



The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 78, JULY / AUGUST 2022

PRICE - £1.50 /€2.00

See inside...



St Colm's 60 anniversary - Draperstown.



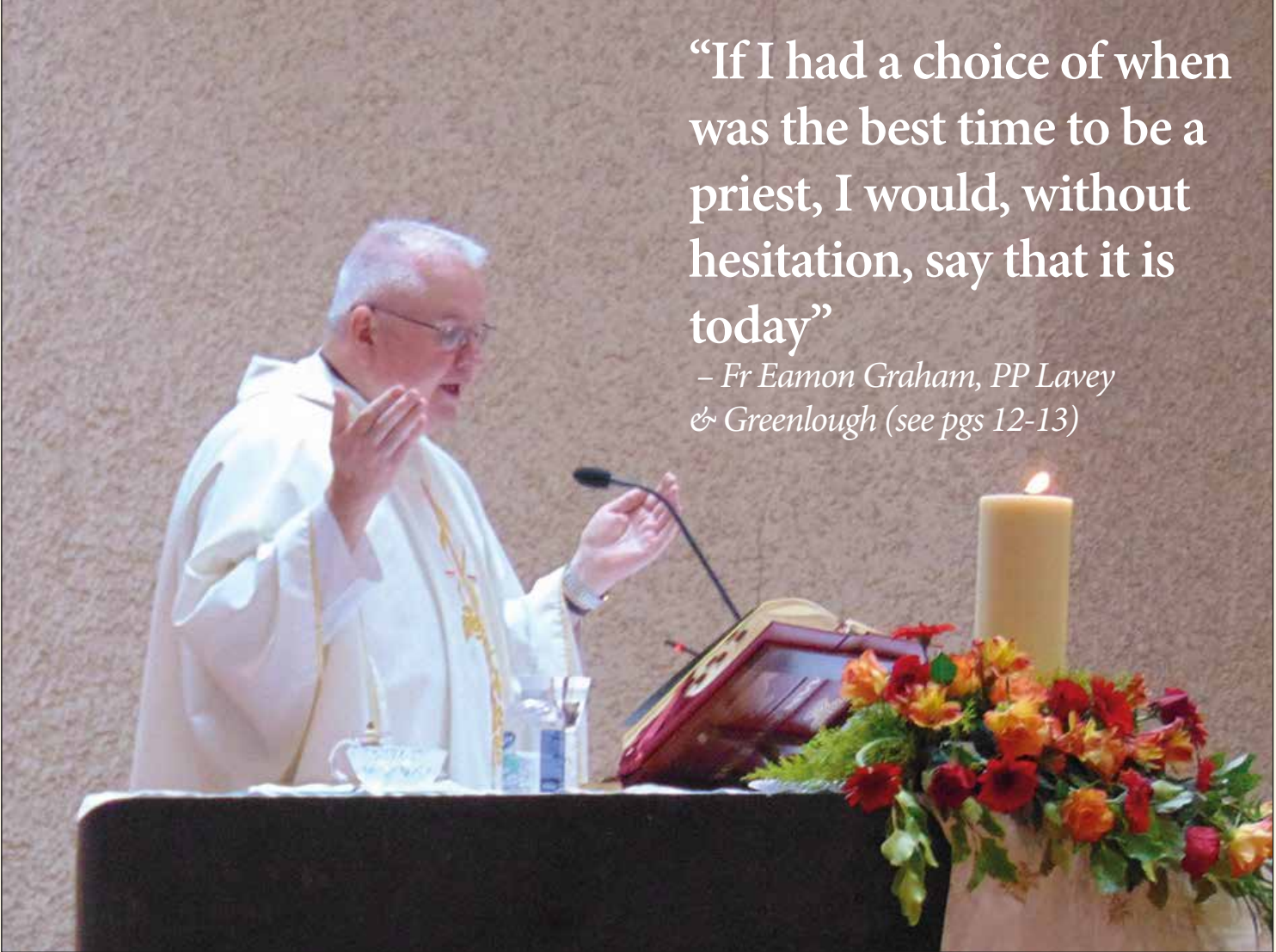
HOPE Camp returns - Limavady.j



St Pio Mass - Cappagh.



St Therese Novena - St Eugene's.



“If I had a choice of when was the best time to be a priest, I would, without hesitation, say that it is today”

– Fr Eamon Graham, PP Lavey & Greenlough (see pgs 12-13)

Fr Eamon Graham celebrating Mass in St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Clady, in the Greenlough Parish, to celebrate 40 years of priesthood.



New Celtic Garden Shelter Blessed - Muff.



Walk for Glenock - Newtownstewart.



40 years of Carmelite ministry - Derry.

People in focus



Clare Wilkinson - Strathfoyle



Fr Eamon Graham - Lavey-Greenlough PP



Fr John Cargan RIP



Nula Breen - Draperstown.



The late Bishop Edward Daly.

Also featuring: Sr Clare's Children's Book; Young Writers' section; Children's Catechism Club - C3; Fr Stephen Kearney Award 2022; Cathedral Parish blessed to have Seven Sisters-Fasting Brothers Apostolate; Ardstraw East Parish News; Rosary on the Coast at Benone; Pilgrimage reflections...and much more...

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Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

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

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or ring/text 07809292852

Bishop Donal reflects on the Pope's prayer intentions...

There is room in a healthy Church for young people of all ages!

"We pray for the elderly, who represent the roots and memory of a people; may their experience and wisdom help young people to look towards the future with hope and responsibility" - July

IT is strange that I should be making this reflection – about myself! By any standards, I come into the category of being aged and pensioner.

But, like so many of my contemporaries, I do not feel elderly.

A story told at the Synod on young people came from the Pacific islands. In travelling from island to island, it takes the strength of young people to pull the oars – and the wisdom

of the old to read the stars and guide the boat.

Another reflection from India spoke of the Easter story, when Peter and John run to the tomb after Mary Magdalene tells them of her encounter with the Risen Jesus. John is young and runs faster – but he halts at the entrance. Peter comes up behind and goes straight in. God's people need the spontaneous enthusiasm of the young – and the wisdom of the old to help them make sense of their experience of Christ.

Life is difficult for everybody in different ways. Like the Israelites coming out of Egypt and Mary at the Annunciation, God's people have always been able to look back on the past

and trust that God was active, even in the worst of times. And those who can give thanks for the challenges and lessons of the past, can face the future with confidence.

There is much that causes people to fear the future. The experience of older people can reassure the young that God's grace is at work, even in the most challenging of experiences, just as God was on Calvary.

It is a dangerous philosophy that fragments society into separate age-groups. It is a wide Body of Christ which knows how to see the Holy Spirit in all the baptised. There is room in a healthy Church for young people of all ages!



Bishop Donal

When small businesses build up people, everybody can flourish

"We pray for small and medium sized businesses; in the midst of economic and social crisis, may they find ways to continue operating, and serving their communities" - August

I grew up in a small business. My father's brother had been apprenticed as a watchmaker but died after three years. And my father, the eleventh of 13 children, was offered his dead brother's place. So, he was eventually able to open a small business, fixing watches and clocks, and selling jewellery

and records and fishing tackle.

I spent much of my free time serving behind the counter and learning how to repair timepieces. The shop was a place where many people met. Lorry drivers going between Co Derry and Belfast often called to leave in or collect repairs.

I saw my father doing small jobs for people and getting a couple of fish or eels in return.

Some years ago, I met Seamus Heaney and explained who I was. Seamus said something to the effect that he would often drop into my father's shop for

a chat. "After all," he smiled, "there wasn't much else to do in Randalstown!"

Small shops and businesses provide value services. But they are also an important feature of a healthy community. Pope Francis asks us to pray that we develop business which serve human communities and help to develop the talents of the young.

When people become slaves of the economy, we have lost our way. When small and medium businesses build up people, everybody can flourish.

Exhibition celebrating the life and legacy of Bishop Daly

AN exhibition honouring the late Bishop Edward Daly is to be launched in the Cathedral Parish in August.

Entitled 'A Man for All Seasons', the exhibition is a celebration of Bishop Daly's life and legacy and pays tribute to the great contribution he made to peace and reconciliation in Ireland, and especially in Derry.

It will open on Monday, August 8, in the Cathedral Hall, following the celebration of 10 am Mass by Bishop Donal in the nearby St Eugene's Cathedral.

The exhibition can be viewed from 10.30 am to 4 pm during the week of Monday, August 8 through to Saturday, August 13, and on Sunday, August 14, from 10.30 am until 2 pm.

BISHOP DALY

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

"For I was sick and you looked after me. I was in prison and you came to visit me."

OPENING TIMES
MONDAY 8TH AUGUST 00.30PM-4.00PM
TUESDAY 9TH AUGUST 00.30PM-4.00PM
WEDNESDAY 10TH AUGUST 00.30PM-4.30PM
THURSDAY 11TH AUGUST 00.30PM-4.30PM
FRIDAY 12TH AUGUST 00.30PM-4.00PM
SATURDAY 13TH AUGUST 00.30PM-4.00PM
SUNDAY 14TH AUGUST 00.30PM-2.00PM

This exhibition has been compiled to celebrate the life, influence, work and legacy of Bishop Edward Daly. The title of the exhibition, *A Man for All Seasons*, was chosen to pay tribute to the wide and varied contribution he made to peace and reconciliation in Ireland, to Derry and its Diocese, to the search for justice and to healing the differences that divide Northern Ireland.

He lived out the words of Christ in his work.

Location: St Eugene's Cathedral Hall
Infirmary Road, Derry/Londonderry, BT48 3PB

staugenesecathedral.com

ANAM ÓG

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR A Summer FUN DAY

Join us for a day of fun and activities for those aged 10-14 years old

FRIDAY 12-4PM | AUGUST 25 | TERMONBACCA DERRY

For more info or booking Contact Aoife
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Diary Dates

Carnhill Holy Hour

The Abraham Community lead an hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament for the National Synodal Pathway in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, on the last Saturday of each month, following the 6 pm Vigil Mass.

Vocations Holy Hour

There will be Vocations Holy Hour in St Mary's Church, Creggan, on the second Friday of each month, running from 8-9 pm.

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.

Sr Clare Rosary

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

Matt Talbott Society

The Matt Talbott Society Mass, praying for those suffering from addiction, is

offered for those enrolled on the first Monday of every month in St Eugene's Cathedral, at 7.30 pm.

Omagh Prayer Group

Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group has extended an invite to people to join its weekly Zoom meeting on Thursday evenings, at 6.30 pm, for hymns, prayers of thanksgiving, scripture and prayers of intercession. The meeting ID and Passcode, which is the same every week, are: 753 1929 5586 (ID) and Prayer 1 (Passcode).

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.

A parish gift to be cherished...

HOPE returns to Limavady buoyed by enthusiasm of young volunteers

“WHEN isolation meets community, when youth meets experience and when faith meets fun and friendship, you get HOPE 2022”.

This statement on the HOPE Limavady Facebook Page sums up the very successful return of the Parish summer camp after a two-year absence due to Covid restrictions, with the volunteers enjoying it as much as the 300 children taking part.

Greatly appreciative of all who contributed in any way to the packed week of activities, Camp leader, Leo McCloskey, who helped Fr James Devine found HOPE 10 years ago as a way of helping their parish evolve, had a particular word of thanks for the dedicated group of volunteers.

“The most important people at the Camp are our volunteers and we had 92 this year,” said Leo, “They are the key to its success. The young volunteers especially have great enthusiasm and energy, and some of them gave up work shifts to help at our Camp this year”.

Pointing out that the theme of the week was ‘belonging’, he remarked: “We think the reason that HOPE is so successful is that people feel that they belong. One of our volunteers said that she liked volunteering with HOPE as she felt welcome”.

He added: “HOPE is a gift from the parish to the young people. Great friendships are made. The HOPE slogan is ‘Faith, Fun, Friendship’ and we have become

very aware over the years how the faith element is what makes it different as a camp.

“During the week, the sacraments are received – we have Adoration, Confessions and Mass – and this makes it special. Few of our volunteers would go to Mass but they all said that they got something out of the faith elements in the programme.”

For one of the faith sessions, Srs Martina Purdy, former BBC journalist, and Elaine Kelly, a former lawyer, who have recently joined the Poor Clares in Co Louth, talked about their faith journey. Both had left their jobs to join the Sisters of Adoration in west Belfast in 2014, but had to leave without making their final vows as the congregation had become too small. They then got jobs as guides at the St Patrick Centre, in Downpatrick, which they left last year to accept a calling into the Poor Clares.

Bishop Donal also spoke to the young people when he celebrated Mass for the Camp in Christ The King Church on the Feast of St Mary Magdalene, during which the singing was led by the Generations of HOPE choir.

Stating that we are all called to be saints, the Bishop expressed the hope that this message was coming through in the HOPE programme, and not just “how to be Catholic a wee bit and be popular as well”.

He went on to say: “Hope doesn’t come from learned and wealthy people. Helping our parish evolve

comes from little people.”

Referring to Blessed Carlo Acutis, who loved computers and the Eucharist and died aged 16, and Sr Clare Crockett, a party girl who entered religious life and died aged 33, Bishop Donal said: “All are called to be saints, to do amazing things for and with God. Do you really believe that God can do beautiful things for the world through you?”

Inviting the young people to look back on the week of HOPE camp, he asked: “What have you enjoyed the most? What have you learnt about God, the Church, yourself, love? What will you build on? What will you want to do next year?”

He concluded by telling them: “We don’t find hope for the future in the stars but from the people beside us, from our parish. Be bearers of hope for the future, that is what God wants you to be.”



Bishop Donal welcomed opportunity to celebrate Catholic education, where school and community work together to inform, form and transform its young, as...

Thanksgiving Mass marks Diamond Jubilee of St Colm's Draperstown

THE school year ended for St Colm's High, in Draperstown, with a lovely Mass in Holy Rosary Church to mark its 60th anniversary on June 29, the Feast of Sts Peter and Paul.

Bishop Donal was the main celebrant and he was joined on the altar by the Parish Priest, Fr Peter Madden, Fr Dermot McGirr, curate, and retired priests, Fr John Downey and Columban, Fr Seamus O'Neill, a native of the parish.

The congregation included staff members and a few senior pupils, as well as former staff members and some parishioners. Amongst those in attendance were Tony McGurk, of Derrynoid, and Joe Kelly, of Moykeeran, who had been first years when St Colm's first opened its doors in 1961.

Bishop Donal had enjoyed a conversation with them before the start of the ceremony, and during his homily he mentioned that he, too, had left primary school in 1961. He went on to recall that when he was growing up in Randalstown, the primary school age went from 4 to 14 years of age, and that most young people then left education and went to work.

He continued: "I remember the great excitement in the big field opposite our house on the edge of town when our three local parishes banded together to build what would become St Olcan's Intermediate School, later St Benedict's College. In modern terms, the parishes had to find the equivalent of what would now be millions of pounds, as Government paid only a portion of construction costs. But they made it a priority.

"The birth of this school will also have come about around the same time, driven on by that same passion that your parish community had to ensure the best possible educational opportunities for your young people.

"Today, we give thanks for those who not only invested scarce money in bricks and mortar but who invested the best they had so that their children and grandchildren might face the future with confidence. We see the fruits of their investment in the confident, industrious communities down the west shore of Lough Neagh".

Remarking that sometimes schools are thought of as being institutions that government provides to help people get qualifications, Bishop Donal welcomed the anniversary celebration as "a chance to celebrate the Catholic idea of education, where school is situated in, and intimately linked to a community that works

together to inform, form and transform its young".

"School, parish, sport, culture and community overlap in the rich formation that you give your children," he said, adding: "Young people flourish when they feel they belong and are cherished within the school and beyond. Education will always fail when society dumps unreasonable expectations on schools, expecting them to compensate for the destructive effects that other influences in society have.

"And yet, despite all its contribution to society, today Catholic education in Northern Ireland is portrayed by some as a relic of a divided past – and that it has to be got rid of. Some of our political parties appear to believe that one sector of education is morally superior to every other sector.

"That arrogance is resented by many people who believe that Catholic education has faced the challenges of the past to create what is the academically most successful sector in NI. And that the least we deserve is to be at the table when it comes to facing the new problems of our time."

Diversity

Bishop Donal went on to say that, in an age of much fragmentation and fear, "community-based education is an essential element in creating confident young people who cherish diversity and do not fear it, who are proud of different identities and can reach out to others".

"Building cultural self-confidence," he remarked, "leads to building bridges and not to putting up barricades. Thus, Catholic education expects no privileges. But it does expect to be treated as an equal partner in education, not as the dunce told to sit in the corner.

"Reconciliation is vital for our society. But there is a reason other than the language of reconciliation that motivates some of the opposition to, and even scorn for, Catholic education".

Referring to the school's patron, St Colm, and to the Saints of the Day, Peter and Paul, Bishop Donal commented: "These were tough followers of Christ in difficult times. Peter and Paul suffered death for their beliefs. Columba dedicated his whole life to making Jesus known and loved, and was criticised by many. What might they say to us today?

"They might tell us that the message of the Gospel has always been criticised and attacked by the powerful in society. Our

current culture is dominated by slogans such as 'Obey your thirst', 'Life is too short to say no', and 'Let's feel good'. Young people are very aware that such a self-indulgent approach to life is destroying the environment and creating a dangerous world for too many young people. But the powerful need us to keep consuming, whatever the cost. And they will not take lightly to any school that dares talk about self-sacrifice, self-control, or the reality of sin.

"The culture also says that I am the centre of my own little universe and that I make up all the rules and even decide what words mean. Christian faith asks us to believe that there is one outside of us who gives life meaning, who loves each person and who offers eternal life. The dominant new secular ideology is entitled to express its opinion. But it now seems keen to ensure that no other opinion can have influence on young people, except itself".

He continued: "There is nothing so intolerant as a liberal who wants room for every idea except one that disagrees with it. Saints Colm, Peter and Paul would call young people to be courageous and idealistic, if we are to escape from being crushed by a self-centred worldview that offers neither hope nor meaning".

Noting that the school's motto is 'Believe and Achieve', with another phrase added for the Diamond Jubilee, 'Veni, Sancte Spiritus/ Tar anuas, a Spioraid Naoimh', the Bishop said: "You have helped young people to believe in themselves by handing on faith in a God who believes in us. You have spoken of a God who has the highest expectations for everyone. But people of faith will have to work hard to ensure that this Gospel message is not squeezed out on the pretext that it is bad for human flourishing and freedom.

"We invoke the Holy Spirit on our school community that we might produce a new generation of heroes who will challenge the deadly idea that life is just a joke, that the individual has no ultimate value and that nothing is really unacceptable except bad hygiene, wearing the wrong trainers and standing for truth".

He concluded: "If we can keep the welfare of young people in community and the wonderful teaching of Christ at the centre of who you are as a parish, in 40 years' time people will look back to big hearts of 60 years ago and to the wise heads of 2022, and be grateful. We give thanks for wise leaders and great young people. And we praise God for his grace at work in this community".



St Colm's principal excited to lead way forward into next 60 years



DELIGHTED to be at the helm for the 60th anniversary of St Colm's, Draperstown, in the Parish of Ballinascreen, Ms Sinead McAllister reflected on her role as principal in envisaging its future, building on the solid foundations laid by her predecessors, and nurturing the gifts and talents of staff and students.

Noting that it was "an unspoken expectation" that their record of academic excellence will continue, and that young people in the Ballinascreen and Desertmartin parishes will get "outstanding opportunities and academic outcomes without having to leave their locality", Ms McAllister remarked that much had changed over the last 60 years, when she spoke at the celebratory meal in the school after Mass for the anniversary.

Pointing out that a population "traditionally employed in agriculture is now immersed in a whole range of industries: construction, renewable energies, engineering and pharmaceuticals to name a few", she continued: "St Colm's is committed to keeping abreast of these changes by educating our local young people so that they, too, can embody the entrepreneurial spirit, work in their hometown, and earn an excellent wage while contributing to the community."

"We want to work in partnership with our local businesses; creating a symbiotic relationship that benefits all and paves the way for a responsive and refreshingly new approach to learning for life and work."

"We want to offer exciting and new opportunities to our young people, thus encouraging an outward looking, inquisitive mindset, a mindset that craves new and innovative learning and is open to the world at large, but confident and content with 'home'."

Highlighting the school community's commitment to growth, Ms McAllister spoke about how the school population had already grown and, for the first time in 60 years, will be over 500 come September.

Commenting on the new challenge this brings, she said: "The physical school building was opened in 1961 and has served us remarkably well; with many battles fought by previous principals to extend the facilities to meet our growing needs. Our 60th year marks the beginning of our new challenge – we have outgrown our wonderful home

and we need to look to a bright new future in a larger facility that can meet the needs of all our learners."

Also highlighting the school's great respect for the landscape, indigenous plants and animals, and the great work of its ECO warriors, Ms McAllister spoke about their plans to mark the 60th anniversary by starting fundraising in September for an 'Eco Dome'.

"This spectacular structure will provide an educational space, a space for prayer and continue our commitment to the community; past, present and future," she explained, adding: "Not only will the fundraising mark our ECO credentials but also our sporting ones too. We will erect our handball court and ensure we truly are the best resourced Post-Primary in the Mid-Ulster area. St.Colm's will continue to be a centre of excellence for Gaelic sports and build on existing relationship with the local Gaelic Athletic Clubs and our feeder primary schools".

In awe of all that St Colm's has achieved over the last 60 years, Ms McAllister concluded by saying that she was "excited and honoured to lead the way forward into the next 60".

Board of Governors chair, Patsy McShane thanked Bishop Donal for joining them for the occasion and paid tribute to the parish priest, Fr Peter Madden, and the school's chaplain, Fr Dermot McGirr "for their substantial input into the liturgy and their continuous support to the school".

Recalling some of the school's history, he noted that when it first opened in 1961 it was known as "St Colm's Voluntary Secondary Intermediate School, or just 'The Intermediate' as the locals

referred to it", and that it was the first secondary school opened in South Derry – two years ahead of St Pat's and three ahead of St Pius."

St Colm's started out doing Junior Certificate, then in 1965 the Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) was introduced, and in 1987 GCSEs were introduced, and then A Levels in 2002, enabling it to cater for all abilities from 11-18 years of age.

"Whilst we are not the largest school and because of our geography never will be," remarked Patsy, "we are definitely one of the most successful schools in South Derry if not the most successful secondary school, with excellent exam results for many years. We topped the Irish News League Tables, we were all Ireland winners and winners of an Eco UNESCO award, as well as the prestigious TES Award twice, and we have had many excellent inspection reports, school productions and sporting success."

"We are an all-round school as you can see. A school that is local, a school that doesn't stream pupils, a school that gets the best from students, a school whose facilities are regularly used by the people of the parishes and a school that delivers – a real community school."

He concluded: "In the coming years, let us continue on the journey started by Fr Michael Collins in 1961, by remaining optimistic...let us continue to celebrate success, let us continue to celebrate our achievements, our community, our pupils, our school and let us promote a positive and confident school community that really believes and achieves. Here's to the next 60 years".



Celebrating success in the UK Active School Hero Awards 2022...

Nula Breen's 'infectious energy' highly motivating for Draperstown school community



THE school community of St Mary's PS Draperstown has been enjoying the celebrations since their Building Supervisor, Nula Breen recently picked up both regional and national UK Active School Hero Awards, at a prestigious ceremony in Birmingham's ICC.

Now in its fourth year, the Active School Hero Award was created to shine a spotlight on the amazing work of primary school staff, creating innovative and fun environments for children to be active.

Principal, Corinne Coyle said: "We have a culture of empowering leadership at St Mary's, and we strive to make the most of everyone's talents. Nula's tremendous work ethic, creativity, commitment, vast array of talents and outstanding leadership skills, contribute so much to the children's learning experience. The numerous initiatives Nula has led over the years warrant this national recognition.

"Her well-deserved success at the UK Active Awards has been a wonderful experience and the personal message from Double Olympic, World and European Champion, Mo Farah, was the icing on the cake.

"The community support has been overwhelming. We're lucky to be part of an affirming school community, and we are, indeed, fortunate to have Nula as an integral part of that."

Corinne went on to thank Lee Francis at Maddison Media, Ashlea Smith, Ollie Moreton and the team at UK Active, the children, parents, governors and staff of St Mary's PS, Draperstown.

In response to the awards, Orla Chennaoui, past pupil of St

Mary's, Eurosport presenter and columnist for Metro and Rouleur wrote: "Nula is famous for making it her life's work to enrich the lives of others - specifically children, but by extension, a great proportion of the community. She is an effervescent, ever-present bundle of infectious energy, encouraging the children to be active even when they don't realise it."

In a special video message from her colleagues, parents, governors, past and present pupils, Nula was credited for her enthusiasm and dedication to getting children active. She was praised for the key role she plays supporting children with additional needs.

Margaret Heron, Chairperson of the Board of Governors at St Mary's, said: "Nula is no stranger to awards. As Building Supervisor, she led the school to three Best Kept School Awards for the North-Eastern Area, going on to scoop the Best of the Best Award in 2018 for the Best Kept School in Northern Ireland.

"Nula has introduced so many different projects over the years. Her flagship project being our school garden and greenhouse. They have enabled so many of our children, especially those with additional needs to improve their wellbeing, develop vital life skills, and participate in physical activity. We look forward to the exciting plans Nula has for our garden area in celebration of our upcoming 60th anniversary."

Outside of school, Nula is a keen runner and cyclist, and does not allow her diagnosis of Rheumatoid Arthritis to hold her back. Her cross-country club is one of the school's most popular after-school activities, largely due

to her fun and energetic approach and the way she motivates everyone to challenge themselves.

'My Marathon'

Three years ago, Nula created 'My Marathon', an annual running event, tasking everyone to run 26.2 marathon miles over the course of one month. Children, staff, parents, and governors get involved. Last year, 'My Marathon' raised £8,000 for school funds. Nula has encouraged businesses from the local area and further afield to throw their weight behind this wonderful initiative. As governor, Karen Doyle stated: "Businesses just can't say no to Nula!"

During the COVID-19 pandemic, 'My Marathon' brought life and fun back to St Mary's, motivating not only the pupils but older members of the school community and those less used to exercise.

Commenting on the Award, Nula said: "I am completely overwhelmed to have achieved this national recognition, for something that is just part of the work I love and enjoy doing every day.

"Active School Hero has generated such excitement at the school and around the local area. It is vital that we get our children outdoors and staying active. I want the children to understand the love I have of being active outside and the positive impact that can have on our health and mental wellbeing.

"I want children to understand that they do not have to be the best to take part, but they must be the best they can be. It has been emotional to hear parents talk about the impact my work has had on their children over the years, and it makes it all worthwhile."

Huw Edwards, CEO of ukactive, said: "Nula's story is a shining example of the impact that school staff can have on our children's health, happiness and confidence, using the power of physical activity.

"We want every child to have access to physical activity and it is clear that Nula's inclusive approach and infectious passion

have made her an incredibly valued member of the community at St Mary's. Congratulations to all the Active School Hero nominees and finalists and thank you for all the work you do every day to show children that physical activity can be fun for everyone."

Dan Burrows, Nike's Senior Director of Social and Community Impact, EMEA, said: "It's been a privilege to be a part of the Active School Hero program and spotlight the inspiring work of primary school coaches across the UK.

"All the shortlisted coaches played a pivotal role in ensuring that more children have access to play and sport, and the decision to select just one was not easy. I'm delighted to celebrate the achievements of Nula Breen and recognise the incredible contributions she's made to keep the kids in her school active and engaged in play."

Gerry Campbell, Chief Executive of CCMS (Catholic Maintained Schools) said: "Catholic Schools are an exemplar of educational provision and at the heart of the communities they serve. This award is positive recognition of Nula's unwavering commitment and service to the children at St Mary's Primary School. I am inspired by how she engages with children of all abilities and encourages them to use their gifts as she teaches them her talents.

"It is representative of the ethos of Catholic education, which promotes the benefits of holistic learning to enable all children to reach their full potential. On behalf of all at CCMS, I extend congratulations to Nula, St Mary's Primary School, and wider community."



Strong advocate of Christian community in action, youth worker Clare Wilkinson reflects on her faith journey with Search Youth Group, concluding...

Search has so much to offer our young people

A YOUNG Derry mother, who has grown up to have a strong faith thanks to the great spiritual nourishment she received as a teenage member of Search, is on a mission to spread word about the great work of the Creggan-based youth group in helping young people discover how to use their faith to develop as a person.

Originally from Creggan, Clare Wilkinson has been involved with Search for about 10 years and, in her current role as a faith-based youth worker with the group, she is keen to help build up membership again in the aftermath of the Covid lockdowns.

"I did my Search weekend when I was 16, many years ago now, and volunteered with them for years until I left and had my own children," said the 34-year-old, adding: "I just faded away and was away for a good eight years, but it was always close to my heart, and I have been back now for about five years".

She recalled: "When I came to Search, I didn't have a lot of faith. My friends had done the weekend and said that I would love it. I had a lot of anger towards God because of death in my family, and because I spent so long being angry at Him, I didn't think He could love me.

"However, the first talk on the weekend was 'God's Love' and it was like a light bulb for me. It changed my whole perspective on God and how I viewed Him. That was the beginning of my faith journey, of understanding it and trusting it.

"Search helps water and nourish your faith, but it also gives you tools to strengthen and understand your faith and develop it as a positive aspect in your life. I am now a mother of three boys, aged 10, 5 and 1, and faith and God is a massive part of our life. We say 'Grace' before dinner and go to Mass every week, and we are constantly talking about God and His love.

"That has all come from what Search gave me when I was younger. Everything we did had an element of faith, and I was able to carry that into adulthood. It shows you how to use your faith to strengthen your person".

"I never drifted from my faith, even when I wasn't attending the Search meetings," remarked Clare, adding: "Search instils faith in you, and I just kept feeding it. The work they did with me as a teenager was strong enough to keep me close to my faith. Sometimes people look at you when you talk about your

faith, so I went through a phase where I kept it to myself.

"However, the Covid experience was a bit of an awakening. Covid and lockdown was very hard for a lot of people but, for me, it strengthened my faith, as I had time to do a bit more praying.

"Search did the Rosary every night during Covid, via Facebook, and we got involved as a family, with the boys helping to plan the prayers and songs we were going to do when it was our turn to lead the Search Rosary. I am blessed that my partner is into his faith too. He didn't do Search, but he loves it from what he knows about it through me. Search is very much part of my family and home".

After completing her second level education in St Mary's, Derry, Clare went to John Moore University, in Liverpool, to study for teaching but quickly realised that it was not for her: "I sat down for my first lecture, and I remember thinking that it was not what I wanted to do. We had done the first Search summer scheme, Mol an Oige, in the community hall beside the white chapel in Galliagh just before I left, and it just clicked with me that that was what I wanted to do.

"I was the first from our house to go to university and so it was made a big deal of, which left me not knowing what I should do. I stuck it for a week, then I came home. I thought I had failed; I was distraught as I thought I had let everybody down.

Passion

"I felt that it was youth work that I was being pulled towards. I got talking to Oonagh McAllister and she got me set up in Coleraine with the Triangle Parishes Project, working alongside her, and that was the start of my youth work career. After that, I got an apprenticeship with Youth Action for two years, then I got a job in a youth club in the Bogside for 11 years. I left it at the end of May to start this job with Search, as I had a burning passion to be more involved after I had been back volunteering for a couple of years.

"I had worked in Club Youth First for two years and then Our Space and the YES project, and I also worked with the Youth Engagement Service".

Saying that she got a degree in Youth and Community Work four years ago, Clare added: "When I was younger, Search put me through a lot of training, such as First Aid and Confidence Building, etc. It has so much



to offer our young people and I feel that message needs to get out there more. Search was well known over Derry at a time, and I think everybody needs to know who we are today.

"We do the same youth work that is done throughout the city, the only difference is that we have a faith element, giving thanks to God for everything in our lives".

"Search is an amazing organisation for all kinds of young people," she continued: "We talk about God, but we also tackle the same issues every other youth club in the area does. We have a wide range of youths here, coming from different backgrounds. There is something missing in most young people's lives. Social media has taken over so much of their time. We like to slow it down and use music for meditation during prayer time, when each is just a child of God".

A great advocate of Christian community in action and encouraging young people to be part of the Mass celebration, Clare said: "We do a lot of drama and music within Search, and I am keen to put that out into the community, so that people are aware of what we do. We are under the banner of youth work, but we have that something special with the faith element. Teaching young people how to have faith in themselves. The goal of Search is that no matter what young people are going through, they are loved".

Search meets in its premises in Iona Business Park, South Way, for the Friday Night Club from 7-9 pm, which is a structured Search programme looking at aspects such as body image and

self-esteem.

Noting that it has been two years since the group ran at full capacity, Clare said: "Pre-Covid, we had 50-60 young people involved in Search, now we have about 20-30 coming each night, so we are working at building the project up to full capacity.

"The age for Search is 14-18 years, and those over 18 can graduate to become a volunteer after undergoing training. We offer young people First Aid, Games Training, Confidence Building. During the year, we do a lot of meditation, mental health, personal identity, confidence building, choices and consequences, morals.

"We run courses based on what the young people want and need. We ask what they want to do and then we source the best thing for them".

Preparations are underway for the next Search weekend, which will run from October 14-16. For further information, Clare can be contacted via the Facebook page – derrysearchyouthgroup@gmail.com



Book of Sr Clare's children's stories published



THE Home of the Mother has published a book of stories for children written by the late Sr Clare Crockett, of Derry, entitled 'When I Was Little'.

From childhood, the talented Servant Sister from the Brandywell had loved to sing, dance, act, recite poetry and make up stories, so when she joined the religious life with the mission to serve God, writing these stories for children was a natural way for her to use her talents to connect with youngsters and make them laugh, while hopefully helping them not to make the same mistakes she did in her childhood.

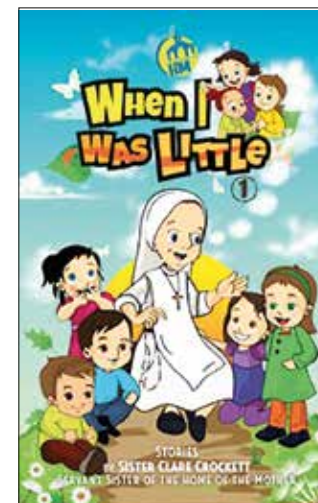
While Sr Clare's sisters, Shauna and Megan have assured the Home of the Mother that many of the stories in the book are true,

the Servant Sisters advise keeping in mind that Sr Clare used a lot of imagination when writing them.

They decided to publish them in a book as a way of encouraging young people to imitate Sr Clare's love and generosity.

Sr Clare died over six years ago in Playa Prieta, on April 16, 2016, along with five young women aspiring to join the Order, when the building they were in collapsed during a devastating earthquake in Ecuador.

The book can be purchased via the following line: <https://www.sisterclare.com/en/her-life/books/9717-when-i-was-little>



THIS month, Niamh and Peter reflect on the important role of the elderly in our society, referring to comments made during the World Meeting of Families in Rome.

Jodie comments on Pope Francis' comments about staying positive, especially in the face of opposition, and John writes about the relevance of St Thomas Aquinas in today's world.

A senior pupil in St Colm's Draperstown, Bronagh writes about her school's 60th anniversary celebration at the end of the school year.

Delighted with the return of the Diocesan pilgrimages to Lough Derg and Lourdes, Hollie took part in both and shares her experience, and Diocesan youth worker, Niamh McLaughlin also writes about her time in Lourdes when she travelled with the Derry pilgrimage as part of the youth team.



Hollie Frystal, Co Tyrone Deanery. Bronagh Doherty, Co Derry Deanery. Peter Grant, Inishowen Deanery. Jodie Kennedy, Derry City Deanery. Lorcan McGonagle, Inishowen Deanery.



Niamh O'Kane - Co Derry Deanery. Gemma Gallagher, Derry City Deanery. John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery. Zara Schlindwein, Derry City Deanery.

Responding to opposition with a positive outlook

by Jodie

AT the Angelus on June 26, Pope Francis called the faithful to follow Jesus, who did not respond to opposition with anger and bitterness, but instead made a "resolute decision" to continue on to Jerusalem, knowing that rejection and death awaited Him there. The Pope stated that this decision was a turning point because Jesus would face massive consequences.

As the Pope says, if we too are called to make a firm decision in our lives "we must be disciples of Jesus in earnest with real determination, and not - as an elderly lady I knew used to say - 'rosewater Christians.' No, no, no! [We must be] serious Christians!"

When facing opposition, it can always benefit us to turn to God. The Holy Father insisted that when

we meet opposition, we must, like Jesus, "turn toward doing good elsewhere, without recrimination."

The Pope encouraged this as He invited us to "ask Jesus for the strength of being like him, of following him with a firm decision, not to be vindictive and intolerant when difficulties present themselves, when we spend ourselves in doing good and others do not understand this."

So, with this we, as Christians, can see the significance of responding to opposition with a positive outlook. When responding with this type of outlook we can only get positive results. We should start as we mean to go on, if we start with a negative outlook we'll get negative results, so start with a positive and get positive results.



The relevance of Thomism in modern society

by John

ST Thomas Aquinas, towards the end of his life had a vision of Our Lord, who said to him, "You have written well of me, Thomas! What do you desire?" Thomas quite simply replied, "Non nisi te domine (nothing but You, Lord)".

It is also said that he likened his work to straw as well. Regardless of that, St Thomas was a man who wrote of great proportions, and who, through the grace of God and the best of his ability, was able to explain and defend the faith in a clear and concise manner. He was also able 'to argue the other side' so much that his arguments for the other side were better than the arguments presented by the other side.

Though I am not a Thomist, nor a Scotist, or a Augustinianist, or any -ist for that matter, as I am a layman in philosophy and not very well read in these things, I am still a Catholic, and St Thomas Aquinas has had a profound effect on Catholic thought. It is in this context that I say that St Thomas and his works are greatly relevant in our society.

From talking about whether there can be virtue in playing games to how a just war could be conducted, St Thomas' thought

spanned as many topics as one could have thought of in 13th century Europe. One can read St Thomas and find many things that could help them in the life towards God. One could also find a good few things that St Thomas got wrong as well, but then again, he was a fallible human being trying to understand and explain the mysteries that surrounded him.

What makes St Thomas useful in our society today is the way he thinks and presents his work. As an example, if we look at the Second Part of the Second Part of the Summa Theologiae, Question 168, Article 2, Aquinas talks about whether there can be a virtue about games. As usual, he presents objections to the concept of a virtue about games. He then presents a small case for the concept of a virtue about games and then he gives his own opinion on the matter. He ends the 2nd Article with replies to each of the objections. The entire article is rich full of scripture and references to the church fathers, ancient philosophers (primarily Aristotle, whom he calls the Philosopher) and contemporaries.



As a person who is not really a philosopher, reading his works can seem quite overwhelming. But Aquinas' answers provide for us a method to think about questions that we are often faced with today. He is not afraid to steelman his opponents. He isn't afraid of a hard objection. Rather, he is focused on finding the best objection and then providing the best possible answer he can to that objection.

I wonder how often we, ourselves, are willing to make our opponents' arguments better. I wonder how often we are willing to spend the time and effort to

come up with a real answer to complicated questions, instead of straw manning them and giving an unsatisfactory answer. Aquinas clearly is not afraid to do both.

St Thomas provides for us an example of how to engage with those who do not agree with us and to do so fruitfully. He is, in that way, a true disciple of Christ. I hope that we, as Catholics, can do likewise and engage with our opponents in such a manner.

In a society that is quite polarised, St Thomas provides for us a way out. St Thomas Aquinas, pray for us!

Bright future ahead for St Colm's Draperstown as it celebrates Diamond Jubilee

by Bronagh

IN June, St Colm's High School, Draperstown celebrated 60 years of educating for the future and nurturing the talents of each child from Ballinascreen and further afield.

The anniversary Mass was celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown, Fr Madden PP, Fr O'Neill, Fr Downey and Fr McGirr, alongside Monsignor Joey Donnelly.

St Colm's opened in 1961 and celebrated 60 years in 2021. We celebrated in June 2022, as the 60th academic year drew to a close.

It was a Mass of prayer for the future and thanksgiving for the past. Held in Holy Rosary Church Draperstown, it was enriched with music from our fabulous school choir and orchestra, led by Mrs Young.

We had readings from teachers, past and present, and pupils led the offertory procession with gifts of a school crest, to represent our school's beliefs, a picture of St Colmcille, our patron saint, schoolbooks to represent the learning that happens within the walls of St Colm's, and a Gaelic football to recognise the non-academic achievements, particularly the sporting success our school has had in the last 60 years. Finally, the bread and wine were carried by sixth formers as a sign of our strong Catholic faith in school.

We finished off our Diamond Jubilee celebrations with dinner in the school hall, where we had speeches from our principal, Ms Sinead McAllister, and board of governor's chairperson, Patsy



McShane, sharing fond memories of times gone by in St Colm's.

Our School has had six principals and, although I have only known two of them, they take so much pride in our school, and it shows in every single pupil who has come through the doors of St Colm's. It is such a loving and homely school and I'm glad to be a small part of

our school's expansive history.

St Colm's has given so much to the past and still has much more to give to children in the future. It is very much in the heart of the community and is getting ready to welcome the biggest group of first years in September 2022; a sign of the very bright future ahead for St Colm's High School, Draperstown.

Building bridges

by Peter



CHURCH historian, Dr Christopher Bellitto expressed the importance of the elderly in the church and outside it, during the World Meeting of Families in Rome, highlighting the importance of closeness that generations of both young and old share with one another.

Throughout your childhood, not only do you look up to your parents, but you also look up to your grandparents very much

and appreciate how they comfort you in tough times and learn life lessons from them, too.

For me, growing up in my childhood and thankfully still with us today, my granny is an inspirational person that I look up to as she always takes the positives from the negatives in situations in her life, whatever she faces every day.

After my granddad's death 10 years ago this year, the whole of

Caring for the elderly *by Niamh*

DURING the World Meeting of Families, Church historian, Dr Christopher Bellitto, from America, emphasised the importance of bridging the generational gap between young and older people in encouraging the youth to be more considerate and care for the elderly who are in dire need of assistance.

He stated: "Elderly people are treasures and caring for them should be looked at not as a burden, but an opportunity for blessing."

Dr Bellitto also spoke on synodality amongst the elderly and the youth, stressing the importance of creating a link between the young and the old as the Church progresses. He commented on how synodality is about "telling stories and listening to stories."

Dr Bellitto highlighted the importance of listening first before telling, as it enables a bridge between the generational gaps, especially in a society which devalues elderly people.

He also underlined the need to value the elderly in society in practical ways, an example is to keep them living with or close to us, if it is medically possible, so that they are "a part of our lives and not something that happens once a month."

Through this, we provide

invaluable companionship to someone who may need it and who is struggling otherwise.

Reflecting upon his own childhood, Dr Bellitto recalls growing up with his grandmother, his father and two siblings. He fondly remembers how the experience of living within a multigenerational family taught him a natural defence for the elderly, an attitude which he feels has been lost in modern times. Through this, we are called to care and protect the relationships within our family as best as we can, especially those with older family members.

Dr Bellitto believes that putting the elderly at the centre of every parish community is a way of valuing and demonstrating an appreciation towards them, and he imagines the elderly as "the hub of a wheel" around which the parish should be revolving.

Focusing on young people will generate talk about the future but only focusing on them risks "losing the present and the past," he said.

To conclude, Dr. Bellitto encourages everyone to look at elders as treasures and reminds us: "In learning to care for our elders, we learn the way that Jesus put forward, even when it is tough."



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my family was in great sadness, but my granny always said: "He is now in the Lord's care, and we will see him again in the Lord's Kingdom." If things ever went wrong for me growing up and even today, she would always be patient and have the time to talk to me and help with my problems, and not just lighting a holy candle for me during my exams but everything else too, from school life to my personal life.

My granny would be like the cement that keeps our family together, like Jesus did with his disciples, and really that is the main role of all grandparents these days, to bring families and friends together to help each other out and not to be worried about everything that life hits you with.

The elderly folk and the young folk in my parish have a great

bond with one another and help each other out. The elderly pass their knowledge on to the next generation.

Pope Francis states that all elderly people have a huge role in the church and society to pass down the knowledge and beliefs of Jesus, saying: "I am with you always", and forever guiding us on life's journey, as my granddad did, and my granny still continues to do so.

Having that relationship and bond with the elderly, like what I have with my granny, helps us to gain an understanding to life in the past and also in the present, and how we can prepare for the future.

Some people may undermine the physical ability of the elderly, but they can inspire us to change not for their benefit but for the next generation

Hollie reflects on her three-day Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lough Derg...

'All that I am, all that I do, all that I'll ever have, I offer now to you'

ON June 24-26, the Diocese of Derry embarked upon its first pilgrimage to Lough Derg since the Covid-19 pandemic. Fortunately, I was able to go on my first pilgrimage to this ancient island back in 2019 and, ironically, it has been a pleasure to return there after three years!

Without hesitation, I have to admit, that my second time really equaled the description that one views at the entrance of Lough Derg, entitled 'Purgatorium Sancti Patricii', or in English, 'St Patrick's Purgatory'. The weather was horrendous, and the food and sleep deprivation were utmost difficult. However, despite all these challenges, our journey together over the three days was both rich and fruitful in listening, talking and praying; three major components of synodality.

Firstly, in no particular order, we will look at the component of 'praying'. Lough Derg involves a unique and ascetic style of prayer. In speaking to the Church in Corinth, St Paul spoke of discipling one's body and fleshly desires, bringing them under 'subjugation'. Acknowledging that this ancient pilgrimage was born out of an Irish monastic context, it is interesting that this stark-style practice dates back to the early Church and was a particularly favoured way of sacrificing one's life to God, in search and in



discerning one's relationship with Him.

As many of our readership may already know, the pilgrimage requires the abstinence of food and sleep, as well as being carried out barefoot, despite weather conditions. Personally, the major challenges I faced was the weather and the 24-hour vigil.

The words of Jesus, in the Garden of Gethsemane, "Can you not keep watch for one hour?" is the origin of the concept of keeping vigil. Theologically, whilst in stormy, wet, cold conditions, pilgrims prayed using their heads, hearts and feet. Lough Derg requires the surrender of one's whole self, and by stripping away all distractions, one comes face

to face with God, in their most humble and vulnerable state.

Lastly, I will reflect on the two major components of 'listening' and 'talking', with emphasis on encounter and the interaction, on the pilgrim path, with one another. Behind every pilgrim there is a story, and it was evident that people on the island came for many different reasons, possibly as a refuge, in the hope of obtaining a grace for help and strength.

Lough Derg's invitation typifies the chorus of the hymn 'All that I am, all that I do, all that I'll ever have, I offer now to you'. We somewhat present a basic wounded version of ourselves, that maybe in reality (off the

island) we cover with a façade.

On the pilgrim path, we are given the opportunity to speak to others, and more importantly to listen to one another. I remember meeting and speaking with a group of women from around the areas of Belfast, Antrim and Down who were very encouraging and complimentary, as well as a group from the Diocese of Elphin.

There was one pilgrim I met who was 88 years old, and it was her first time to undertake the pilgrimage to Lough Derg. She was truly an inspiration!

The Diocesan pilgrimage to Lough Derg was a fabulous experience, and I encourage anyone who is thinking of trying it, to definitely give it a go!

Hollie writes about her experience in Lourdes with the Derry Diocesan Youth Ministry Team...

Lourdes pilgrimage a wonderful opportunity to be together in-person

THE Derry Youth team on the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes consisted of six young people from across the parishes of Iskaheen, Moville, Melmount, Maghera Glen and Badoney Upper.

This pilgrimage provided us with a unique encounter and insight into synodality. Considering the challenges of 'walking together' online for almost two years, it was a wonderful opportunity to spend time together in-person, and also to take the time to get to know one another.

One pilgrim recalled that she "built great bonds with people that you would never have imagined", and another first-time pilgrim noted "what kind of sums up the call of Our Lady is to expect the unexpected", whilst reflecting on the many 'walks' of life and stories encountered behind each pilgrim, as well as the various different

jobs or opportunities that we encountered.

Coinciding with Pope Francis' emphasis on intergenerational relationships, he cleverly points out that "The world has never benefited, nor will it ever benefit, from a rupture between generations" (Christus Vivit, n. 191). The Holy Father continuously encourages the young and old to 'journey together'. Regarding this, one of our pilgrims recognized and stated that "the intergenerational connection that was made on pilgrimage was so strong this year". There was a great sense of co-responsibility, and both our Youth and Diocesan groups clicked so well.

For me, this pilgrimage marked my second time in Lourdes, and there were certain things that I got to do and visit for the first time.



For example, we walked from Lourdes to the City of the Poor. I remember our leader showing me what is known as the 'Green Cathedral' and I started looking for a building, however, it was an

outdoor space constructed with a flight of Stoney/grassy steps. It represented such a rich example of Synodality, an invitation of faith, in that it created space for

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Diocesan Youth Ministry member, Niamh McLaughlin recalls her first Lourdes pilgrimage...

I understood my call from Our Lady was to say 'yes' to things unknown and even fearful to me

THE Derry Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes was my very first time in Lourdes, and I will admit, I had no idea what to expect!

Although my initial reaction to the pilgrimage was that I was going there primarily to work with our young leaders as we begin our preparations for World Youth Day 2023, I did not pay much attention to the other side of me, the one that was really calling me there.

The pilgrimage offered so many wonderful experiences and opportunities that I will never forget. One such opportunity was the relationships I was able to

form while in Lourdes. A rough start to the pilgrimage in Belfast airport actually provided the groundwork for relationships that were to last the entire pilgrimage and even beyond it.

Connections were also made with the hotel staff, cafe staff and even I found some friends along the way. I have to say regarding the group of girls that Derry Youth Ministry took on pilgrimage for formation, anyone would have sworn that we knew each other our whole lives, when actually it was our first time together as a group!

It is safe to say that the time

I spent in Lourdes paved the way for new relationships to be established and for old ones to be renewed.

Some of us also had the great honour and privilege of leading some of the big events during the day in Lourdes. We played a key role in the Rosary Procession, carrying flags and candles to lead the way for all pilgrims, the Blessed sacrament procession, and the International Mass.

Looking back on those experiences and opportunities, I believe that we all had an open heart to experience something new, and we had the courage to

say 'yes', when we had no clue at all what to do or we had no idea what we were getting ourselves into!

Overall, that sums up my experience in Lourdes and what I understood my call to be from Our Lady - to say 'yes', the greatest of 'yes', to things unknown and even things that are fearful to me.

For me, I just have to remember that these things are ultimately willed and foreseen by God, and that I just have to look to St Bernadette for a little inspiration and for a great amount of courage to say that 'yes' whenever I am in doubt.



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the Church or 'People of God', and not bricks nor mortar.

One pilgrim remarked that "the open-air cathedral which was both silent for reflection and without distraction", was also exposed to the natural beauty of God's creation surrounding them.

Our last event before the conclusion of our pilgrimage was our youth ministry candlelight service. One pilgrim said: "My favourite part was our 'Lighting

of the Candles' Ceremony because we came together to think of our loved ones and our intentions, while singing hymns. It was a beautiful moment".

Indeed, it was a very emotional and uplifting experience, bringing together all that one felt and accomplished on this pilgrimage. Undoubtedly, our young people have made both profound friendships and lasting memories.



Cathedral Parish blessed to have Seven Sisters-Fasting Brothers Apostolate *by Veronica Harley*



Fr Ignacy with some members of the Seven Sisters-Fasting Brothers Apostolate in the Cathedral Parish.

'The Seven Sisters Apostolate and Brothers Fasting' is a beautiful ministry that was introduced to the Cathedral Parish, St Eugene's in Derry, on February 1, 2022. In Ireland, the Feast of St Brigid is traditionally the first day of spring. Spring heralds a new beginning, growth, and a fresh start. In the company of St Brigid, 'Mary of the Gael', this was a blessed day to begin our ministry. May we turn to her for inspiration and support in our new mission.

The purpose of this apostolate is to strengthen the Church by ensuring that a Holy Hour is prayed each day of the week for our bishop and priests.

Remember St Paul's request "to respect those who labour among you and are over you in the Lord and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love because of their work" (1 Thessalonians 5:12-13).

Structure

A group of seven women is formed for this ministry and each group is designated a priest in its own parish. In St Eugene's Parish we have Bishop Donal and three priests; Fr Paul Farren, Fr Patrick Lagan, and Fr Ignacy Saniuta. Therefore, our parish required a considerable number of women to respond to the call of God in prayer. We are blessed to have

21 women praying an hour each day of the week for our Shepherd, Bishop Donal, and 21 women praying within three groups for the dedicated priests in our parish.

Commitment

Each 'sister' commits to praying a Holy Hour on a designated day of the week, thereby ensuring that the whole week is covered in prayer for our bishop and priests. Ideally, the Holy Hour is prayed in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament in your parish church but is not restricted to this. One can avail of a church outside the parish or pray at home or pray while travelling.

Some of the 'sisters' praying

in St Eugene's are housebound. During the stress of lockdown and the Covid restrictions, they were almost completely isolated at home. These women are delighted to reconnect to the parish and give selflessly of themselves to pray for the strengthening of the Church.

Men are essential to the spiritual life of the Church. Our 'fasting brothers' are key to the success of this ministry. When our brothers fast, they are following the holy examples of Moses and Elijah, who fasted for 40 days before going into the presence of God (Exodus 34:28, 1 Kings 19:8).

When fasting, 'brothers' are being attentive to the teachings of Jesus who said "Whenever you fast, do not look dismal like the hypocrites. When you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face" (Matthew 6:16-17).

Fasting

Fasting is central to Catholic tradition because it is rooted in Scripture. It has many spiritual benefits, such as bringing about humility (Psalm 69:10) and clearing the pathway to God (Daniel 9:3). Fasting is also a means of discerning God's will (Ezra 8:21) and a powerful

method of prayer (Ezra 8:23). Each of the seven 'brothers' who fasts is also asked to commit to one day a week for a year and to offer his fast for the bishop and priests in his parish.

God's Gardeners

Sisters praying and Brothers fasting can be likened to the nurture and care that we provide to a beautiful rosebush. We tend to our roses by diligently pruning and fertilising the soil to support their growth. We replenish their roots with nutritious food to strengthen them and to enhance their vitality. A fertile rose bush will flower and emit an aesthetically pleasing display of finery and a magnificent fragrance that draws us in and delights our soul.

The Seven Sisters' prayers are the grace-filled secateurs, the pruning clippers which foster growth in the spiritual lives of our ministerial priests. These prayers are the rich soil that promote fidelity, piety, and virtue in the Beatitudinal life of our priests. Our Brothers fasting provide the active fertile food that is poured into the soil to energise the roots and bolster the stem that reaches out to humanity in service. Inviting us to experience

and ponder the wonder of our Creator and give thanks for the glory of God.

Invitation

On the feast day of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, May 31, Fr Ignacy in the parish of St Eugene invited the 'Seven Sisters and Brothers Fasting' to the celebration of the Eucharist.

This ministry of praying and fasting is essential in our parishes, and I would encourage people in every parish to answer God's call. In baptism we are all given a vocation, a call to holiness, to be 'priest, prophet, and king' and to share in the one priesthood of Christ.

Make sure to answer God's call, to be attentive caretakers by supporting your bishop and priests. Be proactive with your gifts of prayer and fasting, so that our precious priests can flourish and continue to transmit the heavenly allure of God's scent to humanity, drawing each to the Heart of God.

Anyone interested in joining or starting a group in their parish is welcome to contact Veronica on 07857598111, Bridget on 07522436443, or Seánán at seanan.cregan@gmail.com.

Cappagh celebrates 10th anniversary of Padre Pio Mass

by Berni Doody



THIS year sees the 10th anniversary of the monthly Padre Pio Mass in Christ the King Church, Cappagh Parish, Omagh. The parishioners were very happy to welcome back Omagh

native and former parish curate, Fr Joe Gormley to celebrate the Mass.

Fr Joe reminded everyone of Padre Pio's words on how to support a good Christian faith, the 'three legs of the stool': Confession; reciting the Rosary; and the Eucharist.

He confessed that, perhaps, he wasn't so strong on reciting the Rosary but remarked that the Rosary reflected on Jesus' life from the Gospels, encouraged meditative prayer and was a powerful group prayer.

Fr Joe also reminded the congregation that the date of the Mass was the feast day of St Maria Goretti, who in her short life reflected the virtue of chastity; a virtue which is given little regard in today's secular world.

He said that all single people were called to live chaste lives and married people were called in a different way to live holy lives, with God at the centre of their relationship.

Fr Joe blessed all religious objects, and everyone was able to receive a special blessing from Padre Pio's relic at the end of the Mass.

The Padre Pio group was first set up by Marie Martin and Claire McGrath. The group was able to continue its annual pilgrimage to Italy this year to visit Padre Pio's birthplace, the monastery where he lived out his life and to see his exhumed remains. It has also organised a pilgrimage to Knock in the coming month.

River Derg-Lough Derg 'Walk for Glenock' raises over £4,000

THE Parish of Ardstraw East, Newtownstewart embarked on another fund-raising walk on Sunday, June 26. St Eugene's Church at Glenock is in need of major repair and the sponsored 'Walk for Glenock' is a regular initiative. This time the destination was Lough Derg because Newtown Parish has a direct link to the famous sanctuary.

The link is the River Derg, which flows out of Lough Derg at the north-eastern point and meanders about 24 miles until it reaches the River Mourne at Milltown, one mile on the Sion Mills side of Newtownstewart. Down the centuries, the Derg was a lifeline for several monasteries, not least the monastery of St Eugene of Ardstraw.

Accordingly, Fr Roland Colhoun suggested to his parishioners that they follow the course of the River Derg, as the ancient monks did in their currachs, from end to beginning, that is, from Newtownstewart to Lough Derg.

On the day, a group of parishioners and friends of Glenock gathered at the mouth of the Derg, on the A5 at Milltown, and in a convoy of nine cars drove 'upstream', following the river as closely as the roads permitted. About an hour later, the group arrived at the source of the River Derg where it flows out of the north-eastern point of the lake. The lake and river and trees make it a very picturesque scene.

Next on the agenda was the Pilgrim Walk, five miles of guided tour around a portion of the perimeter of the lake. The Pilgrim Walk traces the steps of the medieval pilgrims who made their way to Lough Derg on foot. The Walk was opened as a tourist attraction 25 years ago, in 1997.

There are 11 islands in Lough Derg, the most famous being St Patrick's Purgatory, the centre of penance since the time of St Patrick. However, the group of parishioners didn't cross to any of the islands. The goal was to walk the shore of the lake with a professional guide. Each participant donated £20 (£15 to Glenock Church and £5 to Lough Derg) or £30 per family. Family dogs came along free of charge!

It proved to be a splendid outing with favourable weather, ideal for the outdoor picnic and the prayers of the intrepid pilgrims from Newtownstewart. By the Sunday evening, the 'Walk for Glenock' had raised over £4,000 for St Eugene's Church!

Forty means forty in Newtownstewart

by Fr Roland Colhoun

THE Parish of Ardstraw East completed the Forty Hours Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for Pentecost Sunday. The Church's choice of the number 40 has a biblical origin. The Old Testament and New Testament describe historic events such as the 40-day flood, the 40 years in the wilderness, Christ's 40 days' fasting in the Judean Desert, the estimated 40 hours of Christ in death, the 40 days between the Resurrection and the Ascension, and so on. It was, perhaps, in the 20th century that parishes reduced the Forty Hours to a less demanding period, sometimes just the hours between Sunday Mass and evening Devotions.

In 2020, during the worst of the Covid pandemic, Newtownstewart introduced 40 continuous hours of Adoration. The response was remarkable. People signed up in great numbers, even for the hours between midnight and dawn.

As a result, the practice became annual, and this is the third year to undertake 40 complete hours of Exposition. It began at three o'clock on the afternoon of Friday, June 3, and continued for two days and two nights, ending at 10 o'clock on Pentecost morning.

There were volunteers for every one of the 40 hours and many



people knelt in silent prayer. Parishioners and friends expressed their immense gratitude for the opportunity to spend protracted periods in Adoration. Now in Newtownstewart, 40 means 40 every year. Praise God!

Great memories of faith, hope and love for children in Ardstraw East Parish



Some of the Primary 7 Class of 2021-2022 with Fr Roland Colhoun

THE Primary Seven class made a huge effort for Pentecost Sunday 2022 in Newtownstewart, in the Parish of Ardstraw East.

The 20 children from St Patrick's Primary School received the Sacrament of Confirmation during Lent. The closing day of the Easter season proved to be a great opportunity for these pupils to connect their Confirmation to Pentecost on the first Sunday of June.

During the month of May, every child chose one Gift of the Holy Spirit and one Fruit of the Holy Spirit to work into a pictorial presentation for Pentecost. The 20 posters were put on display in St Eugene's Church, Glenock.

The school chaplain, Fr Roland Colhoun, welcomed the children and their parents to Sunday Mass. He said that the parish is praying that the seven Gifts of the Spirit and the 12 Fruits of the Spirit will bear immense fruit in the lives of the children and their families.

The boys and girls led the readings and intercessions. Eugene McGonagle, the parish organist, trained the P7 choir for the occasion. Diane Preston and Brenda Gillespie prepared a table of surprises outside the church.

This display immediately caught the attention of the children! It contained 20 little cakes, baked by Lynette Preston, to mark Pentecost as the birthday of the Church. Kevin Gallagher, of NISA, donated cartons of juice. The Knights of St Columbanus, in Derry, supplied prayers books for the children, and Hugh McSorley, of Thornhill College, provided the delivery service. Cormac and Paul McNamee captured the P7 posters and display on video and took care of the photography for the occasion.

Once again, Shauneen Kilpatrick, of the Pastoral Forum, was the originator of the project. The parish of Ardstraw East loves to give the children great memories of faith, hope and love.

Fr Stephen Kearney Award 2022

THIS year's recipient of the Fr Stephen Kearney Award, in the Parish of Ardstraw East, is P7 pupil, Áine Louise Quinn.

In honour of the late Fr Kearney, the Award acknowledges the children's contribution to the liturgical life of the parish during their primary school years.

Áine is a faithful member of the parish choir, and is photographed at St Eugene's Church, Glenock, with Eugene McGonagle, organist and choir director, and Fr Roland Colhoun.



Celebrating 40th ordination anniversary, Fr Eamon Graham reflects on his pathway to priesthood and the gift of this ministry...

If choosing best time to be a priest, without hesitation I'd say it is today

I was born in Birmingham on February 24, 1956. Like many Irish people at that time, my parents had moved to England seeking work. My father, Harry, was from Strabane and my mother, Ellen, from Omagh.

My family were very strong Catholics. I was baptised in Holy Trinity Church, Sutton Coldfield. We later moved to the Sacred Heart Parish in Aston, where I attended Sacred Heart Primary School, and made my First Confession and First Communion.

The parish in Aston had many Irish people and was a strong and vibrant Catholic environment. One of my earliest childhood memories was the death, in 1963, of Pope John XXIII, now St John XXIII. As a child, I was very moved by the reaction to his death, especially in a country in which Catholics were a minority. I remember a lot of talk about it in school, and it was this that first stirred the idea of priesthood in my heart.

My parents had a great wish to return home to Ireland, and this desire was realised in August 1963 when we moved to Omagh. I was seven at that stage but have always retained an affection and respect for the country of my birth, and in which I embarked on the Sacramental life of the Church, and, indeed, my thoughts of priesthood.

In Omagh, I attended the Christian Brothers' Primary School and later Grammar School, after I was confirmed. My memories of the Christian Brothers are very positive and, although I found the transition from England and settling into primary school difficult, I absolutely loved secondary school.

I also became an altar server. This strengthened my idea of being a priest, and I began at an early age to attend daily Mass. Attending Mass was the single most important influence in my vocation journey, and it continues to be. I helped around the Church a lot in Omagh and, through secondary school, the idea stayed

with me to try my vocation to find out if God was calling me.

I look back and thank God for the good friends I had at school; they always encouraged me in my discernment and decision, and that support continues to this day, 50 years later. I think, as a priest, you have a ministry to your parishioners, your peers and your wider family.

Omagh was, and is, a wonderful place to live and grow up in. It never had the troubles and sectarian divisions of other places. I grew up with great respect for other faiths and traditions, and the presence of the Holy Spirit in all the Churches and Christian Communities. Every Christmas Day and Easter Sunday on the way back from Mass, I always called into the local Church of Ireland to pray. I knew that it was also the House of God.

Three very visionary teachers in Omagh formed a link between the two Catholic and the local Protestant Grammar schools. We staged a show each year and went on a school trip. It certainly built-up respect for differing traditions at the height of the troubles.

At the time of A'Levels, I decided to apply to the Diocese of Derry and was accepted by Bishop Edward Daly as a student. I went to St Malachy's College and Queens University, and that opened up a whole new aspect of life. Again, I was blessed with friends and future priests that I met there.

The secular environment of Queens made me examine my faith more deeply and reflect on it. I subsequently continued my studies in Maynooth, where I was blessed to meet people from all corners of Ireland; some of the finest that you could meet.

I was ordained on June 13, 1982, in the Sacred Heart Church Omagh by Bishop Daly. I was later privileged to work closely with him. He taught me so much about priesthood and service and became a great friend. I learned at an early stage in priesthood that my only ambition was to be a priest in a parish without preferment or title. Ambition can



corrode a vocation.

I have had 40 wonderful years and would not change any of it. Including my diaconate, I have served in a quarter of the Diocese: Galliagh, Long Tower, Carnhill, St Eugene's as Bishop's secretary, Creggan, Iskaheen, Steelstown, Newtownstewart, Banagher, Long Tower, Greenlough and Lavey.

Fulfilling

If you are called to priesthood, there is no better or more fulfilling way of life. As a young priest, I was apprehensive that I would not be able to face certain pastoral situations, however, I soon learned that it was not me facing them alone, but that the Lord was always there. If I had been depending on myself, I could not have done it.

The expectations I had of priesthood have been far exceeded. I have constantly, as a priest, been humbled by the goodness of people; working, meeting, and praying with people who are far better than me.

I was blessed enough early in priesthood to know that priesthood is not about my happiness, though I have been very happy, but it is about service, and the more I serve people the happier I will be. I couldn't emphasise enough about service; that is where the happiness comes from.

Apart from the parish ministry

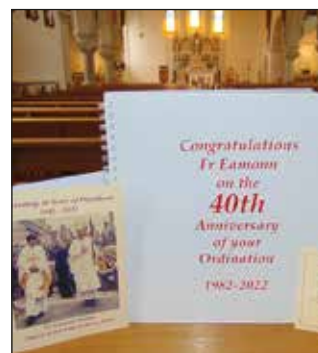
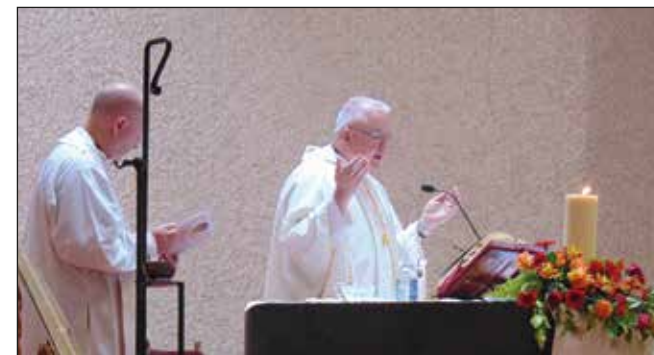
and Bishop's secretary, I was Diocesan representative for Trocaire for 23 years and chaplain to the deaf for 22 years. Trocaire gave me a great appreciation of the Third World and made me think beyond Ireland church wise. Being chaplain to the deaf helped me to be more aware of those challenged with struggles that the rest of us don't have yet.

We have a wonderful supportive group of priests in the Diocese of Derry, probably the best in the country. If I had a choice of when was the best time to be a priest, I would, without hesitation, say that it is today. There are challenges, yes, but it is not a time to 'Circle the Wagons', it is a time to be confident and expansive in proclaiming the Gospel message by what we are and what we do and say. Our happiness and ultimately God is to be found in the service of His people. If we do not do that then we will seek Him where He cannot be found.

The Lord sent His disciples out in pairs. His last words to us were: "Go out to the whole world and preach the Good News". I see the job of the priest to take the Church into every place you can. We live in a very secular world, but when St Patrick came to Ireland, he didn't condemn what he found but tried to view it with a Christian view.

Go out with confidence and bring our faith into every situation

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possible. We have to keep trying. People are open to the Gospel. People that we wouldn't think are...are, if they can see the face of Christ in people who profess to be Christian. It has great affect.

It has been a very happy priesthood for me. I am very grateful for all the priests I have served with, and the people I have worked with. Despite my own weaknesses and failings, I have always found God in every day. I have had questions and doubts like everyone. You can't have faith if you haven't doubt. Ultimately, our faith is in the Lord.

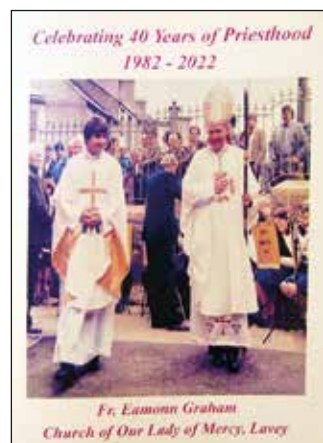
I have great hopes for the future. I think that we underestimate the power of God working through priesthood. I also think that sometimes it seems the wider church and wider world don't fully appreciate the relationship between the Diocesan priest and the people. The priest in a parish is not a functionary, he is a pilgrim travelling with his people, trying

to be an instrument of God's love in their lives.

I have been blessed with some wonderful friends who are always honest with me, sometimes when I would rather not hear their honesty. I have discovered that they are invariably correct in what they say. The greatest journey in life and in a vocation is the journey inwards to know yourself, warts and all. For me it is an ongoing one.

My family has also been a great support to me. I have an older brother, Dominic, and three sisters, Harriet, Patricia and Claire, and 14 nephews and nieces.

My motto is that which an old priest once told me: "Say your prayers and be good to the people". I have tried to live that motto, sometimes more successfully than others, for these 40 years. Please God, I will have a few years more of service in the Diocese of Derry.



"I have heard many stories about Fr Eamon and how he has put flesh on the Holy Trinity" – Fr Dermot Harkin

THE parishioners of Lavey and neighbouring Greenlough were delighted to get the opportunity to express their great appreciation of their joint parish priest, Fr Eamon Graham when he recently celebrated 40 years of priesthood.

Special jubilee Masses were celebrated in St Mary's Church, in Lavey, where Fr Eamon resides, and in St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Clady, followed by refreshments and presentations for the much-loved parish priest.

Giving the homily at the Greenlough Sunday morning Mass celebrating Fr Eamon's anniversary, Fr Dermot recalled an encounter some years ago with a man in his 50s, while shopping in Sainsbury's, in Derry: "He wanted to talk to me, so we met in the café after I was finished. He told me about he had got caught up in paramilitary activities, had a child, had turned to drink and

drugs, and that his girlfriend had left him, and he had no access to his child.

"He said that this had led to him becoming more depressed and to him taking more drink and drugs, and then he had made the decision to kill himself by jumping off the Foyle Bridge. He said that after making that decision he had felt peace.

"On the way to the bridge, he passed a Church and felt a strong draw to go in; maybe it was his mother's prayers. In the Church, there was a strong smell of incense that reminded him of his childhood. When he got up and went to go on with his deed, he felt an urge to call at the Parochial House.

"He said that the door was opened by a smiling priest, who invited him in and listened to him. During this, it occurred to the man that it was Jesus he was

talking to, so he told the priest that he felt he was talking to Jesus, and the priest said that he felt he was listening to Jesus. At that moment his life changed. He saw that God loved him in Jesus."

Fr Dermot went on to tell the congregation that the Church the man had called in at was Our Lady of Lourdes in Steelstown and the priest was Fr Eamon.

Noting that they were celebrating the Feast of the Holy Trinity, Fr Dermot said: "We thank God for the many people that Fr Eamon has helped in the last 40 years. Being a Derry man, I have heard many stories about Fr Eamon and how he has put flesh on the Holy Trinity."

He added: "The Church has a sign of protection against evil; a seal put on us to protect us. How many times did Fr Eamon put the Sign of the Cross on foreheads of individuals and congregations?

Each time, he has shown forth the loving face of God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and he has shone a light on many lives darkened by life."

Fr Dermot went on to highlight that Fr Eamon "sees the good in everybody and seeks to bring out the best in the old and young alike".

He continued: "When we began our priestly relationship six years ago, we decided to concentrate our efforts where we lived; Fr Eamon in Lavey and me in Greenlough. I can tell you, without fear of contradiction, that he works quietly away on administration for both parishes in equal measure."

Concluding, Fr Dermot invited the congregation to turn to Fr Eamon and make the Sign of the Cross to bless him for the next 40 years.

Remembering Fr John Cargan – a caring, compassionate and holy priest



THE great shock and sadness felt when Kilrea parish priest, Fr John Cargan passed away in hospital a few months ago is still impacting his family, friends and parishioners he ministered to so diligently.

Paying tribute to her younger brother, Maggie Mullan spoke about how she still greatly misses him, as he had often visited her Maghera home. Only two years between them, Maggie had always looked out for 'Sean', as his family called him, becoming a motherly figure to him after their mother died on September 8, 1972, while he was studying for the priesthood in Maynooth.

Appreciating the love of a mother, Fr John had a strong devotion to his Heavenly Mother and this was indicated during the Easter Monday Requiem Mass for him in St Mary's Church, Drumagarnier, when a statue of Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was amongst the items brought forward as symbols of his life. The congregation was told that Fr John had often presented a statue of Our Lady to couples he had bestowed the Sacrament of Marriage on.

And so, it was a fitting touch that his copy of the Icon of Our Lady of Sorrows that had been gifted to St Eugene's Cathedral, the Mother Church of the Diocese, was placed in his coffin.

It was notable too that Fr John had died on Holy Thursday, April 14, when the Church recalls the institution of the Holy Eucharist and our priests are asked to renew the promises they made at ordination, when they gave their lives to God in His Service, for he had been totally dedicated to his priesthood.

Saying that Fr John had had a calling to the priesthood from he was a young child, Maggie added: "From he was eight or nine, we had to play Mass. I used to say to him why can't I be the priest, but I wasn't allowed. And I remember, when we had the chip shop, when he was lifting the fish and chips up to drain, Sean would do it like he was saying Mass. He would have been 15 or 16 then. A customer said to him one time, some day you will be a bishop!"

Describing him as a very hard worker and brilliant chip maker, Maggie also has fond memories

of them spending lots of time playing on the beach near to their Castlerock home, and of her brother's love of Mechano, Airfix Kits, and trains, with him spending hours as a youngster in the nearby train signal booth with the station master, Jimmy Allen, and getting great joy from being allowed to pull the levers.

Born in Magherafelt, where the family originally had a dairy farm, Fr John was the second youngest of five, and the only son of Patrick and Ellen Cargan. When they moved to Castlerock, he and his siblings were kept busy helping in the family chip shop, newsagents, and B&B.

Having a close bond, Maggie recalled crying for weeks after he was sent off as a boarder to St Columb's College, in Derry. As for her brother, while it was tough, he really blossomed at the College and met many friends for life, and Maggie was delighted to receive a letter from one of them following Fr John's death, in which was recalled his "commanding presence" and "ready laugh and twinkle in his eyes".

It was in the chapel of St Columb's that Fr John was ordained on June 11, 1978, by Bishop Edward Daly, and his first appointment was as curate in Omagh, where he also enjoyed time spent as school chaplain at Loreto.

"He was very popular in all the schools where he was chaplain," said Maggie, including Thornhill College, Derry, and was loved for the retreats he led for the Loreto and Thornhill students in Linsfort Convent, Buncrana, in Co Donegal.

"The Linsfort retreats were famous for the involvement in Sean's talks of 'Garfield the Cat', which was his favourite cartoon," said Maggie, going on to recall her brother's love of art, music, dance and drama: "He belonged to choral and drama societies when he was in Omagh, and was renowned for his parts in many dramas and pantomimes during his time there and in Derry."

Fr John also loved spending time with his family, celebrating their weddings and baptisms, and with his beloved pets, especially his favoured Bichon dog, Souci, which he deeply missed when it had to be put to sleep.

Known for his great compassion for people with disabilities and problems, Maggie said that she had also heard many times people speak about his great humour, and how they always left Mass with a smile on their face.

In reflecting on her brother's life, Maggie wanted to pay particular tribute to Nurse Hazel from Kilrea Medical Centre, on his behalf, saying: "Sean had a

great fear of getting blood taken and always said that he could never repay Hazel for all that she did for him in this regard. He had great faith too in Ursula, a former nurse who works in Kilrea pharmacy, and GP, Dr Grainne McGurk was also very attentive to him. The nurses in the hospital were excellent as well."

Thanking everyone who supported the family during the wake and funeral, Maggie said that they also appreciated the support of the Diocese and clergy.

Love

Delivering the Requiem Mass homily, Fr Francis Bradley spoke of the great love Fr John had had for the parishioners of Kilrea and how he served them "like Christ himself, with the last drop of his own blood".

He also spoke of a notable incident at Fr John's home birth on November 7, 1952, when "he was blue and refusing to breath", saying: "In desperation, his mother Ellen took him in her arms and pleaded with God that if he gave him to her, she would give him back to him. And so she did. Pope Saint Pius X once wrote that while every vocation to the priesthood comes from the heart of God, it comes through the heart of a mother".

Starting his priestly ministry in Omagh, in the Parish of Drumragh, Fr John went on to serve as curate in Our Lady of Lourdes, Steelstown, from 1988, and then in Faughanvale Parish from 1995 until 2000, followed by a period as curate in Maghera before returning to Steelstown in 2007 as the first parish priest of

what was a newly independent parish, and then on to Kilrea as parish priest in 2014.

Saying that Fr John had enjoyed every parish he went to, Fr Francis remarked that his friend had spent his days "serving his people and all those he encountered from whatever background they came".

He added: "He always maintained that we as priests, served according to our backgrounds and how we were reared. His model was the corner shop and café: open 7-11, keeping the shelves stocked. And that's what he did. And he was as cute as a fox".

Describing Fr John as having been "innovative and focused in his pastoral care," Fr Francis went on to say: "He had the ability to engage people with humour, encourage them with support and enthuse them with energy and zeal. He was as comfortable in Moyola Walk in Shantallow as he was in the leafy suburbs of the Culmore road. A lively wit and great humour allowed him to speak the truth even onto power".

He also remarked that whether "as a dame in the pantomimes or as a priest at the altar, as a host at the table or a friendly ear at the end of the phone, Fr John Cargan was a caring and most compassionate man, a powerful and holy priest. Everyone felt on equal standing with him, and he could tell you the truth tempered with humour".

After Mass, a lone piper led the way as Fr John's remains were carried by his brother priests to his final resting place in the adjoining cemetery.



With his family on the occasion of his ordination.



Fr John on his ordination day with Bishop Edward Daly



At one of the Linsfort retreats.



Little Way Novena talks highlighted nothing is small in the eyes of God



THE annual Little Way Novena in St Eugene's Cathedral was back to full capacity this year, and in a warm welcome to all in the pews and watching online from various parts of the Diocese and further afield, Bishop Donal remarked how wonderful it was to have a packed Cathedral again.

The great devotion many have to St Therese of Lisieux draws them to take part in the Novena Masses and talks each year, to pray for special intentions and ask the Little Flower to intercede for them.

This year's theme was 'Nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love', and the guest speakers included 47-year-old Jessica Wade, from the City of Dublin, whose talk was entitled 'Light a candle for yourself: The transformative power of a kind word'.

Jessica shared her life-story, going back to when she was seven years old and a lot of change was taking place in her life, with a change of living conditions and a new school to contend with. She explained that her education suffered as she got older. When she was about 13, she was mixing with girls older than her, who were out drinking and smoking and she ended up doing the same.

She said: "In the 90s, I was 17 years old and got into the rave music and dance, which drew me into the City, where I was introduced to drugs, ecstasy and the heroin. I became a mother and had two children by the time I was 19.

"I was arrested on a drugs charge and put forward for a trial in the Four Courts. A barrister told my dad that I was going to prison, and my dad turned around and told me to run, and I did. I caught a ferry to the UK, where I was introduced to more drugs in London."

Meanwhile, Jessica had been given a three-year prison sentence. She eventually decided to go home and had to do 13 months of that and sign on. During her time in prison, she met a lady who was involved with education there, who invested time in her.

"She had a huge influence on me and I am still in touch with

her today," remarked Jessica, who went on to say that when she got out of prison after 13 months she ended up homeless.

She recalled: "My head was telling me that the best thing to do was to stay away from my children, and so I didn't go home to my mother. I lost my partner, the father of my children, through drugs. He passed away and that had a huge impact on me. There was a time then that I didn't want to be in this world anymore. I thought I was no good and not worthy of anything, so I decided to take my life.

"I went into a church to light a candle for my children and mother because I wanted to say sorry to them. It was my way of saying goodbye. I reached out to light the candle and this lady appeared that I hadn't noticed, as I had been so focussed on the thought of taking my life. She placed her hand on my arm and said, 'light a candle for yourself.'"

"I had taken my eyes off my children and my mother and had put them on myself," said Jessica. "My children had made their Holy Communion in that church, and I had made my Confirmation there. Many times, I had been in that church when I was out of it on drugs.

"I looked around at the Stations of the Cross, and followed them all the way round the Church, and the story became alive for me. When I saw Jesus on the Cross, I cried. I discovered Jesus at a level I hadn't done before. I no longer wanted to take my life. I knew I had to die to something that day and it was the drugs. I'm 13 years now in recovery."

Mental health

Former footballer, Keith Fahey, from South Dublin, who played most of his career with League of Ireland side, St Patrick's Athletic, as well as English Club, Birmingham City, spoke on the second night of the Novena about the hidden life of addiction he had been living, as he struggled with mental health.

The 39-year-old said: "I had no real spiritual life. I was Christian but I was born into a family that didn't go to Church. My family broke up when my mother left

home. I was seven and I didn't trust the world or people. I carried that hurt through to my 30s, when I got healed. I went through a lot of self-destruction, but I found my way back to the faith through a lot of self will."

He added: "People would have known me from playing football and would have thought that I had a great life. I had a nice car, money in the bank and a liquor bar in the house, but I never felt free. My cycle of addiction started when I was 13. I was drinking, etc, to escape life. I played football from I was 15 until 32, and I was addicted from I was 13 to 35. My life was chaotic. I was constantly trying to pull myself back.

"I came back from England as a failure, as I thought. People said that I was an awful waster, which just confirmed what I thought about myself. I tried to take my own life when I was 20. I didn't know what I was searching for.

"Football was there for me. I got a chance to go back to England, but I was still carrying the weight of the world on my shoulders. I thought if I earned more money, I would be happy, but I always felt something was missing. I never felt content and was full of self-pity."

"When I retired at 35, I was still stuck in the cycle of addiction", continued Keith, "I didn't realise that I was as bad as I was. When I wanted to stop drinking, I couldn't. I got help from a counsellor and went to a rehabilitation centre for 28 days. It was fairly grounding. I had to ask myself a lot of questions. One of these was did I believe in God. I wasn't a regular churchgoer and didn't know God, but when I was asked at that time, I said that I did believe there was a God. I asked for a print-out of the Our Father prayer and put my pillow on the ground to remind me to pray, because I wasn't used to it. I started to pray for a person I resented, and things began to change.

"I persevered but a couple of years after that I still didn't know Jesus. I felt that I needed something more. I was seeking to know God more. A man I was helping in recovery sent me details of an Alpha course. Things

then changed dramatically for me. I got to see who Jesus was and what He had done for us and me, personally. My heart softened and I began to look at the world in a different way".

Recalling sitting in chapel one day and feeling a lot of peace and joy, he said: "I felt that everything would be alright and that my past life was going to help my future. I began reading the Bible and got to know Jesus more and more, and things changed. My life is not so messy now.

"God's Hand was on me, but I had to go towards Him. I needed a lot of healing and there is still a bit to be healed. I believe that God brought me from darkness into light, from unawareness into awareness."

Love

The other speakers included Fr Stephen Quinn ocd, who shared his Carmelite knowledge of

St Therese and the intense suffering she experienced during the last 18 months of her life. Archdeacon Robert Miller, from the neighbouring Church of Ireland, and Marguerite Hamilton, of the Columba Community, delved into the theme of the Novena, "Nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love". Archdeacon Robert talked about how even little acts of love can make a difference in the life of another, while Marguerite reflected on the little boy's offering in the Bible account about the sharing of the loaves and fishes, giving all that he had away to Jesus, who used it to feed many.

Bringing the Novena to a close, Fr Paul Farren, St Eugene's administrator, reflected on the week of prayer and talks, highlighting a sense of having been "taken by the hand" throughout it by small people.

He said: "If given all, God blesses it and makes an abundance. The story of the loaves and fishes is still being told 2,000 years later. Nothing is small in the eyes of God. Do all that you do with love".

"Today, each one of us has been given the responsibility to grow the Church and not shrink it," continued Fr Paul, saying: "We have to put our hand in the hand of God and we have to give everything. We have to ask people do they believe in God. We have to touch arms and tell people to light a candle for themselves.

"Defeat cannot be an option. We cannot give into the world. Tell the story of your faith. Tell the story of God alive in your life. Do all that we do together and let's rebuild a new Church in our world in our time."



Praise and gratitude central to 40th anniversary celebration of Carmelite ministry in Derry

MARKING the 40th anniversary of their arrival in the Diocese of Derry, the Discalced Carmelites of Termonbacca held a special celebration in early June, which began with the gathering of their many friends for Mass in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, followed by a buffet and ceili dancing.

The former Bishop of Raphoe, Most Reverend Philip Boyce ocd presided at the Mass, which was concelebrated by his fellow Carmelites, Fr John Grennan, Provincial, Fr Stephen Quinn, prior, Fr Michael McGoldrick, Fr Michael Spain and Fr Cajetan Apeh, along with Fr Paddy Baker Adm Long Tower, Fr Colum Clerkin, Episcopal Vicar for Religious in the Diocese, Fr Joe Gormley, Cursillo chaplain, Fr Paddy Doherty, former Cursillo chaplain, and retired Long Tower native, Fr Frank McLaughlin.

Expressing a warm welcome to all, Fr Grennan, who had formerly served as prior of the Termonbacca Carmelite community, highlighted that the theme of the Mass was 'praise and gratitude' for the privilege of ministering to the people of Derry.

The late Bishop Edward Daly had asked the Carmelites to come and establish a retreat centre in the former boys' home run by the Sisters of Nazareth, and Fr McGoldrick, who had been amongst the first group of Discalced Carmelites to arrive in Derry, recalled in his homily for the 40th Anniversary Mass the wonderful welcome they had received at the Long Tower Mass to celebrate the Feast of St Columba, with 70 priests concelebrating and the pews packed.

"As we were going out, everyone wanted to shake our hands," said Fr Michael, adding: "That made us feel very welcome, and that has continued down the years".



Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd.

Referring to Bishop Daly praising the Carmelites for their courage in coming to Derry, in his book 'A Troubled See', Fr Michael commented: "I don't think it was courageous at all. It was more that we didn't know what we were coming to."

"We lived with the new reality of army checkpoints, but the Troubles didn't really bother us as the welcome of the people was so good. We adapted the house as a retreat centre and, from the off, we were blessed with great staff who took pride in their work, and that continues today."

Saying that they could never have afforded the expense of running a retreat centre, Fr Michael remarked that they needn't have worried "as people were very generous in offering their services".

"I have never seen volunteering anywhere like I have experienced here in Termonbacca," he added, "it has been a constant over the years. Sometimes I wonder how much it would have cost us for

all the hours of work that people volunteered."

"The financial generosity of people has also been staggering over the years. It has enabled us to keep the house going and to extend and do it up. That staggering generosity still exists today and kept us going during Covid, which was a very difficult time for us financially."

He went on to thank all the groups involved in retreats over the years, such as Cursillo, Cor, Search, schools, priests and the Home of the Mother, saying that they were particularly glad that Sr Clare Crockett had once walked their corridors.

Highlighting the Sacrament of Reconciliation as having been a very important part of their ministry in Termonbacca, Fr Michael said: "It is a very humbling ministry."

He concluded by noting that Our Lady had "certainly been a Mother" to them over the past 40 years in Derry, adding: "The Holy Family has looked after

us extraordinarily well over the years, and we entrust our future to the love and care of the Holy Family".

Remembering Bishop Edward Daly with gratitude for inviting them into the Diocese and for the support he gave them, Fr Grennan added the appreciation of the Carmelites for the late Bishop Seamus Hegarty and the current Bishop of Derry, Most Reverend Donal McKeown having continued that support.

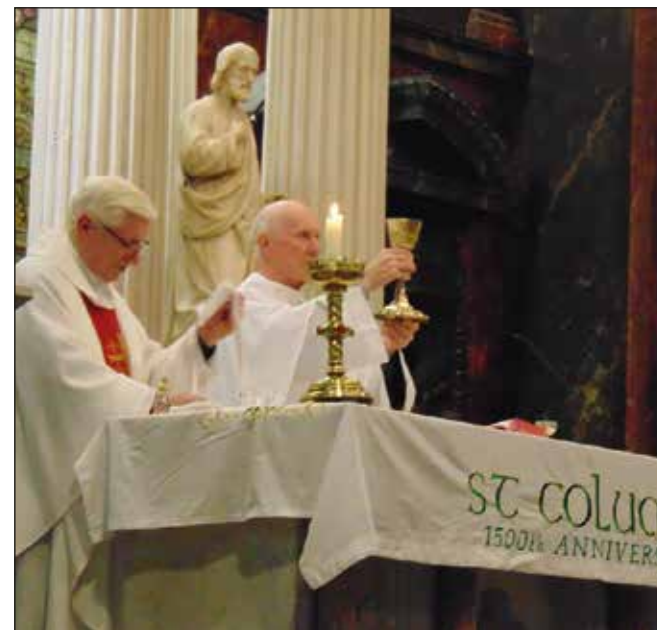
He went on to thank his confreres who ministered in Derry over the last 40 years, as well as the priests and the people of the Diocese who have been very supportive and generous towards them.

Speaking to 'The Net' in paying tribute to the Discalced Carmelite Community in the Diocese, Bishop Donal said: "One of the great strengths of our 2,000-year-old tradition is the space that Catholicism makes for a range of spiritual traditions and charisms in the one Church."

"We have been blessed to have the monastic community of the Carmelites in Derry for 40 years. They came in the dark years of the Troubles and have offered a haven of peace and healing in Jesus' name".

"Anyone who knows Termonbacca", he added, "will be aware of the range of ministries that the Carmelites have offered to all who come to them: hospitality, Sacrament of Reconciliation, spiritual direction, a venue for meetings and weekend programmes."

"But most of all, there is their silent witness of a community life which is centred on prayer and service. The distinctive Carmelite spirituality complements the ministry of the parishes. We are so grateful for the immense spiritual benefits that have been brought to this Diocese".



Fr John Grennan ocd and Fr Colum Clerkin, Episcopal Vicar for Religious.





Ladies...a special retreat this summer...

Captivating...The Beauty of a Woman *by Aoife O'Neill*

JOIN us for this event at Termonbacca Carmelite Retreat Centre, Derry, as we journey together into the deep mysteries of our feminine souls. This experience is hosted in a setting of beauty and tranquillity and is designed to recapture your heart.

Through teaching sessions, prayer time, and guided periods of reflection, we discover together that the 'more' that women have been longing for in life is available! This is more than a retreat – it is an expedition of the heart. This is a weekend full of love and acceptance by the God of the universe who loves each of you with a passion!

This experience is based on the book 'Captivating' by John & Stasi Eldredge. At the heart of every woman are three core desires: a desire for romance; a desire to play

an irreplaceable role in a grand adventure; and a desire to unveil her own unique beauty.

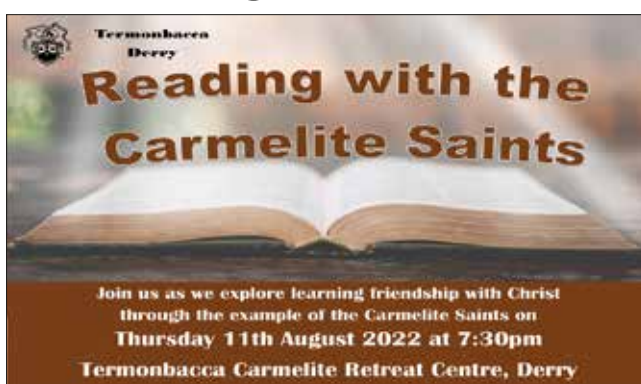
Through an atmosphere of beauty, teaching sessions, films, music and reflection, our prayer is that the Lord will draw you near to His heart, revealing to you the desires and dreams He has placed in you, healing every wound, and letting you see yourself as the captivating woman He created you to be.

The cost for the weekend is £90, which includes accommodation and nine meals. The weekend begins at 7 pm on Friday, August 12, and will conclude with lunch on Sunday, August 14.

For further information or booking please contact Aoife at Termonbacca on 028 71 262512 or by emailing: termonbaccaderry@gmail.com.



Reading with the Carmelites *by Aoife O'Neill*



THE Carmelite Book Club will meet again on Thursday, August 11, at 7.30 pm in Termonbacca Retreat Centre.

The purpose of the book club is to explore learning friendship with Christ through the example of the Carmelite Saints.

The Carmelite vocation is committed to a life of 'allegiance to Jesus Christ', as a Friend and Companion along the way.

Through the reading and

discussion of various books about or by the Carmelite Saints, we hope to get encouragement and growth in our own spiritual journey today.

This month's book is 'The Impact of God' by Iain Matthews. Everyone is welcome to come along and join us in this venture.

If you have any further queries contact Aoife on 028 71 262512 or termonbaccaderry@gmail.com





A Pilgrim Church... journeying with God and one another

THE summer months tend to be when many take time out to go on pilgrimage and, in our Diocese, we have had the return of the annual pilgrimages to Lough Derg and Lourdes. Going on pilgrimage is an opportunity for rest and spiritual nourishment.

It can also be an encounter with the Divine and a time of healing in many ways, especially when pilgrims see their pilgrimage also as a journey within their person, drawing them into a deeper relationship with God as He walks with them, and loves them as they face truths about themselves and their lives.

It is this 'pilgrim' experience that Pope Francis is calling us to be open to, as he leads us in calling upon the Holy Spirit to help guide the Church in the direction God desires at this time.

Reflecting on a 'pilgrimage' experience, whether at home or in a sacred place, a few people from across the Diocese have shared how it helped them, with some commenting on how they feel it could help our Church for all to see ourselves as pilgrims journeying with God, and one another, to a better place for each of His children.

Climbing the Mountain

by Martin Harran



Martin Harran, Urney & Castlefin.

THE first pilgrimage that I ever did was exactly 60 years ago when I climbed Croagh Patrick. My sister and her family had gone to live in Westport and taken some of us younger ones down for a couple of weeks' holidays. I had turned 11 in the middle of July, so my sister and her husband decided that I could accompany

them on the ascent on 'Reek Sunday', which takes place on the last Sunday in July, although in those days it was a night-time ascent, starting at midnight.

At that age, I was more caught up in the adventure of the pilgrimage rather than any spiritual aspect, but now, 60 years later, I see a lot of commonalities between that pilgrimage and what we are currently undertaking in the Synodal Pathway process.

Firstly, there was an element of preparation. In the case of Croagh Patrick, it was a matter of going off to the nearest woods to cut a couple of stout sticks to assist in the climb and sorting out what footwear we would need. In the case of the Synodal Pathway, there was advance reading to be done and the gathering of a small parish team to work out how to best take part in the process locally.

Then there was the journey itself.

God wants us to journey in freedom... open to the insights of our fellow pilgrims

by Bishop Donal

PEOPLE have always travelled for many purposes, including discovery and business. Literature is full of stories of epic journeys, such as Homer's Iliad and Virgil's Aeneid. Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and Boccaccio's Decameron are collections of stories, told by pilgrims as they travel. Now, we live in an age where travel experiences are marketed as products, to be checked off our bucket list and collected like trophies.

Travel for specifically religious purposes had a deep history in the Bible. Abraham was called to leave his homeland in modern Iraq and travel to the Holy Land. Moses led the Chosen People for 40 years, journeying through the desert on their long exodus.

Pilgrimages are a very different form of travel. They involve getting to a holy place, but getting there is part of the experience.

Abraham was told to leave his homeland and his wider family circle and to travel. The journeying in faith was part of God's way of teaching Abraham to be led. The 40 years in the desert were a key time in the

formation of the Israelites as God's people. And, long before Ryanair, Christians travelled on foot to Jerusalem, Rome and Santiago. The main part of those pilgrimages was getting to the holy place and not so much merely in being there.

I have been privileged to be on many pilgrimages – to Lourdes, Lough Derg, Croagh Patrick, Knock, Fatima, Rome and Czestochowa. I would like to mention two.

In 2015, there were great celebrations to mark 1500 years since the death of St Columbanus in Bobbio, Northern Italy. I was invited to be part of those festivities. But I decided that, if St Columbanus arrived in Bobbio on foot, so could I.

Three of us decided to walk the last 90 kilometres from San Colombano al Lambro up to into the hills. That meant lots of time to walk and talk, or to walk and be silent. It meant travelling light. You carry as little as possible, the clothes on our back and a fresh set in the rucksack. The most important other things are good footwear and plenty of



liquids. Being a pilgrim focuses on the basics, not the frills. We depended on the hospitality of those who ran hostels along the way. Pilgrims journey in hope.

The following year, there was a Diocesan pilgrimage to Rome for the Year of Mercy. And a few of us decided to arrive in Rome on foot, completing the last 104 kms on foot. We began walking at Viterbo and followed the medieval Via Francigena that led from Canterbury to the Eternal City.

We met many people. Some were walking for spiritual reasons. Others seemed just to

be walking for walking's sake. As the Via Francigena comes into Rome, it leads you up a hill, and suddenly you come around a corner and get your first glimpse of St Peter's Basilica.

The spot is called Mons Gaudii – the Hill of Joy.

Being pilgrims, and being a pilgrim people, means being open to being surprised by joy. God wants us to journey in freedom, with trust in Him and open to the insights of our fellow pilgrims.

Our world is badly in need of pilgrims who are not afraid to travel into the future with joy.

Knock had a profound impact on my life, even at a very young age

by Annie Mullan

IN gratitude to God, I reminisce on my childhood pilgrimages from Claudy Parish to Knock Shrine, where Mary the Mother of God and our Mother had me in her school of love and gently deepened my faith.

Back in the day when our buses were filled to capacity with families of all ages, we journeyed together praying the Rosary and singing, not forgetting to stop in Bundoran for chips and ice-cream.

I would love every child in Ireland to have an opportunity to go on a pilgrimage to Knock, this beautiful place where Heaven came to visit our faithful Irish people in their suffering. How blessed is Ireland in having

Knock on its doorstep, where we feel drawn to come back time and time again to draw strength and be spiritually nourished.

Only today when I pray Mary's prayer is it that I realise that Knock had a profound impact on my life, even at a very young age. I have a special fondness for our Lady of Knock, my devotion to Her fills my heart with wonder as I feel Her immense love.

Just as it says in Her prayer, Mary is the Queen of Ireland who gives us hope, She inspires us to pray to Her Son, Jesus, She helps us to remember that we are all pilgrims on the road to Heaven, She fills us with love and concern for our Brothers and Sisters in Christ, She comforts the sick,

lonely and depressed, She teaches us how to take part ever more reverently in the Holy Mass, She gives us a greater love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, no doubt, She is praying for us now and will do at the hour of our death.

Knock Shrine is a sacred place where the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the World silently waits for us to take Him into our hearts.

Mary, with Saints Joseph and John, our spiritual giants, guides us on our journey to the Lamb of God, Her precious Son Jesus. There we will trust in Jesus to draw us to our Heavenly Father, our final destination, where we will join our ancestral Saints and praise God for all eternity. To

God be the Glory.

Our Lady of Knock pray for us. Saint Joseph pray for us. Saint John the Evangelist pray for us.



Annie Mullan, Claudy.

In the case of Croagh Patrick, it involved quite an arduous climb made more difficult by the fact that it was carried out in total darkness. The Synodal Pathway has not been quite so arduous in physical terms, but it has certainly been demanding both in time and in mental energy, thinking about and discussing the various issues. Just like the night climb of Croagh Patrick, it can be difficult at times to see exactly where we are going and where to take the next

step, but there is an underlying confidence that we will complete the journey.

Prayer is a very big element of the Croagh Patrick pilgrimage, with three stations on the way, involving the recitation of seven Our Fathers, seven Hail Marys and a Creed at each one and the recitation of 15 Our Fathers, 15 Hail Marys and a Creed whilst walking around the outside of the oratory on the summit. Finally, there is Holy Mass in the oratory.

Prayer must equally be a substantial element of our Synodal Pathway. It is only too easy to get caught up with the workshops and discussions and other activities and forget about prayer, but prayer must lie at the heart of everything we do as Catholics and Christians. We should take our example from Jesus on His journey and how often He paused for prayer.

One difference between the two journeys is that we did reach the

summit of our Croagh Patrick journey, with a truly wonderful feeling of achievement and inspiration from the wonderful views over Clew Bay, from the top of the mountain. We have not yet reached our destination on the Synodal Pathway, but we can be confident that we will get there and that we will eventually experience similar wonderful feelings of achievement and inspiration.

The final part of the Croagh

Renowned Glencolumbkille Turas

deepened my faith in God *by Dionne Dooher*

SITUATED on the Atlantic Coast of southwest Donegal, Glencolumbkille is home to one of the most renowned pilgrimages in Ireland. I was fortunate enough to visit this beautiful village in 2018, whereby I embarked on a pilgrimage with my year group at school during the time.

Glencolumbkille is named after the Saint and remains as the longest practicing Turas in Ireland. There are 15 stations along the 5.5 km route, as well as pre-Christian sites on the Turas. I began my pilgrimage on June 9 due to the fact it is the feast day of St Colmcille, and it took approximately four hours to complete.

The pilgrimage at Glencolumbkille was wholly uplifting for me in a variety of ways. Firstly, I was filled with a sense of pride and adoration for my own county and was left awestruck at the beauty that lies within the village of Glencolumbkille.

As an avid historian, the pilgrimage was littered with

historical information and offered a wide range of megalithic tombs and cross pillars throughout the stations, allowing pilgrims to reflect on each one and further their knowledge on St Colmcille and his quest for bringing Christianity to Scotland, as well as his monastic foundations in Ireland.

Finally, like most pilgrimages, it provided a strong sense of mindfulness and reflection. After visiting Glencolumbkille, I felt that my faith in God had deepened. Having a first-hand experience of the hometown of one of the patron saints of Ireland added a touch of realism to my Catholic faith and left me with an abundance of clarity.

The physical, emotional and spiritual effects of this pilgrimage benefitted me not only as an individual with a better sense of inner peace, but also as one of God's children with a greater understanding of God's love for us all, as well as the comfort of knowing that God is always with us.



Dionne, second right, with fellow pilgrims in Glencolumbkille.



My pilgrim journey *by Brenda Deery*

AS a teacher getting off for the summer, it is always a time to reset, refocus, catch up with 'to dos' and link up with friends, to name but a few. We are lucky in the profession to have two 'restart' times in the year, as we have the New Year and the new school year. Personally, I am always ready to pause the alarm and readjust many areas of my life at these times.

For me this is part of my 'pilgrimage'. In fact, I am aware that I am an ongoing pilgrim as I journey through my life. I do 'reluctantly' know that I am not here forever, which is something I have to pray about and reflect more on.

At present, I know I am too orientated to worldly comforts and too materialistic, which is

an area I am conscious of and do pray about. I, like everyone else, have many relatives, neighbours and acquaintances who are no longer with us or who are going through various illnesses, which continually challenges me out of my comfort zone. It is for these reasons that I need to take time out to ponder, reflect, pray and discern with God, His Word and spiritual readings to anchor myself to the reality that this life is a journey and not my forever stopping point. I need time to prepare for my departure and get the priorities right.

Usually, in past years, I would have travelled to foreign Marian shrines and enjoyed time away, sunshine and prayer time. Alas, with the present travel chaos, I am not adventurous enough to

book this year. I do hope to get to Knock, which I love, but not sure about Lough Derg...I just need a very big push which, to date, has not happened. Lots of excuses!

The song 'The Voyage' and its lyrics by Christy Moore helps me to appreciate the journey that I am on, and why I need to have someone with me to navigate it. The need to have love in my heart and know who I am and why I was created helps me to navigate this life, with all its joys, sorrows, highs, and lows.

Taking time out of my busy schedule helps me to ponder on many core questions. Who am I? What is my purpose? Who/what is influencing my lifestyles, decisions, and friendships? Is my heart set on God? Am I developing a mature relationship

with God?

So, my pilgrimage this summer is to set aside some time every day to give to prayer, reflection, and detachment. I know I am attached to too many things and want to try to identify them and rectify them. I am not, however, overanxious, punitive, scrupulous or doom and gloom. Thankfully, it is not my nature, as my trust in Jesus is paramount and my knowledge that we are 'fallen' people who constantly need God's grace and mercy.

I cherish the Sacrament of Reconciliation and the Divine Mercy chaplet, and believe in the power of the Rosary as a fundamental spiritual weapon which helps in the battle of negativity, evil and sin. Our Lord, together with his Mother, is my

guide on my pilgrim journey. Mary shows me the importance of prayer, reflecting on scriptures and works of love and mercy.

I believe I must grow where I am planted, and if that means cooking, cleaning, helping others, etc, then that is my pathway to eternity.

So, to date this summer, I have not travelled to a shrine yet but am trying to make the place I am living a 'holy place'. I am trying to up the prayer life, get to more Holy Masses and spend more time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. I am trying to visit people whom I have not visited in a while and do more reading and serving.

I am still too much a Martha, so need to work more to become more like a Mary, her sister. It is

an ongoing journey and it will continue to be.



Brenda Deery, Faughanvale Parish

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Patrick is the descent, which presents its own physical challenges. We are some way yet from completing our Synodal Pathway journey but when we do reach our destination, we will have a return journey to complete; it won't be enough just to identify the things we need to do to achieve the church that God wants for Ireland, we will have to get on with implementing those changes and that will surely involve its own challenges.

Just like any pilgrimage, however, we must believe and trust that the Holy Spirit will be with us every step of the way.

Summer holidays with a difference *by Rory McGilligan*



Rory McGilligan, Dungiven.

THROUGHOUT the years we share a lot of experiences with our peers. It might be starting university, a new job or even getting married. I remember getting my first car; the buzz and excitement was great. It was one of the many steps to being an independent adult.

I remember on one occasion when a friend's mother asked me to accompany her son to the monastery so that he could get his car blessed by the monks. I don't remember much of the occasion except for one of the monks telling my friend and I

"to be careful of the devil in the corner of the room." It didn't take us long to realise that he was referring to the television. At the time, we thought it was a strange statement and I never gave it much thought until years later.

As restrictions ease and airports get busy again, people want to go on foreign holidays in the sun again. I have travelled foreign before and visited many places. One year a group of us went on a beach holiday. Let's just say I have only ever gone that once. I remember as we

landed in Antrim Airport, I thought, "I am so glad to be home, what a dull experience that was".

The following year, I decided to go on my first foreign pilgrimage to Medjugorje. I had wanted to go there for some time. None of my peers were interested in a pilgrimage, but this did not deter me, and, in fact, my parents ended up coming along. Well, what an experience I had. I loved every minute of it.

The group of pilgrims I travelled with were warm and welcoming people. Many had

been in Medjugorje before and had got so much from it that it became an annual event for them. I found the local people very friendly and deeply religious, and not just the older generation, but all generations, unlike Ireland where the young seem to have forgotten about our Lord and Our Lady. Each day was filled with prayers and Masses, as well as beautiful walks to the Blue Cross or the walk-up Cross Mountain. The praying whilst on pilgrimage never felt intense, it just felt like the right thing to do.

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As a pilgrim, you share a comradery with your fellow pilgrims. I remember in the evenings we would sit around and share our experiences, not just of the pilgrimage but as a people of faith. No one was in a hurry; people just wanted to stop and share.

Without distraction, everyone got a sense of their own relationship with God. And if that relationship required a bit of TLC, Confessions was available to remove anything that would block you from forming a closer bond to Christ. I remember going to Confessions outside and being able to fully open my heart to Jesus. I was blessed with such a sense of peace. As the week was coming to a close, I would have been happy to stay on. I was blessed with so many wonderful experiences that were spiritually uplifting. I wanted to live a life like that all the time. I remember thinking that we, in Ireland, have got this way of living badly wrong.

Going back to our old friend the monk from Bethlehem Abbey, in Portlengone, he was right, not only is the Devil in the corner but it is also in your pocket on mobile phones. There are so many distractions these days, including endless TV channels to countless numbers of social media platforms, all looking for our attention. Ex-employees of these social media firms will tell you that these platforms are designed to keep you addicted to them.

We are created by God for God. I think that when we go on a pilgrimage, we get a glimpse of what our lives should really

be like. A community of people on their journey towards God, keeping God as the focal point of their lives, as well as His love being the glue that keeps community together.

David Goggins is an ex-US Navy-seal and Green Beret. He is a member of the one percent of African Americans that comprise the Navy Seals. He has overcome many personal trials, not just having an outstanding military career, he also taking part in extreme sports. His ability to overcome situations and never give up has given him a certain notoriety within the US.

In an interview that was recorded several years ago, he talked about how many people wasted their lives on social media, taking the easy way out. The interviewer asked him what motivated him to overcome these obstacles, and he answered that when he died and met God he could say, "God you created me for great things and I didn't want to disappoint".

God created us all in His image and we all have the ability within us to accomplish great things. This may not necessarily be sporting abilities, but we must not get distracted from keeping our focus on God.

When on pilgrimage, we focus on God and attain a level of peace within ourselves. We let ourselves be filled with the Holy Spirit and directed by God. Maybe as we move forward in life, we should try to continuously keep our focus on God, moving away from distractions and let God's plan for us unfold.

Life is a pilgrimage...the narrow path that leads us to everlasting life *by Rhonda McColgan*

IT was so exciting to see the people from our Diocese head off again on the annual pilgrimage to Lough Derg and Lourdes for the first time since Covid hit. For myself, I am excited about returning to the three-day trip to Lough Derg soon and, a bit later, on I'll be heading to Medjugorje for a few days, God willing.

As I anticipate these upcoming trips, I have been reflecting upon what it means to me to be a pilgrim and how my experiences of pilgrimage has led me closer to the one who sustains me. The one who is called Love and Mercy itself.

Back in 2017, I was having an extremely difficult year and my mental health was particularly poor which awakened a desire for change. Over my life I did, however, have different experiences and was fortunate enough to have visited Lourdes when I was 15, and then as a nurse when I was 33.

Both times, I just knew that my heart yearned for something more but, without the right formation back home, I just fell back into my usual ways of struggle and feeling lost. Coming across as a very 'needy' type of person, my relationships would inevitably suffer due to the intensity of my behaviour (my husband must already be a saint!).

It reminds me now of the Parable of the Sower, in Matthew 13:1-23. My heart was like the rocky ground that the seed fell on. I received it with great

enthusiasm but when trouble or fear came my way, I gave up, allowing fear, anxiety and worry to consume me.

So, in 2017 everything changed with the grace of God. I went on the three-day pilgrimage to Lough Derg and following this I headed straight to Medjugorje. Although Lough Derg was physically tough, and through this stripping back I just knew that the Lord was hearing my yearning, my groaning prayer for change.

In Isaiah 38:5, we hear how God told Isaiah to go to Hezekiah who was ill, with a message, "I have heard your prayer; I have seen your tears". I knew something was different this time. The priest picked me out of the congregation to read at Mass. As I read, I immediately knew why the Lord took me there as I received great comfort in the scripture that I was reading. I needed to remove myself from the hustle and bustle of life to hear the Lord speak, "Come away with me by yourselves to a quiet place and rest for a while". (Mark 6:31-33)

Following Lough Derg and hearing the Lord's voice, I spent time with Mary in Medjugorje. Feeling a little disappointed, however, in not having had any extraordinary experiences in Medjugorje, I understood later how Mary did lead me to that faith formation, quite miraculously, upon returning to Ireland. The grace I received from Medjugorje was, I believe, that it led me to a

Bible study run by the Franciscan Friars.

Today, as I write this article on the feast day of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, I have renewed my Marian consecration after celebrating Mass in our local Carmelite monastery in Derry.

I sat for some time after that contemplating this article before I left. I realised as I was looking up at the cross, that having come very close to Jesus on the cross during my pilgrimage in Lough Derg, that Jesus looked upon me and said those words, 'Behold your Mother' (John 19:25-27). Mary knows exactly what her children need. She pleads on our behalf and then tells us, "Do what he tells you" (John 2:5).

When Mother Teresa received a call from God to care for the poorest of the poor, she referred to this as 'A call within a call'. Similarly, to go away on pilgrimage it feels, to me, like a pilgrimage within a pilgrimage.

Life, to me, is a pilgrimage, a journey home with twists and turns, peaks, and troughs. The narrow path that leads us to everlasting life. There is a certain Irish airline. that shall remain nameless, that loves to add cost to every detail of our journey. Whenever they decided to add a charge to 'checked in' luggage, it was amazing how all of a sudden we could fit all our belongings into a small cabin case. Then our cabin luggage acquired a charge and, mysteriously, we can now fit our belongings into a ruck sack.



Rhonda McColgan, Iskaheen Parish.

My point is that throughout our pilgrim journey we learn to let go, to declutter. We learn to travel light as we let go of unhealthy attachments that cost us way too much. In our daily coming away to that quiet place with Jesus in prayer, attending Mass, Adoration, daily Rosary, taking up our daily crosses etc, we enter into that journey of the unknown, thus allowing the Lord to heal our broken humanity.

The longest journey in life is the journey within that allows God to transform our surrendered heart as we come closer in our desire and thirst for Him. My consecration to Jesus through Mary allows Mary to take me into deepest intimacy with Jesus. The treasure hidden in the life of a pilgrim is Jesus Himself and, as we continue to journey deeper within, may we also climb higher above.

Consider the Synodal journey as a pilgrimage that never ends *by Janet Forbes*

SOME years ago, I travelled to the Holy Lands in what was a truly transformative and life-giving experience. As forty plus pilgrims journeyed across the sacred landscape of modern-day Israel and Palestine, the bible and its stories came to life and took on new meaning for us all. As we travelled, each pilgrim came to a more intimate relationship with God and Jesus and many had significant moments of conversion, and change.

Amidst the diversity of those journeying together, friendships were made, hurts were restored, wounds were healed in miraculous ways. With every mile traversed, we absorbed the sights and sounds with joy filled anticipation of what we would encounter next. The sense of community felt on that pilgrimage is one that has only been replicated a handful of times since.

In October 2021, Pope Francis invoked the largest consultation ever conducted in the history

of the Church, asking all God's people to reflect on how we are journeying together as a Church. The Derry Diocese accepted this invite with great enthusiasm and, in January 2022, I facilitated a series of Zoom sessions, followed by training sessions and gatherings that ran from March to May 2022.

In many ways, the Synodal journey I have experienced through my work with Derry Diocese has mirrored my experiences on that pilgrimage to the Holy Lands back in 2016. The sense of a community journeying together with a common purpose has been tangible at all stages, and I don't think that anyone who engaged with the process can argue that fresh insight into our own lives, and the lives of our Christian communities, have been opened up.

I have a sense that through the many moments of table fellowship, dialogue, prayer, reflection on scripture, and life, the Derry Diocese and

its communities therein have developed a clearer sense of identity, their relationship with Christ and what this is calling them to as the People of God.

The pilgrimage to the Holy Lands back in 2016 is one of the most important points in my own journey of faith to date, and I return to the memories of it often to sustain my journey of faith. Reflecting on it through the lens of my recent Synodal journey with the Derry Diocese, I am struck by the parallels.

Perhaps, we might consider the Synodal journey of the last six months as a pilgrimage that never ends, finding ways in which we can foster authentic dialogue and fraternal gathering that is orientated to developing communities that authentically live out the Gospel, so that all may have a personal relationship with God.

In a Homily in the Vatican Basilica on Holy Saturday 2013, Pope Francis spoke about 'Remembering', saying: "To

remember what God has done and continues to do for me, for us, to remember the road we have travelled - this is what opens our hearts to hope for the future. May we learn to remember everything that God has done in our lives."

May we each revisit the significant moments that have punctuated the last six months, allow them to open our hearts and foster hope for our collective future. The road travelled so far has been a grace filled one, may we cherish the insight it has given us and return to that wellspring often so that we may be refreshed for the journey.

The road we travel on will have many challenges, but like myself and those who journeyed to the Holy Lands in 2016, may we do it together as a community of believers, as the People of God.

(Janet, from the Archdiocese of Armagh, is a member of the Irish Synodal Task Group)



Janet (left) with her aunt, Marie McStay, on pilgrimage in the Holy Land.



Pilgrimage essential for personal spiritual growth and to help us, as Church, to follow the Holy Spirit *by Aoife O'Neill*

ON May 27, 2012, I went on my first ever pilgrimage with my daddy to Medjugorje. I had completed a Cursillo weekend two years previous and had started to take my faith seriously for the first time in my life. I had heard many people tell of how special Medjugorje was and how going there had helped them in their own spiritual journey.

Immature in my faith at the time, I was mesmerised by some of the extraordinary stories people told of this place. The tales of the many sights and wonders people experienced there lit in me a longing to witness some of the same. Ten days before a group of pilgrims were due to leave, one pilgrim had to pull out and I was given the opportunity to take their place. I was filled with excitement as I climbed onboard the bus looking forward to spending a week in this place of 'heaven on earth'.

Disembarking the bus in Medjugorje, following a long journey of over 10 hours, I was struck immediately by the atmosphere of peace. On the first day, we went along to one of the most important talks I heard that week given by Fr Leon Pereira. He reminded us of the importance of being pilgrims and not tourists; to forget about the camera and trying to capture the perfect shots and instead open our hearts to capturing God.

He spoke about the importance of interior experiences and not to be getting caught up in the

pursuit of any spectacular sights and wonders. After this talk, I gave up my glimpsing at the sun to see if it was spinning or making any other unusual movements. I resolved to use my time there wisely and prayed that it would be of benefit to me.

Throughout the week there, we took part in a jam-packed pilgrimage schedule. Getting up at 5 am to climb Cross Mountain, visiting various Churches in the areas around Medjugorje. We visited and saw the amazing work of the Cenacolo community in helping young people with addictions. We heard all about the war-torn history of that area and the persecutions people had suffered for the faith. We took part in Masses, Confession, prayer, and song. We prayed a multitude of rosaries and went along to one of Mirjana's visions.

One of my personal highlights was the evenings of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament; to see so many people, all in the one place, on their knees in silence worshipping God was amazing. I really enjoyed being in this atmosphere of faith for the week, everyone there all joined in one common mission, to draw close to Christ.

However, at the same time I couldn't help but miss home. I was missing Erin, my four-year-old daughter, and as I clutched onto my rosary beads, more than once I caught myself wondering "what would my friends think if they could see me now?"

I thought Medjugorje was a beautiful place, however, I didn't seem to feel the same way as many others who I had heard speak of it with such affection. I wasn't particularly 'touched' in any way by any of my experiences there. While I had really enjoyed the week, I didn't think it would be somewhere I would rush back to.

Sadness

As we boarded the bus to return to Dubrovnik airport, I settled in, glad to be finally on my way home to see my baby. On that journey we prayed the Rosary, as we did during all our journeys. Following this, our guide from Marian pilgrimages stood at the front of the bus to give us her final words of encouragement. She was a girl around my age called Tia and she had given us many talks and tours during our week there. She began to share with us about her recent visit to Dublin and her thoughts about the faith in Ireland. She spoke of the sadness with which she had witnessed a lot of irreverence and a sense of lukewarmness in the faith. She had been heartbroken to see disregard of God and of the Catholic faith in what was once the land of Saints and scholars.

As Tia spoke to us, I was overcome with emotion. I felt tears stream down my face and I felt a very strong sense of God's love for me. For the first time, I could understand the quote from Our Lady that I had seen written everywhere throughout the week,

"If you only knew how much I love you, you would cry with joy." I knew that I had to do something.

On that bus journey, I reflected on my own life and the ways I was using my gifts and talents in the service of God. During that journey, I decided that if there was anything I could do to help the Church in Ireland, I was willing to do it. The spirit of that pilgrimage did not end with the final steps through Dubrovnik airport, but it sparked a fire that enlivens my everyday life with the joy of Christ. It became a catalyst for diving deeper into my relationship with Christ. The experience of that week and seeing the faith so vibrant and alive has inspired me in my commitment to serving others in Christ's love.

I was privileged to return to Medjugorje again for a pilgrimage in 2018, as a chaperone with a group of students from St Cecelia's college. Again, this week was a beautiful opportunity for rest and spiritual nourishment. I believe that taking time out for pilgrimage is essential for personal spiritual growth and to help us, as a Church, to reflect on and follow the direction of the Holy Spirit.

A pilgrimage is an abbreviated representation of that lifelong journey we are all on as we make our way to our heavenly home. It gives us an opportunity to take some time out of the business of our daily lives and reflect on what we should be truly striving for in this life. It reminds us of our



Aoife O'Neill

duty as Christians to live a life in Christ, to find our hope and strength in Him.

Below is a poem I wrote on that second pilgrimage. During a climb of Cross Mountain, I felt like it really related to the 'climb' we all take in life as we make our way towards the summit, Heavens...

Pilgrimage to Lough Derg *by Noel Bradley*

YOU may have noticed the large number of people wanting to travel abroad, with airports overcrowded and long delays both here and abroad. Most of them want to go on holidays, for a rest or just to get away. A few people want to go on a pilgrimage of some kind. The Camino de Santiago (St James) in Spain is very popular for all kinds of people, and not just believers.

The same is true of Lourdes and Rome and other places throughout Europe. The Muslims too have their very revered pilgrimage to Mecca. Most devout Muslims would wish to make that pilgrimage at least once in their lifetime. They then are called 'Alhaji', an honour that gets them great respect in the Muslim community. Unlike a holiday, a pilgrimage would have some kind of prayer or devotional ritual. We, in Ireland, have of course our own famous pilgrimage to Lough Derg.

Lough Derg is no holiday like Rome or Lourdes or Santiago.

It is renowned as a penitential pilgrimage. You fast from mid-night before you arrive on an island, which you can see from the mainland, with a huge Basilica in the centre. You get one meal a day, consisting of toasted bread, hard oatcakes and black tea. You keep vigil the whole of the first night and the next day. You are bare foot all the time, until you are leaving the Island on the third day, and you keep the fast till mid-night that day. You spend a lot of the time walking around the various 'beds', which are stony and sore on the feet, while praying a multitude of Our Fathers, Hail Marys and Glorias.

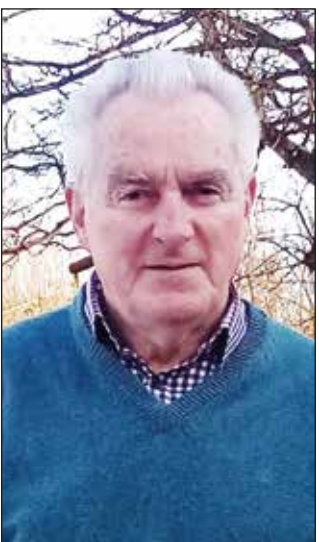
People do all this as penance for past sins or to obtain some favour from God or to give thanks for some favour received. I knew one man who, after a long binge of drink, would always go there to sober up, then start again as a new man. Confession is also available.

I have done the pilgrimage a number of times, following the example of my parents, and

usually because I felt it would be a good thing to do at the time. I found the vigil of staying awake tough and even tougher towards the end of the next day before going to bed. The fasting was less tough, since you could eat as much toast as you wanted once each day.

We would all say the same prayers over and over again, like a mantra. I don't know why there was so much repetition of the same prayers; all said quickly. It was the tradition. Perhaps it was to get us out of our heads and into a deeper part of ourselves. For myself, I used to hope for some spiritual consolation from the praying but very little ever came. I suppose consolations are not really compatible with penance. I do remember once being very consoled and sustained by the words 'Come to me all you who labour and are overburdened, and you shall find rest'.

One of the enjoyable things about the pilgrimage is the meeting with people, sharing



Noel Bradley, Buncrana

stories and humour, especially at the famous meal. There is great camaraderie. All social class, rank and status are eliminated. We were all at the same level: hungry, tired, and bare footed; an experience of genuine community.

It was also a struggle at a deeper more spiritual level. You had no

Cross Mountain

*Climbing on your rugged way, I couldn't help but see
How similar it was to life and the journey made by me.
There's no-one else who ever has, and no-one ever will,
Step upon the exact same rocks I did upon that hill.*

*For parts I follow right behind someone climbing with no bother,
But pretty soon what I would find is we parted from each other.
At times I walked the path alone like no one was around,
I could hear the birds and insects there and each step upon that ground.*

*At times I felt like I could fly, as I glided over rocks.
At other times every step was hard, I met many stumbling blocks.
When I got stuck and could see no way, an outstretched hand I would find,
To help me through that testing time with smiles and words so kind.*

*Those shiny rocks were clear danger zones, so I stepped on those with care.
They reminded me of the times in life when of hazards I'm aware.
Oh, those solid rocks and the trees to grab and the stretches that were flat,
Then I didn't need no one else to help- even I could handle that.*

*Some rocks I thought looked really safe, yet they rocked beneath my feet.
There were times I felt I could not go on; I could almost taste defeat.
When my legs got tired or the thirst got bad, I would sit to take a rest,
And the glorious views that surrounded us, made it a very worthwhile quest.*

*Well, I made it to the very top, the majestic cross stood there.
My eyes were filled with those tears of joy and the peace just filled the air.
Lord, I know you guided every step, you inspired every time
Someone reached out to help me there, you were captain of that climb.*

*I hope all through life and when times are hard, I recall your rugged mountain
How your love and grace filled my heart with joy overflowing like a fountain.
So, I thank you Lord, Our Blessed Lady too- you have brought us here together
And the memory of my time spent here I'll hold within my heart forever.*

Pilgrimage: A predisposition for Synodality *by Fr Cajetan Ikedi Apeh ocd*

THE Holy Father, Pope Francis has called on the faithful for a synod in October 2023. This is not the first synod in the Church nor the first that Pope Francis is initiating, yet this particular synod presents certain novelty: it is a synod on how the Church can be 'synodal'. In pursuance of this, the Vatican has announced the theme as: "For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission".

The Pope, in his message, stated that a "synodal Church is a Church of participation and co-responsibility". According to him, the grace of baptism makes one part of the body of the Church and, therefore, responsible for its life and mission. He, therefore, called for 'synodality', which literally means 'walking together' among the faithful such that, docile to the Holy Spirit, they may reflect and rediscover individually their co-responsibility to the life, communion, and mission of the church. And this reflection, he emphasised, must be done together as a community of believers first locally and then universally.

Now, considering the term 'synodality' as 'walking together' it immediately evokes the notion of pilgrimage, which etymologically too implies 'walking'. In which case, the following questions naturally arises: Is the Holy Father inviting the Christ-faithful to embark on communitarian pilgrimage? Is there any relationship between pilgrimage and synodality? Are there individual experiences of pilgrimage which would prepare us for better appreciation of synodality?

In this reflection, I intend to respond to the above questions and by applying the etymological and bible notions of pilgrimage, in conjunction with my personal

experience of pilgrimage, to show that a good understanding of pilgrimage is necessary for building a synodal Church in the sense of the 'synodality' desired by the Pope.

Pilgrimage

According to 'Wikipedia', the word pilgrim comes from the Latin word 'peregrinus', which literally means one who has come from afar. It has a religious connotation, by which a pilgrim implies a traveller who is on a journey to a holy place. Consequently, pilgrimage as a derivative of it, is not just a movement from one place to another but movement strictly for religious purposes. And such journeys are always made to sites that have links with one's faith and religious belief. This explains why the different major world religions have different places for pilgrimages. For the Israelites and the Christians, Jerusalem still holds a pride of place among their pilgrimage attractions and this, to a large extent, is biblical.

Biblical Root of Pilgrimage

In the Old Testament, it was customary for the people of Israel to make on pilgrimage to the central sanctuary: "Three times in the year shall all your males appear before Yahweh" (Ex 23: 17; 34:23). These festivals are the festival of unleavened bread in the month of 'abib', marking the coming out from Egypt; the festival of the harvest, of the first fruit of their labour and the festival of ingathering at the end of the year. This injunction for pilgrimage became accentuated with the Davidic dynasty.

The act of bringing the Ark of Covenant to his capital city, by David, with the intention of reposing it in a temple, marked another dimension of pilgrimage

in the life of the people of God. The habitation of God among His people became localised in Zion. And the people perceived this not just as an act of ingenuity or piety on the side of David but a Divine selection. This is what the Psalms referred to as the 'Psalms of Zion' (Psalms 46, 48, 76, 84, 87, 122, 132) seek to affirm: God had elected David as His son and had chosen Zion as His dwelling place.

Psalm 132: 13-14 is worth noting: "The Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation; this is my resting place forever, here I will reside, for I have desired it". This consciousness of the dwelling place of God among His people was further affirmed with the completion of the Temple by Solomon. Hence, besides the observance of the injunction of a national festival together, there was that consciousness among the people of the privileged encounter with God that Zion and the Temple facilitated.

The Christian Pilgrimage

Although Jerusalem remains an important pilgrimage destination for Christians, the Christian pilgrimage has a slightly different dimension from the Jewish pilgrimage. The Christian pilgrimage to Jerusalem rests on the acceptance of messiahship of Jesus Christ. The attraction of Jerusalem and some other sites in the Holy Land is on the basis of their connection to Christ as the place of His birth, His passion, death and Resurrection.

In embarking on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, a Christian does so with the conviction that one's physical presence at the sites that the Lord graced with his Divine-Human presence would elicit in one a faith-experience. Again, such journeys for the Christian could have a penitential undertone in which case, the individual traces the path the Lord walked at His Passion with the intention of making reparation for faults, for seeking God's favour or discovering the will of God in one's life.

Now, in the Catholic Church,

because of our belief in the privileged role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the Incarnation of Christ and also her place in the Church as the new Eve, the Mother of the redeemed, we equally make pilgrimage to sites associated with her. Pilgrimages are also made to sites connected with saints on account of our faith in the communion of saints and the efficacy of their prayers.

Again, down the centuries, God, in His providence, has permitted the apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary and through that has awakened the world to prayer, penance and virtuous life. Some of the sites where these apparitions took place have since become places of pilgrimage such, as La Salette and Lourdes in France, Fatima in Portugal, and Knock, etc. Among the people of the Derry Diocese, Lough Derg, which is associated with St Patrick, Lourdes and Medjugorje seem to be very popular for their summer pilgrimages.

My Pilgrimage Experience

July 16, 2017, will ever remain fresh in my mind for a number of reasons; it was the date of my diaconate ordination at the Basilica of the Holy Rosary in Lourdes. I did not just go there to be ordained, rather the ordination itself was part of the activities in that year's pilgrimage of the Discalced Carmelites of the province of Avignon-Aquitaine, in France. And, as a young Carmelite receiving formation in that province, I had participated in the annual pilgrimages in two consecutive years previously before the one of 2017, in which I was ordained.

The Carmelites in France usually organise an annual pilgrimage to the Sanctuary of Lourdes from July 14-17. July 16 is the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, a principal feast for the Carmelite family. Anyone conversant with the history of Lourdes would remember that the last of the apparitions to St Bernadette was on July 16, 1858. This apparition turned out to be different from the previous ones because,

according to St Bernadette, Our Lady in this occasion never uttered any word yet Bernadette latter remarked about it: "Mary was more beautiful than ever".

In organising their annual pilgrimage to Lourdes around July 16, the Carmelites on one hand undertake a spiritual exercise necessary for every Christian but, on the other hand, they celebrate the 'Carmelite' elements of the last apparition: the Beauty and the Silence. The 'Beauty', because in the Order, Mary has always been honoured under the title of 'Regina Decor Carmeli' - Queen Beauty of Carmel; and the silence, because being a contemplative Order par excellence, the Carmelites from their days on Mount Carmel in Holy Land seek to model their lives after the Blessed Virgin who, having received the word of God, pondered it in her heart.

Likewise, a Carmelite is to stay in his cell pondering on the law of the Lord, day and night, unless when attending to other things worthwhile.

As a participant in that pilgrimage, what impressed me most was the inspiration for spiritual things awakened in me by observing the piety exhibited by my co-pilgrims. Even if one does not wish to pray, the sight of others praying is enough invitation to pray. Secondly, the Rosary procession with candlelight, and its recitation in the major world languages and among men and women of different languages, awakened in me the appreciation of the universality of the Church and a foretaste of heaven.

The day before the ordination, I availed myself of the sacrament of Penance and went for a 'bath' in the Holy fount, ensuring both purity of body and soul. And finally, being ordained in the basilica that was erected at the request of our Lady, surrounded by friends and well-wishers, had a great impact on me.

Now, all these experiences of that pilgrimage have not just revealed to me the companionship and the communion I share with others



Fr Cajetan Ikedi Apeh ocd

in the church, but also it showed me that people are hungry for the service I will render as a minister in the Church. In other words, I have a place in the assembly of the people of God which cannot be taken by another since that is my vocation. This applies also to other people in their own vocation and positions in the church, such that if one is found wanting in one's role and vocation, the entire body of Christ suffers it.

Conclusion

One thing that is a common denominator in the different angles from which we considered pilgrimage, be it from the biblical, Christian or the individual point of view, is that it is a spiritual exercise that redirects us to the most essential aspect of our life, our relationship with God. The act of leaving our milieu to go on pilgrimage with the possible discomforts that it entails, is mortification. Again, the destination that we choose, for it to be worth the name pilgrimage must provide an ambiance for prayer and meditation and introspection.

Now, in inviting the Church at all levels to participate in the synod on synodality, the Pope is calling for a communitarian evaluation of the 'pilgrimage' of the Church so far, to be able to ascertain whether she is faithful to her mission in the world.

Just as pilgrimage offers us an opportunity to be in touch with ourselves, through prayer, penance and self-examination, the synod on synodality seeks to offer us the occasion to do so on community level.

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distractions of phones, television, or your normal workaday world. Like Jesus in the desert, I also felt in a kind of desert, alone and struggling, outside my normal comfort zone. It was a time to wonder and reflect on my life's pilgrimage. How is my life going? How is my relationship with God in general? With Christ in particular? With my family? My friends? People I don't like? People in the work place? Nowadays, I would want to think about my relationship to the environment. Every person's reflection on these things is unique to each one.

"Our hearts are Restless until they Rest in Thee" (Augustine).

This kind of reflection can be a prayer in itself if, behind it, there is a desire for what God wants in it all and it is not just thinking and daydreaming, as if we are looking at a movie in our heads. I have often found myself thinking

and thinking for ages and not sharing any of it with God. That is a trap that is easy to fall into. There is a spirit within us that thirsts for God, "like a dry weary land without water" and that makes the reflections prayerful. "What do YOU want here, God?" is the key question in all of this.

Sometimes, too, "when we cannot choose words in order to pray properly, the Spirit himself expresses our plea in a way that cannot be put into words" (Roms 8: 26). I don't think of this as the Spirit up in heaven interceding for me but as doing this work in my own consciousness and yours as an integral part of our 'busyness', concerns and worry. It is part of the "entire creation...groaning in one great act of giving birth...as we groan inwardly as we wait for our bodies to be set free" (Rom 8:22-23).

Anytime I have, as they say, 'done' Lough Derg, it has always been a rewarding experience.

My pilgrimage to Skellig Michael

by Oliver Barrett

SKELLIG Michael is situated 13 kilometres off the coast of Co Kerry. Yes, it is famous for being in a scene in Star Wars, but my interest in Skellig Michael stems from my study of the distinct development of Celtic Christianity.

Early Irish society depended on family loyalty and was based on a close-knit family bond, known as the clan. Each clan was under the rule of a leader known as the chieftain. When Christianity arrived in Ireland, at the time of St

Patrick, monasticism flourished in Ireland. Monasticism's strong emphasis on community, with an abbot at its head, was a concept we Irish could easily grasp and embrace. This is part of the reason the monastic way of life is successful here.

Skellig Michael is the location of one of these early Irish monastic communities. I travelled there after reading about Gallarus Oratory and the beehive stone buildings of the island's monastery. How Irish monks

could live in such an isolated place, from the 6th Century onwards, captured my imagination and inspired me to travel there on pilgrimage in August 2021.

I took a small boat at around 8.30 am, with around a dozen other people, from a pier near to Waterville. The dense mist made it difficult to see and I wondered what I had let myself in for. As we sailed out into the Atlantic, I could only trust in the navigation skills of the boat's captain. After around an hour, we arrived at



Oliver Barrett, Leckpatrick.

Skellig Michael. We stayed on the Island for around two hours, climbing the steps to see the beehive monastic cells and passed

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Why go on Pilgrimage?

by Sr Margaret McConalogue



Sr Margaret McConalogue, Culmore.

PILGRIMAGES frequently involve a journey or search of moral or spiritual significance. Typically, it is a journey to a shrine or other location of importance to a person's beliefs and faith, although sometimes it can be a metaphorical journey into someone's own beliefs.

Muslims have travelled to Mecca, in modern-day Saudi Arabia, since the seventh century, the birthplace of Muhammad the Prophet, because Muslims regard Islam as a return to the original faith of the Abrahamic prophets such as Adam, Noah, Moses, David, Solomon and Jesus. They understand their pilgrimage as a 'submission' (Islām) to the will of God.

For Jews, Jerusalem is regarded as the Holy City. Indeed, the Hebrew Bible instructs all Jews to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem three times a year: in Spring for Passover, in Summer for Shavuot, and in Autumn for Sukkot – in thanksgiving for The Law (the expression of God's will for His people) and the Covenant of Love which sealed that

Covenant relationship between God and His people.

Christianity too, has always had a strong tradition of pilgrimage, both to sites mentioned in the New Testament stories as well as to sites associated with later saints or miracles. Jerusalem, the place where Jesus spent the last week of His earthly life, suffered and was put to death, has also been an important place of Christian pilgrimage from earliest times. The Holy Land itself, with so many places connected to Jesus' life and preaching, His death

and resurrection, has always been a place of special devotion and prayer for Christians, who often in previous times, made the journey on foot to the Holy Places, while fasting and praying.

Other well-known worldwide places of pilgrimage, especially for Catholics, include Rome, Lourdes, Fatima, Santiago de Compostela (The Camino), Knock, Guadeloupe, among others. Here, in Ireland, there is a long tradition of visiting Knock, recently proclaimed an International Eucharistic Shrine, Lough Derg, Doon Well, Faughart, Downpatrick, Kildare, to mention but a few. Many holy wells are to be found dotted throughout our country and newer pilgrimages have been developed in recent times - such as the 'The Way of Colmille' (Donegal/ Derry) in the Northwest, and St Patrick's Pilgrimage from Downpatrick, in the Northeast.

Pilgrimage usually entails some separation, alone or in a group, from the everyday world of home, in order to reflect on our lives, to discern the next stage of our life's journey, to pray for a particular intention or burden to be lifted off our shoulders, to receive spiritual guidance, or the Sacrament of Reconciliation, or to give thanks and praise to God. Those who cannot travel, often request a pilgrim to pray for their intentions or to light a candle (eg at Knock, Fatima or Lough Derg).

I well remember our family pilgrimage to Knock every year, a tradition inherited from our grandparents in honour of Our Lady. I remember the long processions of pilgrims around the ground following the decorated statue of Mary, as we prayed the Rosary aloud and sang the beautiful hymns to Mary.

Fervent

The fervent faces of those pilgrims made such a deep impression on me, so many invalids and suffering people bringing their needs to Mary and renewing their faith and trust in her. I remember wondering to myself as they processed around the church, how moved our Blessed Mother must be by the sincerity of their prayer. It was,

indeed, a blessing to be among them!

Of course, my other memory is of "doing Lough Derg", especially in our Leaving Cert year to pass our exams. We were teenagers then and hoped that such penance and fasting would ensure a good result, with a reasonable amount of study! Were we looking for miracles? Was it some kind of an "insurance policy"? Maybe that was how we saw it through our teenage eyes and spirituality at the time, but there was also a sense of "Ask and you shall receive" too!

Sincere prayer of petition always does express an element of trust and faith in the Almighty and loving God and is a very valid form of prayer. I always hope that the young women who went to Lough Derg to pray for a good husband, in their teenage years, had their prayers well answered!

Many people also go on pilgrimage to discern their future direction in life, what vocation God is inviting them to, a new career path, freedom from an addiction, resolution of family issues, who to marry. Or to pray for the sick. Our Lady, Health of the Sick, is their one hope, and a special place is reserved for them at all our Marian shrines – Lourdes, Fatima and Knock. Sometimes they may not be cured physically but many sick pilgrims will tell you that they come back healed in mind and spirit, maybe better able to accept their trials in life and with a deeper faith in God's Providence. Occasionally, some are physically cured.

Above all, pilgrimage is about openness to God and awareness of God's action in my life. Being with others and praying together inspires us to do better. The fun together and the singsongs can all add to the sense of joy in being a follower of Jesus. But often it is the alone time at the Grotto of our Lady and the atmosphere of prayer there that inspires us most, and challenges us to question how we are living our lives and how we are with God.

For me, the deep sincerity of people, the expression of serenity and fervour on their faces as they join with others in the prayers and hymn-singing is what makes me so grateful to belong to a believing community.

Christian literacy.

Kenneth Clark writes: "It is hard to believe that for quite a long time – almost a hundred years – western Christianity survived by clinging to places like Skellig Michael, a pinnacle of rock eighteen miles off the Irish coast, rising seven hundred feet out of the sea."

When we go on pilgrimage to these places today, we are acknowledging the sacrifices the Irish monks made for the sake of the Gospel.

The following is an excerpt from the first chapter of a book called 'The Call of the Camino de Santiago' by Paul Gavazzi, the father of Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, Fr Francesco Gavazzi, residing at the Franciscan Friary in Galliagh...

Don't plan, be led

...while we are wayfarers, we ought to know the road leading to our goal – St Thomas Aquinas

The desire to become a pilgrim springs from a seed sown in a heart, open to the possibilities that pilgrimage provides. It takes root in those first few thoughts, in the preparations made, the destination chosen, in travel plans, maps, equipment and guide books, as well as in the heard or read experiences of pilgrims who have gone before them. Pilgrims on their way gather a rich harvest of the people they meet, the places they visit, the knowledge of themselves they learn. And all pilgrims encounter God somewhere along the way - whether He is known or unknown to them, acknowledged or forgotten; whether He be found in a church hanging on a crucifix, venerated at holy fiestas, present in the Eucharist of the Mass or in the piety and devotion of devout religious pilgrims. Pilgrims feel richer and become more complete for the experience.

Seven hundred years before trek over the Pyrenees mountains that separate France from Spain, another man of Italian heritage walked this way. He was known as Francesco, meaning the Frenchman, as he was affectionately called by his family. He too travelled on foot, but he was cloaked by a coarse gray habit and travelled without shoes and money; reliant completely on the goodwill and hospitality of benefactors he met along the road. He ventured a great distance from his home town, Assisi.

My journey by contrast, started further away in Sydney, Australia and was made easier by cars, planes, a bus, a train, computers, a mobile phone, credit cards, cash and an ergonomic and comfortable backpack that lightened the load I carried. By these means I was transported to the village of St Jean-Pied-de-Port in the foothills of the French Pyrenees, a two hour train ride inland and south of beautiful and belle époque Biarritz on the Cote Basque. At St Jean I commenced the walk of my Camino de Santiago - the Way of St James, to Compostella in the far north-west corner of Spain where continental Europe meets the Atlantic Ocean.

Francesco Bernardone, better known as St Francis of Assisi left home on foot to walk to Santiago and back over many months. Turning away from an inheritance of wealth and



Fr Francesco Gavazzi cfr with his father, Paul.

privilege, Francesco's life became a pilgrimage, to and for the glory of God. While he journeyed in homage to the mortal remains of St James at Compostella, he also followed in the footsteps of another greater pilgrim; conforming to the teachings, life and example of Jesus of Nazareth, the divine pilgrim.

I'm privileged to trace the peaceful footsteps of St Francis and to experience something of his life of radical simplicity, which in many ways is the life of the pilgrim on the Camino. I'm also led by the example of the countless pilgrims who have followed a rutted path to Santiago that invites men, women and children to the great adventure that is pilgrimage. For a millennia Santiago has been a special religious destination for Christians. In Spanish Santiago means St James, and Compostella means field of stars. Together they define the place where St James, the disciple of Christ, is buried. St James is so revered he is the patron saint of pilgrims and also of Spain, and his feast day falls on 25 July, commemorated in Santiago by a fiesta over several days with vast crowds.

Here I have no status or position, no work, no privilege, no home, no family; I am as I am in the clothes I stand in and with the few bits and pieces of little value in my pack. Strangely my abandonment is liberating. Before I take a step I think about most humble St Francis coming through here, possibly on this very road and I realise my littleness and how naked I am without my

trappings. I understand better his wise words, 'I am no more than I am before the Lord.'

Pilgrims are a chosen lot. This is the mystery of the Way. Inexplicably many are called to walk the camino of St James. Some say they can't explain why they 'do' the Camino, but say they feel they must. A few pilgrims understand that they are 'led' to their pilgrimage by key events and circumstances. For most, they can't predict what they might experience on the Camino, although they seem to know interiorly that they desire to do it. I was no different. I didn't know precisely why I wanted to walk the Camino, but over time what became very clear to me was that I must walk the Way.

One of my sons had recommended that I read a book called 'The Way of a Pilgrim', a tale about a Russian peasant who roams Russia seeking to learn 'how to pray without ceasing', in answer to the teaching of St Paul in his First Letter to the Thessalonians by which he instructs to 'pray constantly'. The story of the peasant's pilgrimage, for me became emblematic of a pilgrimage and I wanted to attempt to put into practice those inspired words of St Paul. The book opens as follows:

'By the grace of God I am a Christian, by my deeds a great sinner, and by my calling a homeless wanderer of the humblest origin, roaming from place to place. My possessions consist of a knapsack and dry crusts of bread on my back and in my bosom the Holy Bible. This is all!'

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the vegetable patch where the monks grew their vegetables on the way.

The community who lived here were ingenious as they were able to create a cistern to capture rainwater, ensuring that the inhabitants had a constant supply of fresh water. The abundance of fresh fish, puffins and seals meant that inhabitants had everything they needed to be self-sufficient.

The Irish monks who set

up the community on Skellig Michael desired, not to test their endurance, but to renounce the world and be closer to God. For me, Skellig Michael represents all that is good about Irish Christianity and the importance of pilgrimage. We have a Christian faith today because our forefathers sought out rocky islands for their hermitages where they could sing the Psalms to each other and celebrate the Eucharist. They endured being raided repeatedly for the sake of

St Eithne and St Eunan honoured together in Celtic Saints Garden



A new shelter in honour of St Eithne and St Eunan has been constructed and blessed in the Celtic Saints Garden across the road from the IOSAS Centre, at Derryvane, Muff.

Members of the Columba Community and friends gathered for the blessing by Bishop Donal a couple of days after the June 9 Feast of St Columba. Derry's Patron Saint is the son of Eithne, and Eunan was his biographer.

Those gathered heard that Columba Community founder, the late Fr Neal Carlin had drawn on a scrap of paper his idea of what the shelter should look like, complete with instructions. Community leader, Marguerite Hamilton explained that the shelter was their contribution to the year celebrating the 1500th anniversary of the birth of St Columba.

It was Community member, Ann McCay who came to Fr Neal with the idea, after getting a sense in the midst of a prayerful reflection on St Columba during her outdoor prayer time, one day during the pandemic, that the Community should honour his mother, Eithne, "who had carried him in her womb and gave birth to him".

She remarked: "I am sure that he inherited many good qualities and characteristics from her and his upbringing helped him grow in holiness through the example of his parents. I felt that the Celtic Garden would be incomplete

without some reference to Eithne. "When I explained the idea to Fr Neal he was keen to do it. Initially we agreed on a stone for Eithne. We did not want to do anything too extravagant and felt a stone for Eithne to match the stone for Eunan would be sufficient. Fr Neal wanted to combine Eithne and Eunan under one roof somehow. As it turned out, we already had amongst us the skilled craftsmen and the artist to create the images. People who would be true to the ethos of this place. The materials required were, as we discovered, already available on site. All the effort and creativity has produced a fine piece of work befitting these two saints".

Ann went on to note that on December 7, 521 AD, Columba was born in Donegal into the ruling Ui Neill or Friel clan, a child of royal birth.

She continued: "Through his father, Feidhlimid's bloodline, Columba was related to Niall of the Nine Hostages and through his mother, Eithne from an illustrious Leinster family, he was related to Cathair Mór, High King of Ireland.

"It is said that his mother Eithne had a very vivid and striking dream during her pregnancy in which an angel foretold the many good works her son would do for the Kingdom of God and how far reaching his influence would be during his lifetime and beyond.

"In the dream, the angel told

Eithne that her child was to be specially blessed by God. She heard a voice telling her: 'The son you are carrying, will guide innumerable souls to heaven and be counted among the prophets of God'. As Eithne watched her son grow up she would have witnessed everything that the angel had revealed to her come to pass".

Ann's husband Tommy, who was involved in the artwork on the shelter, spoke on Eunan (Adamnan), quoting from the Saint's own work and that of Fr Neal

Noting that Eunan had been born in Drumhome, Co Donegal, on September 23, 624 AD and died in 704 AD aged 80, Tommy added: "He went to Iona and joined the Community there founded by Colmcille when he had left Ireland. About five years before he died, he wrote the Life of Colmcille, (vita columbae) the most complete piece of biography boasted of throughout Europe up to the Middle Ages, and the most considerable surviving literary production of The Celtic Church in Ireland.

"It is mainly through this work that the name and works of Colmcille became known throughout the Christian world. This was written 100 years after Colmcille died so they never actually met".

Feeling honoured to be asked by the Community to bless the new shelter, Bishop Donal told 'The Net': "The Columba Community is a gift to this diocese. They have sought to help us to look back on our painful past and to seek reconciliation. But they have also helped us to rediscover that our past was not just about wars and bloodshed. We have also come to better understand our rich shared Celtic heritage and to celebrate it.

"The Celtic Garden, looking down over the city, offers space



to reflect on the great things that God has done through ordinary Irish saintly men and women down through the centuries.

"The new shelter dedicated to

St Columba's mother, St Eithne and to St Eunan, his biographer, is made from the products of the earth and the work of human hands. It welcomes us to reflect

on Columba in his family and in his time. For this is a time when new saints are being called forth".

Adorers from Derry Diocese enjoy Knock Eucharistic Pilgrimage

PILGRIMS from parishes in the Derry Diocese were amongst those who gathered at the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine in Knock, Co Mayo, on the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ for the Eucharistic Adoration Apostolate's national pilgrimage.

As well as times of prayer and Adoration, involving Children of The Eucharist, there was a healing service led by Fr Pat Collins CM, author and founder of the New Springtime Community.

The keynote address for the pilgrimage was delivered in the Parish Church by Fr Morgan White, a named Knight of the Holy Sepulchre by Pope Benedict, and the Pilgrimage Mass was celebrated in the Basilica by Archbishop Michael Neary.

The programme of prayer came to a close with a procession and the praying of the Rosary, followed by Benediction at the Apparition Chapel.

During the procession, pilgrims



from the Claudy and Craigbane areas within the Parish of Claudy, walked with their Eucharistic Adoration Committee's new banner, and enjoyed a lovely sunny day out together.

Developed by lay people, the Apostolate is an Association of Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament who have responded to God's

call to spend time with Him each week in Eucharistic Adoration.

Its mission is to help parishes and dioceses to establish and develop viable weekly Eucharistic Adoration, and many parishes in the Diocese of Derry have embraced this gift of having regular weekly periods of Adoration in their midst.

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This introduction describes well the simplicity of being a pilgrim, the call to wander, the necessity for humility, the abandonment of riches and the desire of the pious pilgrim to keep the Word of God close to the heart at all times, because It is the 'all'.

St Thomas Aquinas wrote that '...while we are still wayfarers, we ought to know the road leading to our goal' So too, pilgrims will have in mind their destination, if not a clear understanding of how and when they might arrive. For those called to the Way of St James, the physical road to Santiago may be without controversy, however the Thomistic proposition infers a higher, spiritual dimension, presupposes that the goal of all people is and should be the divine and perfect goodness of God - to attain the vision of God in His essence.

In about 1603 Sir Walter Raleigh wrote a poem 'The

Passionate Man's Pilgrimage', while imprisoned in the Tower of London convicted by false allegations of treason and plotting against King James of Scotland who had ascended to the English throne. He had been subjected to a farcical trial, promptly found guilty by a jury and sentenced to hang. The night before his sentence was to be carried out he wrote:

*"Give me my scallop-shell of quiet,
My staff of faith to walk upon,
My scrip of joy, immortal diet,
My bottle of salvation,
My gown of glory, hope's true gage;
And thus I'll take my pilgrimage."*

The scallop shell has for centuries been the traditional symbol of spiritual protection of pilgrims and also served as a handy spoon. The staff has been emblematic of pilgrims, to steady them on uneven ways, as well in earlier times to fend

off wild animals and rogues - a symbol to deal with the snares of the devil. Sir Walter's poem in contemplation of his earthly demise invoked the scallop shell as a metaphor for God's spiritual protection and the staff as his faith to lean on in his time of need. The poem is of a pilgrim ready to undertake a passion like Christ's; a passionate and final pilgrimage to death. Walter remained a man with joy, expectant of salvation available to him and hopeful of the glory to follow death.

Therefore the lives of all men and women should be and are pilgrimages to the divine goodness, some nearer and some further away from the inevitable and ultimate destiny to God, for which our pilgrimage on Earth is preparation. Every pilgrim needs to know the road and the map to get there. I am blessed to have discovered that 'the Way' is more than a footpath in Spain, it is a Person.



Mary of Bethany as a model of contemplative prayer

'The Cloud of Unknowing' author's commentary on the visit of Jesus to the home of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus

by Fr Stephen Quinn ocd

IN the 14th Century, an anonymous monk from a Charterhouse in England left behind a series of important texts in which he discussed the character of prayer. In his most famous text 'The Cloud of Unknowing', he took up the famous Gospel passage on the incident in the house of Lazarus between Jesus, Martha and Mary as the model of all prayer.

In his commentary on the 10th chapter of Luke, the monk, in an unusual theology for his own day, is not critical of Martha clattering around in the kitchen. He describes the welcome that Martha laid on for Jesus, her putting out refreshments for Him, her cooking of a meal, and placing the food and drink in front of Jesus as "very good and very holy." As good and holy as the work of Martha was to Jesus, it still did not compare to whatever Mary was doing at the moment Martha was at her work. What Mary was doing was so significant that it arrested the whole attention and affections of the Lord Jesus as He sat in the front room in their home.

While Martha was so active and busy getting everything ready, Mary was seemingly the opposite. She was doing nothing, she was passive and concentrated, and remained fixed at one spot, that just happened to be at the Lord's feet. Mary sat at the Lord's feet and was engrossed in two docile activities, the first was listening to each word that came from the lips of the Lord and the second was letting her eyes run over the contours of that human face.

The monk, in his description of this intimate moment of Mary sitting looking into the face of Jesus, wants us to know that Mary is not engaged in anything exterior or superficial. He warns us not to be fooled, that Mary was not simply caught up in the sweetness of Jesus' voice or even the beauty of His countenance, no, Mary went further and deeper than skin deep appearances.

She, for these few precious moments, was looking beyond these skin-deep impressions and was searching out what lay beneath. She let herself be completely absorbed in the God who had come so close to her in the obscurity of what seemed just another man, just a son of a carpenter.

The monk goes further than simply describing what Mary is doing to the naked eye, he attempts to communicate what is unfolding in Mary's very own interior world. As Mary sits at the Lord's feet, she is not just giving him her attention, more than that, she turns to Him with a

profoundly interior response. In her heart, she is expressing herself and responding in the deepest way that she knows how. In this response, she is mustering all her love and turning it toward Him who has come so close to her. She sits in perfect stillness letting her heart speak its very own language. It is a language of joyous love, and it wants to speak all its meaning to Him. She knows that only He can read the language of people's hearts. Mary in that movement of heart is wholly intent upon God, her heart wholly intent on giving itself over to the Lord, and it is that gesture that holds Jesus rapt, and he affirms it as the better part, for it is prayer.

The Carthusian monk makes this single moment the model of all praying and every moment of prayer. Just as Mary could not settle for superficiality or simple exterior appearances, so everyone who goes to prayer cannot settle for the canned sentiments of others or the simple expression of words. Like Mary, we have to go further and deeper, to a real movement of our own heart.

Darkness

The monk speaks of the common human experience of prayer. He speaks of the confusion and darkness that marks so many instants of prayer. In the World around us, we live as creatures of light. We arise with the sun and start to close down with its setting. Everything is comprehended by the sun's power, and our eyes pick up the minutest details by the means of that light. Light is so significant that it is the major tool by which we navigate our very lives.

When we close our eyes and begin to pray, all that light is doused, and we enter a darkened world.

The monk advises everyone who wants to really pray to grow familiar with the darkness of the interior world. In that obscurity, we will face two forces that will impinge upon our consciousness and that will only deepen our experience of darkness. The first of these forces are the ever-present distractions. These will try to fill any void by getting us to pay them attention, full of concerns about the day, about life, about work, family, friends, jobs



and hobbies. Then memories of past events, issues and incidents of our history come roaring out from under rocks screaming for our attention. The darkness only seems to darken with them.

Behind those thoughts and memories are all kinds of emotional forces: anxiety, fear, anger, jealousy, envy, and other desires and passions by which we crave anything more than God.

Secondly, we discover in the gloom, the simple but easily missed detail that God is God, that God cannot be compared to anything that we will ever experience, certainly on this side of the grave. No human measure will be effective in working Him out. God is a person but a person who is so totally other, a person who so far transcends any notion that we might think a person to be.

The Scriptures speak of God as the light of the world, but in saying that, the Bible means that God is such a bright light that it dazzles us and appears to our feeble sight to be no more than darkness. No wonder then, the monk uses the title of 'The Cloud of Unknowing' for his chief work, for it captures the darkness of the first contact of the human with the divine.

Just as we followed the example of Mary in terms of seeking depth and breadth, so, in order for us to get used to the darkness, we also have to track what Mary was doing in her interiority. As she sat at the Lord's feet, her heart expanded with joyous love, so the only way for us to deal with the confusion and darkness of our prayer is for us to love in the way Mary did. We use that small word love in so many

varied ways, that we run the risk of seriously underestimating its whole significance.

When the English Carthusian reflects upon the love that was in Mary's heart at that moment in Bethany, he has a particular love in his mind. The love that the monk has in mind is none other than that described by the Lord as His greatest commandment, a loving of God with all our hearts, our souls and our minds.

“ Love pierces the gloom of the darkness because it is so attractive to the Lord, He has been waiting on it for an eternity, He cannot take his eyes of it, and love alone will approach Him and enter into His presence. ”

It is far too easy for us to miss the meaning of those words. It is to love God not for what He has done, what He is doing or what He will do. Most certainly it is not loving God for what we can get out of Him or what He will do for us. It is a completely generous love, loving God for who He is in Himself, loving Him alone above any and every created thing, and simply giving yourself over to God simply because He is who He is. It is a pure naked intent toward God simply for His own sake. In that darkness of prayer, the person, emulating the example of

Mary, simply stokes their heart to love God and to give as much of themselves to God as is possible in that moment.

Free

The Dominican mystic, Meister Eckhart speaks of a single purpose of the heart while at prayer: "A free heart is one which is untroubled and unfettered by anything, which has not bound its best part to any particular manner of being or devotion and which does not seek its own interest in anything but is always immersed in God's most precious will."

Meister Eckhart catches on to what the monk is saying to pray in the darkness and confusion, one has only to have a heart immersed in God and given over to Him. The English monk speaks of the dynamic effect of that loving upon our prayer: "Let your loving relentlessly beat upon the cloud of unknowing that lies between you and your God. Pierce with the keen shaft of your love, spurn the thought of anything less than God, and do not give up this work for anything."

Love pierces the gloom of the darkness because it is so attractive to the Lord, He has been waiting on it for an eternity, He cannot take his eyes of it, and love alone will approach Him and enter into His presence. When we sit in the darkness, giving our love to the Lord, the prayer becomes almost like an arrow that pierces the cloud and strikes the waiting and desiring heart of God. When the monk encourages us in our prayers to get used to the darkness, he is being really intelligent, for he knows that in that darkness we will grow in the

one thing necessary to pray, to love with all our heart, our soul, and our mind.

The monk suggests a method to help us to adapt to the dark, to grow our hearts in love, and to meet the Lord in prayer. He starts simply with asking us to sit relaxed and quiet. He then encourages us to "centre all our attention and desire on God and let God be the sole concern of both mind and heart." He suggests gathering all your wanting of God and love for God into a simple word that the mind and will can easily retain. He recommends a shorter word rather than a longer one as this prayer word. It could be just about anything: 'God,' 'love,' 'Lord,' 'Mercy,' 'Bridegroom,' or 'Jesus.' The only proviso he puts on the choice of word is that it has to be something meaningful to us.

The person speaks the word not by means of their lips but from the silent intensity of their own heart. The heart speaks the word over and over again, not in a frenetic manner but in a calm, gentle, and peaceful way, letting it be handed over to God with all the person's love.

When distractions come, as they most certainly will, the monk suggests to simply speak to them the prayer word, when memories call on our attention, again use the word, and when strong emotions force their way upon us, there is nothing but the prayer word. No matter what comes and goes in the time of prayer, the person proceeds to say the prayer word, praying from their heart. The word is meant for only One person, for Him who came into the home of Martha, Mary, and Lazarus. The word must be entirely for Jesus.

God and Mammon (“No man can serve two masters” - Mt 6:24)

Who wants to be a millionaire? Who wants to be a Parish Priest?!

by Fr John McLaughlin ssc



“DON’T be standing there holding out your hand for money. Just say ‘No thanks’ and move off”. That was the order given to me in Moville, as a small boy, by my mother, when asked to ‘go a wee message’ by someone on the street, or when delivering a prescription from the Chemist shop where we lived on the Main Street. I told the story in Spanish, in the Enrique Alvear community, in one of my homilies and I noticed how the heads came up to listen! ‘A cambio de nada’, they would say in Spanish! Just do it! A lesson for life.

In my first parish experience on Mission in Chile, I well recall the Pastoral Council meetings and how the details impressed me. Luis Zuniga was the Treasurer in one of the bigger chapels and, with his wife, was also a catechist. Luis would present a very detailed, almost boring, report of the Payments and the Entries by a series of ‘recibos’ and, indeed, everything he responded for, and to, had a paper trail, and members followed every detail of the ‘Ingresos’ and ‘Egresos’.

There were to be many occasions in my own pastoral life that I would demand such a paper trail, knowing that someone in the group was just as assiduous as I was about the accounts. A couple of years on, in the same parish community, when Guillermo, the Parish treasurer, had presented on the typical brown paper (papelografo) all the outgoings of the chapels, I was rather disconcerted to note the big item... two International ‘phone calls from Padre Juan...and at the time it was an embarrassingly large sum

for December 31, which was my mother’s birthday! There were very few phones around there in those days and they were not cheap!

The Chilean Church had a well-organized campaign for the finances of parishes and diocese, known as the CALL... the Contribution to the Church. The collectors were known as ‘Visitadores’ and had a small yellow apron while walking through their areas or presiding at the back of the Chapels on Sundays. They had all the paper receipts and often small handouts, a monthly meeting and clear analysis of the situation of the subscribed members. Often they would call at the presbytery to announce the sickness or the death of one of their subscribers (erogantes) and would accompany the priest or minister to the house to assist at the sacraments, or the Velorio if it had to be a rite for the dead.

Everything was apostolic about their ministry, and many catechists or community leaders were also ‘visitadores’ and proud of their service at local level. They would have a monthly meeting on a Saturday evening; tea and sandwiches would be served by the hosting chapel. In attendance, there might be present Manuel the Zonal organizer from the Diocese with his pep-up talk.

The Parish ranked very highly amongst all the deaneries and parishes in that Southern Zone, generally in second place and behind only a much richer parish; fruits of the activity and zeal of previous Columban Sisters and priests. Sometimes, after their monthly return to the Parish

Office, on a Sunday afternoon, a group attached to a chapel would take ‘once’ or afternoon- tea together socially, and that was often an occasion for a pastoral visit on my own behalf.

At one time, we had about 1,400 inscribed over the seven chapels and would generally have a special annual Mass and Christmas Cards procured locally, on which I generally wrote some message. During some of those years, I had to devote three or four nights in a week just to write something personal and in my own hand! Part of that promotion also involved a little newsletter that I wrote and stenciled out (called ‘El Patti Perro, the wanderer!’), as many of those inscribed (the erogantes) would have little idea of the various pastoral activities the parish was engaged in.

The object of all this, as we would be reminded at Diocesan Campaign meetings, was to offer transparency and accountability as part of our Informes. Even at the ‘base’ level, people would and could be exacting, and where money was concerned they were more than just curious, they were demanding and precise. It was a grand relief in those times when I found my way into Computation and the Microsoft Office program, such were the number of reports I had to answer for.

Transparency

In more recent times, on my second run in that parish, there was the occasion on which the Holy Family Chapel presented, in the interests of transparency, another large, brown-papered report in bold letters of all the dealings over a whole year, and displayed it proudly on the outside wall of the chapel. Unfortunately, some of the local alcoholics or vagrants (patos malos!) decided that there must be money available behind those walls; they created damage on windows and doors and presses in an overnight assault. They left with not a centavo, but lots of costly destruction. So that effort at transparency was not repeated.

In another parish, in Puente Alto, in the eastern end of the city, two of the seven chapels, San Columbano and Espiritu Santo both in my care, were ‘done-over’ on the night of Good Friday. So that, instead of dedicating ourselves to the preparation of the Easter Vigil, we had to head off to the hardware stores and the builders providers to shore up our defenses and get more crockery for the little celebrations planned for after the Vigil.

With all that, even for the most ‘ascetic’ of parish priests, there was no getting away from the lure of Mammon! In the lore

of the people, misfortunes with money could occur in many ways; from the Lanzas, the Cogotos, the Estafadores (scams), that is, from the more furtive hustle of pickpockets, from the knife-pointed aggression on the streets or the forced robberies at night etc, or the frauds of many kinds that could occur. I learned about all of them from personal experience!

Even in an Irish setting, there was a sense of deep disappointment at finding out the deception or dishonesty of a parish helper. As a young priest, the challenge and the duty of ‘facing down’ people much older than myself was very disturbing and left the effects of no one ever trusting such people in a responsible position in the future. Even in a domestic situation, there were occasions when I felt the effects of a ‘bofetada’, or slap-across-the-face, after the breach of trust on the part of a previously loyal helper. My thin-skin anguished long over those betrayals.

There was always the moment when someone came along and, with ‘a short softening up’ dialogue, made a pitch about a family or personal debt, with promises to pay back at the end of the month. Only on one occasion did a person actually show up to make the repayment. There was a rather humorous dialogue that occasionally happened, when a hitherto rather marginally known person appeared, sweetly indicating the need of a ‘favor bien...bien...grande...grande’, and, depending on the number of ‘biens...y grandes’, I would be adding on another zero on the possible demand! Only to have the very occasional surprise on hearing that the favor was not going to involve any ‘lolly’, just a house visit or a blessing, or a letter of recommendation for a Catholic school or a grant, etc.

In my early days in Dublin, I had, of course, in the Rialto Parish, visits from despairing mothers who had got ‘in hock to’ the moneylenders and the shame felt in case that their husbands would come to know of their indebtedness. So, there was no absolute truth in stories and situations like those. A little exaggeration had to be a part of the narrative.

One of the aspects of Papal Teaching (on the Macro level!) that a missionary priest often had to brush up on was the Social Doctrine, sometimes referred to as the best kept secret of the Catholic Church! Chile, during my time, made accessibility to these documents vital, on the Rights of Workers (‘Laborem Ejercens’, of Pope John Paul II) and, in this case, the limits of Private Property. In the Document coming from the Latin American Conference in



Medellin, Columbia, ‘Populorum Progreso’ of Pope St Paul VI, I was captivated by the paragraphs on Private Property:

Duty

“He who has the goods of this world and sees his brother in need and closes his heart to him, how does the love of God abide in him?” (21) Everyone knows that the Fathers of the Church laid down the duty of the rich toward the poor in no uncertain terms. As St Ambrose put it: ‘You are not making a gift of what is yours to the poor man, but you are giving him back what is his. You have been appropriating things that are meant to be for the common use of everyone. The earth belongs to everyone, not to the rich.’ (22) These words indicate that the right to private property is not absolute and unconditional.

“No one may appropriate surplus goods solely for his own private use when others lack the bare necessities of life. In short, ‘as the Fathers of the Church and other eminent theologians tell us, the right of private property may never be exercised to the detriment of the common good.’ When ‘private gain and basic community needs conflict with one another, it is for the public authorities ‘to seek a solution to these questions, with the active involvement of individual citizens and social groups.’” (23)

What a surprise that statement could be to many of our modern politicians with some pretensions to be ‘Catholic’ or ‘Christian’!

The Spanish Catholic writer, Jose M Castillo (El Disfraz de Carnaval) points out in a book that could have been written just as well for modern Ireland, that when “the disguises, the spending-sprees (caretas) and the facial make-ups (mascaras), that are so frequent in our day, as people use them all the time in their family and political and economic relationships, and then go on about how badly society is functioning...”

In Ch 4, on the ‘New Religion’, he has a wide range of quotations; “prophets of misfortunes” John XXIII, who were announcing a “new post-religious era” and all the dis-prestige of religion... and yet there is constant talk and comment on religion.

And writers like Karen Armstrong comment on the growth of fundamentalisms, and the New Age and the esoteric and religion light.... all in Spanish, from which I refrain from citing more. But he is pointing up to the ‘Religion of the Market’... powerful and universal, which has concentrated within itself the greatest and most firm hopes. The Spanish writer, J J Tamayo, on Capitalism as a Religion, comments at length on fundamentalism and the dialogue between religions, and the other ‘Lords’ that we purport to serve, and the ‘God of the Market’, which brings its own...salvation, credos, temples, theologians, missionaries, commandments, formation-centres, and doctrines of salvation. “Outside the Market there is no salvation.”! A religion that will



Saints we celebrate in July *by Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd*



St Oliver Plunkett



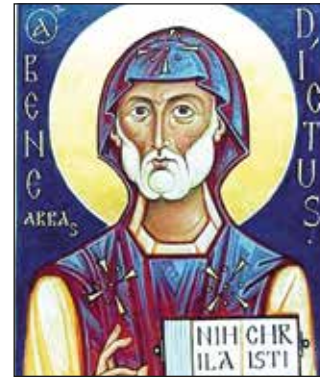
St Elizabeth of Portugal



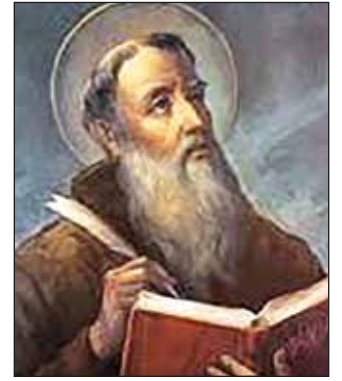
St Anthony Mary Zaccharia



St Maria Goretti



St Benedict



St Lawrence of Brindisi

St Oliver Plunkett

Oliver Plunkett was born in Loughcrew, Co Meath, Ireland on November 1, 1629. In 1647, he went to study for the priesthood in the Irish College in Rome and was ordained a priest on January 1, 1654. Due to religious persecution in Ireland, it was not possible for him to return to minister to his people. Oliver taught in Rome until 1669, when he was appointed Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of Ireland. He soon established himself as a man of peace and set about visiting his people, establishing schools, ordaining priests, and confirming thousands. 1673 brought a renewal of religious persecution, and bishops were banned by edict. Archbishop Plunkett went into hiding, suffering a great deal from cold and hunger. In 1679, he was arrested and falsely charged with treason. He was put on trial in London and, with the help of perjured witnesses, was sentenced to be hanged, drawn, and quartered at Tyburn. Oliver Plunkett publicly forgave all those who were responsible for his death on July 1, 1681. On October 12, 1975, he was canonized a saint. His feast day is July 1.

St Elizabeth of Portugal

Born in 1271 into the royal house of Aragon, Elizabeth was the daughter of Infante Peter (later King Peter III) and his wife, Constance of Sicily, and the sister of three kings: Alfonso II and James II of Aragon and Frederick III of Sicily. Her marriage to King Denis of Portugal was arranged in 1281 when she was 10 years old. It was only in 1288 that the wedding was celebrated, when Denis was 26 years old, while Elizabeth was 17. Elizabeth quietly pursued the regular religious practices of her youth and was devoted to the poor and sick. Such a life was taken as a reproach to many around her

and caused ill will on the part of her husband. The infidelity of her husband was a cause of scandal. Eventually, her prayer and patience succeeded in converting him. Elizabeth took an active interest in Portuguese politics and was a decisive conciliator. After Denis' death in 1325, Elizabeth retired to the monastery of the Poor Clare nuns in Coimbra. She joined the Third Order of St Francis, devoting the rest of her life to the poor and sick. She died in 1336. Her feast day is July 4.

St Anthony Mary Zaccharia

Anthony Zaccaria was born in Cremona, Italy in 1505. He received a medical doctorate at 22, and while working among the poor was attracted to the religious apostolate. He worked as a catechist while studying for the priesthood and was ordained a priest at the age of 26. Called to Milan a few years later, he laid the foundations of three religious congregations, the Barnabites, one for men, one for women, and an association of married couples. Their aim was the reform of the decadent society of their day, beginning with the clergy, religious, and lay people. Anthony encouraged the collaboration of the laity in the apostolate, frequent Communion, and the Forty Hours devotion. He died at Cremona at the age of 36.

St Maria Goretti

Maria Goretti was born on October 16, 1890, in Corinaldo, Italy. Her farmworker father moved his family to Ferrier di Conca, near Anzio, for better accommodation. He died when she was nine. Maria took over household duties while her mother, brothers and sister worked in the fields. The family had to share a house with another family, the Serenellis. Alessandro, the Serenellis' 20-year-old son, made

sexual advances to Maria. When she refused to submit to him, he stabbed her 14 times. She was taken to the hospital, but she died, aged 11, forgiving him. She was beatified in 1947 and canonized in 1950. Alessandro attended her canonization. He had repented while in prison. He later became a lay brother in a monastery and died in 1970.

St Benedict

Benedict was born into a Roman noble family in Norcia around 480. St Scholastica was his twin sister. Benedict was sent to Rome to study but was disappointed by the life he found there. He left Rome to find a quiet place. Benedict became a hermit and for three years lived in a cave near Subiaco. On the death of the abbot of the nearby monastery, the community begged him to become its abbot. This did not work out and the monks tried to poison him. He left Subiaco in about 530. He founded 12 monasteries in the vicinity of Subiaco and, eventually, in 530, founded the monastery of Monte Cassino. He is considered to be the father of Western monasticism. The Rule that he wrote became the norm for monastic living throughout Europe. He died in 547. In 1980, Pope John Paul II declared him co-patron of Europe, with Cyril and Methodius. His feast day is July 11.

St Lawrence of Brindisi

Lawrence was born Giulio Cesare Russo in Brindisi in 1559. His family were Venetian merchants. He was 12 when his father died, and continued his education at Saint Mark's College in Venice. Cesare joined the Capuchins in Verona as Brother Lawrence. He received further instruction from the University of Padua. An accomplished linguist, Lawrence could read and speak Italian, Latin, Hebrew, Greek,

German, Bohemian, Spanish, and French fluently. At the age of 31, Lawrence was elected superior of the Capuchin Franciscan province of Tuscany. In 1602, he was elected vicar general of the Capuchin friars, at that time the highest office in the Order. On completing his term of office, he entered the service of the Holy See, becoming papal nuncio to Bavaria and later to Spain until 1618. He died in Lisbon in 1619. His feast day is July 21

St Mary Magdalene

The precise dates of St Mary Magdalene's birth and death are unknown, but we do know that she was present with Christ during His public ministry, death, and resurrection. She is mentioned at least a dozen times in the Gospels. Mary Magdalene has long been regarded as a prostitute or sexually immoral in western Christianity, but this is not supported in the scriptures. It is believed she was a Jewish woman who lived among Gentiles, living as they did. The Gospels agree that Mary was originally a great sinner. Jesus cast seven demons out of her when He met her. Mary likely watched the crucifixion from a distance, along with the other women who followed Christ during His ministry. She was the first witness to His resurrection. St Mary Magdalene's feast day is July 22.

St Bridget of Sweden

Bridget was born in 1303 to a wealthy family. In 1316, at the age of 14, she married Ulf Gudmarsson, to whom she bore eight children. Bridget became known for her works of charity, particularly toward unwed mothers and their children. When she was in her early thirties, she was summoned to be principal lady-in-waiting to the new Queen of Sweden, Blanche of Namur. In 1341, she and her husband

went on pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela. In 1344, shortly after their return, Ulf died. After this loss, Bridget became a member of the Third Order of Saint Francis and devoted herself to a life of prayer and caring for the poor and the sick. It was about this time that she developed the idea of establishing the religious community to be known as Order of the Most Holy Saviour, or the Bridgettines. In 1350, a Jubilee Year, Bridget made a pilgrimage to Rome accompanied by her daughter, Catherine to obtain from the Pope the authorization of the new Order. It was not until 1370 that Pope Urban V confirmed the Rule of the Order, but meanwhile Birgitta had made herself universally beloved in Rome by her kindness and good works. She died in Rome on July 23, 1373. She is one of the patrons of Europe. Her feast is July 23.

St James the Greater

James the Great, also known as James, son of Zebedee, was one of the Twelve Apostles of Jesus. The son of Zebedee and Salome, James is styled 'the Greater' to distinguish him from the Apostle James 'the Less', with 'greater' meaning older or taller, rather than more important. James the Great was the brother of John the Apostle. James is described as one of the first disciples to join Jesus. He was one of only three apostles whom Jesus selected to bear witness to his Transfiguration. The Acts of the Apostles records that King Herod had James executed. He was the first apostle to be martyred. Saint James is the patron saint of Spain and, according to tradition, his remains are held in Santiago de Compostela. His feast day is July 25.

Sts Joachim and Anne

In the Scriptures, Matthew and Luke give us a legal family history

of Jesus, tracing ancestry to show that Jesus is the culmination of great promises. There is no mention of His mother's family. We know nothing factual about them except that they existed. Even the names 'Joachim' and 'Anne' come from a legendary source written more than a century after Jesus died. Joachim and Anne — whether these are their real names or not — represent the generations of people who faithfully performed their duties, practiced their faith, and established an atmosphere for the coming of the Messiah. Their feast is celebrated on July 26.

St Ignatius Loyola

Inigo Lopez was born in Loiola, Spain in 1491, the youngest of 13 children. His mother died when he was just seven. In 1521, while defending the town of Pamplona, Ignatius was struck by a cannonball in the legs. One leg was broken and the other badly mangled. Part of one leg had to be amputated. During his convalescence, Ignatius began to read the lives of the saints and Christ. These stories had a profound impact on him. On March 25, 1522, he entered the Benedictine monastery, Santa Maria de Montserrat. Before an image of the Black Madonna, he laid down his military garments. He gave his other clothes away to a poor man. He then walked to a hospital in Manresa where, in exchange, for a place to live, he performed work around the hospital. He begged for his food. Ignatius realized he needed education if he wanted to convert people. Returning to Barcelona, he attended a grammar school and later travelled to Alcalá and Salamanca, where he studied at universities. At the age of 38, he entered the University of Paris. While at school in Paris, Ignatius roomed with Peter Faber and Francis Xavier. These, and other men, became friends and Ignatius led them in his spiritual exercises. Pope Paul III approved of them as a religious order in 1540, called the Society of Jesus. Before Ignatius died, his order had established 35 schools and had 1,000 members. Ignatius passed away on July 31, 1556, at the age of 64. He was beatified by Pope Paul V on July 27, 1609 and canonized on March 12, 1622. His feast day is July 31.



St Mary Magdalene



St Bridget of Sweden



St James the Greater



Sts Joachim and Anne



St Ignatius Loyola

Saints we celebrate in August *by Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd*



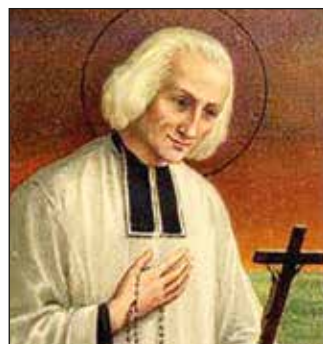
St Alphonsus Liguori

St Alphonsus Liguori

Alphonsus was born in Marianella, near Naples, on September 27, 1696. He was taught by tutors before entering the University of Naples, where he graduated with doctorates in civil and canon law at 16. He became a successful lawyer but after losing an important case he decided leave the profession of law. He was ordained on December 21, 1726, at the age of 30. He lived his first years as a priest with the homeless and the marginalized youth of Naples. He became extremely popular because of his plain and simple preaching. On November 9, 1732, he founded the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, whose goal was to teach and preach in the slums of cities and other poor places. Alphonsus was consecrated Bishop of Sant' Agata dei Goti in 1762. In the last years of his life, he suffered a painful sickness and a bitter persecution from his fellow priests, who dismissed him from the Congregation that he had founded. In May 1775, his resignation as bishop was accepted by Pope Pius VI. He spent his last years with the Redemptorist community in Pagani, Italy, where he died on August 1, 1787.

St John Vianney

Jean-Baptiste-Marie Vianney was born May 8, 1786, in Dardilly, France. When he was 20 years old, John was allowed to leave the family farm to learn at a 'presbytery-school' in Écully. He struggled in his studies, particularly with Latin, but worked hard to learn. In 1809, John was drafted into Napoleon Bonaparte's armies, but within days became ill. After his release from the army, John returned to Écully and resumed his studies. He was ordained on August 12, 1815 and was appointed curate in Écully. Three years later, Fr John Vianney was appointed parish priest of the Ars parish. With help from Catherine Lassagne and Benedicta Lerdet, La Providence,



St John Vianney

a home for girls, was established in Ars. He spent 11-12 hours each day in the confessional working to reconcile people with God. In the summer months, he often worked 16-hour days. His fame spread until people began to travel to him in 1827. Within 30 years, it is said he received up to 20,000 pilgrims each year. Six years later, he passed away and left behind a legacy of faith and care of the poor. St John Vianney was canonized on May 31, 1925. His feast day is August 4.

St Dominic

St Dominic was born in Caleruega, Spain in 1170. His parents were members of the Spanish nobility. Dominic was educated in Palencia. In 1191, a famine left many people homeless across Spain. He sold everything he had, including his furniture and clothes, and bought food for the poor. In 1194, Dominic joined a Benedictine order, the Canons Regular, in Osma. Pope Innocent III asked him to go to southern France, the region of Languedoc, to convert heretics back to the true faith. Dominic recognized the need for a physical institution in Southern France to preserve the gains he had made. He established a monastery at Prouille in 1206, which would become the first Dominican house. According to legend, St Dominic received the Rosary during a period of prayer at the abbey in Prouille. The Marian Rosary became popular following this event, suggesting the legend may be true. In July 1215, he was granted permission to form his own religious order. Six followers joined him. In 1217, Pope Honorius III named Dominic and his followers 'The Order of Preachers'. In the summer of 1217, Dominic decided it was time to send his followers out across Europe to grow the order. New members began to appear in substantial numbers across the continent. He headed to Rome to meet with the Pope and seek support for his mission.



St Dominic

The Pope gave him the basilica of Santa Sabina, which remains the headquarters of the Dominican Order to this day. Dominic then began a period of travel that would continue for the rest of his life. In July 1221, he took ill with a fever. After several weeks of illness, he passed away on August 6. He was just fifty-one. Pope Gregory IX canonized St Dominic on July 13, 1234, and his feast day is August 8.

St Teresa Benedicta

Born into a prominent Jewish family in Breslau, Germany, now Wroclaw, Poland, Edith Stein abandoned Judaism in her teens. As a student at the University of Göttingen, she became fascinated with the approach to philosophy known as phenomenology. Excelling as a protégé of Edmund Husserl, Edith earned a doctorate in philosophy in 1916. She continued as a university teacher until 1922, when she moved to a Dominican school in Speyer. Her appointment as lecturer at the Educational Institute of Munich ended under pressure from the Nazis. Edith was so captivated by reading the autobiography of Teresa of Avila that she began a spiritual journey that led to her baptism in 1922. Teresa wanted to become a Carmelite nun, but her spiritual director believed that her witness as a lay woman was needed. He only agreed to her becoming a nun in 1933. She entered Cologne Carmel. After four years there, Sister Teresa Benedicta moved to the Carmelite monastery in Echt, Netherlands, in 1938 for her safety. However, in response to the pastoral letter from the Dutch bishops on July 26, 1942, the Nazis arrested all Dutch Jews who had become Christians. Teresa Benedicta and her sister Rosa, also a Catholic, died in a gas chamber in Auschwitz on August 9, 1942. Pope John Paul II canonized Teresa Benedicta of the Cross in 1999. Her feast day is August 9.



St Teresa Benedicta

St Clare

St Clare was born in Assisi on July 16, 1194. Having refused to marry at 15, Clare was moved by the preaching of Francis. He became her lifelong friend and spiritual guide. At 18, Clare escaped from her father's home one night, was met on the road by friars carrying torches, and in the poor little chapel called the Portiuncula received a rough woollen habit, exchanged her jewelled belt for a common rope with knots in it, and sacrificed her long tresses to Francis' scissors. He placed her in a Benedictine convent. Sixteen days later her sister Agnes joined her. Others came. They lived a simple life of great poverty, austerity, and complete seclusion from the world, according to a Rule which Francis gave them. At age 21, Francis obliged Clare under obedience to accept the office of abbess, one she exercised until her death. The Poor Ladies went barefoot, slept on the ground, ate no meat, and observed almost complete silence. The greatest emphasis was on gospel poverty. They possessed no property, even in common, subsisting on daily contributions. Her influence was such that popes, cardinals, and bishops often came to consult her, though she, herself, never left the walls of San Damiano. Clare suffered serious illness for the last 27 years of her life. She died on August 11, 1253. She was canonized in 1255. Her feast day is August 11.

St Bernard

St Bernard of Clairvaux was born in 1090 near Dijon, France to Burgundian aristocracy. He grew up in a family of deep faith. At age of 20, Bernard decided to enter the small community that had been established as an effort to restore Benedictinism to a more primitive and austere pattern of life. His five brothers, two uncles, and 30 young friends followed him into the monastery. Within four years, a dying community



St Clare

had recovered enough vitality to establish a new house in the valley of Clairvaux, with Bernard as abbot. His ability as arbitrator and counsellor became widely known. Increasingly, he was lured away from the monastery to settle long-standing disputes. Despite these demands on his time, he wrote a work on Our Lady, a commentary on the Song of Songs and 300 letters and sermons. Pope Eugenius III prevailed on Bernard to preach the Second Crusade throughout Europe. Even though a great army was assembled, the project ended as a military and moral disaster. The ideals of the army were not those of Bernard. He felt in some way responsible for the negative effects of the crusade. This possibly hastened his death, which came on August 20, 1153. He was canonized on January 18, 1174. His feast day is August 20.

St Eugene

Eógan was born in Leinster. As a boy, he studied at Clones, and it was from there that he was carried off to Britain by pirates, and subsequently he was taken captive to Brittany, together with Cairbre of Coleraine and St Tighernach. On obtaining his freedom, he went to study at St Ninian's Candida Casa. Others said to have studied with Ninian include Finnian of Moville. Returning to Ireland, he made a foundation at Kilnamanagh, in the Wicklow hills. After presiding over the Abbey of Kilnamanagh, in Co Wicklow, for 15 years, he settled in the valley of Mourne, in Co Tyrone, about the year 576. He was followed by many disciples, including his relative, St Kevin of Glendalough, who completed his studies under this saint. So great was the fame of the sanctity and learning of St Eugene that he was consecrated first Bishop of Ardstraw about the year 581. He is believed to have died on August 23, 618. He is venerated as the patron saint of the Diocese of Derry. His feast day is August 23.

St Bartholomew

Bartholomew is listed among the Twelve Apostles of Jesus in the three synoptic gospels: Matthew [10:1-4], Mark [3:13-19], and Luke [6:12-16], and appears as one of the witnesses of the Ascension [Acts 1:4, 12, 13]. On each occasion, however, he is named in the company of Philip. He has also been identified as Nathaniel, who appears in the Gospel of John, when introduced



St Bernard

to Jesus by Philip. Eusebius of Caesarea's Ecclesiastical History (5:10) states that after the Ascension, Bartholomew went on a missionary tour to India. Popular traditions and legends say that Bartholomew preached the Gospel in India. Along with his fellow apostle, Jude "Thaddeus", Bartholomew is reputed to have also brought Christianity to Armenia. Scholars believe that he was martyred in India. His feast day is August 24.

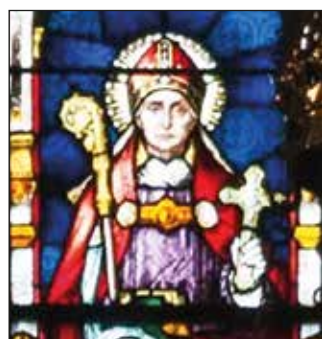
St Monica

Almost all we know about St Monica is in the writings of St Augustine, especially his Confessions. Although she was a Christian, her parents gave her in marriage to a pagan, Patricius, who lived in her hometown of Tagaste in North Africa. Thanks to Monica's prayer and fasting, her husband became a Christian a year before his death. Monica had at least three children who survived infancy. The oldest and best known is Augustine. When he was 29, Augustine decided to go to Rome to teach rhetoric. Monica was determined to go along. She arrived in Rome only to find that he had left for Milan. Although travel was difficult, Monica pursued him there. In Milan, Augustine came under the influence of the bishop, St Ambrose, who also became Monica's spiritual director. She continued her prayers for Augustine during his years of instruction. At Easter 387, St Ambrose baptized Augustine and several of his friends. Soon after, his party left for Africa. Although no one else was aware of it, Monica knew her life was near the end. She became ill shortly after and suffered severely for nine days before her death. Her feast day is August 28.

St Augustine

St Augustine of Hippo, son of St Monica, was born in Africa. He studied rhetoric but lived a lifestyle. His lover bore him a son, Adeodatus. He also joined a heretical sect, the Manichees. He decided to move to Rome to set up a school of rhetoric there, but his mother insisted on following him. He was disappointed with Rome and accepted a professorship in Milan. Monica followed him to Milan. There both Monica and Augustine came under the influence of St Ambrose. Through Monica's prayer and the preaching

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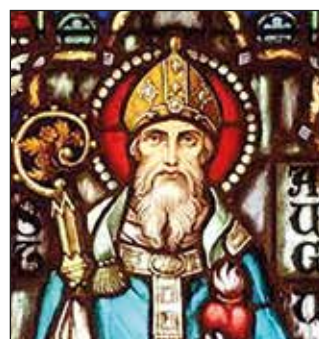
St Eugene



St Bartholomew



St Monica



St Augustine

Love your neighbour as yourself *by Fr Johnny Doherty, CSsR*



Fr Johnny Doherty

‘WHO is my neighbour?’ is the question that surfaces on the second Sunday in the Church’s Liturgy for July. It indicates the second place that Jesus wants us to go – towards one another in love. As with our love of God, we reach towards this point of recognising each other’s dignity, as a total act of faith.

Reason cannot really tell us much about one another because our likes and dislikes get in the way. Faith points us towards the utter dignity and worth of each person that we have to reverence in action and not just in words.

In the Gospel, the question of who my neighbour is, is asked in self-defence by a person who thought that he knew better than Jesus. Jesus pulled down his defences by telling the story of someone in need – a man

who was left for dead by the side of the road. Everyone passed by him for their own good reasons – everyone, that is, except one who had nothing to lose except his own possessions, the Good Samaritan. That is our story, and we need to let it open us up to freedom of the Spirit.

Blocks to our freedom to love

Selfishness: The first great block that we have to deal with is our own selfishness. Today there is such a strong sense of ‘I feel like it therefore I do it’. This is the cause of so much misery in broken marriages, divided families, unhappy homes. Our neighbour is firstly the person that is closest to us, and we have to attend to that person with love. This always means change in ourselves, letting go of our own selfish needs and doing what is best for our loved ones and for our relationships with them.

Prejudice: We are so full of prejudices that we often do not know that we have them most of the time! Prejudice keeps us at a distance from most people. We do not notice so many of the people around us because we have written them off in our minds and hearts.

There is prejudice between women and men that is cultural as well as personal. There is prejudice between different classes of people that is social

as well as personal. There are prejudices between Churches that are theological as well as personal. Prejudice is a major crippling force in our following of Christ in the journey towards one another.

Preoccupation: If you ever watch people in a crowd, you will see the power of preoccupation on them. If it is a crowd of complete strangers, as in a shopping centre or busy street, you will see people almost walking through one another. So many look as if the burdens of the world are on their shoulders! If it is a crowd at a family or social gathering, people are preoccupied with how they look or how they sound, how they are noticed. Preoccupation ties us up into ourselves so that we cannot notice or listen to the amazing beauty that is in ourselves and in every person we meet.

Who is my neighbour? We will never know the answer to that question until we let go of our own tiny world and reach out. The Word of God that we listen to each week at the weekend Mass can bring us into the big world of God’s love and compassion.

Sunday Liturgy week by week

Week 1: July 3 – 9 Christ, our peace

Jesus said to His disciples: “The harvest is rich but the labourers are few, so ask the Lord of the

harvest to send labourers into his harvest”.

When we think about our world today, we are inclined to think primarily of the evil that is undoubtedly there. Jesus’ perception is just the opposite, as He sees the wonderful opportunities that are all around us. And when we think of labourers for the harvest, we are inclined to think primarily of priests and religious and we pray for more vocations. That, of course, is a very important thing to do. But, even more importantly, we need to think of ourselves as the labourers and take up the challenge to be apostles of Christ in our everyday lives. We are apostles of Christ through the generosity of our love in marriage and family life, and in our willingness to build a community of faith and generosity in our parish. Vocations to the priesthood and religious life can only come from generous homes and generous parishes.

Week 2: July 10 – 16 His word is near

The man was anxious to justify himself and said to Jesus: “And who is my neighbour?”

The story of the Good Samaritan is one of the best-known stories of the Gospels. One of the points of it is that Jesus is telling us there should be no limits set by us as to who our neighbour is. For a

married person, the neighbour is a wife or husband who is to be loved and cared for with great affection. For parents, their family is their neighbour and every day they are called to love with great care. In our faith community, our neighbour is the person we are with at any given point of time and our responsibility is to love to such an extent that the family of God becomes visible. And the surest sign that we are taking Christ’s word to heart is when we are growing in a deep reverence for every human person and expressing that reverence in action in our daily lives.

Week 3: July 17 – 23 Jesus, our friend

“Martha, Martha,” Jesus said, “you worry and fret about so many things, and yet few are needed, indeed only one.”

The level of stress and anxiety is very high for so many people in today’s world. Today Jesus wants us, as His followers, to look at this and do something about it. It’s about setting priorities. One very important priority for all of us is our health of body, mind, and spirit. It takes time to care for ourselves properly but it is time well spent. Another priority that is vital is our close relationships of marriage and family. How easily those get put to one side because of all the other things and people in our lives. We are called to put this

right this week. The only way to do this is by giving our loved ones time and attention. And a third priority is the kingdom of God, which is a kingdom of peace, joy, love, wonderment, caring for the poor and needy. If we are taking care of all these, everything else will fall into place.

Week 4: July 24 – 30 Lord, teach us to pray

“So, I (Jesus) say to you: Ask and it will be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.”

The greatest power that we have is, undoubtedly, the power of prayer. And unfortunately, it’s a power that we don’t use often enough. The three words that Jesus uses here are dynamic words that have to involve us at a personal level.

Ask: To do this we have to decide what we are really looking for in marriage and family life as well as in our parish and then we have to be willing to invest ourselves in it.

Search: If what we are looking for is important to us, we will be willing to change to find it and to change even more having found it. So many people want everything but without any cost and this is not the way of the Lord.

Knock: God wants us to come to Him with confidence but then to abandon ourselves into His hands, knowing that we will be well looked after by Him.

The Sunday Liturgy week-by-week for August

Week 1: July 31 – August 6 Our hardened hearts

Jesus said to the crowd: “*Watch and be on your guard against avarice of any kind, for your life is not made secure by what you own, even when you have more than you need.*”

What a difficult message that is for us to listen to today, and yet what a vitally important one. Our lives are governed more and more by the need to get on, so that we increasingly have less and

less time for the really important things of life. And Jesus is very clear about what those important things are; the things that can give us true security. These are, of course, love of God with our whole hearts so that we can know where we came from and where we are going, and love for one another so that we can know the true joy of journeying through this life. That is our message of hope for our troubled world. We have to work at living it ourselves, as followers of Christ.

Week 2: August 7 – 13 Ready for action

Jesus said to his disciples: “*Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.*”

Alcoholics Anonymous have given the world very many insights into human nature. One of those is that “we cannot so much think our way into a new way of behaving as behaving our way into a new way of thinking”. We can have all the best thoughts in the world, but they are useless unless our lives correspond. People who are married have to live as if their marriage is the most important thing in their lives and it will become that. Parents have to spend time in treasuring their children so that they feel special. And people of faith have to live out their faith in action in the community or the faith

becomes just an empty thing. The challenge of the Gospel today, and for this week, is to get our priorities straight so that Christ may be known in our world.

Week 3: August 14 – 20 Victory with Christ

Jesus said to his disciples: “*I have come to bring fire to the earth and how I wish it were blazing already.*”

Fire can be a source of fear when it is a danger to us, or a source of warmth and comfort when it is at our service. For many people Christ is like that. He is a source of fear when we see Him calling us to change and we are reluctant to do so. Equally, He is a source of warmth and comfort when we put our trust in Him and in His way of life. For many married people, marriage can be seen as a restraint on their liberty and can cause resentment. Or it can be seen as a wonderful gift of love that liberates the heart. Jesus is with us to bring us the fullness of life. For some of us that can mean the pain of surrendering our own ways of life and adopting His. But His ways are guaranteed to bring us joy and gladness and a sense of the wonder of life.

Week 4: August 21 – 27 Saviour of all peoples

Jesus said: “*There are those now last who will be first, and those*

now first who will be last.”

One of the basic needs of the human person is to be successful. The fulfilment of this need brings people in all kinds of directions in life. Some people invest themselves in work, and their whole self-worth is associated with how successful they are

there. Then they have to retire! For others it is found in the kind of home they have, or their popularity, or in sport etc. All of these are good things but when they become our reason for being able to say, “I am the best”, they have led us astray. The way of Jesus puts being successful in

love as our priority. Through love we put our beloved as number one whether that beloved is our wife/husband, our children, our community. In so far as we do that we live with great peace and joy and inherit eternal life.

Irish celebration of the Eucharist at Granaghan Mass Rock



Fr Paddy Doherty, PP Maghera, celebrating the annual Irish Mass at Granaghan Mass Rock on July 4.

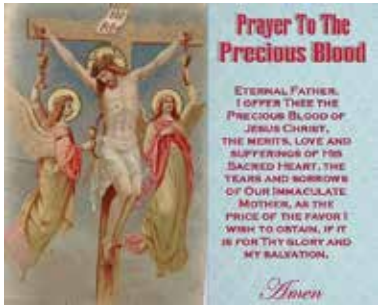
Continued on page 30

of St Ambrose, Augustine finally became convinced that Christianity was the one true religion. He hesitated for a while, but reading St Paul convinced him to take up seriously the way of Jesus. He was ordained three years later. He returned to Africa and set up a monastic community. He was especially interested in discovering how his previous rhetorical training would help the Christian Church in teaching and became a prolific preacher. He was made bishop of Hippo at the age of 41. While bishop, he wrote his most famous work, his Confessions, and The City of God. He is probably best remembered for the lines, “Too late have I loved you, O Beauty so ancient, O Beauty so new. Too late have I loved you!” He died on August 28, 430.

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the months of July and August. Summertime has arrived. These are fantastic months filled with fun and plenty of things to keep you amused.



Precious Blood of Jesus – July

The month of July is dedicated to the 'Precious Blood of Jesus'. We all have blood in our bodies, which helps us to live and stay healthy, therefore, we know how important and precious blood is. The Church and the sacraments, which we receive, have all come about through the precious Blood of Christ, which was poured out on the Cross when Jesus suffered and died for us.

Saints of the Month

St Thomas the Apostle - July 3
St. Benedict - July 11
St. Mary Magdalene - July 22
St Bridget of Sweden - July 23



St Kateri Tekakwitha

On July 14, we celebrate the feast day of St Kateri Tekakwitha. She is the first native American to be recognised as a saint by the Catholic Church. She was born in 1656 in a Mohawk village, her father was the chief of the Mohawk nation and her mother, a gentle woman, was from the Algonquin people who believed in Jesus.

When Tekakwitha was four years old her family all took sick with a disease called smallpox. Unfortunately, her parents died and she was raised by her uncle and aunts. Some Jesuit priests came to her village to spread the good news about Jesus. Tekakwitha listened carefully to the stories she heard about Jesus. She felt that God was calling her, so she asked to be

baptised and so now she was given the new name, Kateri, or Catherine.

The others in her village did not like her decision to become a Christian, so they were very mean to her. She had heard of another Mohawk village where Christians lived, so she travelled a very long distance through forests and rivers to reach her new home.

When she arrived there, she was able to live out her life to God. She prayed for many hours each day and fasted all the time. She taught prayers to the children in the village and worked with the elderly and sick. She would often go to Mass at both dawn and sunset, and she was known for her great devotion to the Blessed Sacrament.

Kateri took sick and died when she was only 24 years old. After she died, the skin on her face was completely healed of the smallpox scarring which she had as a child. She was now as beautiful on the outside as she was in the inside. After her death, many people spoke of how she appeared to them and lots of miracles were obtained through her intercession to God.



The Blessed Sacrament - August

The month of August is dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament is the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Special times are set aside in our Churches called 'Adoration', where we can come and worship Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist (CCC 1178). The Blessed Sacrament reminds us that even when Mass is not celebrated, Jesus, in the Eucharist, is still present in the Church.

O Sacrament most Holy,
O Sacrament Divine
All praise and all thanksgiving
Be every moment Thine

The Transfiguration

The feast of the Transfiguration is August 6. On this special day, we celebrate how Jesus showed Himself to be truly divine to the three Apostles who accompanied Him to



the top of Mount Tabor.

In the Gospels, we hear how Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John, and went up the mountain to pray. While the disciples were there with Jesus, Elijah and Moses appeared to speak with Him. Then before their eyes, Jesus was transfigured, completely changed, His face and clothes becoming dazzlingly white!



The feast of the Transfiguration helps us to see, as the Apostles saw, that Jesus is really and truly God (CCC 554-555). This same Gospel

story is heard during the second Sunday of Lent every year. It is part of the Lenten readings to remind us that the Apostles were given great hope at seeing Jesus in His glory before He was put to death and crucified. Likewise, we can reflect during Lent on the glory and joy which we will celebrate in the Easter story which will follow.

Saints of the Month August

St Dominic - August 8
St Clare - August 11
St Bartholomew - August 24
St Augustine - August 28



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The beautiful feast of the Assumption of Mary into heaven is celebrated on August 15. The Assumption of Mary means that She was taken up into heaven, body and soul. Mary's body was always pure.

She gave birth to the Son of God, therefore, God rewarded Her by taking Her pure immaculate body into heaven (CCC 966).

Mary now reigns as Queen of heaven and earth. She is our Mother who listens to our prayers and asks Jesus for special graces for us. On the Last Day, in the General Resurrection, we, too, hope to enter heaven with our newly glorified bodies. Our resurrected bodies will not suffer any illness nor need food or drink but instead will be splendid and eternally beautiful.

If we use our bodies for doing good while we are alive, we will share the heavenly reward. On this great Feast, we ask the Blessed Mother of God to guide, protect and care for us.



Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. The flag of Andorra carries a drawing of two of which animal?
2. Which Malaysian fashion designer runs a chain of UK outlets specialising in hand made ladies' shoes?
3. The Seven Wonders of the Ancient World includes a statue to which Greek God?
4. What is the name of Dublin's internal tram system?
5. Ed Sheeran teamed up with which Opera singer to record a version of his hit 'Perfect'?
6. Which actor starred in, directed and produced the 2004 blockbuster movie 'Million Dollar Baby'?
7. Who is the current Commander-in-Chief of the US Army?
8. Which is the only South American country to formally adopt the US dollar as its official currency?
9. Denali, the highest mountain range in the US, lies in which state?
10. Who is the current Governor of California?
11. Name the Everton and Republic of Ireland footballer who broken leg during a Premier League game?

Quiz Answers:

1, Cows. 2, Jimmy Choo. 3, Zeus. 4, The Luas. 5, Andrea Bocelli. 6, Clint Eastwood. 7, Joe Biden. 8, Ecuador. 9, Alaska. 10, Gavin Newsom. 11, James McCarthy. 12, Doncaster. 13, Peter Wright. 14, Exeter City. 15, A quarter. 17, Aughnacloy. 18, 2000. 19, North. 20, 60 mph. 21, Robert Runcie. 22, Daniel. 23, Lazarus. 24, Padre Pio. 25, Bono.

12. At which UK race track is the St Leger classic annually run?
13. Who won this year's PDC darts World Championship?
14. Two English League football teams play their home games at St James' Park. Newcastle United is one but can you name the other?
15. What fraction is found when you multiply a half by half?
16. The A5 road runs from Derry City to which busy border village?
17. In what year did the horrific Paris Concorde crash take place?
18. Which pole is the natural habitat of the Polar Bear?
19. What is the national UK speed limit on a single carriageway?
20. Who served as Archbishop of Canterbury throughout all of the 1980's?
21. According to the Bible, who entered the Lion's Den?
22. Mary of Bethany was the sister of which Biblical character?
23. Which Saint was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2002?
24. In which city was the current Pope, Francis, born?
25. Whose real name is Paul David Hewson?

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

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

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

Let Your Light Shine!



Walk to Knock 2022



“To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda or even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery. It means to live in such a way that one’s life would make no sense if God did not exist.”

(Cardinal Emmanuel Suhard, Archbishop of Paris 1940-49)



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