

The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 86. JUNE 2023

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See inside...



Celebrating 200th anniversary of St Mary's Cloughcor - Leckpatrick



Celebrating Corpus Christi - Ballinascreen.



Fan the Flame - Derry.



“A strong Columban parish community reaches out to those who want to feel loved and cherished” -

Bishop Donal (see pgs 6-7).

Long Tower 240th anniversary celebrated on Feast of St Columba.



Four Patrons' Pilgrim Walk - Coleraine.



Our Lady of Lourdes Church 100th anniversary - Inch Island.



Little Way Novena - St Eugene's.



Knock Pilgrimages Thanksgiving Mass - Rouskey.

People in focus



The late Vera McFadden, Derry



The late Rose Lynch, Castlederg



Fr Declan Boland, PP Strabane



Rev Shaun Doherty, Derry



Fr Joseph Varghese, Dungiven

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Pentecost did not happen just once...It is still happening

Reflection by Bishop Donal



Bishop Donal

WE all have a picture of Pentecost. The Apostles with Mary are often seen with tongues of fire over their heads. They generally look holy and happy! And we know about the success of their preaching in Jerusalem, which was busy with people from all parts of the known world.

But my guess is that, for the Apostles, it was as frightening an experience as it was encouraging.

Why do I say that? We all like to be in charge of what is happening in our lives - and to do the sensible thing. Jesus wanted them to know that God

was in charge and that they had to be prepared to do amazing things. Or, more exactly, they had to be prepared to let God do amazing things through them and with them – and despite them!

Perhaps that is why saints are very popular with many people. The Little Flower, Therese of Lisieux, was determined to be a Carmelite nun and got special permission from the Pope to enter the convent at 15! Sr Clare Crockett had an amazing experience of God at 17, which changed her life. Blessed Carlo Acutis, despite having parents who were not involved in Church, developed a passion for the Eucharist and faced death at 15. Saints help us believe that God can be at work in the most unlikely of people.

And there is one more point about these holy people. They were all young. At present, we risk being a church of older people trying to plan for the future with older people's hearts. Whereas, the history of the Church has always shown

that renewal comes from the idealism of young disciples who are fired by love of God.

Two things have struck me over the last year, as we have been talking about synodality and synodally.

Firstly, so many of our meetings have involved older people who have always been committed to church. But the young voices have not been as widely represented in a very youthful country. Without space for youthful enthusiasm, we end up hearing our older people issues rather than the concerns of the next generation. We have been focussed on how to provide enough Masses and to be available for funerals etc. But a youthful church will also have much wider agendas.

Secondly, I have met some young people with a passion for Jesus and a burning desire to re-energise the church. They know the mess in which so many of their peers find themselves with addiction, mental health issues and violence, not to mention the ubiquitous problem of

pornography.

There are an, admittedly small, number of people prepared to consider priesthood and religious life. I have come across some young couples who want Christ to be at their heart of their marriage – and who have prayerfully prepared for their wedding day.

Such young people are not afraid of being put off as they want to be missionaries of the 21st century. Sometimes, we older people are afraid to encourage young people to seek out Jesus, even when they will make mistakes and take risks that sensible older people would not dare to consider. The lives of the saints tell us that even saints didn't get everything right the first time!

The theme for World Youth Day in Lisbon in August 2023 is taken from St Luke's Gospel – 'Mary arose and went with haste' (Lk 1:39). Mary was filled with the Holy Spirit, the Gospel tells us, when the Angel Gabriel visited her. And she went without delay to visit her cousin

Elizabeth.

That was not easy for the youthful Mary, as she had just heard that she was to give birth to the Saviour. And we are told that she spent six months there with Elizabeth.

Pope Francis wants to encourage a young church that is open to the Spirit, a Church that is ready to be frightened by what God is asking from them.

That brings me back to Pentecost. The young Apostles dared to go out, unprepared and uncertain, into the crowds gathered in Jerusalem. There, they were surprised by how well people responded to the Good News about Jesus' death and Resurrection.

The Church is quietly being renewed by young people of all ages, who are not afraid of the frightening but energising Holy Spirit that still breaths divine life on the Church.

Pentecost did not happen just once. It is still happening. And discernment is about seeing where the Spirit of God is blowing where it will.

Remembering the inspirational Vera McFadden and her great faith



The late Vera McFadden, Derry.

THIS June edition of 'The Net' marks the sad passing of one its longest and oldest contributors, Vera McFadden, who died in Altnagelvin Hospital on the morning of Friday, May 26.

A gifted writer and historian, Vera had shared her great faith and knowledge of local Church history in her monthly feature during the eight years she had been writing for 'The Net'. Despite difficulties with her eyesight, the 91-year-old continued as a contributor right up to her last days, completing her article for the June edition shortly before having to go into hospital. It is hoped to feature

this article in the next edition. Fuelled by a life of prayer, Vera's indomitable spirit was an inspiration and wonderful source of encouragement to many. She will be sadly missed but she has left a worthy legacy in her many writings, which included books published and sold for the benefit of charities, particularly those that cared for the homeless.

Having a great love and devotion to Our Lady, it was very fitting that Vera's Requiem Mass was celebrated on May 29, the Feast of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church. It took place in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, with Fr Gerard Mongan the celebrant.

In his homily, Fr Gerard spoke of Vera's love for the Gospel passage of Luke 24, the 'Road to Emmaus', and pointed out that the picture depicting the scene that had hung on the hallway of her Whitehouse Park home, was displayed in the sanctuary for her Requiem.

He remarked: "The Road to Emmaus runs through Carnhill

Church this morning and we've all travelled some part of it. Many of us can identify with the downcast disciples today in our sadness for Vera, perhaps saying like them 'we had hoped'...perhaps we had hoped that she would get better. Vera, in her May article in The Net, had hoped to see again, finding it hard to accept the loss of her sight. Yet, what happened on the road for those disciples and what happened on the road for Vera may help us all see again in a new way and leave our hearts burning within us."

"Our hearts burn within us," continued Fr Gerard, "for having known and loved a truly distinguished and unique lady, who walked the road of life with sheer conviction, courage, compassion, and commitment to the end."

Sympathising with Vera's daughters, Mary and Margaret, and son, Jimmy, and speaking of her great love for them and her five granddaughters and two great-granddaughters, he said: "Her main wish was for

her family to be close together and she recently asked that a picture of her children and her own mother be placed centre stage on the mantelpiece."

Noting that she had worked for 40 years as a primary school teacher in St Teresa's PS, Belfast, and then St Patrick's PS in Pennyburn, Derry, Fr Gerard continued: "Vera believed in bringing out the best in all her pupils, building their self-esteem and encouraging them to embrace all aspects of education, music, history, nature, and their local area. She led the field in local history and found solace in art, reading, local history and archaeology. Her great faith and connection with her deep spirituality gave her great support during life and with the help of her friends she used these gifts to help and support others."

A member of the Franciscan Order, Fr Gerard spoke of Vera's love for the ways of St Francis and for receiving Holy Communion, her reverence for which had been inspirational to

him as a priest.

He added: "Vera valued each day she was given in life. Her recent illnesses and marked loss of sight in recent years caused her a loss of independence and a difficult burden to carry. However, her faith and her inspirational resilience carried her and her family through those tough times.

"As we continue this road of life, may we be comforted in the hope that Vera has now reached the goal of her life. She believed in the words of St Paul today: 'for our eyes are fixed not on what is seen but rather on that which cannot be seen. What is visible is transitory; what is invisible is eternal'.

"Vera can safely say with St Paul: 'I have fought the good fight to the end, I've run the race to the finish, I have kept the faith'. We pray she has opened her eyes in paradise and recognised the Lord, not under the shadow of bread but face to face. And it must be glorious!"

The Month's Mind Mass for Vera will be celebrated in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, on Friday, June 30, at 7.30 pm.

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

If you have a story that you would like to share or an event you would like covered by The Net, just drop an email to editorthenet15@gmail.com or ring/text 07809292852

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Supporting us:

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

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

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

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The ministry of

The NET

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

Celebrating Corpus Christi

THE Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ was celebrated in a number of parishes around the Diocese with the traditional Corpus Christi Procession, including Ballinascreen, Buncrana, Three Patrons, Moville and Cappagh.

Children from the primary schools in the parishes who had made their First Holy Communion this year were invited to take part in the processions, giving them another opportunity to wear their First Communion clothes as well as another occasion to feel extra special.

In some parishes it was also 'Ice-cream Sunday', with parishioners

treated to a free ice-cream and this year it went down a real treat on what was a beautiful, warm, sunny day.

Sharing the experience in her parish, Karyn Birney of the 'Do This In Memory' team in Cappagh said: "A beautiful display of public Adoration on the Feast of Corpus Christi brought the 'Do This in Memory of Me' programme 2022 - 2023 in Cappagh Parish to a close.

"One hundred and fifty children from all the schools across our Parish received the Blessed Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion for the first time in May and they all returned for this beautiful Mass, dressed

once more in their finest.

"A huge thank you to all the parents, Year 4 children and their families who took part in this year's programme, especially those that generously gave their time each month in attending the monthly planning meetings, to help prepare for each DTIM Mass from the programme began back in October 2022. Their enthusiasm, commitment and spiritual inspiration shaped many changes along the way, which we will be bringing forward into future programmes.

"It truly was a blessing to be part of such a wonderful team of parents who were committed

to helping their children, and the children within each of their schools, develop in faith during this special year. The 'Do This in Memory of Me' programme here in Cappagh Parish flourishes because of them."

She added: "This year, the Cappagh 'Parish Do This in Memory of Me' team has grown, with the addition of dedicated parents from past programmes. Led by Fr Declan McGeehan, they are all committed to delivering a programme which is focused on bringing Jesus Christ into the lives, hearts and homes of all families across our Parish."

Buncrana



Three Patrons



Ballinascreen



Cappagh



Confirmation children gather to give thanks for the Holy Spirit coming into their lives



CHILDREN who received the Sacrament of Confirmation this year gathered in Derry's Celtic Park grounds on the eve of the Feast of St Columba for the annual Fan the Flame Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal.

They travelled with staff from their schools across the Diocese in great numbers to fill the stadium stand with their colourful 'Fan the Flame' t-shirts and flags, and were delighted to respond to Long Tower Folk Group founder, Richard Moore's encouragement to raise their voices in song as he and some of the Folk Group members provided the music ministry for the day.

County Derry GAA chairman, John Keenan welcomed the youngsters to what he described as "the field of dreams for many in the GAA", and was delighted to have on display three fine pieces of silverware – the Ulster Minor Football Cup, the Ulster U20 Hurling Cup, and the Ulster Senior Football Cup.

Fr Paul Farren, director of the Diocesan Catechetical Centre that organises the special event, added his words of welcome, telling the young people: "The

reason why you are all here is because you were confirmed this year and we want to give thanks for the Holy Spirit coming into your lives."

Therese Ferry, Primary RE Advisor, and Mary O'Boyle, Post-Primary RE Advisor, who played a central role in the children's preparation for receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation through their online programme, had said together during the online sessions, 'I Am Here', before the entrance procession got underway with everyone singing, 'Shine Jesus Shine'.

The children of Rosemount PS lined the route of the procession with the flags bearing the names of the various parishes in the Diocese, which had been paraded around St Eugene's Cathedral during the Diocesan Mass to celebrate its 150th anniversary.

The massive Fan the Flame banner led the procession, which included flags bearing the names of the Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit and a long line of school banners, followed by a number of priests who were able to attend in support of their parish schools,

and Bishop Donal.

The children were very much to the fore during the celebration of Mass, with a pupil from St Mary's PS, Cloughcor doing the Reading, and a St Patrick's PS, Derry, pupil singing the Psalm, 'Set Your Heart on the Higher Gifts'. The Prayer of the Faithful was led by pupils from Scoil Phadraig NS, Rashenny, Clonmany, Our Lady of Fatima PS, Mullabuoy, and St Michael's PS, Dunamanagh, while the Offertory Procession involved pupils from Sessiaghoneill NS, Ballybofey, Good Shepherd PS, Derry, and St Brigid's PS, Lavey.

Guide

Welcoming the opportunity to help 'fan the flame' of the Holy Spirit as guide and helper, Bishop Donal spoke about how tough life is for many people, especially the young.

"We want to be the best we can be," he said, adding: "We ask the Holy Spirit to be our guide."

During his homily, the bishop drew attention to the spire of St Eugene's that is visible from the Gaelic Grounds. Going on to note that it was the Cathedral's 150th anniversary, he told of how to celebrate they had a statue carved in Italy of the teenage Blessed Carlo Acutis, complete with jeans, t-shirt, sunglasses and wrist-watch, which now stands in the Cathedral, and of an encounter he had there with a mother, her teenage son and nine-year-old daughter. Bishop Donal recalled that he had been praying in the pews when he noticed the trio approach the Carlo Acutis statue, light a candle and say a prayer. As they left, the mother stopped to tell him that her daughter had just asked her if she could become a saint as well.

Telling the young people that they, indeed, can become saints, Bishop Donal said: "It is the only

thing that you are called to be. It is tough to say, 'I want to be a saint', when the culture you are growing up in tells you that the best you can expect is wealth and fame, to eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow you die, that the body is a toy to be played with, and to think 'I am what I think I am – and that all depends on ME'.

Sharing some of Carlo's wisdom in a series of quotes, such as "All people are born originals but many die as photocopies", Bishop Donal said: "The only thing worth becoming is actually a saint in your own unique, outstanding way, whether young or old, married or single, genius or with disabilities. You can become a saint.

"What the world needs is not more sports stars and singers, but more saints and generous heroes."

At the end of the ceremony, Bishop Donal made a special presentation to 80-year-old Joe Murphy, Killea, for his "unfailing support to the Diocese of Derry's annual Fan the Flame Mass".

Speaking to 'The Net' afterwards, Joe recalled being introduced to helping out on the grounds of Celtic Park almost 30 years ago by Kevin Rafferty.

Having decided to retire a couple of years ago, Joe quipped: "When the body tells the mind it can't obey, it's time to call it a day."

Thanking Joe for his dedicated service and preparation for the annual Fan the Flame Mass, Bishop Donal went on to thank the many volunteers present, including senior pupils from Post Primary Schools, for giving up their time to help out too.

The ceremony came to a close with everyone joining the Folk Group in singing 'He's Got The Whole World In His Hands', as the colourful procession of flags and banners made its way off the pitch for the 17th year.





New altar cloths for St Patrick's PS Gortin



During Eastertide, new altar cloths were presented to St Patrick's PS, Gortin. Pictured are the principal, Mary Grugan and some P7 children, with Fr Roland Colhoun.



Newtownstewart children recall Confirmation Day to celebrate Pentecost

ON the last Sunday of May 2023, Pentecost Sunday, Newtownstewart parishioners welcomed the P7s from St Patrick's School to St Eugene's Church, Glenock, to recall their Confirmation Day, which was on March 25. The children did the Readings and led the Intercessions. The Legion of Mary supplied Holy Spirit prayer cards and a donor provided bags of sweets. Mrs Michelle Torney guided the pupils in creating Pentecost posters, which are displayed on the church walls. The Parish of Ardstraw East loves to give the children great memories of faith, hope and love.



Some P7 pupils at St Patrick's PS took part in the liturgy for Pentecost Sunday in Glenock Chapel, Newtownstewart

Celebrating 240 years of the humble beginnings of Long Tower Church, Bishop Donal told parishioners...

You will be a strong Columban community by nourishing relationships and reaching out to those who want to feel loved and cherished

CELEBRATIONS for the Feast of St Columba got underway with an all-night vigil in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, with this year being the 240th anniversary of its construction, between 1783 and 1788.

The Long Tower is believed to be the founding site of the monastic Doire Cholmcille settlement by Donegal native and one of Ireland's three Patron Saints, Columba in 546; adding historical weight to the prayers of those who knelt on this sacred ground during the night of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, which followed the celebration of Mass.

The Vigil ended with 7 am Mass in another special spot, at a Hawthorne tree where Fr John Lynch, founder of the current church, is buried. Towards the end of the Penal times, Fr Lynch would have said Mass at the tree or his house at Ferguson's Lane, prior to the building of the church.

A memorial plaque at his resting place states: "Here grew the Hawthorn Tree under whose shade during every lull of the persecutions, Mass was frequently offered from 1585-1784 by Father John Lynch, who partly rebuilt the Long Tower and who lies buried beneath. He died, December 20th 1786. RIP."

The early morning Mass at Fr Lynch's grave on Derry Patron Saint's Feast Day, June 9, was celebrated by Omagh native, Fr Gerard Mongan, who has

been handed the baton of care for parishioners of the Long Tower, many of whom attended this special celebration of the Eucharist.

Reminding those gathered that, from the late 16th to the latter part of the 18th Century, the authorities had wanted to "wipe out the Catholic religion in Ireland and so persecution was carried out in varying degrees", Fr Gerard noted: "The era of Cromwell was particularly ruthless against the church from 1649 to 1660. From 1691, the Penal laws were introduced on top of other laws that went before: Catholics were forbidden to buy land, excluded from the civil service and the legal profession and they were forbidden to teach.

"All bishops had been ordered out of the country; parish priests were allowed to perform their duties provided they registered with the authorities and took an oath of allegiance to the English crown. Most priests refused this and so were outlawed. It was hoped through these laws that those remaining priests would eventually die out and so, without their priests, the Irish Catholic people would soon abandon their faith.

"How they were proved wrong. As the years progressed, many priests continued to minister in secret, often travelling from parish to parish - secretly celebrating the Mass with the people in places like these."

He explained that Fr Lynch, a native of Dungiven and parish priest of Derry, would have said Mass at times under the Hawthorne tree until the favourable time came to build a church: "In 1783, he set about raising funds, including 200 Guineas from the Protestant Bishop of Derry. The design of the church was a straight forward rectangle, comprising one of the transepts of the present church with the altar near the present side door, facing Bishop Street. It had an earthen floor and was estimated to hold 2000 persons standing. It was still unfinished when Fr Lynch died in 1786, but as a mark of honour it was opened for his funeral, the preacher addressing his congregation from a pile of stones left in a corner by workmen."

He went on to recall that Pope St John Paul II, on his visit to Ireland in 1979, had referred to the many and varied places in Ireland where Mass was offered in those penal times, and had said: "Mass rocks in the glens and forests...for a people poor in worldly goods, but rich in the things of the spirit...small matter where the Mass was offered by the Irish; it was always the Mass that mattered."

Celebrating 240 years of the humble beginnings of Long Tower Church, Fr Gerard said: "We salute Fr Lynch and the generations of faithful parishioners and priests who

celebrated and worshipped here over those years. What was it like for them? Maybe thinking it would be the last Mass they would attend? They have left us a legacy we can be proud of.

"We are no longer gathering for Mass in secret or being hunted down. But this sacred spot will always remind us of the brave sacrifices our ancestors made to preserve the faith from extinction, even to the point of giving their lives as martyrs so that we could practice our faith today in freedom. We are gathered here to make sure that what they did is never forgotten."

The celebrations continued with the annual St Columba Mass in the Long Tower Church, at 7.30 pm, when Bishop Donal was the main celebrant.

In his homily, the Bishop pointed out that the Feast of St Columba was not merely a remembrance of a saint who died many centuries ago: "It is mainly a celebration of this community which is proud of its history and identity. We give thanks to God for St Columba - and for the great people who have kept the faith here over the centuries."

Trust

He continued: "In 1783, before the Cathedral was planned, people were worshipping here, despite the Penal Laws. So, nowadays, we are at the end of a particular way of being church



Photographs by Ivor Doherty & Stephen Latimer





and the start of a new model. But as we know from the past, people here have been driven by the spirit of St Columba, the missionary, who wanted to worship God and minister to people.

“So, the question is not ‘what will the parish be like in the future,’ but ‘what do we need to be doing in 2023?’. If Columba had sat on his hands all those centuries ago, wondering about the future, he would not be remembered today. He set sail in trust – and look at how much God achieved through his life and ministry.”

Noting from the Gospel that Jesus was driven by love of people who were dejected and harassed like sheep without a shepherd, Bishop Donal remarked: “That is the spirit that drove Columba and that our parishes have to have in the forefront of their mind. Celtic monasteries were not places to which monks retreated in order to escape from life. Monasteries were founded in out of the way places so that the Gospel could be preached to most people who did not live in towns. Not only that, but the monks also sought to bring learning, new forms of agriculture and art along with their monastic life. There may be a temptation for us as church to see a disinterested or anti-faith culture out there and want to protect ourselves. That would not be what Columba wants of the parish that bears his name and his fame.”

“Columba and his companions found their strength in prayer,” he said, adding: “Life was not easy in a monastery. They had none

of the modern comforts that we take for granted. They will have faced much opposition by those whose powerbase was threatened by these new Christian arrivals. They probably felt discouraged at times. On other occasions, they will have quarrelled and had disagreements about the best way forward and how to deal with difficult situations.

“As all the saints knew, finding God’s way forward is never easy, just as the road to Calvary was difficult. Saints are not people who had an easy life, but men and women who faced the difficulties of life. As somebody said, faith is the daring of the soul to go further than it can see. Sometimes, when you’re in a dark place, you think you’ve been buried, but actually you’ve been planted. Be people of prayer in this church so that Christ can send you out of the church into our streets.”

Commenting on the challenging decision Columba and his monks took to live as community, Bishop Donal said: “That is not easy. But the witness of monks and nuns is that they are prepared to live, pray and work in community because they are witnessing to a God who is faithful to us, even when we make mistakes. We live in a culture that focuses on me. It gives rise to throwaway relationships which last as long as it suits me. And it is a very dangerous world in which many children are growing up.

“Christ asks you to build a parish community. That is not just a club for like-minded people. A real community is built with people who are different and who finds

graced ways to handle conflict. We know from the multiplicity of Christian churches that it is easy to split and stay with the people who are like us. But real Christian maturity comes from building a parish community which makes space for those who are different, those with whom we think we do not have much in common. You will be a strong Columban parish community when you can nourish relationships that build you up and help you to reach out to those who want to feel loved and cherished.”

He concluded: “We remember St Columba before the God who inspired him. And we celebrate all those links in the chain that connect us to the years when Columba lived here and on Iona. Those links were strongest when people learned three lessons from our Patron: Know that we are a parish that is meant to go out and not retreat; Know that we are a parish that prays so that we can face the challenges of our own society; Know how to build community in a fragmented world that wants to belong and is afraid of commitment.

“Only if we do that, can we really call him the holy patron of our town and ask him from his place in heaven to look down. St Columba, pray for us.”

Following Mass, the traditional procession to St Columba’s Well for the blessing of the water there was led by the St Colmcille Pipe Band. Afterwards, everyone was invited to the Long Tower Primary School Assembly Hall for refreshments and a traditional music session.



Oak tree blessing

Involving the children of the Parish in the 240th anniversary celebrations for St Columba’s Church, an Oak sapling, donated by a local family, was planted following the 10 am Children’s Mass on the Feast of St Columba.

The young tree was planted in the Cemetery in front of the main door of the Church, with the help of Daire, Ruby and Oscar, pupils of Gaelscoil Eadain, Long Tower and Nazareth House Primary Schools.

Prior to the planting, Fr Gerard Mongan, Adm Long Tower, prayed a special Oak Tree Blessing that he had composed for the occasion.

“God of Heaven and Earth,

the work of Your hands is made known in your bountiful creation and in the lives of those who faithfully live their lives in your grace. We ask you to bless this tree which will remind us of the growth and graces that you gave to us through the many people who helped to sow the seeds of faith in this parish community.

May it blossom anew, grow strong and beautiful in our midst. Raising its branches in praise of you, may it offer shade and respite to all forms of created life. Just as the earth is renewed and sustained with each new planting, may our life in you be renewed as we plant

this oak tree to commemorate our deceased parishioners and loved ones, whose faith and commitment is the bedrock of our parish community.

May this tree remind us of the ones whom we love and are now held forever in your never-ending love. May this tree dig deep roots and grow wide branches to bear witness to your abundant love and grace made known in them. May this tree speak the power of your life in our midst, deeply rooted and ever growing in all creation, through Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.”

Musical celebration of Cathedral 150th anniversary *by Niamh Kehoe*

THE choirs of St Eugene’s Cathedral and Altnagelvin Hospital joined together for a concert on Sunday, May 21, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the Cathedral.

Altnagelvin Hospital Choir was directed by Derek Collins and accompanied by Nicky Morton on organ. The St Eugene’s Choir was directed by Maghnus Monaghan and accompanied by Derek Collins on organ. Their repertoire ranged from Handel’s Messiah to Bob Chilcott’s Gloria.

As a parishioner and musician, I

thought it was fantastic to hear that an outside choir was coming to perform. I was intrigued to know what music they would perform.

During the concert, I was thinking that it would be worthwhile for there to be more opportunities like this available in the parish for the younger generation, particularly for them to be exposed to various genres of music. It only takes one concert or even one piece of music to captivate someone’s interest, which can then be developed in numerous ways and, in the long term, possibly

leading to a career pathway.

I enjoyed being in the congregation and listening. It brought back cherished memories from my time at Maynooth University performing Handel’s Messiah with the Ladies’ Choir and The Choral Society.

The concert concluded with commentary from Bishop Dónal. He didn’t need to say much as he stated: “The applause needed no other words, [...] it was a wonderful and warm reception from the congregation.”



Adorers of Blessed Sacrament urged to pray for and encourage vocations



ADORERS of the Blessed Sacrament travelled from various parts of the island of Ireland, including bus loads from parishes within the Derry Diocese, to Knock Shrine for the annual National Eucharistic Adoration Pilgrimage on the weekend of April 22-23, and filled the Basilica to its fullest since the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine opened up following the Covid lockdowns.

Speaking at the end of the pilgrimage, Brendan Cleary of the National Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration, encouraged the many pilgrims setting out on their journey home to continue to 'keep watch with Jesus' and to encourage others to spend time in Eucharistic Adoration, interceding for their parishes and the ministry of their priests.

Expressing thanks to all involved in the pilgrimage, he paid tribute to Fr Pat Collins

CM, spiritual director to the New Springtime Community based in Dublin, author, and conference speaker, who led a Healing Service and gave the keynote address for the pilgrimage, and to Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly, of Cashel & Emly, who was the chief celebrant at the closing Mass.

The Pilgrimage Programme included a period of Prayer & Adoration for Children of the Eucharist, led by founder, Antoinette Moynihan, in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, with a number of Children of the Eucharist from the Claudy Parish taking part.

In his homily, Archbishop O'Reilly, referring to the encounter between Jesus and the two travellers on the road to Emmaus, told those gathered for the Mass that they were witnesses to the Resurrection that promises eternal life and the graces they have received in their lives.

Highlighting what Peter had

said about always being ready to give an account, to anyone who asks, about the hope that is within you, he remarked: "To be a witness at any given time is what we are to be today.

"We pray for each other and we ask that the Lord will strengthen us to give an account for the hope in our daily lives."

Considering how this hope can be shared, Archbishop O'Reilly suggested: "Praying in groups together, aware that it is under the power of the Holy Spirit that we gather."

He added: "Spending time before the Eucharist, we have the opportunity to get to know God in a deep way; a knowledge that is nourished by the Holy Spirit."

With the national Year of Prayer for Vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life beginning on Good Shepherd Sunday, the Archbishop commented: "From all parts of Ireland, all of you are by now aware of the challenge regarding priestly vocations. The Year of Prayer will be a challenge for us to think about what it means, personally, to look for vocations."

Recalling his own vocation story, he spoke of how he had first been drawn to the missionary priesthood and also to teaching, and referred to a conversation he had with his priest, who asked him what he was going to do: "I

told him that I was thinking of going to the national teaching college and he said that he was a bit disappointed, as he had thought that I would have went for the priesthood.

"That began in me a journey that has brought me to where I am today. Don't be afraid to give a word of support and encouragement to someone you think could have a vocation in priesthood or religious life."

He added: "Could you identify someone who may have a vocation? We must call forth priests. It is the priest to whom a community turns in times of need. Be willing, quietly, to go beyond the prayer and seek out someone who may be willing to consider priesthood. It is not easy to do that, but sometimes if someone feels supported, they will go for it."

"Pray for vocations to priesthood and religious life," he continued, "Let us be witnesses of encouragement. Just say to someone, I think you might do very well as a priest in our community. Pray for the Church in Ireland that we be granted priests in our communities and for peace in our world."

At the end of the ceremony, Archbishop O'Reilly blessed the congregation with a relic of St Patrick.



Children of the Eucharist founder, Antoinette Moynihan leading children in Adoration during the National Eucharistic Adoration.



Carmelite Summer Scheme

THE Carmelites at Termonbacca Derry will hold a summer scheme this year, from Monday, July 31 – Friday, August 4.

Each day will run from 12 noon – 4 pm, and is for young people aged 8-14years old. The theme of the week will be 'Parables', and each day will look at some of the Parables through fun, games, arts and crafts, music etc.

It will be a week full of fun, friendship and faith. The week will cost £15 per person. If you have any queries or for booking, please contact Aoife at termonbaccaderry@gmail.com.

Rosary initiative for Year of Prayer for Vocations by Fr Pat O'Hagan, Diocesan Vocations' Director

RECENTLY, I was approached by a parishioner who has come up with what I think is a wonderful idea in conjunction with the Year of Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood. It's very simple but has the potential to be very effective, and it's very easy to organise and then practise.

Anyone who wishes to take part is asked to invite 19 other people to join them in saying one decade of the Rosary every day for the intentions of the Year of Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood.

Everybody in the group of 20 is allocated a different Mystery of the Rosary, with the result that a full Rosary is said by each group of 20 each day of the Year of Prayer, which continues until Good Shepherd Sunday, April 21, 2024.

Joyful Mysteries: The Annunciation; The Visitation; The Birth of Jesus; The Presentation; The Finding in the Temple.

Sorrowful Mysteries: The Agony in the Garden; The Scourging at the Pillar; The Crowning with Thorns; The Carrying of the

Cross; The Crucifixion.

Glorious Mysteries: The Resurrection; The Ascension; The Coming of the Holy Spirit; The Assumption; The Coronation of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Mysteries of Light: The Baptism of Jesus; The Wedding Feast at Cana; The Proclamation of the Kingdom; The Transfiguration; The Institution of the Eucharist.

Share Good News so that others may attend Mass and see the mysteries of our faith celebrated – Fr Pat Collins CM



Fr Pat Collins CM, guest speaker at the National Adoration Pilgrimage in Knock.

THE Eucharist and the Foundational Truths of the Christian Faith (Kerygma) was the theme of the keynote address for the annual National Eucharistic Adoration Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, which was delivered by Fr Pat Collins, a Vincentian priest based in Dublin involved in evangelisation through the New Springtime Community.

Fr Collins noted that Pope Francis mentioned the foundational Christian proclamation in 'Evangelii Gaudium' (The joy of the Gospel), in par 164, when he wrote: "We have rediscovered the fundamental role of the first announcement or kerygma, which needs to be the centre of all evangelising activity and all efforts at Church renewal...the first proclamation must ring out over and over: 'Jesus Christ loves you; He gave His life to save you; and now He is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you...' This is the principal proclamation, the one which we must hear again and again in different ways."

Fr Collins went on to list six main points that modern scholars have suggested that the kerygma contains: God loves you and wants an intimate relationship

with you; All have sinned, and thereby have weakened or broken our relationship with God and are in need of salvation; Jesus died to forgive our sins; Repent and believe; Receive the Holy Spirit and His gifts; Enter fully into Christian community.

Pointing out that kerygma is contained in every Mass celebrated, he then considered how each is present in the Eucharist, beginning with 'God loves you'.

"The Eucharist is preeminently the sacrament of God's love", said Fr Collins, adding that this was highlighted in Eucharistic prayer number four, when the priest says just before the Consecration: "He always loved those who were His own in the world. When the time came for Him to be glorified by you, His heavenly Father, He showed the depth of His love."

He then recalled that, after saying a Mass in Bishopstown in Cork a number of years ago, a man who had attended said he had seen a beating heart in his hands when he elevated both the host and the chalice at the consecration.

"At the heart of the Eucharist," he remarked, "is the beating heart of love."

Regarding the point 'All have sinned and are in need of salvation', Fr Collins remarked: "Our sins prevent us from fully experiencing the presence and the love of God. The Greek word for sin 'hamartia' literally means 'to miss the mark'. God wants us to lead holy and loving lives, by obeying the commandments especially the great commandment of loving our neighbours as ourselves. However the good we wish to do, we sometimes fail to do, and the evil we wish to avoid is exactly what we do as a result of either weakness or malice."

He added: "At the beginning of the Eucharist, we acknowledge that we are sinners in need of God's mercy when we say, 'I confess to almighty God, and to you, my brothers and sisters, that I have greatly sinned through my thoughts and in my words, in what I have done, and in what I have failed to do.' Later in the Mass, we say, 'Lamb of God you take away the sin of the world, have mercy on us'."

He went on to note, having heard lots of confessions as a priest, that "because people have lost their sense of God, they have lost sense of their sins."

Considering the point, 'Jesus died to forgive our sins', Fr Collins quoted St Peter: "The burden of our sins He Himself carried in His own body to the Cross and bore it there, so that we, having died so far as our sins are concerned, may live righteous lives" (1 Peter 2:24).

He added: "We are reminded of this amazing truth at every Mass we attend, especially at the consecration. When the priest extends his hands over the bread and wine, it is symbolic of Jesus acting as our scapegoat, by taking our sins upon Himself. The priest is transferring the sins of the people onto Jesus in the Eucharist. "At the consecration of the wine, the priest says, 'Take this, all of you, and drink from it: this is the cup of my blood, the blood of the new and everlasting covenant. It will be shed for you and for many so that sins may be forgiven'. Jesus died to forgive our sins and we remember that at every Mass we attend."

Repent and believe

Commenting on the fourth point, 'Repent and believe', Fr Collins said: "Many of us find it hard to acknowledge our failings. Pride can make us reluctant to

honestly admit our faults without excusing or minimizing them, eg, by attributing them to impersonal factors such as environmental pressures, unconscious influences, ignorance etc. But just as bright sunlight reveals dust particles on window sills and table tops, so the light of God's merciful love in the Mass reveals our own lack of mercy and love.

"Like the Prodigal Son, we need to acknowledge our wrongdoing while coming to recognise how loving and merciful God really is. We should pray, 'Lord, search me and know me, and reveal to me any sin within me.' When the light of God's love shines on us, it is in this light that we see what is wrong in us. It is not frightening in any way; it is gentle."

Believing that the pain of purgatory will be the pain of how "short we were in love", Fr Collins remarked: "It will be intensely painful to know that you were not nearly as loving as you could have been. When I go to Confession, the main thing that I examine myself on is whether I was loving since my last Confession, and I realise that because of my lack of patience that I have not been as loving as I could have been. When I get out of bed in the morning, I intend to do well, but by the time I am going back to bed at night and examine my conscience, I realise that I did not do well in loving."

He added: "There are many prayers in the Eucharist which express our repentance and belief. I like the prayer we say just before receiving Holy communion which says, 'Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress, as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ'."

"A lot of us are sadly lacking in self-awareness. We see the speck in our brothers and sisters eyes, but fail to see the plank in our own."

Moving on to the fifth point, 'Receive the Holy Spirit and His



Archbishop Kieran O'Reilly, of Cashel & Emly, who was the chief celebrant at the National Eucharistic Adoration Pilgrimage.

gifts', Fr Collins commented: "Without the Spirit, we can do nothing, but when the Spirit who is the Lord and Giver of Life is active within us, we can lead holy and loving lives. At the consecration, the priest calls down the Holy Spirit upon the bread and wine to change them into the sacramental body and blood of Christ. Even though the bread and wine retain their outward features, Jesus Christ is present, and what makes that possible is the power of the Holy Spirit descending upon these elements.

"When I'm celebrating the Eucharist, I sometimes am conscious that the Holy Spirit is coming down on the members of the congregation in a life transforming way."

Commenting on the sixth point, 'Enter into the Christian

community', Fr Collins highlighted that one of the dismissals the priest says at the end of Mass is 'Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord.' We are supposed to go out and bring the kerygma that is celebrated at Mass to those who do not know the Good News. We are not supposed to do that on our own, but in community.

"We can spread the Good News that is implicit in the Eucharist by sharing our faith with others, person to person, and by joining others in order to run Life in the Spirit Seminars, which are very much approved by the Church, and Alpha Courses. Go and share the Good News with others so that, like you, they can come and attend Mass and see all these mysteries of our faith celebrated at each Mass."

Chocolate treat for Newtownstewart First Holy Communicants



Children who made their First Holy Communion on Saturday, May 13, in Newtownstewart, were invited to make their Second Holy Communion the following day, at Sunday Mass. Afterwards, they received the customary chocolate gift from Fr Roland Colhoun.

Feeny First Communicants dedicated to growing in faith by Miss McCloskey

THE primary four class at St Canice's, Feeny, have worked so hard all year. They followed the Celebrate books, 'Grow in Love' programme and attended Mass weekly with their class.

They had many visits from Charlotte, our faith Coordinator, and Fr Micheal, our Parish priest. They were also very lucky to receive visits from deacons during the Parish Mission.

The children have taken part in the monthly Blessed Sacrament programme. They thoroughly enjoyed the Online Preparation

Programme with Therese Ferry, and have been very respectful and dedicated to their faith this year.

They prepared monthly for the 'Do This in Memory' Mass and took part in the liturgy through Reading, lighting of the candle and bringing up the gifts.

A huge 'Thank You' to our school, parish and community, as well as the Derry Diocese for all their help and support throughout the year in preparing the children for their sacraments.

They made their First Communion on May 20 and have

been excellent at practising their Faith. We are extremely proud of all our children.



THIS month, we welcome St Eugene's parishioner and St Columb's College Y13 student, James Tourish on to The Net Young Writers' Team. Representing the Derry City Deanery, James reflects on the importance of the tradition of honouring the Sacred Heart of Jesus during the month of June.

Having finished her A'level exams, Bronagh shares her experience of the power of prayer, and Shea writes about the impact of the Rosary on his faith and relationship with Jesus.

Moved by the creation of a Memorial Garden at his school, St Columb's College, Sean reflects on the importance of community and of remembering community members when they are called away by death, and John shares the joy felt by his Syro-Malabar community on its recent celebration in Derry of Our Lady and St Sebastian.



Hollie Frystal, Co Tyrone Deanery. Bronagh Doherty, Co Derry Deanery. Peter Grant, Inishowen Deanery. Jodie Kennedy, Derry City Deanery. Eimear Doherty, Derry City Deanery. James Tourish, Co Derry Deanery.



Niamh O'Kane, Co Derry Deanery. John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery. Zara Schindwein, Derry City Deanery. Shea Doherty, Derry City Deanery. Evan Curran, Derry City Deanery. Seán McLaughlin, Co Tyrone Deanery.

The Power of Prayer

by Bronagh



MAY and June are two of the most stressful months in the school year for those doing A levels and GCSEs. Some may feel like the mountain of work they are facing is impossible, the never-ending timetables of exams and the stress overwhelming.

I have just finished my last year of A Levels and can now reflect on how prayer helped me through these times.

My form teacher always reminded us that "God will provide" for us during our exams, and before each exam we said a prayer that He would help us remember everything we had been taught.

Prayer brings a great sense of comfort in these scenarios; the feeling that He is on your side and has the power to make great things happen. I fully believe that God has a plan for everyone, a roadmap, and He won't let us stray from it; even if we don't know where the destination is yet, He does, and we will eventually. The feeling of handing over some of our worries calms us down and brings comfort.

Prayer brings comfort to those in all circumstances, such as times of sickness, war, and grief. During Mass, we regularly pray

for the children and families caught up in crossfire, that they may find safety and return to their normal lives.

Sickness is when prayer is called upon most commonly. When someone is sick, prayer can bring a family together in hope that they will be healed, or suffering will be ended. Jesus performed many miracles during his life, healing the blind, the paralyzed man and the man with leprosy. This gives people the hope that He may cure their loved one.

Ultimately, prayer brings people together, in person and spiritually. During Covid was one of the strongest examples of this. Mass went online and the congregation watched from their own homes, but spiritually everyone was together praying for a return to normality and thanking God for what we had. Since then, people have returned to Mass.

Recently, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown, there was a powerful visual reminder of how prayer brings people together. The annual Corpus Christi Mass was held. This is a Mass that particularly involves the families of P4 children who have made their First Holy

Communities are built by those in them... and when someone is called away by death, it is necessary and respectful to keep them in memory by Seán

REMEMBRANCE of those who have passed is vital to maintaining a healthy community; be that in a parish, a workplace, a family... in this case, it is a school – an opening ceremony in memory of the late members of the St Columb's College Community. The opening of the Memorial Garden for our late College Community members occurred on the dull afternoon of April 26.

For weeks beforehand, I had glimpsed through the windows of the internal courtyard at the quiet and still top-end of the College building, only grasping blurred and hasty glances at the progress that was being made as I walked from class to class. Stone slate was hauled in, a large metal cross, the Stations of the Cross themselves, even wooden benches and a fountain in the centre.

The first thing I saw when walking through the glass, double doors and onto the hard, cobbled floor of the courtyard, was the cross, dark, tall, and embedded in a slate platform, surrounded by flowers and marble plates bearing the names of those recently deceased – Reuven Simon and Joseph Sebastian. The two boys may have been a year older than myself, and although I knew them only to see, I still felt a sense of loss because they were fellow College boys on the same educational journey, in the same school community. Their loss rippled through the school.

The cross had been cemented firmly into the stone on Good Friday, at three in the afternoon. To tie off this symbolic component of the Memorial Garden, a Scripture quote from John 3:16 was engraved on a plaque, reading, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him may not perish but may have eternal life." Jesus Christ loved us and died for us so that we could have salvation. Death brings not the end of life, but the end of the test, the beginning of the new chapter.

In that courtyard are two square patches of grass, each hosting a majestic birch tree. Flanking all of this are the 14 Stations, each one a fine, professional steel mould depicting Jesus Christ on His last humanly journey, before His next

Communion.

The Corpus Christi Mass is one of Adoration and Benediction; a Mass of thanksgiving for the Body and Blood of Jesus. It is led by the children doing the readings and prayers, followed by a procession around the town to show off their



chapter beyond our small world. Each one has a golden Roman numeral at the bottom of the plate, which is attached to a stand so that it is raised off the ground. Between the two small lawns is the fountain, square and stone, quiet and barely rippling...the garden is very tranquil.

I first saw the garden completed about an hour and a half before the ceremony began. I paced around the outside of the Stations, gazing at each one for a moment. Sometime in the minutes after, I heard someone say, "In all the years I've been here, it was an unused space. This is just what it needed, I think."

I couldn't agree more. In my five years at the College so far, the courtyard had always been desolated, empty and grim, its only components being the birch trees. It was a gap like the gaps left behind by those who were called away from us. But now I felt that it had been filled with a better purpose – memory.

I returned later that afternoon. A crowd consisting of most of the families of the deceased members of the College Community had gathered at the doors and were taking up positions around the courtyard, between the blue-tiled pillars that supported the floor above, which provided some shelter if it rained.

Remember

Many College boys and teachers were also there; those who had been in the same class as late pupils, those who had taught them, and those who had been a colleague of late members of staff. But we were all there for the

communion dresses and suits, spreading the word of God.

Prayer brings people of all ages together, those just starting their journey and older members of our Parish. This was such an uplifting Mass and showed that prayer is a time to be thankful and grateful

for everything we have, as we truly are so lucky.

same reason, no matter what our personal connection to a deceased member of the community – to remember. To remember how good they were. Everyone collected a small prayer book, which contained pencil drawings by a past pupil of the Stations, and all the responses needed for the ceremony. Mr Madden, the Principal of the College, gave a speech, welcoming us to the ceremony. It was quiet and peaceful as he did so. This was followed by the violin and singing, before Bishop Donal McKeown and Fr Seán O'Donnell anointed first the Cross and then every station individually. All was silent bar the clicking of the metal chain, and slow sound of the violin.

Next came the readings in memory of the deceased. Pairs of pupils or pairs of teachers went to the microphone in turn and read solemnly a piece of Scripture. The Scripture varied, but the response of the crowd remained the same: "I love you Jesus my love of all things; I repent with my whole heart for having offended you. Never permit me to separate myself from you again. Grant that I may love you always and then do with me what you will."

Each pair would do their readings and the crowd would give the response. They would then slowly walk to each station until all were occupied by a pair. It was very silent as each pair made their way to their Station, and the next set of readings would not begin until they had completed the journey, which reminded me of the journey that Jesus made around those Stations, stumbling

from the crest of joy or the trough of despair: it is a vast supernatural force that opens out my heart and binds me close to Jesus."

Prayer means something different to everyone, but one thing that is the same is that God is always there to listen and guide us.

His way to His own death at the Place of the Skull, Golgotha, with the weight of His own cross on His shoulders. Only the readers walked firmly. The weight on their shoulders was that of mournful remembrance.

Sparse rain pattered down weakly, like tears on the courtyard, and anyone who was standing outside of the pillared shelter moved back under it. Umbrellas were offered to the pairs who stood at the Stations, but they were not accepted.

The first reader had no pairing. He walked alone to the Cross and stood behind it, looking down in sorrow. He was not joined until the last reader had read and joined him. The Stations were now complete.

This short ceremony seemed long to me, and I'm sure that applied to every member of the College Community present, and to the families of the deceased, no matter if the death had occurred just last year or a decade ago – even more in some cases.

But no matter how sad and emotional the event was, it allowed me to mentally highlight just how important a community is. Communities of people are built and developed by those in them; they do not just come together as they are after many years. And when someone is called away from a community by death, it is necessary and respectful to keep them in your memory.

To my fellow College boys, Reuven and Joseph, and all deceased members of the College community, rest in peace.

Syro-Malabar Feast in Derry by John



Bishop Donal with the Apostolic Visitor, Mar Stephen Cherappanath.

ON May 21, the Syro Malabar Community in Derry celebrated our annual feast dedicated to Our Lady and, from this year onwards, St Sebastian, at St Columb's Church in the Waterside area of Derry.

In Kerala, India, where the Syro Malabar faithful in Derry come from, feasts dedicated to Our Lady and to St Sebastian are extremely common. It may seem weird that St Sebastian, a Roman Soldier with little connection to the East, is a popular saint in

Kerala. However, this devotion can be explained, as St Sebastian is the patron of those who are plague-stricken or are affected by disease. Catholics in Kerala began their devotion to him as a result of epidemics and diseases that affected them during the winter season.

His feast is usually celebrated during December or January, which coincides with his feast day in the Church's calendar of January 20.

In order to prepare for this

feast, or 'perunnal' in Malayalam, our Syro Malabar Chaplain, Fr Joshy, prayed for two out of our 12 sponsors for every Sunday before our Parish feast. We prayed a novena to Our Lady for the Sundays preceding the feast in preparation for the feast.

As the feast was also dedicated to St Sebastian, days before the Feast, the arrows from his statue were taken around to the homes of families in our community, where we prayed for the Saint's intercession. This is a common devotion in Kerala and so it was also done here.

When it came to the Feast, the procession to the church began around half two, led by the cross, followed by the 12 sponsors in their garments, followed by the altar boys and the priests.

The first thing that happened was the raising of the flag, which is a typical custom for parish feasts in many Syro-Malabar parishes. The flag was raised by Bishop Stephen Chirappanath and Fr Michael Canny, Parish Priest of the Waterside Parish.

We then entered the church in a similar procession and the

Qurbana began, which was celebrated by Bishop Stephen. It was a very beautiful liturgy. After the Qurbana, the novena was said again, and prayers and devotions were said to Our Lady and to St Sebastian.

A final procession then occurred, in which the faithful assembled in the church also took part, going around the outside of the church. After coming back inside the church, Bishop Stephen then blessed this year's sponsors and the sponsors for next year's Feast.

The ceremony ended with refreshments, which were sponsored by the sponsors. The Feast was the combined effort of the Trustees, the Parish Council members, the Sponsors, Catechism Staff, Choir members, Matrujodi (Mother's Association) members, Altar Boys, and our entire Parish community under the leadership of Fr Joshy.

Overall, the Feast was a joyous event for our community, and we pray that through the intercession of Our Lady and St Sebastian, next year's Feast will be even more joyous!



Let's honour June as the Month of the Sacred Heart of Jesus by James



In 1899, Pope Leo XIII received several letters from Mary of the Divine Heart, a German religious sister, urging him to consecrate the world to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as she said she was instructed to do so from Christ Himself.

Interested, and perhaps even emotionally impacted by this, according to theologian, Laurent Volken, the Pope commissioned a group of theologians to examine the petition on the basis of revelation and sacred tradition. The outcome was positive, and so in the encyclical letter Annum sacrum, Pope Leo XIII decreed that the entire world would be consecrated to the Sacred Heart

of Jesus and that June would be established as the Month of the Sacred Heart. The Pope would later say that the consecration was "the greatest act of my pontificate".

We must ask ourselves then, how can we honour and respect this month that is devoted to the sheer love and compassion of the heart of Christ towards humanity.

Well firstly, we can pray Acts of Consecration to the Sacred Heart, which glorify and recognise the love that Christ has for us, we can also make Acts of Reparation that are said with the intent to expiate sins that we have committed, with Pope Pius XI saying: "The spirit of expiation or reparation has always had the first and foremost place

in the worship given to the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus."

We can also reflect the love that Jesus has for us, in our own lives through our actions and our words. Simple and small things can make a substantial impact when they are done many times, and by many people. Saying 'please' and 'thank you', holding the door open for others and comforting others in times of anxiety or stress, may seem trivial but they do, indeed, matter.

Acts of kindness and respect go far, and it is these things that we must base the foundation of our society upon. If we cannot firstly do the small things right, how can we then hope to change the

world in colossal ways? The verse, Hebrews 13:16 is clear in showing what we must do, as it reads "Do not forget to do good and to help one another, because these are the sacrifices that please God."

Through the embodiment of the teachings of Christ and the

values He sought to promote, we can genuinely help others and authentically dignify our faith in the Sacred Heart of Christ. May we never forget the love that God has for all of us, and may we seek to always do what is good, not what is expedient.

Each Mystery of the Rosary has touched my heart in a special way and deepened my connection with Jesus by Shea

I would like to share how the holy Rosary has affected my prayer life and strengthened my love for God.

Over the past year, I have begun to truly journey in my faith, making it my main priority in life, no matter what way it takes me.

To help me, I have started praying a lot more often, especially the Rosary. It has been an incredible journey so far and has opened my eyes up to the life of Jesus and Mary through the four Mysteries – the Joyful, Sorrowful, Glorious and Luminous.

Each one of the Mysteries of the Rosary has touched my heart in a special way at different times over the past year, and has helped

me connect in a deeper way with Jesus each time, strengthening my faith in Him more and more.

It wasn't until last year that I learnt how to pray the Rosary while I was at Camp Veritas, where it was said every day. If it wasn't for my friend, Eddie, it would have taken me even longer.

At the time of the Camp, I was only finding Jesus, and I only knew three prayers from the Rosary. I actually, at that time, did not know the Mysteries even existed. However, my friend, Eddie very patiently taught me the prayers and the Mysteries, and, for the past couple of months, has even given me the opportunity to lead the Rosary at our Youth 2000 Adoration.

This has been amazing and



a great way to experience Our Lord and Saviour, as well as a great way to share my experience

of Jesus with others in my own community.

Derry Search Summer Scheme

THE date for popular Derry Search Summer Scheme, Mol an Oige (Praise the Young) is drawing near, and places are filling fast.

The week of fun will run from July 3-7, beginning at 10 am and closing at 2 pm, and is open to children in P1-P7. The

registration fee is £25. Located at Unit 5, Iona Business Park, Southway, the Youth Group can be contacted via: 07950 326838; derrysearchyouthgroup@gmail.com; or derrysearchyouthgroup.org

Derry Search Youth Group

MOL AN OIGE

REGISTER YOUR CHILD FOR THIS YEAR'S SUMMER SCHEME!

3rd - 7th July
10 am - 2pm
P1 - P7 ages
Limited Spaces Available

Unit 5
Iona Business Park
Southway
£25 per child

☎ Call: 07712571086
f Derry Search Youth Group
✉ derrysearchyouthgroup@gmail.com

Hike with the Servant Sisters *by Niamh Kehoe*



ON Saturday, May 27, I was going on a hike with the Servant Sisters. At the beginning of that week, I was aware that the day was approaching and needed to start my preparations. After work on the Friday I went to the town to buy appropriate footwear, a stick, and a bag. I came home with all three. Taking advice onboard, I went to the local shop to buy some snacks to eat for an energy boost on the hike, if necessary.

I was delighted that I was prepared. Later in the day, my mother and neighbour had noticed the increased pace in my voice; evidence that I was excited for what lay ahead.

Everything happens for a reason

Late on the Friday night, my plans changed regarding travel arrangements. At first, my father was going to take me down as my two friends planned to stay overnight at the nuns' house the previous night. Later, I found out that they instead planned to travel on the Saturday morning as well, so I travelled with my friend, Emma from Strabane to Killygordon, where we were welcomed by the nuns.

A few of the girls were already outside by the cars waiting on us, so we went out to meet them. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw one of my other life-long friends, Bethany. Both of us were surprised to see each other. Not long after that, Emma and I were told that we were travelling with Bethany and her sister, Lauren, to Mount Errigal.

I was delighted. This was a chance for us to catch up. I grew up with Lauren and Bethany; we attended the same primary and secondary schools and studied together at further education. Every now and then, I saw Bethany at other faith filled events. It was God's grace that I was about to take on a challenge with them and other like-minded people.

Challenge

At first, we posed for a group photograph. Grainne then read out a quote from a book on Mary, to guide us on our journey. After this, we made a start. There was a new path at the bottom of the mountain, which was a huge difference from the previous muddy path. We were full of energy and found it no bother at all until, suddenly, I really needed to stop for a drink and food. I felt that I could not turn my bag round to get access to my water; that's how fast we were walking. So, I asked the person at the front to stop as I needed an energy boost. Thank goodness others were prepared with alternatives, as my protein bar was not appetising.

For a while, I was thinking that I would have to go back and wait for everyone at the bottom of the mountain, as a voice in my head was saying that I was not able mentally or physically to do it. With relief, after I ate my chocolate croissant and drank some water, I was ready to proceed.

Support

I received encouraging support

from the group frequently ensuring me that I was still okay. As a result, it was easier for others to speak out regarding how they felt, with some slowing down as it was starting to get tiring. We helped each other any way we could.

Challenges like this can test friendships and even ourselves, regarding helping others in need. There were many different challenges climbing the mountain: the tiredness; the large steps; the cold; the rain; the wind; the fog; and even the effort to stay on a rock trying not to fall backwards. I had a stick with me, but it was more of a hindrance than anything. However, I was glad that someone else was able to use it as an aid.

The climb we were enduring was a reminder of the journey that Peter, James and John took with Jesus up the high Mountain of Tabor for the Transfiguration. Thinking of this, I was hoping this challenge would help me think of ways to transform my own life for the better. Sacrificing access to the internet, being away from distractions and the real world, allowed us time to do this.

To guide us, we recited the Rosary, the prayer that Our Lady of Fatima gave us. We prayed and stayed together as a group, which in my opinion strengthened each of our journeys.

There was one last challenge on the way up. From top point one to top point two, it was very narrow. Lauren showed kindness in taking my hand to reach the corner, as it was tricky between rocks.

We got a few photographs at the top as evidence of our achievement. Next, we descended and stopped at the corner point to eat some food. As we were eating, we met some Derry folk ascending, who were also faith-filled, and wished them luck on the remainder of their journey.

After our food, Grainne reminded us of the quote we read at the beginning of our journey, hoping to gather more inspiration to finish it. After she had read it, the clouds began to move and there was relief on everyone's faces as we appreciated that the heat from the sun would warm us up.

Reflection

As we descended, I thought of the challenge we had just endured. I was relieved, proud, privileged, and so blessed. I thought of why I had chosen to partake in this hike. I knew I could trust the people in the group, but I asked myself why a challenge like this? I suppose one reason was to prepare me for an upcoming challenge at the end of June, which will be spending three days at Lough Derg.

Another reason is the challenge itself. I was using it as a sacrifice as it had been pointed out to me that I was being selfish at home. This year, I have been particularly busy in a new job and studying, therefore, I have not contributed into the house as much as I used to. I asked God to forgive me for not pouring my love onto my family at home, and hoped that he understood that I am pouring my love onto the children I teach.



Dunboe, St John's and Aghadowey pilgrims undertake Four Patrons' Walk *by Fr Neil Farren*

THE Parish of Dunboe, St John's and Aghadowey had their Pilgrim Walk of the four Patrons on Saturday morning, June 10. The 21 Pilgrim walkers assembled at the Old Dunboe Church area and walked, via Dunboe Wood, to St Mary's Church, Dunboe.

They had a coffee stop a little later on before re-entering the wood on the high path above the Serpentine Lake and passing Dungannon Hill, on way back to where walk began.

The Old Dunboe Church site and Dungannon Hill has a long history. This Hill was originally Dunboe Hill, with its ancient settlement. The four Patron Saints

passed through this area.

St Patrick, upon leaving the Faughan region, left the Gospel of St Martin at the Dunboe site when he visited en route to the Coleraine area and its eastern hinterland. Unfortunately, with the battle of 1182 at the site, the Gospel was taken away and never found. The church ruined in the battle was rebuilt in 1192. Its ruins are still visible.

St Columba, after the Drumceatt Conference, for which he returned from Iona to attend, met St Comghall in the Dunboe region before being brought to St Comghall's Foundation at Camus juxta Bann.

St Columba life's story was written by St Eunan, who succeeded Columba at Iona as Abbott following the death of the Dove of the Church, and thankfully wrote about St Columba's life. St Eunan was the founder of the ancient Dunboe foundation.

We are blessed to have had these Irish Apostles walk this way before us.

On our Pilgrim Walk, we had two occasions to stop for a short prayer service, and two other opportunities to walk a few moments in silent prayer.

A Pilgrim Walk is good for mind, body and soul.



Rouskey Mass of Thanksgiving for Knock pilgrimages over the years

THERE was a wonderful celebration in St Mary's Church, Rouskey, in Co Tyrone, on Trinity Sunday, when Fr Francis Bradley said a Mass of Thanksgiving for the people of the Parish who had run buses to Knock over the years, and all gathered afterwards in the local community centre for some refreshments and musical entertainment, as well as a fine display of Irish Dancing.

Fr Frank was joined on the altar by former Parish Priest, Fr John Forbes, and Fr Peter McCawille, SMA, native of Dregish, and the ceremony was beautifully enhanced by the music of Cara Rose Brogan.

In his homily, bearing in mind the celebration of the Triune God, Fr Frank spoke of the benefits of geo-location systems such as 'What3Words', remarking: "The benefit of this system is that no matter how remote the location is, it will pinpoint the spot with amazing accuracy.

"It is based on the old notion of triangulation: the process by which a place is pinpointed by being cross referenced from three known locations. As such, every three-metre square of the earth's surface, no matter where it is, from the remotest parts of Antarctica to the bustling streets of New York, has been given a unique combination of three random words. It is a most accurate way of setting your course, of finding your location."

"The use of three," he reflected, "is widespread in language and science: there are three dimensions, three primary

colours, and so on. And when it comes to God, the same holds true. God is not an inert and distant being, dislocated from the world in which we live and the ways in which we live. God's nature is written into our nature, and the laws of our nature reflect the nature of God himself. God has revealed Himself as Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

He went on to say that there had been "triangulation down through the years too, when it came to buses going to Knock", noting: "There was, initially, John Pat and Pat McSwiggan, and then later they were joined by Delma McSwiggan and, again, by Brigid Carlin and Kathleen McSwiggan and Mary McCullagh and Peggy McSwiggan.

"Obviously, where buses to Knock were concerned there was no getting lost! They were always at the front of the bus - guiding and directing, praying and chatting. They had their destination in mind - a route around here lifting people along the road. I can still remember the excitement standing at the top of the New Line in Teebane.

"At 10 years of age, I had never been on a bus in my life; it was all big stuff back then. Off to Bundoran for the tea break at the little café down to the left, where the buses could park, and then on to Knock. The Rosary said on the way there, whilst there and on the way home; Mass attended and Benediction after the Rosary Procession, and the day was complete with the eats in Bundoran on the way back. And

Pat has done this 101 times since 1957. It was always a great day, the first Sunday in June."

"The Holy Trinity is our destination, our true North, so to speak," continued Fr Frank, "We often think of the Holy Trinity as the source from whom we draw our life. But the Holy Trinity is also the destination to which we are drawn in hope. Our pilgrimages to Knock helped keep our compasses set for Heaven, Our Lady, St Joseph and St John were triangulation points leading us to the Lamb of God on the Altar there.

"So the question might be, 'What three words will mark your location, my location?' Before the ceremony here, I checked what three random words were assigned to the very spot on which I'm standing now; interestingly, they are 'motivates, deciding and bundles'.

"As we reflect on the mystery of the Holy Trinity, we should realise that for us as Christians, the three words assigned to the place we are searching for are, 'Father, Son, and Spirit'. And there is nothing random about it - this is how we have been created, the life for which we have been designed. Heaven is our destination; everlasting life is our greatest gift; eternal rest our deepest prayer.

"But for now, we honour the patch of ground on which we stand and from here we ask the help and guidance of God, the Holy Trinity, to safely bring us all the way to Heaven as so many brought us safely to Knock."



Gortin school honour Our Lady with beautiful May procession



The staff and pupils of St Patrick's PS, Gortin, led by Fr Roland Colhoun, held a beautiful May Procession in the grounds of the school, in honour of Mary.

Crowning of Our Lady's Statue in Limavady



Some of the children and parishioners who were involved in the May procession at Christ the King Church, Limavady, where Our Lady's statue was crowned.



May Rosary prayed weekly by Limavady children



Children gathered at St Mary's Church, Limavady, every Thursday after school to pray the Rosary for the month of May.



Inch Island faithful celebrate cherished identity on 100th anniversary of Our Lady of Lourdes Church



ON a beautiful May evening, Inch islanders gathered in Our Lady of Lourdes Church to celebrate the 100th anniversary of its opening.

Five minutes before the ceremony got underway, 68-year-old parishioner, Pius Hegarty pulled on the rope in the choir loft to ring the bell of the quaint little Donegal church. Bell-ringer for the last decade, Pius explained afterwards that he took on the role when the island priest at that time, Fr Frank Lynch, remarked that it was “a shame to have a bell and it not rung”.

The main celebrant of the Mass was Fr Frank Bradley, parish priest for Burt, Inch & Fahan, as well as Buncrana, and he was joined on the altar by Fr Paddy Baker, curate in the parish, and some of the priests who had ministered to the islanders in the past - Fr Neil McGoldrick, Fr Michael Porter, Fr David O’Kane and Fr Gerry Sweeney.

Welcoming the priests and people of the Parish, past and

present, and those watching via the webcam, Fr Frank noted that the Centenary Mass was taking place on the eve of the Blessing and Dedication of the Church back in 1923, and was just the beginning of the celebrations for the 100th anniversary.

In his homily, Fr Frank shared the view that the evening’s celebration was not a journey of nostalgia, which he felt would “do a great disservice to the past and perhaps leave ourselves bereft of hope into the future”, but a parish community coming together to celebrate the identity they cherish.

Saying that Bishop Donal would be joining them for further celebration in August, Fr Frank expressed the hope that a book will have been produced by then featuring photographs and stories to mark the Centenary and honour those who built the Church, such as Fr Michael O’Mullin, the parish priest, and Fr Thomas McConnelogue, the curate, as well as the generous

and faithful people who helped make it happen.

Describing Our Lady of Lourdes Church as “a sacred spot”, he added: “It is the heart of this place and its people, for thanks to those who went before us and those who are still believers today, from here we can draw life and refreshment still.”

He went on to refer to a story in the An Dúchas resources for Inch School back in the 1950s, which told about how there was supposed to be a thin line of white stones laid around the island, and a treasure buried deep beneath the island by the Danes, remarking: “Maybe the spot on which we stand this evening is where the treasure is to be found – and since the best place to hide something is in plain sight, we find the treasure not by digging down but by looking round.

Stubborn hope

“What we are doing here tonight is not just a stroll down memory lane...It is an acknowledgement of the place and people from

which we’ve come, the wellspring of faith and family and friendship from which we draw our identity. It is a moment in time which marks our journey onwards – a journey we do not make alone, for we have the companionship of history and the inspiration of what I would call a stubborn hope in uncertain times.

“From where do we draw this stubborn hope? By going back to the source of life and hope, for we must never forget from where we’ve come lest in our haste we forget where we’re going! And this trusted source is Jesus Christ – the heart of what this chapel represents, the foundation-stone of who we are as His people.”

He added that challenges faced today were nothing compared with those faced by the priests and people who planned and built the lovely Church dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes.

Quoting a Greek proverb that “a society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they know they shall never sit”, Fr Frank remarked: “The men

and, most especially, the women of Inch did exactly that over a hundred years ago – and we sit more comfortably today because of their faith and their courage. We must take up the challenge of imitating their great example.”

He added: “As grateful men and women, priests and people, may we not get so lost in the financial and moral mayhem of the day, to say nothing of the scientific conundrums that plague our minds and starve our hearts, that we lose hope. We must celebrate and be thankful for what has been and what we’ve received, always viewing it as a living tradition to which, in our own time, we must contribute and upon which we must build for those who, in their time, will follow us.

“As we finger through the treasure-trove of memory during these centenary celebrations... may we not overlook the efforts taken to secure the land, the investment of time, energy and expertise, which for generations has safeguarded the celebration of the sacraments and the practice

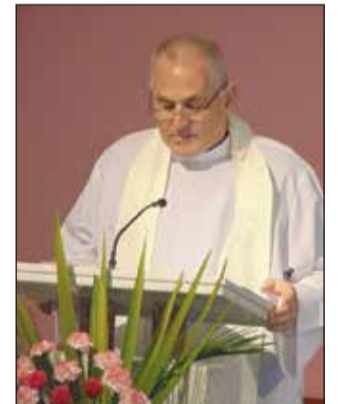
of the Catholic faith in this area.” “Little by little,” concluded Fr Frank, “we will have to grow in appreciation of the labour of love which the life and mission of the Church is in our time.

“Tonight, may we leave with a greater sense of who they really were - who they really are - and who we are and have become as a result of their generosity, their stubborn hope and their commitment.”

Thanks was expressed to the Folk Choir for the beautiful singing and music, and to all who were involved in the Liturgy of the Mass, and to those who had worked hard on the preparations for the occasion.

Amongst those present at the Centenary Mass were James and Maureen McGrory. James’ father, Patrick, had built the Grotto in the grounds of Our Lady of Lourdes Church along with his brother, John, as young men 100 years ago.

Afterwards, many made the short walk down the road to the parish hall for refreshments.





Burt Inch & Fahan calendar *by Kathleen Grant*

THANKS is extended to all who helped make the Burt Inch & Fahan 2023 calendar another great success: the photographers for allowing the use of their photographs; the local business fraternity for their sponsorship; the local shops for selling the calendar; the local media, and, above all, all who bought this special calendar.

The calendar showcases our beautiful parish and is sent all over the world. I would like to give a special mention of thanks to Malachy Harrigan, who gave a lot of his time to this project.

The total amount raised, after costs, was €3,720, which was shared between The Oncology Ward, Residents Comfort Fund, Letterkenny University Hospital, and to Burt Inch & Fahan Parish Funds.



Dr Janice Richmond, Advanced Nurse Practitioner, Oncology Dept LUH, receiving a cheque for €1,860 from Kathleen Grant. Also pictured is Breige Grant (oncology patient).

Lavey parishioners enjoy Clonard Novena

THE Lavey Parish had its annual visit to the Clonard Solemn Novena in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Help, with a number of parishioners

accompanied by their parish priest, Fr Eamon Graham and the choir from St Brigid's PS, Mayogall, which sang at the morning session.

The Novena, led by the Redemptorists, always draws large crowds and this year's theme was 'Towards a New Vision of Church'. It ran from

June 14-22 and included Blessing of the Sick at all Masses, Blessing of Children at all Masses, a Youth Session with Mass, and an Inter-Church Day.



Fr Francis Bradley PP receiving a cheque for €1,860 from Malachy Harrigan. Also pictured is Kathleen Grant.

Celebrating Cloughcor Church Bi-Centenary on Pentecost Sunday... Leckpatrick parishioners invited to continue building faith community begun 200 years ago *by Leckpatrick Parishioner*



Kathleen McCay, aged 91 and a lifelong member of the Congregation at Cloughcor, with Fr Sweeney and Ann McCann.

PENTECOST Sunday, May 28, was a momentous day in the life of Leckpatrick Parish, when parishioners celebrated the Bi-Centenary of the Parish Church, St Mary's, Cloughcor.

In the weeks leading up to the celebration, much preparation was undertaken by the Parish Pastoral Council as painting, bunting, cleaning, choir rehearsals and floral decorations were organised and carried out.

A marble wall plaque detailing the 200 years of the church was made and fixed for unveiling, and small wooden commemorative plaques were available, along with Prayer Cards, as mementoes of the occasion.

The choir enhanced the celebration on the day, as regular choir members were joined by former members who happily returned to be a part of the celebration. The choir was directed by Geraldine Devine and accompanied by Sr Perpetua.

Bishop McKeown was joined by Parish Priest, Fr Gerry Sweeney, neighbouring priests Fr Colm

O'Doherty, Fr Declan Boland, and Fr Michael Doherty, and priests who had previously served in Leckpatrick, Fr John Doherty, Fr Michael Porter, Fr Con McLaughlin, Fr Peter McLaughlin and Fr Paul Farren. They were also joined by Fr Chris McDermott, a native of Cloughcor.

Being Pentecost Sunday, the choir, with soloist Ita Devine, set the scene just before Mass began with the reflective chant, 'Veni Sancte Spiritus'.

Outside, the congregation then heard the peals of the ancient Cloughcor Bell, which Fr Sweeney rang as the entrance procession began and the choir sang the beautiful 'Spirit of God in the Clear Running Water'. Bishop Donal began celebrating the Mass, during which the readers were Oliver Barrett and Gabrielle Dooher, and the Sequence was sung by Ruth Corey.

In his homily, the Bishop reminded us that Pentecost was the Jewish feast celebrated 50 days after Passover. He spoke about how Jesus had left the apostles 40

days after His resurrection and now they were frightened and locked in a room, afraid to go out.

"They probably consoled themselves with the idea that the church could start small and after they had time to get prepared. But, The Holy Spirit had other ideas. They were told to get started straight away," he said, adding: "So, what might we learn as we celebrate 200 years since this church was built out in the country and in difficult times?"

He continued: "Firstly, when Jesus met the disciples on Easter Sunday, His first words were 'peace be with you'. He had to say it twice to reassure them, as they were His closest followers who had run away when He was arrested. He had an urgent message for them. They were to go out and preach forgiveness of sin. Their own betrayal of Jesus was now forgiven and they should now go out and tell others that they too could be forgiven whatever sin they had committed."

Saying that people in 1823 had not only wanted a church where they could worship, but that they had also wanted to gather so that Jesus could encourage them through the Sacraments and that they, too, could go out and be bearers of Mercy, even in a country that was just coming out of terrible discrimination and persecution, Bishop Donal remarked: "At the end of Mass, we are told to go out and announce the Gospel of the Lord. Today, we give thanks for those who have met Jesus in this church. It took courage to build this church and I'm sure many people were demoralised, but they were also people who were filled with the Pentecost courage of the Holy Spirit and determined to start building."

Challenges

"We face new challenges today," he continued, "but it is important that we remember those who started the task. There is a huge need for the Good News of Jesus in a world fragmented and angry about many things. Yet, we are not doing a good job at handing on hope and healing to a younger generation. The builders of 1823 would tell us to get started, not to live in the successes of the past, or be afraid of the future. Pentecost tells us that there is a job to be done, and today is the day to get started."

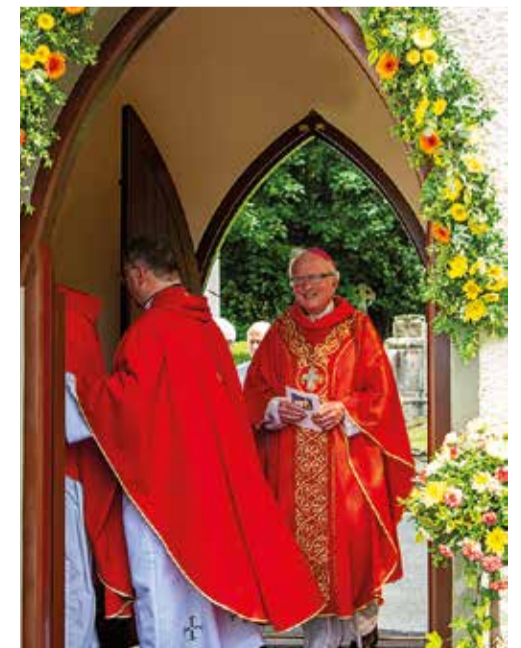
"Churches were built for a purpose," added Bishop Donal, "to give glory to God and to

celebrate the Good News. Very few of our church buildings were erected before Cloughcor and the church had survived in other ways. Churches are built so that the people of God can be built. Buildings will come and go and the challenge for communities is not merely to keep the building going, but to build up the community of God.

"St Paul tells us that we have all been blessed by the Holy Spirit with different gifts. Together we are the Body of Christ. A Holy Spirit filled church starts with the conviction that we are all gifted to help build up the church and that lay people have the call to be co-



Photography by Strabane & District Camera Club.





Coleraine Thanksgiving Celebration for all baptized during year

THE Coleraine Parish held a beautiful Celebration of Thanksgiving on Trinity Sunday, June 4, in St John's Church, for all baptized in the Parish in the past year.

This was the first year for this liturgical celebration to be hosted in the Parish, which covers Dunboe, Macosquin and Aghadowey, and the family members and godparents were invited to come along with their recently baptized babies, in the prayerful hope that it would bring great blessings upon them all.

Parents, guardian and family members were invited to volunteer to take part in the ceremony, regarding readings and the presentation of baptismal symbols.

Following the opening hymn, Fr Neil Farren, PP, welcomed all, saying: "On this Solemnity of Trinity Sunday, we welcome all here gathered. Your child, or indeed grandchild, godchild or family member, was baptised in this Parish in the past year and we return today to give our thanks to God for the Gift of the Holy Spirit given to the child, and to renew our commitment to assist the baptised child to know, love and serve God."

A procession of baptismal symbols and the oil of Baptism

then took place. The symbols included: Jugs of Water; a white Baptismal garment symbolizing becoming the new life Baptism won by Christ's Resurrection; a lighted candle symbolizing the handing on the light of Christ to another generation; the Oil of Baptism symbolizing the freeing of the Baptised from the stain of Original Sin; a flowering plant, which, like the babies, is still growing and in need of nurturing and care; and Praying Hands symbolizing the prayer support that all Christians have surrounding them through life from loved ones, as well as from the deceased.

Fr Neil then prayed: "Lord...we recall their baptism and give their lives into your care. As weakness turns into maturity, may they grow to love and trust you. Draw us together in deeper love and understanding so that our children may grow in security and peace."

Highlighting that water was the focal point for the gathering, as they revisited the sacrament of their baptism, Fr Neil blessed the water as a source of life and nourishment, giving fullness to all loving things and refreshes the body, saying: "Protect us from all danger, ill-health and broken dreams. May we always

thirst for you, knowing that you alone can satisfy our quest for freedom and wholeness. Give us your protection, strength and life giving presence, this day and always. Amen."

He then led those gathered in the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, before sprinkling them with the blessed water.

Passages of Scripture were read, followed by a Family Prayer thanking God for His many blessings, especially the gift of family life and love, and asking for renewed hope, and to be aware of the mystery of His presence "in the bits and pieces" of family life, and find time each day to listen to the Spirit's call "to grow in love and faithfulness."

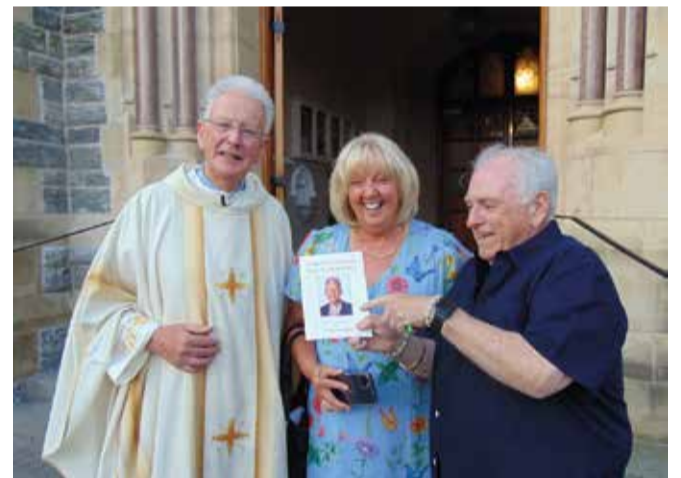
Following the Prayer of the Faithful, for the children and their parents and godparents, Fr Neil said the closing prayer: "God our Father, we thank you for the wonder of new life and for the mystery of human love. We give thanks for all whose support and skill surround and sustain the early years of life. As Jesus knew love and discipline within a human family, may these children grow in strength and wisdom. As Mary knew the joys and pains of motherhood, give all parents your sustaining grace and love."

responsible for that mission. "We have to discover that we are all blessed by the Holy Spirit by Baptism and Confirmation, nourished by the Word of God and by the Sacraments so that the Body of Christ in this faith community might be alive with the Spirit. That is the best way to give honour and thanks for the people who have built up and sustained this faith community since 1823. Today we celebrate 200 years of this building, and today I invite the parish to face the present and the future with trust that God is at work in your parish and God has a dream for your parish."

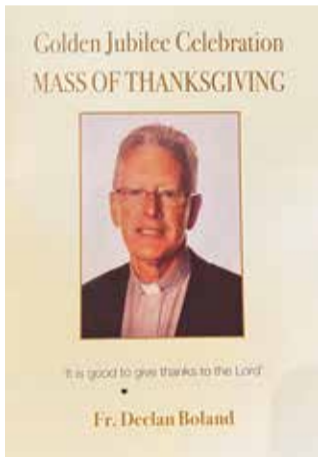
Following the homily, the Prayer of the Faithful was led by Roisin Kielty, and the gifts of Bread and Wine were presented by Olivia Burke and her mum, Maria. After Communion, Bishop Donal unveiled the plaque as the choir sang The Gaelic Blessing. Following the final blessing, the congregation joined the choir in singing the recessional hymn, 'Hail Queen of Heaven'. Following the Mass, everyone was welcomed to St Mary's Primary School by the principal, Andrea Devine, where refreshments and reunions were enjoyed over a cup of tea,

as photographs of people and times gone by were projected via modern technology, and photograph displays also adorned the walls, sparking much interest, conversation and memories. Fr Sweeney then presented Bishop Donal and the priests who had served in the parish with a memento of the happy occasion. As we reflect in gratitude on the celebration, and remember past times and people of Cloughcor, we should again focus on the words of the Bishop and realise that it is now our responsibility to face the future and continue to build the faith community begun 200 years ago.





Celebrating Fr Declan Boland's Golden Jubilee and undiminished zest for priesthood



CAMUS Parish Priest, Fr Declan Boland was joined by his family, friends and parishioners, including many parishioners from previous parishes he served in and neighbouring parishes, for a Mass of Thanksgiving in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Strabane, for the Golden Jubilee of his Ordination.

Ordained on June 10, 1973, in St Pius X Church, Moville, by the late Dr Neil Farren, Bishop of Derry, along with late Fr Paddy O’Kane and Fr Con McLaughlin, Fr Declan served in St Patrick’s, Pennyburn, from 1973-1977, St Mary’s, Creggan, from 1977-1984, Ballinascreen, Draperstown, from 1984-1992, Limavady from 1992-1999, and then arrived in

the Camus Parish in 1999. Celebrating the Mass of Thanksgiving on Friday, June 9, Fr Declan was joined by a large number of his fellow priests as he processed into the Church to the powerful sounds of the Strabane Brass Band. Apologies were sent by Bishop Donal, who was leading the St Columba celebration in St Columba’s Church, Long Tower.

Delighted to have the opportunity to share with Fr Declan in the joy of his Golden Jubilee, just as he had journeyed and shared in the joyful and sorrowful moments in the lives of his parishioners, a representative of the Parish Pastoral Council addressed the congregation, saying: “We gather to give thanks to God for calling him to priesthood 50 years ago, and for his zest for priesthood that has never diminished.”

Grateful to have so many join him in celebrating 50 years in the priesthood, Fr Declan said: “Your love and support has shaped me into the person I am today. I am very blessed that you have come into my life. My love for you and your love for me are only manifestations of one love – God.”

Delivering the homily, Fr Declan’s brother, Fr Eugene

spoke of the Golden Jubilee of Ordination as a wonderful milestone: “It is an occasion for looking back over the last 50 years, with the prevailing theme being deep gratitude and joy for so many blessings received.”

Noting that the trio ordained in Moville on June 10, 1973, had been ordained into a Church and ministry that have changed dramatically over the last half century, Fr Eugene added: “Vatican II was lifting hearts and minds, and morale of priests was high. Sadly, the vision of Vatican II was never realised.”

“Things are so different nowadays,” he remarked, “morale is low and there are fewer going for priesthood. The pedestal that priests were put on is now in bits. We should never have been put on a pedestal.”

Saying that the abuse scandals had caused “untold damage to many”, with “many good people

having walked away”, Fr Eugene noted one constant: “By and large, where people have been critical of Church leaders, they have stood by their local priests.”

He went on to remark that his brother, Declan had been “nourished at the source through his daily encounters with the Lord”, and that one of his greatest mentors is Richard Rohr, who says, “Transformed people transform people.”

He continued: “So many people say that when listening to Declan speaking it is as if he is speaking directly to them, as it is exactly what they need to hear. I can only think that is the Holy Spirit talking through him.”

Saying that over the past 50 years Fr Declan had never lost his enthusiasm for priesthood, Fr Eugene added: “Sometimes, we priests can get cynical or lose heart, but not Declan.”

He told his brother: “You





have been an inspiration to our colleagues and our family and myself. I have always felt that I walked in your shadow, but I didn't mind that."

With it being the Feast of St Columba, Fr Eugene finished with the Prayer of St Columba: "Be a bright flame before me, O God, a guiding star above me. Be a smooth path below me, a kindly shepherd behind me today, tonight, and forever. Alone with none but you, my God, I journey on my way; what need I fear when you are near, O Lord of night and day? More secure am I within your hand than if a multitude did round me stand. Amen."

Reflecting afterwards on his Golden Jubilee celebration, when he also celebrated his 75th birthday, Fr Declan remarked that it was one of the happiest occasions of his priesthood,

adding: "I am deeply grateful to God and to so many others for the many graces and blessings over the past 50 years."

After the Mass, everyone was invited across the road to St Patrick's Hall for a buffet and musical entertainment.



Taking the risk for Christ *by Bishop Donal*

IN June 1973, five priests were ordained for the Diocese of Derry by Bishop Farren. They were Frs Francis O'Hagan, Declan Boland, Con McLaughlin, Patrick O'Kane and John R Walsh.

Thankfully, four of them were able to celebrate 50 years in priesthood - and to remember their colleague, Fr Paddy O'Kane.

These priests had studied in the years following the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) and had no preparation for the chaos that they would have to face throughout the years of civil conflict.

But the parish celebrations for the Golden jubilarians showed just how much their work was appreciated by so many people. They have left a foundation on which the next generations can build.

It is with gratitude to God that

we hope to have three newly ordained priests in 2023 for the Diocese of Derry.

Rev Shaun Doherty has had a long faith journey that has brought him to this point. And he is due to be ordained to the priesthood on July 2 in the Cathedral.

These new priests will, I pray, be an encouragement in this Year of Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood (<https://vocations.ie/>).

The theme is 'Take the Risk for Christ'. The Church has a past, but it also has future. We work and pray so that many will take the risk for service of Christ.

(Coverage of Golden Jubilee celebrations for Fr Con McLaughlin and Fr John Walsh will be included in the next edition.)



Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during June for:

The Abolition of Torture:
We pray that the international

community may commit in a concrete way to ensuring the abolition of torture and guarantee support to victims and their families.

Prayer for Priests

Heavenly Father, I ask you to bless our bishops and priests and to confirm them in their vocation of service.

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

Give them the grace they need to respond generously to you, and the courage to proclaim your Word of justice, love and truth.

Bless, in a special way, Your servant Father, Send your Spirit upon him So that he may always walk in the path of faith, hope and love, in the footsteps of Christ, the eternal priest, who offered Himself on the cross for the life of the world. Amen.

Remember in prayer during June:

- Fr James Devine (June 1st)
- All priests
- Msgr Brendan Devlin (3rd)
- All priests (4th)
- Fr Peter Devlin (5th)
- Fr Fintan Diggin (6th)
- Fr Brendan Doherty (7th)
- All priests (8th)
- All priests (9th)

- Fr John Doherty (10th)
- All priests (11th)
- Fr Michael Doherty (12th)
- Fr Patrick Doherty (13th)
- Mgr Andrew Dolan (14th)
- Fr Brian Donnelly (15th)
- Msgr Joseph Donnelly (16th)
- Fr Liam Donnelly (17th)
- All priests (18th)
- Fr John Downey (19th)
- All priests (20th)
- All priests (21st)
- Fr Jack Farrell (22nd)
- All priests (23rd)
- Fr John Farren (24th)
- Fr Neil Farren (25th)
- Fr Paul Farren (26th)
- All Priests (27th)
- Fr John Forbes (28th)
- Fr Eddie Gallagher (29th)
- Fr Paul Fraser (30th)

As the Derry Diocese prepares for the ordination of Rev Shaun Doherty, the former radio presenter told 'The Net'...

I am looking forward to beginning this new journey... doing what I feel called to do



Shaun Doherty

THE Diocese and Derry-Donegal based Columba Community are excitedly preparing for the ordination to priesthood of the Rev Shaun Doherty, who was ordained to the Diaconate last year in Rome.

Well known from the period he presented his own show on Highland Radio, from 1990 until his resignation in 2017, the 58-year-old has been overwhelmed at the many people who have been praying for him since he stepped down from his radio presenting role to follow God's call to priesthood.

Buoyed by this wave of prayer support, Deacon Shaun is looking forward to sharing the joyous occasion of his ordination by Bishop Donal in St Eugene's Cathedral on Sunday, July 2, at 3 pm, with his family, the many friends he has met over the years, and the people and priests of the Diocese.

Reflecting on his faith journey, he told 'The Net' that he has had a strong faith for as long as he can remember. Born in Stoke-on-Trent on August 20, 1964, to a Derry-born mother and Inishowen-born father, he said: "I have particularly strong memories of my mother's faith and going to Benediction with her on a Wednesday night as a young child in St Wulstan's, my local Church, which was just across the road from where I lived.

"All my infancy and primary school years were spent there, and as a young boy I read at Mass and became an altar server. My niece's son, George is now an altar server in the same church."

"I was surrounded by very good people growing up," remarked Rev Shaun, "I remember especially a man called Harry Dooley, who was from Ireland. He and his wife, Sandra, were very kind and good to me. Harry was a very good witness to the faith and his wife became a Catholic after she got married to him. I became Godfather to one of their sons, John."

First considering priesthood when he was about 15 years

old, he recalled: "I had read an advertisement in a Catholic newspaper about a vocations weekend in St Albans with the Sacred Heart Order. I made contact and went on the weekend and really enjoyed it. I felt very happy there over that weekend and they were very keen on me following it up. They had priests and brothers in the Order. What put me off was the academic element; I didn't think I could be bothered with that or that I would be able for it."

Various jobs followed as he put priesthood on the backburner, but his faith remained to the fore: "I lived in London for a year when I was younger, and I remember one of the first things I did on arriving there was to find the local Church so that I could go to Mass, as that was very important to me."

Likewise, when he came to live in the Waterside, in Derry, around 1985, he went to seek out the local church and found St Columba's on Chapel Road.

"I have always had an affiliation with St Columba's Church, I love going there and it was wonderful that I ended up there for one of my parish placements," said Rev Shaun, adding: "I had a placement in the Cathedral as well, which was my mum's parish church. She was from the Bogside and was married in the Cathedral, and her Requiem Mass was there too, when she died in 1988."

He also has powerful memories of attending Mass in St Mary's Church, in the Creggan, as a 15-year-old: "It was packed and I found that staggering. I was very taken by the powerfulness of the faith of the people. Fr Francis Lagan was the priest there at the time.

"I also have fond memories of Fr Noel McDermott. I think he was the first priest that I met when I first came to Derry, when I was 22. He was a very helpful guide to me."

The move to Derry led him further down the pathway to priesthood, with Rev Shaun recalling that he experienced real change when he encountered Columba Community founder, Fr Neal Carlin during an exploratory visit to the little chapel in Columba House, when he was in his twenties.

"I didn't know what Columba House was," he said, "I was just walking past and saw it, so I went in. I had never seen a chapel like the one in Columba House. I was the only one there at the time and then a priest came up to me and started chatting. It was Fr Neal. He asked did I mind him saying a prayer with me, and I said that

I didn't.

Attractive

"Later, I discovered St Anthony's, the Columba Community's Retreat Centre, and went there the odd Saturday night for Mass over the years. I didn't know the Community but I loved the small, prayerful depth of it. I really found it attractive. People would speak out prayers of intercession, which I thought was a very good way for people to be more fully involved."

He continued: "Before White Oaks and the Celtic Prayer Garden were developed, I met Fr Neal and he mentioned that he was working on a project. He knew that I worked on the radio. He told me that he was building an addiction centre and so I took him on the radio show to talk about it. Over the years, I would have spoken to him on occasion and he would have been on the Highland Radio programme now and then.

"At one point, Fr Neal had Shingles. He had been listening a lot to the radio when he was recovering from this at home and one day he rang my show, but I missed the call. I started to come to Mass at St Anthony's and Columba House, and got to know the members of the Columba Community more. Fr Neal said to me about coming to a Community meeting, which I did, and then I became a member and attended more regularly. That was about 15 years ago."

Noting that he became much more interested in his faith, and that it deepened because of Fr Neal's influence, Deacon Shaun said: "I found him an astonishing witness of the Gospel. His endless care for people really inspired me, especially his work at White Oaks with people who had addictions. He was very wise and understood people very well. He was the kind of man who could read your soul almost. You could have conversations with him and tell him everything.

"It was staggering the lives that he affected and changed. I know so many people who felt that God had used him to heal them. I witnessed his prayerfulness and people coming to him for prayer. Since his death, so many stories have been shared about what he did for people. I also saw his humanity; his struggles through ill health and how he handled that."

He continued: "By going to Mass at St Anthony's and particularly Columba House, I started to feel this draw, that there was a decision to be made to leave the radio and follow this call that

I felt I had.

"There was a Fr Mark Coyle at Ards Friary, who knew me from my years on the radio. He had had a very bad accident and was severely injured. Not long before he died, his nephew, Brian told me that he wanted to see me. So I went to visit him in the hospital and he was telling me all these lovely things about me from my time on the radio, and that I had done great work. I told him that I had done nothing compared to the great work that he had done as a priest, and he grabbed my hand and said to me that it wasn't too late. I was a mature man at that point and this made me think."

Going to Medjugorje around this time gave him plenty of opportunity to think, and he said that it had a profound effect on him: "Our Lady has always had a profound effect on my life. She is the signpost to Jesus. Mary led me to a better understanding of a relationship with Jesus, and I got this through going to Medjugorje. I went there twice with Fr Neal and it was there that I very easily made my decision to go for priesthood. I just felt very clearly that it was the right decision for me.

"I decided that I was going home and stepping down from radio and pursuing this possibility of priesthood. I resigned from radio and gave three weeks' notice. It was a big shock for people as they didn't know why, but I hadn't even spoken to the Vocations' director or the Bishop. I just wanted some time and space as it had to be a free choice. I had a year where I visited places like Assisi and Rome, and I went back to Medjugorje again."

After speaking to the Vocations' director and the Bishop, he was sent to Salamanca, the Royal Scots College in Spain, for a propaedeutic year.

"There were eight of us; one around the same age as me and the others were younger," he said, adding: "It was a great experience; putting your toe in the water and getting used to seminary life, which was a big change after a long time in working life.

St Paul

"After that, I took a short break and was sent to Rome, and that is where I have been for the past four years, at the Pontifical Beda College, a seminary for English speaking men over 30. It is next door to the Basilica of St Paul Outside the Walls, so I was very blessed to be so near St Paul's tomb. That is where I did my formation, degree and final diploma. I also worked on Vatican Radio while there and

did commentary for a few Papal Masses, as well as recording work on Laudato Si and a Rosary meditation recording for this year's World Youth Day in Lisbon."

Grateful for these opportunities, Deacon Shaun also felt blessed by his parish placement experiences in the Waterside with Fr Michael Canny and in the Cityside, in the Cathedral, with Fr Paul Farren: "These were very rewarding times, with good experience gained in the hospital as well as in parishes, where people have been so supportive.

"I learnt a lot and was very well cared for. Wherever I go, people I don't know come up to me and say that they are praying for me. I get that every day. It is amazing the number of people who are praying for me."

This support was particularly evident when he was ordained to the Diaconate last year in St Paul's, in Rome, along with the seven seminarians he had journeyed with.

He remarked: "It was lovely to have my family there, as well as members of the Columba Community, and friends, including those from places where I had worked, such as Highland Radio. It was very special. So many people sent cards and gifts and I didn't get an opportunity to get back to them to express my gratitude."

Finishing up in Rome a couple of weeks before the date of his ordination in the Cathedral, he said: "I was busy studying for exams, so the Columba Community organised everything for my ordination celebration. I am amazed at all the great work that has been done, and I am particularly grateful to Marguerite Hamilton, the Columba Community leader, and Mary Duffy, who worked with me on Highland Radio and now works with us in the IOSAS Centre, as well as the Columba Community members and others who have been involved too.

"I am looking forward to beginning this new journey

with my ordination on July 2, to doing what I feel called to do. My cousin, Fr Daniel Doherty, is a priest in Scotland and he will be vesting me during my ordination ceremony, and there will also be lots of friends there from throughout my life.

"I am very grateful to get this opportunity. It shows that the Lord never gives up on us. God calls people in different ways. You don't have to be a priest to do God's work, but I am grateful for the support of the Bishop and the Diocese, and the many priests and religious, and friends who have been part of this journey and encouraged me. It is not an easy journey for anyone at any age, but I have found that if you respond, God will give the grace you need when you need it."

Rev Shaun will be ordained as a Diocesan priest and, while continuing to be part of the Columba Community, he is looking forward to serving it in a different way.

He added: "I look forward to being involved in the lives of people. I particularly feel that I would like to be with people on the margins. There are so many issues and problems today, so many feeling hopeless. Hopefully, my story will be a source of encouragement for people that there is always hope because of the goodness of God. His love and generosity is boundless and never ends."

Rev Shaun will celebrate his first Mass in St Columba's Church, in the Waterside, on Monday, July 3, the Feast of St Thomas the Apostle, at 7.30 pm.



Shaun as a child with his twin sister, Sharon



Shaun on the occasion of his ordination to Diaconate, with his sisters, nephew and Derry Diocesan Vocations Director Fr Pat O'Hagan.

Remembering the late Rose Lynch



Rose, who loved shopping and style, pictured on Holy Thursday.

THE sudden death of Castlederg parishioner, Rose Lynch, during a family pilgrimage to the International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine of Knock, Co Mayo, in Easter Week, was a great shock to her loved ones and all who knew her, but it is also a moving story of the power of prayer and the great witness to the faith that she was to many.

Celebrating Rose's Requiem Mass in St Patrick's Church, Castlederg, on Monday, April 17, Fr Paul Fraser, PP, described her as a "wonderful lady, wonderful parishioner, but most of all a deeply loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother".

This love and appreciation of her deep faith was evident in the reflection read by her grandson, Niall, as symbols of Rose's life were brought forward to the altar at the start of Mass: her Rosary beads with which she dedicated so much time to praying for others, which in return brought her so much peace; and a statue of Our Lady of Knock, which was her 'happy place' and where Our Lady answered her prayer...that she would die there.

Fr Paul recalled that Rose had attended the Holy Saturday Night Vigil, during which she had taken a light from the Paschal Candle and renewed her Baptismal Promises, remarking: "Little did she know that the next time it would be lit would be her funeral, but she was well prepared."

Born on May 7, 1933, the youngest of nine children of Annie and Daniel Sweeney, from Laughtmorris, Aghyaran, Rose would have been 90 this year, and was the last surviving member of her family. Noting that she had been given two names, Rose and Mary, Fr Paul said: "I think this was so significant for Rose."

Growing up on the family farm in Laught, she had a great love of horses from a young age and had an affinity with them while working on the land. After marrying Jack Lynch, on May 24, 1956, Rose took part in many gymkhanas and pony drives, and helped out at carriage driving events at Baronscourt.

Married for 63 years, Rose and Jack, who died four years ago, had seven children (five daughters and two sons), the youngest of which, Jo, died eight years ago aged only 46.

Paying tribute to her, Rose's eldest daughter, Colette described the family home as always being "a hub for parties and family gatherings", adding that her mother was known to her great grandchildren as 'Granny Rose' and they had all adored her.

"Mammy had a great way with young children. She loved the craic and the fun she got from them. They kept her young at heart and she looked forward to them visiting her. Last Easter, there was an Easter hunt at her house and she was stuck in the middle of it, with her bunny ears on enjoying looking for eggs with the great grandchildren. And, last Christmas, Santa arrived at Mammy's, again for the great-grandchildren; she got great pleasure from seeing them so excited and happy."

Remarking that her mother's "warmth, sense of humour, kindness and hospitality" were an example of a life well lived, Colette added: "Mammy never made any difference in people. Her house was always an open door for all the family members to stay when they visited from England. She loved visitors and would come out to greet them when they arrived and be out to wave them off when they were leaving. Her home was a second home for many."

"Mammy had great faith and her day revolved around her prayers and her devotion to the Rosary. She prayed for everybody every night when she was saying the Rosary. She recited four Rosaries every day, on top of all her other

prayers and novenas, and kept the statuette of the Sleeping St Joseph at her bedside. Underneath she had written, 'I pray for a happy and peaceful death.' Her prayer was answered."

Knock

"Mammy's favourite place was Knock Shrine and that's where she was happiest," continued Colette, "and that is why we took her on pilgrimage to there and stayed overnight in the Knock House Hotel. The day we went, April 12, would have been Jo's 54th birthday. Her death so young was a very hard burden for Mammy to bear, and she spoke a lot about her in Knock that day. It was almost as if she felt that she might soon see Jo again. The day before we went to Knock, Mammy had said to her granddaughter, Karen, 'Wouldn't it be lovely if I died in Knock.'

"That evening when we arrived in Knock, and on the journey there, the wind and the rain were terrible. Our umbrellas were blown inside out when we visited the Shrine. The only part of the pilgrimage we could do was to attend Mass in the Parish Church, and sit and pray in the basilica. We said the Rosary together in our bedroom.

"As President Joe Biden was arriving in Knock on the Friday, the Shrine was to close completely at 1pm for security reasons. Mammy was in a wheelchair, as we had so much to do that morning. Firstly, we got our Mass Cards and Mammy always had a long list of people to get a Mass said for. Then we did the Outdoor Stations of the Cross. Next, while we were getting holy water, I noticed the candles lit in the Apparition Chapel and sure enough there was Mass there at 10.10am. It was a beautiful Mass celebrated by a young American priest. Then we went to Confessions and lit candles.

"Finally, on our way back to the hotel, we said together the last decade of the Glorious Mysteries, 'Our Lady is Crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth'. Mammy thought of so many people in her final hours, enrolling people in Knock, getting holy water and lighting candles for many.

"Whilst I was opening the door of the bedroom in the hotel, Mammy collapsed. I held her in my arms as she was falling, and Kathleen held her head. Paramedics worked on Mammy for over 45 minutes. She was

pronounced dead at 11.57am. She was then anointed by Fr Denis Hartnett, Knock Shrine. He was very compassionate and supportive to us at such a difficult time."

Colette expressed the family's deep gratitude to the staff of the Knock House Hotel, under the stewardship of Declan Heneghan, General Manager, and the support of Eithne Cosgrove, Director of Sales and Marketing, "for their kindness, support and help that fateful morning", and to Garda Danny Costello, Claremorris Station, "for his guidance and professional assistance".

She added: "We are thankful to Joe Biden, as we were told by the staff of the hotel, that Mammy had all the emergency services so quickly due to them being on site for the President's arrival.

"Due to the roads being blocked in Mayo, as President Biden was visiting, we had to wait for two days to bring Mammy home. Her beautiful funeral Mass took place on April 17, celebrated by Fr Paul Fraser, and five priests helped to concelebrate, Fr Danny McCauley SMA, Fr Peter McCawille SMA, Fr Patsy Arkinson, Fr Frank McManus and Fr Peter Madden."

"As Fr Paul said in his homily, Mammy died 'living'," remarked Colette, "these words were so true right up to the very end of her life. We are so blessed to have had such a wonderful mother, whose example of her devotion to prayer and the Rosary was passed onto us. Mammy's passing has certainly increased my belief in the power of prayer, 'Ask and you shall receive'.

"She looked forward to Fr Paul's visits and to receiving communion on a Sunday. She was always prepared and sitting waiting for him to arrive. He was a wonderful support to her spiritually and as a friend."

Saying that a family party had been organised to celebrate her mother's 90th birthday, Colette added: "She obviously wanted to spend it in Heaven with daddy and Jo, and all her family and friends who had gone before her. We had a special Mass in honour of her birthday on the Sunday, May 7 and she was there with us all in spirit."

Rose is survived by her daughters and sons, Colette, Danny, Kathleen, Kevin, Teresa and Bernie, 13 grandchildren and nine great-grandchildren.

Granny Rose

*Granny Rose, was a lady,
like no other,
a loving wife, granny, and
mother.*

*She covered us in kisses
and showered us with
love,
now she's looking down at
us, from Heaven above.
She loved her style and
had a fab sense of fashion,
trouser suits and coats
were her passion!
She passed away*

*peacefully in Co Mayo,
Knock was her happy place, we all know.
Granny Rose believed in the power of prayer,
she had strong values and always played fair.
Her smile was full of sunshine and her heart solid gold,
we had a wonderful granny, who never really grew old.
I told my friends at school, my great granny was the best,
we shall miss her each day, now she's finally at rest.
So Granny Rose, go in peace, you've earned your sleep,
your love in our hearts, we'll eternally keep.
She was one of a kind, as the saying goes,
Happy birthday, Granny Rose!*

(By Molly, age 10)



Annual Rosary walk to Malin Well and Grotto



“At the heart of the Church, my mother, I will be love” – St Therese...

Derry's vibrant faith evident during Little Way Novena

by Niamh Kehoe

Photographs taken by Stephen Latimer



AFTER a busy week of celebrations for the St Eugene's Cathedral's 150th anniversary, the life, spirit, and faith of the parishioners of the Derry Diocese's Mother Church continued to manifest, with many attending the St Therese's Novena in May.

From the beginning to the closing of the Novena what was evident was the vibrancy and strength of faith in Derry, as seen in the commitment of the clergy, in the altar servers serving, in the music ministry provided by schools and communities, in the background administration and organisation of the Novena, and, of course, in the crowds from various parishes who attended.

The Novena began on Saturday, May 6, with a Mass that included the Anointing of the Sick, while on Sunday, Bishop Dónal celebrated the opening Mass. The week-day programme included 6.30 am Mass, 8 am Mass, and evening devotions at 7.30 pm, 'Mass of the Dead' on Saturday, May 13, and the closing ceremony on Sunday, May 14. Many parishioners were seen at more than one celebration each day, such as the dedication of the community and its devotion to St Therese.

Opening Ceremony

The opening ceremony was celebrated by Bishop Dónal. In his homily, he reminded us that the Gospel we had just heard reoccurs every now and then when we celebrate the Novena to St Therese. In St John's Gospel

(John 14: 1-12), Jesus says to His disciples: "Do not let your hearts be troubled." He continues: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life." Bishop Dónal reminded us that saints, such as St Therese and Blessed Carlo Acutis, knew this early in their lives.

Bishop Dónal's first point is to let Jesus be The Way for us; in all our ups and downs, when we are strong and when we are weak. He has a plan for each of us. Sometimes, it is difficult to trust in God in a world where we are judged on what we do or what qualification we have. In those times when we do not believe in ourselves or are full of uncertainty, we can call on the scripture from Matthew 11:28 to give us reassurance and remind us that Jesus is the Way: "Come to me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."

In his second point, Bishop Dónal asked us "to let St Therese enable us to see ourselves as Jesus sees us." We might think that Jesus only loves us when we succeed but we should let Jesus see our life, as the Bishop said, "in all its messiness, in all its imperfections and all the things that didn't work out and all the broken dreams."

Jesus spent 40 days in the wilderness, carried His own cross and was crucified, but He was resurrected from the dead. Let the resurrection of Jesus be a sign of hope and light. We take courage in John 16:33: "In this world you will have trouble. In me you may

have peace 'take heart' because 'I have overcome the world!'"

Finally, Bishop Dónal told us: "Jesus already lives in us". The crosses the Saints had to bear had shortened the lesson they had to learn that Jesus loves us and that loving Jesus enriches our lives.

Marion Carroll

Marion Carroll, who was cured from MS in Knock in 1989, was our speaker during evening devotions on the Monday. Marion spoke very enthusiastically, with passion and from the heart. She testified that God had not only cured her from Multiple Sclerosis but also, importantly, had enriched her life with love.

Marion had prayed to Jesus and Mary as a child that she would get married and have a family. Jesus answered her prayers on June 5, 1972. Three months after she got married, she became pregnant with her first child. From then on, however, all she ever knew was illness. In 1978 she was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis, in 1985 came a deterioration, and by 1987 she had lost all power in both her legs, in her right arm, and had only limited power in her left arm. Her speech and throat were also badly affected.

Marion shared with us what had gotten her through 17 years of illness: Love. Her husband, Jimmy showed her love. She recalled and shared her favourite story from such a time. They had travelled to a hotel in Athlone and her husband had put her favourite dress and make up on her, brought her down to the dining room and fed her the tea. Even though the other women in the hotel were all dressed up in the finest of clothes, she felt that she was the richest woman in the world because she had love. According to Marion, 'love' is what Jesus sends if you are close to Him.

This love that Jesus sends is experienced through prayer. Marion shared with us that she prayed the greatest prayer for families, the family Rosary. She assured us that we will have disappointments in life but praying the family Rosary, staying close to Jesus will "give us the courage in our hearts to face anything that comes our way."

In 1989, Marion wanted to return to Lourdes but could not afford to go. Instead, they went to Knock, but only "to get away from the four walls." Her previous two trips to Knock were not great. However, on September 3, 1989, she travelled to Knock. On arrival, the nurses took her into the Basilica and to her surprise she was placed right in the centre of the altar, underneath the statue of Mary that is used in the procession. The words she said to

Mary were: "Well you're a mother too, you know how I feel."

Marion was due to have her pain killers before attending the Mass. However, because of a couple of hindrances she decided to wait until after. She received the Eucharist from her Bishop and the Bishop came down with the Blessed Eucharist in the monstrance with the blessing of the sick. It was at that point that she had a "magnificent feeling", which she described as: "A whispering breeze telling me that if the stretcher was opened that I could get up and walk." She later communicated with a doctor's wife, asking if the stretcher was open would she be able to walk. To pacify Marion, the doctor's wife opened the stretcher. Marion's feet swung open and she sat herself up straight, and was moving her hands and legs, and her speech was perfect.

Marion left us with a final message: "All you have got to do is trust in Jesus. [...] Jesus always listens and answers but, like any father, He knows what is best for His child and all you have got to do is open your heart and allow Jesus in." She reminded us: "When you share Jesus, you share pure love, love is Jesus."

Tim Shiver

Tim Shiver, chairman of the Special Olympics since 1996 and founder of Unite, spoke on the Tuesday evening. His Aunt Rosemary was born with an intellectual disability in 1918, while Tim's mother was born a few years later in 1921. After Tim was born, his mother wanted to challenge the world's perception of people with intellectual disabilities.

He said: "She saw things that others did not see. She saw a sister that was too beautiful to be left out."

Motivated to do something, Tim's mother invited in people with intellectual disabilities and began to teach them to swim. She also brought in adults without a disability so they would see what she saw. What she began in that way is now known as the Special Olympics Movement, currently active in 190 countries worldwide.

Tim shared how proud he is of what his mum had taught him and many others. He said that she taught him to "see from the inside out", which inspired him to ask her to write a book, but she didn't believe that she was worthy of such a thing. "Why would I write a book? All I did was teach people how to swim," she said.

Tim said that we can all relate to this, recalling Reina Maria, who wrote: "Everything that frightens us is in its deepest essence something helpless that wants





our love.” Maybe that helpless something is ‘us.’

He expanded: “Maybe that’s exactly the part of us that enables us to see as God wants us to see, that small starving helpless part of us”.

This supports what Bishop Dónal reminded us of in his homily on the Sunday, when he said that Jesus wants us to see ourselves the way He wants to see us.

Tim invited us to pause, think and believe that we are a gift from God. God loves us no matter what, we do not need to be afraid or seek security or approval. He asked us to remember what St Therese told us: “You will never be alone.”

Eunan McMullan

Eunan McMullan, who spoke on the Wednesday of the Novena, is a former barrister and now a lay Friar in Assisi, and he talked about many close connections between St Therese and St Francis of Assisi. After realising that St Therese’s burial date was the date of St Francis of Assisi’s Feast Day, he was intrigued to find other connections and shared them with us.

St Francis and St Therese showed us the path of humility, which everyone can take. St Therese wanted to take the ‘lift’, or elevator, by going into Jesus’ arms and being lifted up to Heaven. She said: “To get there I need not grow, on the contrary I must remain little, I must become still less.”

A Franciscan friar said: “If you want to see, you must become blind. If you want to hear, you must become deaf. If you want to go up, you must go down.”

St Francis and St Therese expressed their love for God through their gifts. St Francis growing up had great joy in life. St Therese was kind to all, even to the Sisters at the convent who were considered unsympathetic or unfriendly. St Francis was a poet, and wrote a poem in the Italian language called ‘The Council of Creatures’. St. Therese wrote a play to celebrate Joan of Arc.

Eunan also noted at this point how Sr Clare Crockett, from

Derry, often used her talents in the situations in which she found herself. He then shared with us a story of how St Francis was responsible for a conversion of three brigands: The guard chased them away and told them the truth about themselves. However, Francis told the guard to give them bread and wine and ask them to confess. After this they were converted and all three became Friars.

Alexander McClean

Alexander McLean, founder of Justice Defenders based in Uganda who seeks to improve the lives of people imprisoned in Africa, spoke on the Thursday of receiving love as a child, right up to his recent unfortunate circumstances and giving love to others he works with as a justice defender.

Despair

Alexander courageously and kindly shared his personal experience of bereavement. In the last four years, he has lost his twins before birth and lost his dad to heart failure. He did not know how to pray and asked his friends for prayers, but they were already holding him in prayer. He found comfort in Psalm 139: “You know when I sit down and when I rise, you perceive my thoughts from afar, you discern my going out and my lying down, you are familiar with all my ways, before a word is on my tongue you Lord know it completely.”

He asked us to reflect on St Therese committing to a life of both giving and receiving love and to take heart.

God’s plan and sharing love

Although Alexander did not receive a place at Oxford University, he found that God had a different and a better plan for him. He took a year out; travelling to a hospice in Uganda to shadow doctors. Whilst there, he witnessed horrendous scenes: seeing a man lying naked on the floor on a plastic sheet covered in a pool of urine; and prisoners being arrested and beaten by police officers, resulting in bleeding in the eyes and ears. One beating resulted in death after the victim

developed tetanus.

A nun, who was also a doctor and who founded the hospital, showed Alexander powerfully what it is to love in practice; even if they have no family they can die feeling loved. They took care of the man in his last days.

Alexander reminded us of one of the most important commandments: “Love our neighbour as ourselves.”

At university, he brought dignity and hope to people in prison. He continued to show love in his vocation. His work now is to train prisoners and prison officers side-by-side as paralegals. They train officers to defend prisoners, to defend those in court who do not have families, or not enough money for representation.

Alexander said that God can work through each of us, and that each of us is more than the worst thing we’ve done.

Transformation

He shared with us that a woman called Susan, an advocate for human rights, abolished the death penalty. Many were released from the death row. Therefore, transformation is possible. He stated: “Transformation is possible in all our lives and even in places we expect hopelessness, God can move.”

Concluding, Alexander asked us never to write ourselves off, saying that each of us has the possibility to love just where we are, to love those around us, and to take one step in love that leads to another.

Brendan McGinn

For Brendan McGinn, principal of St Mary’s College, Derry, who spoke on the Friday, love is a central theme of the Church, developing his faith and impacting on him as a leader of a girl’s Catholic school. A County Tyrone man, he is specifically from Killyclogher and moved to Derry 21 years ago. Since qualifying as a music teacher, Brendan has been in education for 30 years: seven years in St Eugene’s High School, Castledearg, 16 years in St Columb’s College, and the remaining years in St Mary’s College. Church, Mother and Love were the three most important words that brought him to speak at the Novena.

Disconnection

At an early age, Brendan had a disconnect from Jesus. He attended Mass but never understood what he heard at Mass. He became close with his step-granny, with whom he prayed the Rosary each time he stayed over with her. His only focus was to say the correct number of Hail Marys. Spirituality was just something he could not tap into.

Problem

In his married life, he recalled how he was witnessing good people, enriched by God and Jesus. His wife’s family home was filled with faith and prayer and had a humble devotion

to God, Jesus, and the Saints. He continued going to Mass, performing at services, and preparing choirs for services.

Brendan said that he began to squeeze “almost completely everything out of his life.” However, he realised and courageously admitted that he was becoming self-centred. He filled his spare time with distractions. He struggled to understand the true meaning of love in the context of the church. He did not “recognise properly God’s love.”

Understanding God’s love

When his mum died in 2011, Brendan read a text from the New Testament which he had heard many times before. He said: “This time I was ready”. The text was: “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy...it is not proud, it does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices for the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.” (Corinthians 13:4 -8).

This is the love he understood. He said that he can recognise it in others and in himself, and he understood what St Therese was saying, “Life is love”.

Sharing God’s love

In recent times, at a course for new principals, Brendan said that he was asked what type of principal he was. He responded with that he felt he needed to “serve the community of St Mary’s, be there for the pupils, staff and parents.” He went on to say that the title principal “meant nothing” to him, and that he was as comfortable doing the small things as the big things.

To finish, Brendan gave thanks to St Therese, and shared with us nine written thoughts his mum left before she died. Each written thought is love in action. He recognises that his mum’s love was God’s love all along. In 2011, he began to understand what love really meant in the Church and this understanding continues to deepen.

Novena conclusion

The Mass of the Dead was celebrated on the Saturday morning at 10 am and the closing ceremony was celebrated at 3 pm on the Sunday, which included the blessing of the roses and candles. Many kept a few of their blessed roses and gave them to clergy as a sign of gratitude.



Burt Book Sale benefits three charities

THE Burt ‘Book Sale’ has recorded another great success for three charities. Kathleen Grant wishes to sincerely thank everyone who bought books and also left in donations, books, money and food over the two days.

She is also thankful to all who

donated books over the last three years, as well as to the book team, who gave of their time voluntarily and are essential to this fundraiser.

The proceeds went to RNLI (Lough Swilly), €1,000, Mary’s Meals, €250, and Parish Funds €3,167.



Fr Patrick Baker receiving a cheque for €3,167 from Colm Doherty. Also pictured is John Gillespie, member of the book team, and Kathleen Grant, organiser.



John McCarter, Lifeboat Operations Mgr and Chairman Fund Raising Branch, Lough Swilly RNLI, with Tony Burns and Kathleen Grant, Burt Book Sale organizer, accepting a cheque for €1,000.

The challenge to trust *by Fr John McLaughlin ssc*



Paddy Lynch



Sra Trinidad Espindola

A name - and a face - that always come back in to my mind is that of Luis Zuniga, in the pastoral council of then Columban Parish of San Luis in Santiago. He was the treasurer and was always at pains to make transparent all the payments and income of the Comunidad, by bringing forth a long string of papers and receipts. It seemed a little boring to me in those early months, and I waited for the moments of greater drama when the secretary took over. But, after a while, I came to appreciate that the work of Luis, and its painstaking nature, was more valuable in the long run.

I had experienced it in Irish parochial situations and had 'to face up for the Church' in a couple of man-to-man situations that, for a young priest, were stressful. There was the absolute need to be discreet when the irregularities did occur, and it served no purpose to make a victim out of the person who had yielded to temptation in the Planned Giving or the church collections or at

“Attachment to Catholicism owes much more to a sense that it is a good guide to this life than to any conviction that it is a passport to the next.

Edward Stourton
Confession: The agenda-challenging, unexpected memoir from one of our best-loved broadcasters.

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domestic level from a position of trust.

Some of those moments are burned into my memory and bring forth the same sentiments of dread and shame despite the passing of the years. There were no victories gathered from those situations, as people were faces and persons and judgment was not mine to make.

In one of those years on Mission in Latin America, there was a certain amount of comment on the PNUD, which was a UN-based survey of attitudes and values. One of the questions

set about 'domesticating' him; a term that is more than just washing up the dishes etc, in Spanish. There was a moment of withdrawal when one of the group approached again. "Excuse us, Father, could I ask you a question: Do you think you could tell us about how long it takes to domesticate a cura (priest)?"

My own experience over the years was that pastoral visitation was just about the best way of sowing trust in a new parish or community. The words in some

“The return of cheerful Catholicism mattered especially to me because I was putting together the pope's obituary around the time I was thing about my own for reasons I explained at the beginning of this book. Having an incurable cancer should, logically, make me reflect on the Church's promise of resurrection and eternal life - and of course, the threat of damnation - but it has not done that at all: I find I think no more about such things as I did when I was healthy, and I have never been much given to agonized contemplation of eternity (unlike my troubled ancestor John). An I realise now - anyone who takes their faith seriously is bound to keep learning new things about it.

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of the Psalms on the Lord...my rock, my stronghold, my salvation (Psalm 18:1-4 eg)...from the Prayer of the Church, often served to steel my purpose and get myself out to the houses, apartments, street ferias etc and available to be approached and questioned etc in

the flesh.

Pope Francis loses no opportunity to bring up the trends of 'Clericalism', especially when addressing bishops and priests on his many overseas visitations. I was of the generation that worried too about that tendency and tried to face it down.

There was an entertaining moment during an encounter with some of my contemporaries, when Archbishop Dermot Ryan responded to a rather daring question. Why had he been making so many changes in the Diocese in that period? To which he replied, drawing from football parlance, some priests were first division players, while others were either second or maybe third division standard. So, he proposed that it did not seem right to just have a team from the first division in the one parish, when another could be serving where the need was greater and where standards had fallen. There were no smart answers to that reasoning on his part, as none of us could claim to be first division players! Though I have to say that some of the pastoral commitments to which I was assigned, whether in Dublin or in Chile, seemed to be more about expediency or pragmatism as I bowed obediently to the will of Bishop or Columban superior. Yet the Spirit still appeared, as in none of them was I less than happy and fulfilled. Thank God!

"We were hoping, maybe that..." suggested the two disciples to Jesus on the Road to Emmaus, and those hopes and confidences were placed in all of us serving as pastors or pastoral agents, lay or clerical. There was Mission and there was Maintenance, and a balance had to be worked out. In Chile, the 'Option for the Poor' emanating from the Celam meeting in Puebla, influenced many of us very deeply. Bishop Oscar Romero was a huge figure in the early 80s and his martyrdom was surely the seed of great growth and dedication. Gaining the trust of the Poor was at the head of many parish and chapel councils. I can recall a mid-term 'Jornada', or workshop, in San Columbano where 'Solidarity' was the overall theme for the parish and all its pastoral agents, whose presence was obligatory. About that time also, on the occasion of the elevation of Jesuit, Albert Hurtado, as Blessed in the Church, in our large parish-assembly Eucharist, the testimonies of those in solidarity activities were given by those in Alcoholics, Food Kitchens, Youth, Legal Aid, Social-worker; positions highlighting the devoted and short life of Hurtado, whose works and projects now spread across Chile and into neighbouring countries.

After the revelations about Jean Vanier, which hurt so very many of us, I came across this little reflection which certainly served

me. From Tom Reece: "In one of my earliest memories, my father is warning me about a famous man, 'Remember, he still puts his pants on one leg at a time'. I remembered this warning when I heard about the fall of another famous icon, Brother Jean Vanier, the revered founder of L'Arche, an ecumenical community where disabled and able persons live in Christian fellowship.

Vanier, who died [in 2019] at the age of 90, has been credibly accused of an abusive sexual relationship with six non-disabled adult women to whom he was giving spiritual direction. In other words, this was not just a one-night fling with someone met in a singles bar. These were calculated and manipulative attacks on women under the guise of bringing them closer to God. These accusations were investigated by an independent agency at the request of L'Arche's new leadership, which agreed with the findings and made them public. Despite our anger, we should still congratulate L'Arche for its transparency. We must also thank the women who had the courage to come forward.

“Another kind of Catholicism is possible, Pope Francis said. And those who've lived through his papacy won't forget that. He demonstrated not just a different way of being a pope. The showed the world a different way of being a Catholic. And said to people of all faiths and none that, in our troubled times, the gospel is actually good news.

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Confession: The agenda-challenging, unexpected memoir from one of our best-loved broadcasters.

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Vanier was once talked about as a possible recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, even canonization. To discover that such a person was a fraud makes me angry. At the same time, I ask myself, why am I surprised? History has taught us the flawed and sinful character of most famous men. Some of the founding fathers fathered children with their slaves. History is full of bad popes, bishops and priests. European and American history is full of great leaders and thinkers who were anti-Semites

and racists. During my lifetime, John Kennedy and Thomas Merton had their affairs. The 'Me Too' movement has ripped away the curtain to expose men who are not the gentlemen they projected publicly.

Even the Scriptures describe people as flawed who played important roles in salvation history: Eve, Abraham, Moses, David and the Twelve. It is nearly impossible to find an important figure in the Bible who is not also a sinner. In Mark's Gospel, nobody understands Jesus, not even His Mother (Mark 3).

Does that mean that we must discard everything these sinners did? Do we stop honouring Abraham because he pimped his wife to Pharaoh in exchange for livestock and slaves? Do we stop praying the psalms because David had Uriah killed so he could have his wife, Bathsheba? Do we burn the books of Thomas Merton because he had an affair? Do we close down L'Arche because Vanier abused his position as a spiritual father?

The message of the Scriptures is not that these are holy men but that God can use flawed and sinful people to do great things. We continue to see that throughout history and in our own time. Part of growing up is recognizing that our heroes have clay feet.

But forgiveness is something else. I can forgive Eve, the Twelve, Merton and sins of weakness, but I am not ready to forgive Abraham, David, Theodore McCarrick, Vanier, Harvey Weinstein and others who abused their power to prey on the vulnerable. I will leave their forgiveness to God. I am still angry because of the harm done to the people who were exploited by these men. I am also angry because they have made me a cynic when it comes to great artists, politicians and religious leaders.

As a social scientist, I am never surprised by sin, corruption and conflict. I am a firm believer in Original Sin, for which there is lots of empirical evidence, although I don't blame it on Eve and the apple. For me, Original Sin is the reality that sins of the past provide fertile ground for sins in the present (think slavery and racism). And sins in our time will make it difficult for people to be good in the future (think global warming).

What surprises me is goodness, kindness and love, which are signs of God's grace in the world. Many people turn away from God because they cannot resolve the problem of evil: How can there be a God when there is such evil in the world? I have the opposite question. Granted that we have been struggling to survive ever since we crawled out of the muck, evil does not surprise me. I am surprised by the problem of good. Why is there good in the world?

Given where we came from

Divine Mercy Image...bringing healing to our broken image of God

by Sr Benedetta Hutnikiewicz ZSJM, Sisters of Merciful Jesus, Letterkenny



IN my last article, I talked about the history of the Divine Mercy Image. Today, I would like us to have a closer look at the image itself. But before we dive deeper into the parts of the image, I want to touch on a very important subject...our image of God. You see, the Divine Mercy Image is much more than a holy picture. Through it, God wishes to heal our image of Him.

How can this happen? After all, "No one has ever seen God" (Jn 1:18)! But, as St John continues, "the only God, who is at the Father's side, He has made Him known." (Jn 1:18).

Jesus said: "No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him" (Matt 11:27). Jesus' whole life and

mission were focused on leading us to the Father. When one of His Apostles, Philip, asked Him to show them the Father, He replied: "Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (Jn 14:9).

In the upper room, Jesus prayed: "that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent" (Jn 17:3). This truth was also what led Him to His death: "This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God." (Jn 5:18)

Jesus opened the way to the Father for each of us, by His death and resurrection. Thanks to Him, we are the adopted children of God, and can cry out with confidence "Abba, Father!" (Gal 4:6)

However, the truth is that we all have a broken image of God, to some degree. The image we have in our heads is usually correct; we know God as the One who is Merciful, Loving, Forgiving, and Generous. The One who created us, gives us graces, takes care of our needs etc. But the image in our hearts doesn't exactly follow the one in our intellect. How can we know this? I think a real litmus paper is a situation when things go wrong for us, we experience suffering or something really bad comes our way. If, in those moments, we find ourselves angry at God, giving out to Him, full of pretence, it means things are not as good as they seem to be. Of course, we can hide all these under a mask of external politeness. But, if we are honest with ourselves, we need to admit that all of us have these moments.

These false images of God are often hidden, but they bubble up in our hearts, or sometimes in our way of speaking about God. For example, I once heard someone say that God takes away everything that he loves. And that person said it with no anger,

not realising what image of God lies behind such a statement.

The distortions of the image of God can be different. We can have an image of God who follows us, controls us, and is always looking to catch us as we are sinning or disobeying him. Or, God may be to us someone who doesn't want us to enjoy life, who inflicts suffering, and so on.

Where do these images come from? Mostly from our childhood experience of our parents or guardians. I'm not inventing this; it's what modern psychology has taught us. It is a very important insight for our spiritual life; as children our parents (guardians) are our whole world. They provide for us and our needs. They grant us safety, nurture us, and give us a healthy environment. We can't function without them (think of a newborn!). In short - our parents are 'god'. As we grow and learn that God exists, we transfer what we have learned in our homes to the image of God the Father.

Typically, it's the father figure in the house that affects our image of God the Father. Please note that I wrote: father figure, not father! It may be that the mother, grandfather or someone else took over the father's role in our family. In that case, we can have a very confused image; on one hand, God who is weak, since the earthly father was not much of a father, really, on the other, the characteristics of the person who took over the role (demanding, harsh, overprotective...the list can go on). If a father was missing, we will see God as absent. If he didn't care much, that's what we will think God the Father is like.

Jesus knows how distorted the image of the Father can be. That's why He taught so much about the Father! A chief example of this teaching is the parable of the Merciful Father, more known as the parable of the prodigal son, Luke 15:11-32.

Since Jesus "is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all

creation" (Col 1:15), everything Jesus said and did can speak to us about the Father. That is why the Divine Mercy Image is so significant. By looking at it, meditating on it, we not only look at Jesus, but through Him, at the Father Himself!

We live in a culture which has become dominated by images. A hundred years ago and more, it was the written word that had the most influence. Nowadays, it's mostly images that we look

at. And God, in His providence, has provided us with an image. If we take the time to uncover its meaning, this image can become for us a way of coming to know the true God. The Father wants us to come closer to Him. Let us allow ourselves to be drawn through the image, into the very depths of His unfathomable Mercy. Let us immerse ourselves in the love of His fatherly heart.

Clonleigh May Rosary at Porthall Lourdes Grotto



Men's monthly Rosary in Buncrana.



continued from page 24

and the world in which we live, why is there love? Why is there self-sacrifice? These are miracles of grace. These are signs of the Holy Spirit, God's presence in the world. It is the Holy Spirit that pushes us upward in our evolutionary journey beyond selfishness and sin to kindness and love. So, if you, too, are angry and depressed by the failures of great men, if all these failures are turning you into a cynic, don't let sin blind you to the presence of grace in our world. Be surprised by love." (Religion News Service)

It seems to me like a truism, though maybe not yet to many

Catholics. Knowing something of the 'History of Salvation' can open us up to the way of God, in dealing with His creatures through a series of Covenants, pacts offering trust and inviting our reciprocation as free agents. So, we reflect in faith upon the Covenant with Adam using the Covenant form of Marriage, and the Sign of the Sabbath; on Noah Covenant form of Household, and Covenant sign of the Rainbow, on Abraham with the Covenant form of Tribe and Covenant Sign of Circumcision, on Moses Covenant Form on Nation and Covenant Sign of Passover. On David - Covenant Form of the Kingdom, Covenant

Sign of Temple and Throne; of Jesus with Covenant Form of The Church and Covenant Sign of the Eucharist (Monsignor Daniel Deutsch). Thereby was His Trust offered and invited and the next move is our own!

God has been 'consecuente' with us, as they would say in Spanish; faithful and true. "I thank you for all your faithfulness and love, with excel all I even knew of you; on the day I called you answered, you increased the strength of my soul" (Psalm 138:1-4) - one of my own favorites!

In a recent address of Pope Francis in Hungary, on his visit he spoke to a very attentive and spontaneous assembly of young

people on 'Christ as the future' in the midst of all the offers on show. And to the religious, he was his usual blunt self, as he spoke of Worldliness, Defeatism, Gossip, as three amongst the many challenges to be faced down. 'Christ is the future', he emphasized on both occasions.

Finally, I can recall very graphically a moment of 'intuition' as a young priest, where it seemed that the load was even then too demanding, and the sensation was of the distinction of the Priest being Christ, and I as Minister, leaving me with the conviction for a lifetime, that in Him as Priest I could, as His Minister, place my Trust.

To die of love: The Glorification of Pere Jacques *by Fr Stephen Quinn ocd*

JOHN of the Cross, the first friar of the Discalced Carmelite reform, wrote in his book 'The Living Flame', "the death of such persons is very gentle and very sweet, sweeter and more gentle than was their whole spiritual life on earth. For they die with the most sublime impulses and delightful encounters of love, resembling the swan whose song is so much sweeter at the moment of death."

St John is proposing that in the midst of the painful process of letting go that precedes the end of life, and in the physical disintegration of our bodies, a person can make certain acts that can transform this distressing and painful experience into a demonstration and statement of love for God. As John hints in these few lines, the love with which the saint has lived their life culminates and comes to full flowering in sickness and death, thereby completing their journey to God.

Sometimes the reasoning of Religious Superiors leaves a lot to be desired! Pere Jacques left his work in the diocese and in the diocesan college in order to embrace a monastic vocation. So, after that choice and all the effort of monastic formation, it was decided that the best placement for the newly minted friar was to send him back into education! Even in such a questionable decision, it is still possible to see the finger of God writing straight in crooked lines, for in running a school and in teaching the very thing that was closest to Pere Jacques' heart, God started to ask the friar to die to himself.

At the previous Chapter of the French province, it had been decided that the province was going to establish a college that would be a juniorate for the initial formation of boys preparing to join the order. There was only one problem, they had no school building and were lacking the funding to finish the project. The whole project was then placed into Pere Jacques' hands; an enormous task, literally building from the ground up. The most challenging aspect of the task for a religious was to attempt to hold on to the observance of the rule, while being involved in so much activity and with so many demands being placed upon the person.

Behind such a task, the dying that God was asking of Pere Jacques was to be expressed in not letting his natural enthusiasm for the project to get ahead of him, and not distract him from the love that God was asking of him in consecrated life. The extent of the dying that God was asking of Pere Jacques was only emphasised by the freedom and *carte blanche* that the Provincial gave him to carry out the task.

The new school was built in

the grounds of the monastery at Avon and was given the title, the Petit-College de St Therese of Lisieux. Once the college was built, Pere Jacques was made its first headmaster and, again, he was given a great deal of personal latitude. He was to oversee the employment of the lay staff, draft a plan for attracting and recruiting young men to the school, and then he was allowed to draw up the curriculum singlehandedly. In all this freedom, we can faintly hear the warnings of those who knew him in his formative years, the "utter success or utter failure nature," "the go for broke streak," and the "obstinacy." In such a seed ground, these weeds could so easily grow and strangle this nascent religious vocation.

We can see that Pere Jacques' forceful nature did not at first pick up on the dying that God was asking of him, and that for a period of time his enthusiasm for the success of the project got ahead of the headmaster. The old enemies of his nature raised their ugly heads in the activism of being a headmaster, in making decisions without any consultation, and even the unheard of privilege of sleeping outside of the community. They raised their heads enough to cause certain disquiet even in his own community, creating for a time friction and distance. This failure to respond immediately to the dying that God was asking of him shows that a saint does not hover like an angel through the experiences of life, but is locked in a terrific battle with his own fragility and his too human nature.

Tries

The old catchphrase goes "if at once you do not succeed, try, try again." The human encounter with the holiness of God can be seen as a whole series of tries building one on top of another. Pere Jacques' successful attempt to climb the mountain of holiness by dying in love came against the awful historical events of the 1930s and 40s. In Germany, Hitler and his National Socialists were making their mad grab for total power and 'living room' for the German peoples. France fell to these ambitions in less than a month after a lightning blitzkrieg strike in May 1940. France was then split into two sectors of influence; a region in the north that was governed directly by German authorities and a section in the south by a collaborating French regime named Vichy.

The Vichy regime collaborated with Nazi terror and implemented the German anti-Semitic measures. Shortly after these measures had been made the law of the land, Pere Jacques bumped into an old friend, Lucien Weil. Weil had been a professor in the university and had been

forced out of his position by the anti-Semitic legislation, and was forced to wear the yellow star of David on his breast. Pere Jacques visibly bristled and expressed his disgust at the humiliation of his friend and the racist theory that manipulated this situation. He immediately invited Professor Weil to come and teach science to the pupils of the Petit-College.

The National Socialist's blatant discrimination and injustice forced a fundamental choice on Pere Jacques. The choice that he would make would be intimately bound up with the dying that the Spirit of God was asking of him. To do nothing and to stand passive when terrorism was being unleashed on innocent people was not a morally neutral choice. To do nothing was to actually give your own personal approbation and to collaborate with the continuing evil. Pere Jacques chose to join the Resistance Movement in France and to personally participate in an opposition to National Socialism. His role in the Resistance was not to participate in armed struggle, but was more subtle and humane than that. He decided to turn the Petit-College into a refuge for the victims of the war. He reached out to and sheltered those who were directed his way by other members of the Resistance. Pere Jacques assisted refugees to find modes of travel and safe routes into Spain. He sheltered Resistance fighters and got them to safety, and got assistance to Jewish families and children.

Pere Jacques' death of love was heralded in a most unusual manner. In 1943, he received a request for assistance from the Religious Sisters of Notre Dame de Sion; they had on their hands three Jewish boys whose families had been 'disappeared' by authorities. Pere Jacques recognised immediately both the urgency and danger of the situation. He consulted his provincial and asked permission to take the boys into the College. He received word, "to do what you must, come what may."

The names of the three boys were Helmut Michel, Maurice Schlosser and Jacques France Halpern, as they came into the College; they were given Christian names - Jean Bonnet, Maurice Sabbatier, and Jacques Dupre. The plan was for the boys to fade into anonymity, each was to be just like any one of the other boys. Despite the traumas of their recent experiences and the devastating loss of their families, the boys were quickly beginning to excel at the Petit-College, moving steadily up the results tables to the top of the class. Such was the need for secrecy, that even though Pere Jacques was attending to the boys' every need, he made absolutely no obvious overture to any of the boys. Maybe his careful stewarding of

the boys could be best seen in his insisting that, even though they were disguised as Christians, they were not forced to do anything against their consciences. None of the boys were forced to say prayers or to attend Christian liturgies against their wills, and a cover story was developed to direct attention elsewhere.

The secrecy was not just significant for the boys, it was in some ways the music of Pere Jacques' death in love. The starkness of the situation of the Second World War and all the secrecy required of Pere Jacques by the Resistance and in stewardship of the boys, acted as a purgative experience on his soul. The whole desire to control, to be obstinate, and to be self-sufficient died in him as he endeavoured to care for so many, while all the time not letting his left hand know what his right was doing.

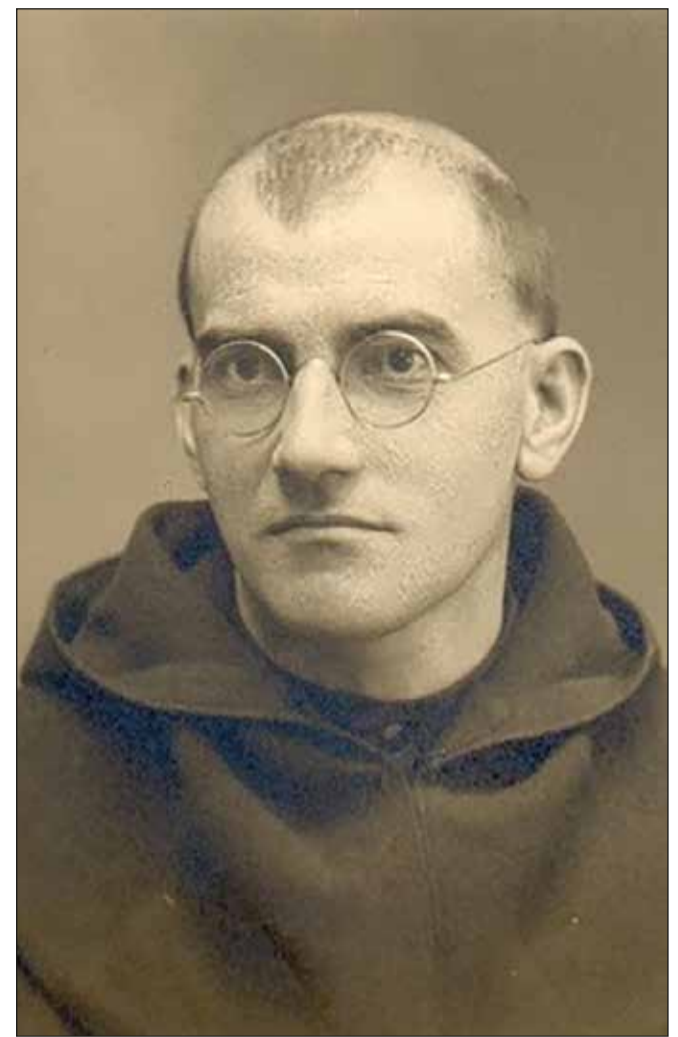
Those who knew Pere Jacques best at this time noticed a distinct change in him. In this time so dominated by the needs of others, they saw his character become gentler, the faults of pride disappeared, and his prayer and life became more rounded. Pere Jacques became an instrument of Christ's Charity in the confusion and secrecy of some of the worst scenes of human history.

Serenity

The college kept its own quiet routine until January 1944, when events began to spin out of control. A series of unfortunate events led to a Gestapo raid on the school on January 15. The Gestapo immediately identified their targets; they arrested the headmaster and the three Jewish children, and led them away with the whole school gathering to witness the scene. The headmaster displayed tremendous dignity and serenity as he was led to the trucks. The pupils started to shout their support for their fellow pupils and their saintly headmaster. Pere Jacques paused, turned to them and simply replied, "Au revoir les enfants!" (Good-bye children.)

His time at the Petit College may have come to an abrupt end but that did not mean that God's word and mission to Pere Jacques ceased. Once he was taken prisoner, Pere Jacques was taken to a succession of four concentration camps; each one getting successively worse than the one before. The last one he arrived in was Mauthausen, in Austria, and there he suffered the same tortures and deprivations as the other wretched inmates of that place.

Looking back from this high hill of 2023, it is hard to imagine the horrors that this former headmaster witnessed in that place of manufactured death. Sheer hell is not an outrageous epithet for what he went through there.



The saintly Cure de Ars, St John Mary Vianney, once said of the priesthood that "it was the love of the heart of Jesus". What had begun when Pere Jacques was ordained in 1925, found its perfection in that concentration camp. In Discalced Carmelite tradition, in every cell of a friar or nun a blank black cross is erected, a reminder that the friar or nun is to model their life on the Crucified One who came not to be served but to serve and to give his life away for the ransom of many. Pere Jacques, while he was in the concentration camp, busied himself with a love that went to the end and died.

The prisoners in Mauthausen only received the very minimum of rations. Jacques became well known for sharing his starvation rations with other prisoners, for being attentive to his priestly duties to the neediest, and for giving away the last of his energy in caring and presence to others. There are reports of Pere Jacques' presence around Mauthausen. One prisoner said of him, "Every evening Pere Jacques visited block 24 when there were six hundred invalids, condemned to die. He attended them materially and spiritually by confessions. It happened to be Holy Week. Tuesday at 8 pm had been chosen for the confession of the sick. All our poor invalids, full of joy, awaited Pere Jacques so they could cleanse their souls, their hearts, there in the concentration camp, this hell on earth."

At the centre of any priests' ministry are the words of consecration, "Take this all of you

and eat of it for this is My Body," "Take this all of you and drink from it, for this is the chalice of My Blood". Now Pere Jacques was asked to live the mystery of those words in his own life; giving himself away a piece at a time to those he served. "This is my body" in giving away to others his meagre rations that compromised his own body and reduced his body to skeletal proportions; his entire weight was no more than seventy-five pounds at the end. "This is my blood", with his lungs being ravaged with tuberculosis, leading to a constant cough and an enduring feverish temperature. All the time, he went on working to bring Christ's heart to other prisoners until his body could not carry him anymore.

On May 5, 1945, American troops liberated the camp. Pere Jacques was too ill to be repatriated; he was carefully nursed in St Elizabeth's Hospital but continued to decline, and died peacefully on June 2, 1945. St John of the Cross spoke of sublime impulses, delightful encounters and sweet tunes in the death of love. There were precious few of those experiences amongst the horrors of Mauthausen, but in the way that Pere Jacques lived there, loved there, and died there, he brought the sweetest song of the swan. The priest, Fr Michaud, who celebrated the extreme unction and viaticum with him, noted the intensity of his death. The priest recorded, "He did not want to be distracted; the Trinity was within him, and he so entered into contemplation."

Transcending the Graveyard...

Embracing life, death, and resurrection in community and liturgy

by Fr Joseph Varghese, Dungiven



Fr Joseph Karukayil Varghese, Dungiven Parish.

AT this time of year, we set aside a special day to honour and remember our departed friends and relatives who have entered the eternal realm. Known by different names, like Cemetery Sunday, Graveyard Day, or Life, Death, and Resurrection, this occasion holds deep significance in our hearts. Every circumstance of death is different. Jesus speaks to His disciples about His death, but tells them that their hearts are not to be troubled.

I am truly captivated by the multitude of parishioners who faithfully visit our Church graveyards. Their visits are infused with solemnity and reverence, reflecting the enduring bonds of love that once existed. It is evident that we express gratitude to God for the privilege of knowing or being connected to those who have passed on. Love is the fundamental element that

transcends time and place. We pray for our departed loved ones with unwavering faith, nurturing the hope of a joyous reunion in the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the very fabric of the Eucharistic celebration, we encounter the same three sacred movements - attending, remembering, and hoping. Through Scripture, we attend to the divine incarnation, embracing the profound story of God's love for humanity. With hearts filled with gratitude, we remember Jesus' life and sacrificial death, knowing that His ultimate victory over death brings hope for our own eternal life. These liturgical movements become transformative experiences, allowing us to participate in the divine narrative. When we contemplate Jesus' death, we stand at Calvary, receiving the immense blessings of His redemptive sacrifice, and our spirits soar with hope as we witness the empty tomb.

My heartfelt wish is for all those who faithfully visit their loved ones' graves but do not partake in the Eucharist, to consider the richness of their deceased loved ones' life experiences and present them to the Lord during the Offertory. In this act of profound offering, they join the bread and wine with the hope and knowledge that one day, their loved ones and themselves will experience the triumphant resurrection through God's transformative love. There

can be no greater gift than to unite the memory and legacy of their loved ones with the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

As visitors enter our parish cemeteries, they are greeted by a breath-taking sight - the vibrant tapestry of flowers adorning the graves throughout the year. These enduring floral tributes speak volumes about how our departed loved ones are cherished and remembered long after our visits conclude. In the celebration of the Eucharist, we witness similar gestures of devotion. Melodies of music and hymns become an exquisite adornment to the liturgy, while the presence of flickering candles serves as enduring symbols of the faithful's profound devotion.

Remembrance

Undoubtedly, Cemetery Sunday holds a special place in our collective hearts - a day for our parish community to unite in love and remembrance. This gathering imparts a powerful sense of community, reminding us that we are all interconnected members of the Body of Christ. While we treasure this annual commemoration, its true fulfilment lies in our regular assembly as a believing community during the weekly Eucharistic service. It is my deepest hope that more of our parishioners will find a way to bring the spirit of unity and shared experience from



our cemeteries into our sacred churches.

In times of profound grief, it is not uncommon for bereaved parishioners to wrestle with blame towards God, especially in the tragic loss of a child. Although this response arises from deep emotional pain, it lacks a theological foundation. Blaming God may stem from a fundamental misunderstanding of our relationship with the Divine. God has bestowed upon us the gift of moral freedom, allowing us to navigate the life He has given us - a life that encompasses both joy and sorrow, triumph and tragedy, and ultimately, the certainty of mortality. When we are burdened by feelings of injustice, it is meaningful to bring our anguish and questions into the sacred space of the Church. By walking the Stations of the Cross or contemplating the Psalms, we gain insights into the mysteries of God's providence, finding solace and understanding amidst our pain and suffering.

Let us also spare a compassionate

thought for those who face an agonizing loss without the solace of a grave to pray beside. Imagine the heartache of families whose loved ones were lost at sea, leaving them without a physical place to seek solace and connection. In our own country, we are familiar with the sorrow of 'the disappeared', and our hearts extend to those trapped in such unfortunate circumstances. Besides the incomprehensibility of the tragedy, the families of the disappeared grapple with the immense challenge of finding closure. In these moments, their pain and grief yearn for inclusion in the liturgy of the Eucharist, which encompasses the very essence of death, redemption, and resurrection.

In the Gospel of John (20:11-28), we witness the raw anguish of Mary Magdalene, standing in tears outside the empty tomb of Jesus. Her grief is palpable as she encounters two angels within the tomb, her voice trembling as she shares, "They have taken my Lord's body away. I don't know where they have put him." The

need for closure after a loved one's passing is undeniable. This need is deeply ingrained in our cultural traditions, such as the sacred wake in Ireland. The support of the community during these trying times is immeasurable and profoundly appreciated. Therefore, if it lies within your capacity, remember the families of the disappeared during your visits to cemeteries this year, offering a heartfelt prayer on their behalf. As priests, it is incumbent upon us to remember them in the liturgy of the Eucharist, where death, redemption, and resurrection intertwine in divine harmony.

Those we remember never die. They continue to walk and talk with us. Their influence is still felt among us. St Paul puts it clearly, "The life and death of each of us has its influence on others; if we live, we live for the Lord; so that alive or dead, we belong to the Lord" (Romans, 14:7-9).

Let us also be reminded that "Those who die in grace go no further from us than God and God is very near."

Dungiven Blessing of Lilies to celebrate St Anthony

ON the Feast of St Anthony of Padua, Fr Joseph Varghese was delighted to bless Lilies when he

celebrated Mass on the morning of June 13.

Prayer to St Anthony

O Holy St Anthony, gentlest of Saints, your love for God and Charity for His creatures, made you worthy, when on earth, to possess miraculous powers.

Encouraged by this thought, I implore you to obtain for me (request).

O gentle and loving St Anthony, whose heart was ever full of human sympathy, whisper my petition into the ears of the sweet Infant Jesus, who loved to be folded in your arms; and the gratitude of my heart will ever be yours. Amen.



Camus procession for Ascension of The Lord

ON The Ascension of The Lord, Sunday, May 21, parishioners of Camus, in Strabane, gathered for a Eucharistic Procession, some 50 years after the last one.

Parish Priest, Fr Declan Boland, led the procession from the nearby Grotto to the Immaculate Conception Church.



Parish Post-its

Aghyaran

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Thursdays after 9.15 am Mass, and finishes at 12 noon.

Ardstraw East

Bridging the Years: On Thursday, June 29, at 7pm for 7.30pm, the Newtown Stewart Heritage Group will host an Evening of Unforgettable Memories, celebrating the history and heritage of the area.

Walk for Glenock: The annual Newtown Stewart Parish Mystery Walk will take place on the afternoon of Sunday, July 2. It will be a 3.8 mile walk.

Badoney Lower (Gortin-Rouskey)

Graves' Blessing: The Blessing of the Graves will take place in Rouskey on Friday, July 21 at 7.30pm, and in Gortin on Saturday, July 22 at 6 pm, with Mass in St Patrick's, followed by walk and prayer to the graveyard for the blessing of graves.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Sundays in St Patrick's Church, Gortin, from 3.30-5.30 pm.

Ballinascreen/

Desertmartin

Fr Madden Anniversary: Fr Madden's 40th anniversary of his ordination to priesthood will be celebrated at the weekend Masses on Saturday, July 1, 6 pm Vigil, and Sunday, July 2, 10 am, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.

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

Ballymagroarty

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

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

Banagher

Adoration & Chaplet: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Divine Mercy Chaplet take place in St Mary's Church, Altinure, on Thursdays 10.30 am - 11.30 am, and in the Grotto Chapel, Fincairn, on Fridays, 10-11 am.

HOPE Camp: HOPE Camp Banagher will run from July 31 until August 4.

Cemetery Blessing: The Blessing of the Graves will take place at St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, on Sunday, July 9, at 10.30am, at St

Peter & St Paul's Church, Foreglen, on Sunday, July 16, at 12 noon, and St Mary's Church, Altinure, on Sunday, September 3, at 10.30 am.

Bellaghy

Community Café: The Open Door Community Café is open on the last Sunday of each month, from 11.30 am until 1 pm.

Buncrana

Cemetery Sunday: The annual Graveyard Masses take place on Sunday, July 31, at 3pm, in St Mary's, Cockhill, and on Sunday, August 6, at 3 pm in Star of the Sea, Desertegney.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place daily in St Mary's Oratory after Mass until 1 pm (Monday-Friday), 11 am - 5 pm (Saturday), 1.30-7 pm (Sunday).

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed each weekday at 9.30 am in St Mary's Oratory, prior to 10 am Mass. During May, the Rosary will be prayed on Sundays, at 5 pm at the Grotto at Cockhill, and 7 pm at the Oratory Grotto. All welcome.

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

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

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

Burt, Inch & Fahan

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

Carndonagh

Cemetery Sunday: The Annual Service of Intercession for the Dead will take place in the cemetery on Sunday, July 2, at 3 pm.

Castlederg & Ardstraw

West

Prayer: The Rosary and Angelus are prayed in St Patrick's Church, Castlederg on Tuesdays at 2 pm.

Adoration: Adoration takes place following 10 am Mass in St Patrick's Church on Fridays, until 12 noon.

Claudy

HOPE Camp: This year's Claudy-Craigbane HOPE Camp will launch with an opening ceremony on Sunday, August 6 and run until

Friday, August 11.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place from after the 10 am Mass until 8 pm on Tuesdays in St Patrick's Church, Claudy, and on Wednesdays in St Joseph's Church, Craighbane.

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.

Clonleigh (Lifford)

Knock Pilgrimage: The second annual Parish Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine will take place on Saturday, August 12.

Coleraine

Parish Picnic: There will be a Parish Family Event on Sunday, August 20, from 2 pm in the grounds of Chapelfield House. Families are to bring their own rug and picnic.

Exposition: St John's Church Monday Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Wednesdays in St John's Church, from 2-4 pm. with Rosary at 3:45 pm.

Creggan

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

Culdaff

Graves' Blessing: The Blessing of the Graves will take place on Sunday, July 2 at 6 pm in Bocan Cemetery.

Dunamanagh

Knock: There will be a pilgrimage to Knock on Saturday, August 5, with a bus leaving Aughabrack at 8 am. For further information and to register interest contact Claire Sheerin at mariesheerin@btinternet.com or telephone 028 71 398932.

Drumragh (Omagh)

Prayer Group: The Charismatic Prayer Group meetings take place in The Pastoral Centre on Thursday evenings, with Rosary at 7.40 pm and prayer meeting at 8 pm. All welcome to come and pray. **Legion of Mary:** The Legion of Mary Men's meetings take place on the first, second and last Monday, and third Tuesday, of each month, in St Vincent's Hall (beneath Sacred Heart Church Sacristy).

Dungiven

Healing Mass: A St Pio Healing Mass takes place on the first Tuesday of each month at 7 pm in St Patrick's.

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed at 9.35 am in St Patrick's Church from Monday-Friday.

Prayer Group: The St Canice's Prayer Group meets each Thursday in the Conference Room at 7 pm, and invites anyone who wishes to deepen their faith through shared Scripture, Prayer and Praise.

Errigal

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration

takes place on Mondays after the morning Mass in St Mary's Church, Ballerin, until 2.30 pm.

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

Social Gathering: Tea and scones are available in Glenullin Social Club after the Wednesday morning Mass, offering an opportunity to have 'a cuppa and a natter' after the prayers are said! Everyone welcome.

Fahan

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

Faughanvale

Memorial Cycle: The annual Fr Jack Gallagher Memorial Cycle will take place on Sunday, August 6. Registration will be in St Anne's Hall from 9.15 am, and the cycle will leave at 10 am for The Drift Inn, Buncrana, where refreshments will be available, along with music and a ticket raffle. All proceeds go to Foyle Hospice. For further information contact Andrew Barr on 07791760237.

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

Greencastle

Cemetery Sunday: The Blessing of the Graves will take place on Saturday, July 1, after the 6 pm Vigil Mass in St Patrick's Church, Greencastle, and Sunday, July 2, after 11.30 am Mass in Our Lady of the Wayside, Broughderg. **Divine Mercy:** The Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed on the First Tuesday of every month at 12.15 pm before Mass in St Patrick's Church, Greencastle.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in St Patrick's Church after 12.30 pm Mass on Tuesdays until 5 pm.

Iskaheen

St Peregrine: The St Peregrine Novena Prayer and veneration of relic takes place in St Columba's Church, Drung, after the 10.15 am Mass on the first Sunday of each month.

Lavey

150th Anniversary: The 150th anniversary of the opening of St Mary's Church, Lavey, will be celebrated on Friday, September 8, at 7.30 pm.

Youth 2000: Youth 2000 Prayer Group, for 16-35 year olds, meets in Lavey Parochial House, opposite the chapel, on Friday evenings at 7.30 pm.

Leckpatrick

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays after 10 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

Limavady

Children's Liturgy: Children's Liturgy for children in P1-P3 takes place every Sunday at the 12 noon Mass in Christ the King Church.

Maghera

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

Moville

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

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

Sion Mills

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

Steelstown

Parish Pilgrimage: Our Lady of Lourdes Parish and Steelstown Brian Ogs GAC are planning a joint pilgrimage to Lough Derg, Leaving on Thursday, June 29, at 11 am, and returning at 11am on Saturday, July 1. Pilgrims must be at least 16 years old. Children aged 16 or 17 years must be accompanied by an adult. The cost is E80, bursaries of £50 available for anyone who would need financial help to enable them to go. Contact Lee Casey at leejcasey@gmail.com if you want to go or want more information.

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

Adoration: Spend some quiet time before the Lord Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament each Sunday 6-7 pm. Adoration also continues each Friday after 10 am Mass to 6.50 pm.

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

Strabane (Camus)

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place all day in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), which is situated at the back of the Church.

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

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

contact Margaret Harte on 028 71 883159.

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

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

Templemore - Long Tower

God Club: Young people wanting to learn about their Catholic faith are welcome to come along to the 'God Club' in Aras Colmcille, in the grounds of Long Tower Church, on Saturdays, starting at 10.30 am.

Padre Pio Mass: A Padre Pio Mass for healing in mind and body takes place on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm, in Long Tower Church. It is hoped at the end of each Mass to give a Blessing using a First Class Relic of Padre Pio. The Mass will be streamed via the parish website: www.longtowerchurch.org then click on the link for the webcam or alternatively by logging on to www.churchmedia.tv Everyone is welcome to attend and the next one will be Monday, May 1.

Templemore - St Eugene's

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

Cathedral Voices: Cathedral Voices is a singing group for people living with dementia and older members of the community. The singing club takes place every Thursday from 1.30-3 pm. A great chance to socialise, listen to music, have a cup of tea and a chat and a bit of craic. If you are interested in attending, please contact the parish office on 028 71262894.

Three Patrons

Be Still: Be Still is a Men's Prayer and Friendship Group that meets every Thursday night from 8-9.15 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, within St Joseph's Church building, Galliagh. Its mission as a group is to provide a safe place where men can pray and share in a confidential and supportive setting. All men are welcome.

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

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Mondays after 11 am Mass, until 11 pm, in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh.

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

Waterside & Strathfoyle

Lectio Divina: Reflect on the Scriptures with Lectio Divina in the Church of the Immaculate Conception on Thursday nights, starting at 8.15 pm.

Diary Dates

Rally for Life: The Rally for Life 2023 will assemble at 2 pm on Saturday, July 1, at the Garden of Remembrance on Parnell Square in Dublin city centre.

Colmcille Exhibition: An exhibition showcasing works by artist, Ina Olohan in celebration of Colmcille, entitled 'In Search of Colmcille', opens on Thursday, July 6, at 7 pm in Donegal County Museum, High Road, Letterkenny, F92 K123. All welcome. RSVP to email, museum@donegalcoco.ie or by telephoning 074 9124613.

Grandparents Knock Pilgrimage: The pilgrimage to Knock Shrine for Grandparents will take place on World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly, Sunday, July 23. The programme includes: Rosary at 2 pm; Anointing of the Sick at 2.30 pm; and Mass at 3 pm, followed by Benediction and Rosary Procession. For further information, visit knockshrine.ie.

Eucharistic Conference: Abide Eucharistic Conference '23 will take place in St Anne's, Cranmore Road, Sligo, on Saturday, September 16, at 10.30 am. The

theme will be – 'As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love' (Jn 15:9). The guest speakers will be Bishop Kevin Doran, Mother Adela Galindo, Archbishop Domenico Sorrentino, and Fr Barry Braum. This will be followed by a nine-day Eucharistic revival mission around Ireland.

Stations of Cross: On the First Friday of each month, after 10 am Mass in St Eugene's, there is a silent procession from the Cathedral to St Columba's Church, Long Tower, meditating on the Stations of the Cross.

Coastal Rosary: Rosary on the Coast for world peace and the protection of unborn babies takes place at Lisfannon Beach, Buncrana, on the first Sunday of every month at 3 pm, and at Benone Strand on the third Sunday of every month, at 3 pm.

Men's Rosary: The Men's Rosary takes place on the first Saturday of every month in Market Street, Omagh (opposite Primark) at 1 pm. All Welcome!

Sr Clare Mass: Mass in honour of Sr Clare Crockett is celebrated on the second Sunday of each month, at 7 pm, in Termonbacca. All welcome. The Mass is streamed live via Termonbacca YouTube channel.

Reading with the Carmelites: The Carmelite Fathers at Termonbacca hold a monthly session of 'Reading with the Carmelite Saints', to explore learning friendship with Christ through the example of the Carmelite Saints. It takes place on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm.

Healing Night: The monthly Healing Night with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, in Derry, takes place on the First Friday of each month, at 7 pm.

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 Talbot Society: The Matt Talbot 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.

RALLY for LIFE

Saturday 1st July DUBLIN

DERRY
St. Joseph's White
Chapel 8.30am

STRABANE
Sports Direct
9.15am

OMAGH

Omagh Park n Ride
10.00am

Book by calling
Michelle 07724791252
or **Ciara 07749308198**

Rally for Life 2023 will assemble at 2pm at the Garden of Remembrance on Parnell Square in Dublin city centre

KNOCK

Ireland's International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine

Grandparents Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine

Sunday
July 23rd, 2023

Schedule of Ceremonies

- 2.00pm: Rosary
- 2.30pm: Anointing of the Sick at Knock Basilica
- 3.00pm: Concelebrated Mass at Knock Basilica followed by Benediction & Rosary Procession

Explore Knock Shrine:

- Exposition in Blessed Sacrament Chapel
- Self-Guided Audio Tours available
- Guided Prayer Sessions in the Prayer Centre
- 100 acres of landscaped gardens to explore
- Resources to enrich and inspire at Knock Bookshop

Light the Fire

Hill of Slane

Sr. Briege McKenna

Fr. Pablo Escriba de Romani

Dana

August 6th 1pm - 4.30pm

1pm Gathering

1.30pm Rosary

Dana & Music Ministry will sing Light the Fire

2pm Mass

- Talks • Eucharistic Healing Service

4.30pm Depart for home

For further enquiries please email:
hillofslaneaugust6@gmail.com

Diocesan Diary

Ordination: Rev Shaun Doherty will be ordained to the Diocesan priesthood by Bishop Donal on Sunday, July 2, at 3 pm, in St Eugene's Cathedral. He will celebrate his first Mass in St Columba's Church, Chapel Road, Waterside, on Monday, July 3, at 7.30 pm.

Education Conference: A Catholic Schools Diocesan Education Conference will be held in St Columba's College, Derry, on August 29 for Post Primary and August 30 for Primary, with the theme: 'Go Make Disciples of all Nations'. The keynote speaker will be David Wells, an internationally renowned

speaker with a background in Education, and there will be a number of workshops and a session looking at how, as Catholic schools, rooted in Jesus, a culture of dialogue and forgiveness is encouraged in all our relationships.

Vocations Holy Hour: A Holy Hour for Vocations takes place in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, at 8 pm on the second Friday of each month.

World Youth Day: Derry Diocesan Youth is taking a group of over 18s on Pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Lisbon, from July 25 to August 7. Still some places available.

To register or find out more information contact Lizzie Rea on lizzie.rea@derrydiocese.org.

Lourdes 2023: The 2023 Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes, led by Bishop Donal, will take place from July 3-7. Going direct from City of Derry Airport, the pilgrimage consists of four nights' full board in the Hotel Agena, costing £745 sharing, with a £35 single supplement. Travel insurance up to age 79 is available at £39, and £78 for age 80 to 94 (pilgrims may wish to use their own insurance). For further details and payment arrangements contact the Lourdes Pilgrimage Office, 164 Bishop Street, Derry, derrypilgrim@outlook.com, telephone 028 71 260293.

Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR writes... Receive the Holy Spirit



Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR

THE month of June is introduced for us as Christians by the great feast of Pentecost which this year we celebrated on Sunday, May 28. Everything that we have been doing as a faith community for the past six months has been leading up to this; and everything we will do for the next six months will lead from it into a deeper life of faith, hope and love.

Receive the Holy Spirit

Each year we, as the Church, journey in faith with Christ, beginning with His Birth in Bethlehem at Christmas, which is prepared for by the four weeks of Advent; onto His death on Calvary and His Resurrection at Easter, which is prepared for by the six weeks of Lent; and then, during the seven weeks after Easter, we walk with the Risen Christ onto the sending of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. It is a journey that is always beginning, although from a different place each year because of how we are each year in the world, and in the Church, and also in our own personal lives.

A power, not a possession

The Holy Spirit is given to the Church, not as a possession but as a power. If the Spirit is seen as a possession, we simply look at what it does for us as God's people. We are enriched individually and as communities. This can lead us into seeing ourselves as better than others and draw us into being judges of the world around us.

But the Spirit is given as a power with which we are sent to the world as representing God's desire for all of humanity and all of creation. And the power of God's Spirit is the power of love.

"As the Father sent me, so I am sending you."

Two things happen at Pentecost that are renewed every year for us as believers in Christ. First of all we receive the Holy Spirit. The signs of accepting this gift are mainly peace, and enthusiasm for life.

The second thing that happens is we are given the commission: "As the Father sent me, so I am sending you." It is through us, in our daily lives, that Christ saves and renews the world. Our commission is to be peace makers and peace bringers to the world we live in. It is also to bring enthusiasm for life into a world that is so often anti-life and troubled with divisions of every kind.

The power of the Holy Spirit that can transform the world is the power of love. That is why Jesus gave us as His commandments: "Love God with your whole heart, your whole soul, your whole

mind, your whole strength. And love your neighbour as yourself." This is the only way to full human living. And in another place He said to His disciples: "What I command you, is to love one another as I have loved you."

Love is the power that we have been given to take to the world as Christ's salvation of the world.

What does this mean?

One of the most amazing statements in the Gospels is: "God is love. Those who live in love live in God and God lives in them." Love is far beyond what we normally think about it. For us, love is so often what we feel for someone or something. And that can be love. But the power of love is far beyond that. Our feelings change and there are times when we do not feel that same love for the person or the thing.

We believe that God is the origin of all love. Love is a God power to create anew and forever. It is a power that God shares with us who are made in God's image and likeness. And it is the power that the Holy Spirit takes and infuses in us as the followers of Christ so that the world may believe.

Love is about relationship

For us, love is not just something that we have as individuals. It is a gift that we have for building relationships with one another. There are many different kinds of relationships in human life for many different kinds of purposes. Some are for business; some are for power and politics; some are recreational; some are social; and so on. All of these change with

time. Many of them disappear altogether from our lives.

Through love, though, we are united with one another in mind, heart and soul in ways that last forever, even when they are difficult. Marriage; family life; living together; friendship; faith community; are all examples of relationships founded on love. It is in these relationships that we can see the presence of the Holy Spirit. And it is through these relationships of love that the Holy Spirit will enter into the other kinds of relationships mentioned above.

God's masterpiece

In the Book of Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament, we hear of God bringing about the most wonderful masterpiece of creation. The high point of this creation is humanity made in the very image of God. And the jewel in the crown is "male and female God created them; in the image of God they were created." And God saw that it was very good.

Marriage

The first and single most important love relationship in human life is that of marriage of a woman and man. I am aware in writing that sentence that many people will not necessarily agree with it for all kinds of good reasons. And that is alright.

- In the marriage of a woman and man, we have the full image of God as revealed in the Word of God – two persons, fully distinct and fully equal, becoming one flesh.

- In marriage, we have two

people who commit themselves exclusively to each other for the rest of their lives 'for better for worse; for richer for poorer. In sickness and in health.' What an amazing commitment of love that is. And what a great tribute that is to the goodness of humanity.

- In marriage, we have the origins of the next generation of human life in which individuals experience the wonder of love from the moment of conception, come what may.

- In our Catholic tradition, the marriage of a woman and man is recognised as one of the seven Sacraments of the Church. As such, marriage is one of the major sources of Christ's salvation for the world in which we live. What an act of faith that is in this core relationship of love.

Today's challenges

There are many challenges in today's society that we have to face. In our culture, it is common for couples to live together instead of getting married. It is not for us to judge them but to encourage them to look for the more.

Unfortunately, marriages break up and people have to move on, often into second relationships and blended families. They need our understanding and compassion rather than condemnation.

There are same sex couples who need to find their fulfilment in love. We have to grow in our respect and reverence for them and condemn all forms of homophobia that lead to distress and suffering for them.

And there is the whole new

phenomenon of gender identity in which most of us are at a loss what to think or do. The most important thing in this for us, as in all other circumstances, is to make sure that we have room for everyone in the life of the Church where each person can feel safe and revered.

The biggest challenge

As we respond to the Holy Spirit of love at this time, the biggest challenge is that all of us: married; single; separated; divorced; priest; religious; LGBTQ+ etc, would positively encourage and celebrate the core marriage relationships of men and women, especially in the sacrament of marriage. And, of course, the greatest challenge is also for all these couples themselves to work on their marriages to make them as successful as possible, by making their marriage the main priority of their lives.

Conclusion

In his letter to all of us called 'Amoris Laetitia – The Joy of Love' – Pope Francis wrote:

"As a social institution, marriage protects and shapes a shared commitment to deeper growth in love and commitment to one another for the good of society as a whole. That is why marriage is more than a fleeting fashion; it is of enduring importance. Its essence derives from our human nature and social character. It involves a series of obligations born of love itself, a love so serious and generous that it is ready to face any risk."

Celebrating Brandywell Grotto Mass for Life, Fr Gerard Mongan prayed with those gathered...

We ask Mary to help us cherish the gift of life in all its stages

ON the Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin, Sunday, May 31, a Mass for Life was celebrated at Brandywell Grotto, in Derry, by Fr Gerard Mongan, Adm Long Tower, and Fr Peter McLaughlin.

During his homily, Fr Gerard welcomed those gathered to thank God, with Mary and Elizabeth, for the gift of life.

"We thank God for the many mothers and fathers in our parish and in our country who struggle so hard to care for their children despite many setbacks and trials," he said, adding, "With Elizabeth, today we give a loud cry with any parent who has lost a little one in whatever circumstance and who desperately need healing and peace. Today we cry with any child or vulnerable adult who have been robbed of their life, who have been harmed and are still hurting.

"In that meeting of two mothers, Elizabeth and Mary, we are given a glimpse of the joy of new life and how sacred life is. Notice the first person to recognise Jesus is an

unborn child."

Remarking that the Feast of the Visitation was all about "mutual support, encouragement and accompaniment", Fr Gerard continued: "We thank God for all who peacefully and respectfully pray for the protection of life, who offer life-affirming options, real healthcare that preserves, supports and nurtures every life.

"When we make our own visitations and journeys to the ones we love, may we have the same joy that Elizabeth and Mary shared in each other's company, to live the words of St Paul today: having a profound respect for each other, making hospitality our special care, treating 'everyone with equal kindness'.

"May we see in the faces of everyone that there is a life precious to God. We ask Mary to help us cherish the gift of life in all its stages, to live it to the full so that one day her greeting will reach our ears in the joy of Heaven."

Stressing that Our Lady "isn't a pious and still statue, static

and lifeless", Fr Gerard went on to say: "She's like a superhero, a woman of action. Someone is in need of help and she flies there instantly. And if she went with haste to help her cousin...will she not come even faster to assist us, her children?"

A couple of weeks after, during their Summer General Meeting of the Irish Bishops' Conference in Maynooth, the Northern Bishops expressed deep concern at the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Chris Heaton Harris' decision to lay regulations in the Westminster Parliament making it compulsory on all second-level schools in Northern Ireland to teach children about access to abortion and prevention of early pregnancy.

They stated: "Having already imposed some of the most radical abortion laws in the world on the people of Northern Ireland, without their consent, the Secretary of State now seems determined to impose an ideologically biased view of abortion on all schools,

irrespective of parental rights or school ethos.

"This is radical legislation the British Government doesn't even impose on schools in Britain, where the right of parents to be involved in decisions about such ethical and pastoral issues is fully respected."

The Bishops added: "It is not for a Government to impose one ideological approach on children, parents, or on our schools, over others. This is why the right of parents to an education for their children that is in accordance with their ethical, religious and philosophical convictions, is an internationally recognised human right."

They went on to call on the Secretary of State to "respect the internationally recognised rights of parents, and the principles of consultation and devolution in the Good Friday Agreement, and to withdraw this legislation, leaving it to a devolved Assembly to decide, in consultation with parents and educational stakeholders."

The Northern Bishops include Archbishop Eamon Martin, Bishop Larry Duffy, Bishop Michael Router, and Bishop Donal McKeown, who, in his recent homily on the Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ, highlighted the clear message in the New Testament that our bodies are Temples of the Holy Spirit, that they belong to God.

Regarding schools in Northern Ireland being now obliged "to provide so called scientific information on abortion and contraception, as if they were issues where values and morality played no role", Bishop Donal

said: "The announcement by the NI Secretary of State that abortion is merely a normal health matter is high on ideological steroids and pedagogically blind with no obvious concern for children's wellbeing.

"When schools are reduced to a battleground where the new ideology must be taught and there is no room for a different view, I fear that we will do more damage to our children's future. The lesson of human rights can be a great servant but a bad master."

The next Dublin Rally for Life takes place in Parnell Square on Saturday, July 1.



Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the month of June and the lovely summer days. This month is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. This year, we celebrate this beautiful feast day on June 16 and, on the following day, we rejoice at the Immaculate Heart of Mary, on June 17. God is Love and the Sacred Heart of Jesus is the human sign of God's love for us. Jesus' Sacred Heart is overflowing with love for all humanity.



Sacred Heart of Jesus

*Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust in You.
Sacred Heart of Jesus, I believe in
Your love for me.
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Your Kingdom
come.*

The Immaculate Heart of Mary leads us closer to God and shows us how we should love Him. Mary's Heart is Immaculate, this means that it is pure and without sin (CCC 411) and that she is the only fully human person who can love God in the way that He should be loved. Devotion to Mary's Immaculate Heart allows us to honour her holiness (CCC 971) and unites us closer to God (CCC 969).

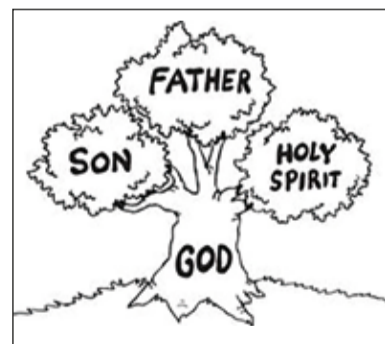
Immaculate Heart of Mary

*O Virgin Mary, My Mother. I give to
your Immaculate Heart, my body
and my soul, my thoughts and my
actions.*

*I want to be what you want me to be
and do just what you want me to do.*

*I am not afraid because you are
always with me. Help me to love your
Son Jesus, with all my heart and
above all things.*

*Take my hand in yours so I can
always be with you.*



Trinity Sunday

Trinity Sunday is celebrated on the first Sunday after Pentecost and lasts only one day, which is symbolic of the unity of the Trinity. On this day we remember the truth that God is made up of the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit. It is a central mystery of our faith (CCC 234) and a little difficult to understand that there can be one

God yet three persons to God.

The Bible reveals that there is only one God but that this God is made up of three parts, The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The word we use to describe this 3 in 1 God is 'Trinity'. This word is made up of the word 'Tri', which means three, and the word 'unity', which means one or being unified together.



Saints of the Month

St Justin Martyr – June 1

St Kevin – June 3

St Columba – June 9

St Irenaeus – June 28

Corpus Christi

The glorious feast of Corpus Christi is celebrated after Trinity Sunday. It usually falls between late May and June. The name 'Corpus Christi' is the Latin for 'Body of Christ' – the Feast of the Holy Eucharist. The actual feast day of the Eucharist is Holy Thursday, the Last Supper. But because of the sad events which are recalled in Holy Week, the Eucharist is given its own special day to celebrate – Corpus Christi.

One practice of devotion which allows us to show great homage to Christ is Eucharistic Adoration.



Eucharistic Adoration

The Catholic Church has developed the beautiful practice of Eucharistic Adoration. This practice is centuries old, dating back to the Apostles, when the Eucharist was carried into the homes of those people who could not attend Mass.

Eucharistic Adoration is a sign of devotion and worship of Jesus, who is truly present – Body and Blood,



Soul and Divinity – in the Eucharist.

The Holy Eucharist is placed in a very special vessel called a monstrance. This is made of a precious metal and is shaped like the sun to symbolise the resurrection of Jesus. The centre of the monstrance has a round glass window through which the sacred Host can be seen. Behind the glass is a round container called a lunette. The lunette holds the host securely in place. When the Host is not in the monstrance for Adoration, it is kept safely in its lunette, within a strong container known as a pyx, in the Tabernacle.

When the monstrance contains the sacred Host, the priest will not touch the vessel with his bare hands. Out of respect for the Eucharist, the priest holds the monstrance with a humeral veil, a wide band of cloth that covers his shoulders (humera) and has pleats on the inside, in which he places his hands. A humeral veil is a liturgical vestment normally made of silk or gold cloth and is used by priests during Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

We are invited to come and spend time with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. When we come to spend time with Jesus in the Host, we praise and adore Him. We thank Him for all the wonderful things in our lives and the many gifts He has given us.

When the angel appeared to the children at Fatima, he showed them how they should worship Jesus in the Eucharist. He bent low in worship until his forehead touched

the ground. He taught the children a beautiful prayer to say to Jesus.

Please try to visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament and spend some precious time with Him.



St Anthony

"I shall instruct you and to teach you the way to go; I shall not take my eyes off you." (Ps 32:8)

The feast day of St Anthony is June 13. He was one of the greatest preachers in the Church. St Anthony was born in Lisbon, Portugal, into a wealthy family, but from an early age he wanted to live in poverty like St Francis, helping others and loving God.

One of the gifts which God gave St Anthony was the ability to teach and give talks to people. When St Anthony preached in a Church it was overflowing with people who, having listened to what he said, changed their lives and turned back to God. He is one of the most loved saints of all times.

In one of his sermons, he spoke about how our actions speak louder than words, meaning that the things we do show more clearly our intentions and is more important than what we said we would do.

May we always try to do what St Anthony spoke of by letting our words teach and our actions speak to everyone we meet. This way, we can show God's love to all. St Anthony pray for us.

Saints Peter and Paul

During this month we celebrate the special feast day of two magnificent saints, Peter and Paul. It falls on June 29 every year. These two men were among the first to spread the message of Jesus.

St Peter was a fisherman who Jesus called to be one of His apostles. He followed Jesus, learned from him and loved him. This great apostle's name was Simon, but Jesus changed it to Peter, which means 'rock'. "You are Peter and on this rock I will build my Church" (Matthew 16:18). Peter is the Prince of the Apostles, the first leader of the Church, the first Pope.

St Paul was a Roman Citizen and a Pharisee who never met Jesus during the Lord's earthly life. He hated the first Christians and made them suffer for believing in Jesus. Paul was converted to Christianity after he experienced a vision of the resurrected Jesus on the road to Damascus. He became a powerful teacher and preacher, always trusting in God.

We honour these two great apostles: Peter, our leader in the faith, and Paul, its fearless preacher.



Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. What song, made famous in a 1994 Walt Disney classic literally means 'No Problems' in Swahili?
2. Which of New York's 'boroughs' is the largest by population?
3. Which former England footballer is now a presenter on TV show 'Homes under the hammer'?
4. Which Manchester-born former lead singer released solo albums entitled 'A tribute to Bobby' and 'American Soul'?
5. What is the main ingredient in a Spanish paella?
6. In which US state do the former Royals, Harry and Meghan currently live?
7. Which actor stars in the hit TV comedies, 'The Righteous Gemstones' and 'Eastbound and Down'?
8. What nationality is environmental activist, Greta Thunberg?
9. How many races are there in a full decathlon?
10. In which Irish county is the town of Mullingar?
11. Whose face is said to have launched 1,000 ships?
12. Aureolin is a shade of what colour?
13. Which planet in our galaxy is known to be the hottest?
14. In what country would you find Mount Kilimanjaro?
15. What sport is played at Edgbaston Stadium in Birmingham?
16. How many stars are there on the national flag of China?
17. The 2018 documentary film 'Amazing Grace' tells the gospel singing story of what world famous American performer who died that same year?
18. Which fictional TV priest lived on Rugged Island?
19. Which former Manchester United and Ireland footballer's autobiography about his battle with alcohol is entitled 'Back from the Brink'?
20. What is the capital city of Australia?
21. Who played the role of TV detective Lieutenant Columbo?
22. 'Supersonic' was the first single ever released by which British band?
23. What 17th century book is still regarded as the best-selling novel of all time?
24. In which country did the modern celebration of Halloween originate?
25. What nut is used to make marzipan?

Quiz Answers: 1, Hakuna Matata. 2, Brooklyn. 3, Dion Dublin. 4, Mick Hucknall. 5, Rice. 6, California. 7, Danny McBride. 8, Swedish. 9, Four. 10, Westmeath. 11, Helen of Troy. 12, Yellow. 13, Venus. 14, Tanzania. 15, Cricket. 16, Five. 17, Aretha Franklin. 18, Fr Dick Byrne. 19, Paul McGrath. 20, Canberra. 21, Peter Falk. 22, Oasis. 23, Don Quixote. 24, Ireland. 25, Almond.

Aghyaran, Ardmore, Ardstraw West & Castlederg, Ballinascreen, Ballymagroarty, Banagher, Bellaghy, Buncrana, Carndonagh, Claudy,

Let Your Light Shine!

Moville, Newtown Stewart, Omagh, Plumbridge, Sion Mills, Steelstown, Strabane, Swatragh, Templemore - Long Tower and St Eugene's, Three Patrons, Waterside

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnyloop, Drumquin, Duramannagh, Dúngiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,



Confirmation children celebrating annual 'Fan the Flame' Mass in Celtic Park, Derry.



Greenlough, Iskaheen, Killyclogher, Killygordon, Kilrea, Lavey, Leckpatrick, Lifford, Limavady, Maghera, Magilligan, Malin, Melmount,