

The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 116. MARCH 2026

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See inside...



Out and About - Greencastle.



Camino Coffee Morning - Ballinascreen



Lenten Retreat - Dungiven



"Shine your light on others...don't hide it under a bushel!"
(see p4-5)

A joyful moment during panel discussion at An Lasair Chríost youth conference, in St Columb's College, Derry.



Marathon Fundraiser - Cloisters, Long Tower



Rickety Wheel Fundraiser - Ardmore



Silver Jubilee Celebration - Sacred Heart College, Omagh



Passionist Mission - Moville

People in focus



Courtney Cowan, Spark Derry



Fr John Friel CP, Derry & Co Down



Kieran Burns, Claudy



Patricia McMaster, Maghera



The late Yvonne O'Rourke RIP

Also featuring: Young Writers' section; Spark youth programme; Irish Columban Youth launch; Dungiven GAA Clubs' Mass; Children's Catechism Club; Irish Section; Knock Eucharistic Adoration Pilgrimage; World-wide Eucharistic & Marian Procession; Vocations News; Features; Diary pages; Quiz and much more...

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Sr Deirdre Mullan RSM reflects on the Pope's March prayer intention for Disarmament and Peace:

"Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence."

What if accelerating arms race were replaced by race to feed hungry and alleviate global poverty?

A few months ago, Pope Leo XIV reminded the world that the 80th anniversary of Hiroshima is not merely a historical milestone, but "a wound that still calls for peace". The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki inflicted unimaginable suffering on hundreds of thousands of people – overwhelmingly civilians – whose lives were shattered physically, psychologically, and socially. Eight decades later, that devastation remains a universal warning about the consequences of war, and especially of nuclear weapons. As world leaders and representatives from many

nations gathered at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park to mark the anniversary, Pope Leo XIV spoke from Vatican City, insisting that Hiroshima must never be reduced to a closed chapter of history. He warned against the false sense of security built on nuclear deterrence and urged the international community to replace fear with justice, open dialogue, and fraternity. Memory, he insisted, must not paralyse us; it must shape responsibility. But can it? And will it? In these early months of 2026, the world finds itself in an increasingly dangerous nuclear moment. For too

long, the trading of nuclear threats has been accompanied by denial – the belief that such weapons can be used to intimidate or even strike an adversary without devastating consequences for all. This ignores overwhelming scientific evidence that any significant nuclear exchange would have global effects. Beyond the immediate destruction in a potential theatre of war – whether on the Korean Peninsula or elsewhere – the environmental and climatic consequences would be worldwide, triggering what scientists describe as a form of nuclear winter, with catastrophic implications for

food production and human survival. The Holy Father has entrusted this intention in a particular way to the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network, inviting Christians not only to pray but to shape their daily lives in response to this appeal. The call for effective disarmament and for dialogue over violence comes at a time of profound global crisis. Several nuclear-armed states are led by figures who prioritise power, prestige, and self-glorification over truth and the common good. This combination places humanity in uncharted and perilous waters. As the Church's first North



American Pope, Leo XIV understands with particular clarity that his country of birth – and others – possess the capacity to alter the course of history. As he has said, "In an era of confusion, the world needs a compass – and that compass is the Beatitudes."

Beatitudes

In 'Voices of the Catacombs – The Church, Power and the Poor', Don Mullan reminds us that the Beatitudes, together with Matthew 25, form the true litmus test of Christianity. The criteria laid out in Matthew 25:35-40 are stark and unambiguous: I was hungry and you gave me food; I was

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

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

- Donaghmore:** Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.
- Drumquin:** Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.
- Drumragh:** Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.
- Dungiven:** Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9am-6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.
- Errigal:** Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.
- Fahan:** Fridays after 10am Mass, St Murá's Parish Church.
- Greencastle (Tyrone):** Thursdays, 6-10 pm, St Patrick's Church.
- Greenlough:** Thursdays, 9am-5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.
- Iskaheen:** Tuesdays, from after 10 am Mass until 2 pm, St Patrick's Church.
- Kilrea:** Mondays, 12 noon - 7pm, St Mary's Drumagarnier. Concludes with Benediction.
- Lavey:** Fridays, after 9.30 am Mass until 5 pm.
- Leckpatrick:** Wednesdays from 8.15 am-5 pm.
- Lifford (Murlog):** 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
- Limavady:** First Sunday of each month from 3-5 pm in Christ the King Church (with Confessions), and on Thursdays in St Mary's Church, from 1-6 pm.
- Magilligan:** Wednesdays, 3-7 pm; First Sundays, 3-6 pm, St Aidan's Church.
- Melmount:** Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.
- Moville:** Mondays, 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, St Pius X Church.
- Newtownstewart:** Thursdays, 6.30-7.30 pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.
- Sion Mills:** Adoration takes place in the side chapel (Oratory) and will be available every day during the Church's opening hours, moving to the main body of the chapel on Fridays, from 11am-6.50 pm, ending with Benediction

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

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



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.

Young people encouraged to experience Spark youth programme that is...

Fanning spark of faith into burning bright belief



THE Spark Youth Programme is a faith-based encounter for young people aged 12-16 years. This is a time of transition in these young people's lives. They have recently completed a period of preparation for and received the Sacrament of Confirmation, with the beautiful gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. Moving to a new school, studying new subjects, making new friends, the spiritual aspect of their lives can easily be given a place of less importance.

Spark is a unique programme developed right here in the Derry Diocese. Designed in a way that is appealing to young people, it is delivered over a residential weekend, Friday evening to Sunday evening. Based on themes from YouCat and The Catechism of the Catholic Church, relevant spiritual

topics are explored, discussed and learned in a relaxed and enjoyable way.

The weekend programme is made up of talks and immersive exercises exploring faith topics and their relevance in the lives of young people today. No, it is not all boring stuff, indeed, it certainly is anything but! There is fun and games, music and laughter, lasting friendships and good food all in the mix, making for an unforgettable and enjoyable experience.

The programme is delivered by a team of young people, who have previously experienced the weekend themselves and have taken so much away from it that they want to pass it on to others. Of course, there is a group of adults in the background to support, supervise and create the space for

the young people to both lead and participate in the activities.

Probably one of the most important aspects of Spark is that there is a follow-on after the young people come away from their weekend. The 'Burning Bright' meetings take place once every two weeks. Young people can meet up in a safe and supervised environment to talk, share, pray and have some fun together, continuing the journey they began on their Spark weekend. Oh, and not forgetting the pizza!

As the saying goes, Rome was not built in a day and, as Spark is a brand-new concept, it was necessary to proceed carefully to make sure everything worked well, but with a team of wonderful, enthusiastic young people in the ranks, the Spark of renewed faith will certainly be passed on to many more young people in days to come.

As we know, nothing good happens without much prayer. Spark has built up a team of 'Prayer Crusaders' throughout the community, who pray daily for the success of the Spark programme. A

Prayer Card with the prayer to the Holy Spirit, consecration prayer to Our Blessed Mother, invocations to young saints, and other prayers is distributed to those who commit to saying the set prayers daily. This is a solid foundation for the future of Spark, because as we are aware that, in these times, there is a battle for souls, especially the souls of young people.

The next Spark weekend will take place from 6 pm on Friday, April 17, to after Holy Mass at 3 pm on Sunday, April 19, in Melmount Parish Centre, Strabane. It is necessary to complete an application form and pay a small deposit to secure a place. Places are in demand already.

Information and forms are available from Vivienne - 00447935007351 - or Brendan - 00353(0)868067973, or by email: sparkburningbright@gmail.com.

Prayer Cards for anyone who would like to become a Spark Prayer Crusader are also available from these contacts.

The only way to truly know Spark is to experience it. Why not give it a try?



Privilege to help young people feel valued and connected to their faith by Courtney Cowan

SPARK is a youth group that helps young people stay connected with their faith in a fun and supportive environment. It is a place where teens can come together, learn more about their faith, and grow spiritually while also making new friends.

Through games, discussions, and activities, Spark shows that faith isn't just something you practice alone, it can be shared and enjoyed as part of a community.

Being part of Spark helps young people cope with the challenges of everyday life. It gives them a safe space to talk, ask questions, and support one another. By building friendships and encouraging kindness and understanding, Spark helps teens feel that they belong and that they are not facing things on their own.

I have been part of Spark since the very beginning, and it has been amazing to see how it has grown and helped so many young people.



Teaching the teens about faith is something I really enjoy because it is not just about lessons, it is about building relationships and walking alongside them as they grow. Seeing their confidence grow, their friendships form, and their faith develop is really rewarding.

Spark has become like a family, and it is a privilege to be part of something that helps young people feel supported, valued, and connected to their faith.

Spark Prayer

Dear God, we stand in awe of Your creation.
 We thank You for creating each of us individually and uniquely.
 We lift up our young people to You, O Lord,
 in our homes, our communities and across the world.
 May our paths be rich, for we are all Your masterpiece.
 Help us to understand that You lead us right where we are supposed to be,
 that Your love is divine and will sustain us through good and bad times.
 Arm us with strength that we may handle the challenges and uncertainties of life.
 Help us to face each day with grace and love.
 Grant us the wisdom to make decisions and the humility to reach out for help.
 Inspire us.
 Give us the courage to lead and to follow, and the peace to see the joy in everything.
 We hope and trust that You will provide all the necessary graces,
 and we give You thanks for our many gifts with sincere appreciation.
 Equip us to be Your hands and feet,
 and envelop each other in the love, safety and joy of Your family.
 Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Reflection continued from p2

thirsty and you gave me drink; I was a stranger and you welcomed me; naked and you clothed me; sick and in prison and you visited me. These are not abstract ideals. They are concrete moral tests - applied not only to individuals, but to societies and nations.

At a time when the United Nations struggles for resources to deliver essential humanitarian services, one is compelled to imagine a different set of global priorities. What if the accelerating arms race were replaced by a race to feed the hungry and to alleviate global poverty? Measured against Matthew 25, such a shift would represent not weakness, but moral clarity.

Nuclear disarmament, the arms race, peace, and food security are inseparably linked. A nuclear conflict between major powers

would not only kill millions outright but could trigger global famine on a catastrophic scale, as agriculture collapses, supply chains fail, and sunlight is reduced by atmospheric disruption. At the same time, the vast financial resources devoted to maintaining and modernising nuclear arsenals and conventional weapons could instead be redirected toward preventing hunger, strengthening food systems, and addressing the root causes of conflict.

This moral truth was articulated with remarkable clarity by US President, Dwight D Eisenhower, a former Supreme Allied Commander and no naïve idealist. In 1953, he warned:

"Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed... This is not a

way of life at all, in any true sense. Under the cloud of threatening war, it is humanity hanging on a cross of iron."

Eisenhower understood that an arms race is never morally neutral: it diverts resources from human need and corrodes the very values it claims to defend.

Today, as Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin preside over renewed military escalation and rhetoric, Eisenhower's warning sounds less like history and more like prophecy. A new arms race that serves entrenched military-industrial interests continues to exact its price from the poor, the hungry, and the vulnerable.

History reminds us that food itself has often been weaponised. From the siege of Leningrad to the Holodomor in Ukraine, to Ireland's own experience during the Great Hunger, starvation has been deliberately used to

break populations. These lessons demand that we recognise food not as a tool of power, but as a fundamental human right.

This is why Pope Leo XIV has dedicated March to the urgent task of replacing the false security of nuclear deterrence with justice, dialogue, and fraternity. In doing so, he offers neither naïve optimism nor abstract idealism, but a moral imperative - rooted in memory, faith, and a clear-eyed recognition of our shared vulnerability on this fragile planet.

(Sr Deirdre is a Mercy sister from Derry. She is the coordinator of a programme promoting education for girls in the developing world. She is a trustee of Arise, the anti-trafficking foundation which works to end the trafficking and sale of human beings.)

Spark weekends enriching young souls by Luke Murphy

IN February of 2025, I helped to lead the Spark weekend. At that point in time, I had never even been on a retreat myself and here I was in a critical role, helping to deliver the weekend to nearly 30 young people.

I remember shivering with nerves while giving the introduction for the weekend, but I knew that what I was doing was good work that needed to be done.

Though I was certainly under-qualified, I was over-graced and managed to forget myself and my nerves, and committed myself to the task at hand, surrendering to what, I suppose, was God's Will. I experienced an incredible joy and peace over those three days that left an indelible mark on my heart, and led to my discovery that I desire to live a life dedicated to God's Will.

It was such a great pleasure to see also the graces the candidate



children received over the course of those days; certainly a result of the prayers of the many people who prayerfully support Spark.

With the secular world being such a meat-grinder for the soul, it has been an incredible source of hope to see God's Will in action through Spark. To see all those associated - parents, children, leaders, and volunteers - come together to create an environment to enrich the souls of young people in Derry, makes me confident that the ground we stand on will yield many saints in the years to come.

Flame of Christ Youth Conference attendees encouraged to...

Shine your light on others... don't hide it under a bushel!

AN Lasair Chríost, – The Flame of Christ - brought to Ireland by St Patrick, was the very apt title for the youth conference held in Derry on the Sunday after Ireland's Patron Saint's March 17 Feast Day. The young people who organised it have a burning desire in their hearts to evangelise, and they were delighted with the turnout for the celebration of Mass in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, followed by a time of talks, panel discussion and prayer in St Columb's College.

The general consensus amongst the 140 or so attendees was that it was an amazing day from start to finish. Evolving from a discussion amongst a number of 'The Net' Young Writers' team at the end of their Christmas meet-up with Bishop Donal, and planned over a series of weekend meetings after that under his guidance, the fruits of all their efforts were enjoyed on the day across all the age-groups present, which was mainly teenagers and twenty-somethings.

The Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal was a beautiful start to the day, with Fr Antonio Maria and Fr Joseph Mary, of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and Discalced Carmelite, Fr Stephen Quinn, concelebrating, and five young men as altar servers, and the Cathedral Schola Group lifting the occasion to another level with their beautiful singing, accompanied by Cathedral Choir Director, Maghnus Monaghan.

The young organisers of An Lasair Chríost were very much involved in the liturgy of the Mass, and were joined in managing the day's events by a number of enthusiastic volunteers, including some Pope John Paul II participants organised by Bethany Doherty, of the Diocesan Youth Office, who was also on the organising team.

Reflecting on the Gospel readings during Lent as a series of lessons, helping us to "see the world through the mind and heart of Jesus Christ", as we are led to Palm Sunday and Holy Week, Bishop Donal spoke of Easter as "bursting out in the Lasair Chríost, the flame of Christ, in the darkness of the Easter Vigil, leading us to 'We are an Easter People and Alleluia is our song'"

He went on to note that the readings show that Jesus doesn't just want to do things for people, but to reveal who He is in order to lead us somewhere, and he encouraged his young listeners to be open to learning some challenging lessons, and to love life and help others to love life.

Saying that there was "a huge need today" for the flame of Christ that Patrick had brought to Ireland, Bishop Donal told the young people: "This generation is called,

in an age of the focus on me, to let Jesus do your leading and teaching. He is Lord. In an age of despair and lack of hope for many, witness to where you have seen resurrection and life in your own story. Let Jesus be good news in you. In an age of bad role models on a world stage, gather your peers to discern where you are called to minister and be missionary."

Speaking also at the start of the Conference in St Columb's College, the bishop expressed the hope that the youth event "would be the start of something", saying: "There is an enormous need out there for healing. Please God, this will be an opportunity to network and share ideas. There is a huge number of generous hearts."

Pointing out that the 1600th anniversary of St Patrick's arrival in Ireland will be celebrated in 2032, Bishop Donal hoped that "something substantial" could be done by that.

Guest speakers

The guest speakers for the day were Dominican, Fr Patrick Desmond OP, Prior of St Catherine's, Newry, and Fr Conor McGrath, Down & Connor Vocations Director and popular voice on Instagram.

Fr Patrick broke his reflection into three parts: Some key moments/movements in Ireland's Christian past; the Church in Ireland today; and Christ's call to the young people of Ireland today – the future of the Catholic Faith on the island of Ireland.

Looking back to the past, he spoke about St Patrick and St Brigid; how Patrick used the shamrock to explain the Trinity, and Brigid relayed a whole catechesis through weaving rushes together into the shape of a cross. He also spoke about the great Irish tradition of sending missionary monks abroad to evangelise, the arrival of the Dominicans in Ireland 800 years ago, and the 16th-17th century persecution of the faith here, followed by Irish Missionaries going out all over the world in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Noting that 80 million people worldwide claim Irish heritage, Fr Patrick remarked: "We have a big, big tradition that we should be proud of."

Commenting on the abuse scandal of the 20th century, he noted that Catholics under the age of 30 have been living under the shadow of the Church scandal, and he commended the young people gathered for thinking about the future and their faith.

Going on to consider the Church in Ireland today, Fr Patrick pointed out that while he sees "the Church as an institution limping along

towards extinction on this island and has been for decades," he was there as an optimist.

Amongst his list of observations were: modern churches, art, liturgy and music that fail to inspire; Tabernacles hidden away and altar rails removed; no confession boxes or kneelers in some churches; no regard for the Holy Eucharist; widespread dissent from Church teaching on all sorts of moral issues; Catholic schools not producing disciples; bad formation of generations of Catholics; clericalism; heresy; radical feminism and cultural Marxism; materialism; secularism; relativism; few vocations and seminaries closing; mass apostasy; baptised Catholics practicing New Age and other religions; noisy churches; and total loss of the sense of the Sacred.

Noting that the Church always needs reform in every generation, he posed the question about what kind of reform does it need now. "We need to worship authentically," he added, "or we are building on sand."

Pondering what might Christ's call be to the young people of Ireland, Fr Patrick suggested that it is the same as always – to follow Him.

"The future of the Church is traditional...meaning, Christ-centred," he said, adding: "Clericalism, heresy, scandal, apostasy, banal liturgies, etc, are all manifestations of the problem and not the problem itself. The problem is too many baptised Catholics, priests and laity alike, simply do not believe in Jesus Christ with that life-giving, life-changing faith which is what renews the Church in every age.

"The medicine for a spiritually-sick society, suffering from a crisis of faith, is the same in every generation – true faith in the One, True God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit."

"There will be no authentic reform, renewal or restoration of our beautiful Catholic faith," remarked Fr Patrick, "unless we return to Christ, enthrone Him again in our hearts, in our Church, in our society."

Concluding, he reassured his young listeners: "We should not be afraid of the time we are in, but rejoice. It is a great time to be a Catholic. It is a time for new saints to rise up."

Baptism

Fr Conor McGrath talked about the importance of passing the flame, the light of Christ that we have received through Baptism, to others, just as our parents, grandparents, etc, passed it on to us.

"I am sure that you can all attest

to the love you have for God," he added, "and you protect that flame by spending time with the Lord, by loving the Lord."

Sharing a safari experience from a visit to South Africa, Fr Conor said: "I was so excited to see the elephants, lions, buffalo and giraffes, but it was none of those animals that stayed with me in my memory, it was the simple zebra. When a zebra has a foal, she takes it away from the herd and they spend a considerable amount of time staring at one another; the mother teaches and the baby learns every pattern on its mother's face and even the vocalisation of the mare. So, whenever they return to the herd in the wilderness, that baby foal will know its mother's face; each pattern is unique. It knows who feeds and protects it. For me, that is a powerful example of how to get to know God; to spend time with Him in Eucharistic Adoration and to make time for Mass.

"Learn the face of the Father, grow in confidence in God's love and the flame of faith will be handed on. We need to own it."

Fr Conor went on to warn about the temptation when talking about holiness and vocation, to make it "between me and God" – I want to grow in holiness, I want to be a saint. "No vocation," he said, "is just about you and God."

The nature of vocation, he explained, is to serve God and His people, to build up the Church, and to bring souls to Christ: "Shine your light on others, don't hide it under a bushel!"

Between the two talks there was a panel session, hosted by Fr Antonio CFR, who was MC for the day. The line-up included: Bishop Donal; Fr Declan McGeehan, Diocesan Vocations Council; Sr Mary and Sr Rachel Maria, Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother; Fr Joseph Mary CFR; Fr Stephen Quinn OCD; Brendan Gormley, Net Ministries, and Bernie Carolan, Youth 2000.

The panel members happily responded to a number of questions put to them by Fr Antonio, such as: How can I be a saint? How can a young person know their vocation? There was also an opportunity for questions from the floor, which included: How can you be sure that you are living the vocation that you are called to live? Any practical advice for when you are trying to be silent, but the noise in your head keeps on going?

The day came to a close with the celebration of the Rite of Eucharistic Exposition and Benediction, led by Bishop Donal, with Bethany Doherty providing the music and singing. Earlier in the day, those entering the College reception



continued from page 4

in the reception area and attracted a lot of interest for candles, Rosary Beads and reading material. The day was a great success thanks to the efforts of many, including Bishop Donal; the band of volunteers from teenagers to pensioners; St Columb's College principal, Mrs Caroline McLaughlin and her support staff; Fr Antonio as MC; the guest speakers and panellists; Maghnus Monaghan and the Schola Group; stall-holders; and Pat Kennedy of Cloisters Café, Long Tower, who provided delicious soup and sandwiches; and especially all those who turned up for the occasion.

Everyone received a prayer card as a memento, with St Patrick's Breastplate on one side, and a Holy Spirit prayer on the other, along with the St Carlo Acutis quote: "To always be close to Jesus, that's my life plan."

Another part of the programme that attracted a lot of interest was the opportunity to find out about youth organisations, such as Youth 2000, Net Ministries, 77, Spark, Anam Og, Thomistic Youth, and Fraternity of Frassati, as well as about Religious Orders, through the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, the Discalced Carmelites, and Servant Sisters present, and Diocesan Priesthood. Other organisations with stalls at the conference were Mary's Meals, the Legion of Mary, the Knights of St Columbanus; Order of Malta; and Guardians of the Faith, while St Paul's Books and Gifts set up shop

in the reception area and attracted a lot of interest for candles, Rosary Beads and reading material. The day was a great success thanks to the efforts of many, including Bishop Donal; the band of volunteers from teenagers to pensioners; St Columb's College principal, Mrs Caroline McLaughlin and her support staff; Fr Antonio as MC; the guest speakers and panellists; Maghnus Monaghan and the Schola Group; stall-holders; and Pat Kennedy of Cloisters Café, Long Tower, who provided delicious soup and sandwiches; and especially all those who turned up for the occasion.

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Irish Columban Youth launched at Conference

ON the heels of the success of An Lasair Chríost (Flame of Christ) Conference, a new group for young adults has been established in Derry City for those seeking to learn more about their faith, and engage with like-minded individuals who are at a similar point in their lives.

Irish Columban Youth is a new group for young adults aged 18-30, who want to deepen their faith in a mature and dynamic way. It will be open to everyone at every stage in their lives, from those who have been brought up as Catholic to those who are just coming to the faith.

It is hoped that the group will meet once/twice a month on a regular basis, with guest lectures, meals together and fun activities for all to get involved. And that this will provide a space for young adults who want to explore their

faith and make some good friends while doing so.

Many young people are finding their faith in a time of increasing secularism. There is a clear search for purpose amongst those who have seen the fruits of a life without faith and meaning. Christ offers to us all a promise of life and renewal.

Struggle is an inevitability of life, but the Christian life teaches that the struggle is what builds us in our faith and character, and that it isn't without eventual reward.

We all undergo trial in our lives, and we should hope to help each other with this. The Irish Columban Youth will hopefully provide that space and allow young adults to speak about their own experiences and faith in an open and honest environment.

For further information and expressions of interest, contact 07375528580.

Sacred Heart College Omagh Silver Jubilee

Sacred Heart College Omagh marks Silver Jubilee milestone



SACRED Heart College, Omagh, celebrated 25 years at the heart of education in the community, with former and current staff and pupils of the school gathering in Sacred Heart Church for a special Silver Jubilee Mass concelebrated by Bishop Donal and a number of priests.

As part of the celebrations, the school launched its new College Prayer, which was created to reflect and strengthen the values that sit at the heart of the school community – compassion, faith, hope and joy. These values guide the College's mission, shape their young people and inspire its community into the future.

Reflecting on the celebration afterwards, the principal, Michael Gormley said: "It was a truly special occasion for our entire school community. It was wonderful to welcome so many former members of staff and past pupils, many of whom also played a part in the celebration of the Mass.

"In his homily, Bishop Donal McKeown beautifully captured the spirit of the occasion, reminding us that a school is far more than a building, it is the heart of a community, nurturing faith and promoting the values of compassion, hope, respect and service to others."

During his homily, Bishop Donal also noted that the name 'Omagh' meant 'the virgin plain' and that there had been a monastery there over 1,200 years ago, before remarking: "So Sacred Heart College follows in a long line of ways in which this community has tried to love its young people by helping them to love learning or, as it says on your website, 'to be independent and committed learners for life'."

He went on to say: "Tonight, we celebrate the first-quarter century of this specific college, born in September 2000 from the amalgamation of its predecessors, St Patrick's and St Brigid's. They, in turn, had been set up just over 65 years ago by the local parishes when education was to be made available to all teenagers. That had meant the local parishes finding up to 35% of the building costs of Catholic maintained schools, the equivalent of many millions in today's money. At the same time, other post primary schools were being built by the state at no cost to local communities.

"But earlier generations knew that education offered both new opportunities and hope. Tonight, we give thanks for those who scrimped and saved so that the teenagers of 60 years ago would have the opportunities that their parents never dreamt of. And we give thanks for those who decided that a co-educational facility was the way forward for the 21st century. And now we face new challenges and opportunities.

"But in our modern culture is it worthwhile having a Catholic college? My answer is a resounding 'yes'. Why? These last 25 years have not been good for young people. 2001 saw the attack on the Twin Towers in New York and the invasion of Iraq based on lies. 2008 saw an economic crash that was triggered by outrageous greed among the rich. The surge of the iPhone revolution has exposed our young people to a very damaging on-line world. Then we had COVID. Now there are wars on many fronts, as well as a lack of political leadership on a global level.

"In a world that seems to offer little hope of change, there is a

huge role for a worldview that talks about human dignity, the value of all human life and the possibility of reconciliation and healing. Faith-based education explicitly wants to hand on a distinctive worldview that helps young people generate hope for the future and not just sadness in the present."

Bishop Donal went on to speak about a book he had recently read, entitled 'The Anxious Generation', saying: "Its theme is the damage done to young brains by excessive use of electronic devices and by some of the content of these. The author writes that video games 'make it easier to retreat to your bedroom rather than doing the hard work of maturing in the real world'. Excessive social media leads to social deprivation, sleep deprivation, attention fragmentation, and addiction.

Ancient traditions

"That is the world in which we live and we have to cope with that reality. But there is a way out. This secular author is convinced that our minds can be rebalanced by the 'Wisdom of ancient traditions'. He insists that spiritual practices such as meditation, prayer, and confession draw us away from ourselves and reduce loneliness.

"He specifically names shared sacredness; sharing sacred times, places and objects (eg World Youth Day); shared rituals, especially eating (meals and Mass); stillness, silence and focus ('without training, the mind flits around like a jumping monkey!'); transcending the self – against the cultural pressure to be judgemental, boastful, dishonest and petty; be slow to anger, quick to forgive rather than being pushed to rage and condemnation; and find awe in nature."

He continued: "As the outworkings of the secular agenda become clearer, there is a growing recognition of the wisdom that many thought had been forgotten. Blaise Pascal referred to a God-shaped hole - 'if we don't fill it with something noble and elevated, modern society will quickly pump it full of garbage'.

"We are not victims of malign forces. Catholic Education is set up to hand on the wisdom of the Gospel rather than the foolishness

of the market."

Referring to Sacred Heart College's "strong" motto – 'Driven by the love of Christ' – and the cover of the Anniversary Mass booklet highlighting compassion, faith, hope and joy, Bishop Donal said: "Those are very praiseworthy ideals. And yet, there are those in our society who would want to say that education is about subject content and some particular social issues that are dumped on schools to solve.

"In the face of much mental distress and addiction, where parents are afraid of what is happening outside the home but often powerless to protect their children in their homes, you have shown that you want to stand for something – like truth, community and forgiveness – and not fall for anything that some influencer spouts about 'me, myself and my shadow'.

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

"Thank you for being proud of what you stand for," he concluded, "you believe in a God who believes in people and who wants us to flourish. We will face many challenges from those who believe that there is nothing much worth believing in. Some have been disappointed in life and in church. Be grateful for what has been achieved in the past. Trust that faith, hope and love can bear rich fruit. And never doubt that the Sacred Heart of Jesus is working to heal the broken heart of the world."

All were invited back to the College afterwards for refreshments.

Looking back with appreciation and forward with anticipation, Sacred Heart College gives thanks for 25 years of learning, growth, faith, and community and for all who have contributed to its story.

Deeply appreciating all who came along to join in the Silver Jubilee celebrations, the College also expressed thanks to the Diocesan Catechetical Centre for its guidance and support, and particularly Finbar Madden, Post-Primary RE Advisor.



Sacred Heart College Prayer

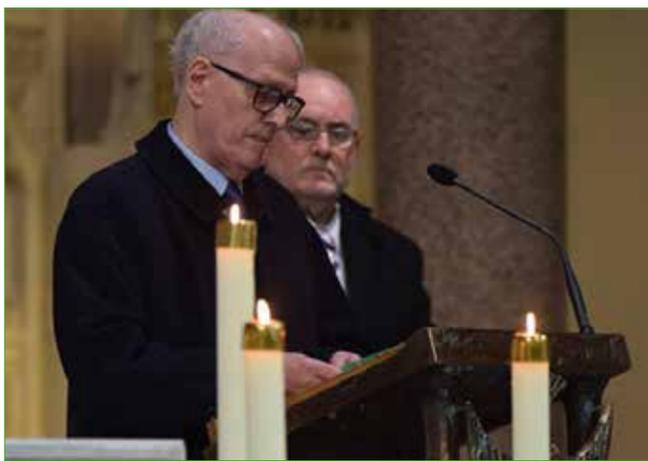
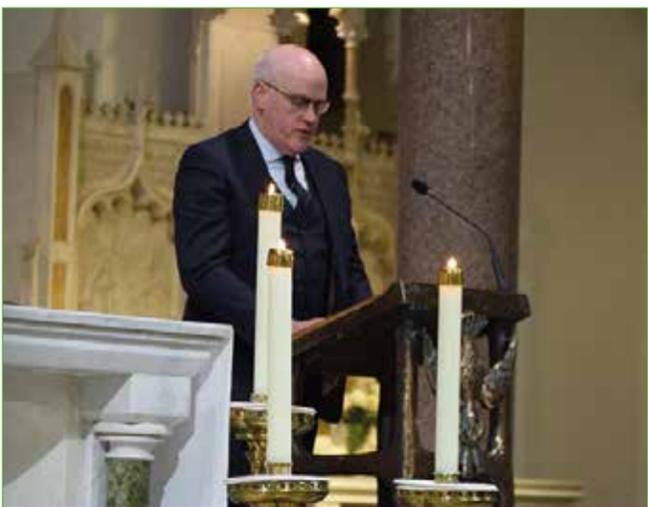
*Jesus, our Saviour and Friend,
be with us in our school today.
Give us a heart of compassion
to care for one another,
faith to trust in You,
hope to face each day with courage,
and joy to bring light to our school community.
Sacred Heart of Jesus,
we place all our trust in You. Amen.*



Sacred Heart College Omagh Silver Jubilee

Photographs continued from page 6

Great parish support for Ardmore 'Rickety Wheel' fundraiser



ARDMORE Parish Pastoral Council is delighted with the response to its 'Rickety Wheel' fundraiser.

There was a great turnout at the event, which raised £2,735 for the Parish Building Fund.

Its success was not only down

to the generous support of the many who attended, but also to the large group of volunteers from the Parish who joined the Pastoral Council members in collecting prizes, organising and running the event on the day.



St Colm's High School pupils prepare for Portuguese Camino by Miss C Brady

PUPILS and staff from St Colm's High School, Draperstown are preparing for an exciting and meaningful challenge this summer, as they take part in a Camino fundraiser walking tour in Portugal from June 23-30.

They will take part in the week-long journey, walking sections of the famous Camino route through the beautiful Portuguese countryside. The walk will be both a physical challenge and a unique opportunity for reflection, teamwork and personal development.

The Camino routes are well-known for bringing people together through perseverance, community spirit and shared experiences. For the pupils of St Colm's High School, the trip promises to be a memorable adventure as they work together, support one another and represent their school with pride.

A group of dedicated staff members will accompany the pupils on the journey, providing encouragement and guidance along the way. Those taking part include school principal, Miss McAllister, along with Pat Cassidy, Fr Madden, Sharon O'Kane and Karen McGuigan.

In preparation for the trip, pupils have been working hard over

recent months to raise the funds needed to make the walking tour possible. Their fundraising efforts have already involved several events that have brought together pupils, staff and members of the local community.

Recent events have proven to be a huge success. In school, pupils have also been running 'Split the Pot' draws as another way to contribute towards their fundraising goal. They also held a Coffee Morning on Sunday, March 8, which was very well supported by the local community, with many people coming along to enjoy tea, coffee and homemade treats, while contributing to the pupils' fundraising efforts. Organisers expressed their gratitude to everyone who attended and helped make the morning such a success. The Jumble Sale held by Mrs Belaid on Thursday, March 5, also proved extremely popular, with plenty of bargains available and a fantastic turnout from supporters. The event raised valuable funds for the Camino trip and highlighted the strong community spirit that continues to support the pupils on their journey.

Future exciting events planned include the Camino Walk on April 12. This community walk aims

to give participants a small taste of the Camino experience, while supporting the students who will be travelling in June. Everyone is welcome to attend, and organisers are encouraging families, friends and members of the wider community to come along and take part.

Updates, details, and information about future fundraising events can be found in the Parish Bulletin and the school's social media pages, where supporters can follow the pupils' progress as they prepare for the challenge ahead.

For pupils involved, the Camino journey represents far more than simply travelling abroad. It is an opportunity to take part in a shared challenge, experience a different country and create lasting memories with Fr Madden, Board of Governors, classmates and teachers.

Pupil voices are very enthusiastic, with one saying: "I'm most excited about walking the Camino with my friends and seeing the scenery in Portugal, and praying together. It will be a great experience and something we'll remember for a long time."

While another said: "I'm really looking forward to the challenge of the walk itself and spending

time with everyone in our group. The fundraising has been great so far and I'm excited to finally experience the Camino."

And another pupil said: "What I'm most excited about is travelling to Portugal and completing the walk together as a team. It will be amazing to reach the finish knowing that we did it together. Pupils who completed the Camino previously have told us how special it is."

As the countdown to June continues, excitement is building amongst the group preparing for the journey ahead. With the support of their families, teachers and the wider community, the pupils of St Colm's High School are looking forward to embarking on what promises to be a truly unforgettable Camino experience this summer.



ST. COLM'S HIGH SCHOOL FUNDRAISERS - DRAPERSTOWN

CAMINO DE DRAPERSTOWN
SUNDAY 12th APRIL

80s/90s DISCO NIGHT
SUNDAY 3rd MAY

GOLDEN ERA CAR SHOW
SUNDAY 10th MAY

SUPPORT YOUR SCHOOL! ❤️



ST. COLM'S HIGH SCHOOL
CAMINO
ST. COLM'S CAMINO
Get the walking shoes on and join us!
Sunday 12th April 2026

Let's Walk Together!
16k or 22k — you choose!

Our Camino route is flat, easy and suitable for everyone.
Starting @ St. Colm's - Finish @ Susan's Trail
Tickets Now Available From:
• St. Colm's High School • Ballinascreen Credit Union
• Heron's Giftshop • Online via Klubfunder
Adults £20/ U18 £10

Tribute to the late Yvonne O'Rourke

(March 27, 1963 – February 6, 2026)

by Evy McGinley

IT was with great sadness that we learned of the recent passing of our dear friend, Yvonne O'Rourke (née O'Leary), in Belfast. Yvonne will be remembered by so many as a gifted singer, a woman of deep faith, and a warm, generous friend whose presence enriched the lives of all who knew her.

Many first came to know Yvonne through the original Carnhill Folk Group in the late 1970s. At that time, St Brigid's Church would often be filled to capacity, with people drawn not only by the inspiring leadership of Fr Seamus O'Connell and Fr Paddy Doherty, but also by the beautiful music of the group. Yvonne was a soloist whose voice was truly unique. What set her apart was not just the beauty of her singing, but the prayerful and heartfelt way she interpreted the psalms and songs of the liturgy.

Yvonne performed widely with the Carnhill Folk Group, making numerous BBC television and radio appearances and recording sacred music on their first album. She also sang with the Diocesan Folk Group at youth weekends throughout the 1970s and 1980s, and used her gift of music to

enhance many wedding Masses across Derry and Donegal. Through these years, her voice became part of the soundtrack of countless joyful and meaningful occasions.

In 1981, Yvonne began her studies at Queen's University Belfast, where she quickly became involved with the Chaplaincy Folk Group. After settling in Belfast with her husband Brian, she continued her musical ministry as a member of the Down & Connor Diocesan Folk Group.

Later, together with former members of the Carnhill Folk Group who lived in the parish, Yvonne helped form the St Bernadette's Folk Group. They recorded a CD together, and it was especially fitting that the recessionary hymn at Yvonne's Requiem Mass on February 9, celebrated by Fr Eamon Graham in St Bernadette's Church, included her own solo recording from that album.

Yvonne will always be remembered as a wonderful singer whose voice and warmth brought joy to many within the folk music community. Her love of music, and the friendships she



formed through those groups, meant a great deal to everyone who had the privilege of singing alongside her or listening to her perform.

In recent years, Yvonne faced motor neuron disease with remarkable courage and dignity. Throughout her illness, she showed extraordinary strength and resilience. Her faith, bravery, and positive spirit were an inspiration to everyone around her.

Above all, Yvonne was devoted to her family. She is deeply mourned

by her loving husband Brian, her beloved son Daniel, daughter-in-law Beth, her treasured grandson Arthur, her mother Sheila and brother Dermot, who were truly at the heart of her life.

Yvonne's beautiful voice, kindness and gentle spirit will be fondly remembered by all whose lives she touched. She will be greatly missed, but the memory of her music, her friendship and her faith will remain with us always.

Lifted up by angels, may she rest in peace.



Exploring Mystery

A concert of celebration will take place in St Eugene's Cathedral on Friday, April 24, at 8.30 pm, in thanksgiving for the work of Bishop Donal McKeown, who celebrates his Silver Jubilee as bishop and the 50th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood this year.

Included in the programme, which will last approximately an hour, are works by Durufle, Rachmaninov and Victoria, as well as some Marian Antiphons. The choir director, Mr Maghnus Monaghan, will perform words by Chopin and Buxtehude.

The concert, entitled 'Exploring Mystery', will feature St Eugene's Cathedral Choir and choral scholars. The evening provides an opportunity to hear this group of talented students - some of whom have been participating in the Choral Scholars' Scheme for up to three years - perform as an ensemble and in smaller groups; one student, Beibhinn Magee will be performing on the harp

also. Two of the scholars who participated in a fully-funded International Choral Conference in Warsaw last summer will perform some of the Gregorian chant studied there.

There will be a retiring collection in support of the Choral Scholars' Scheme, now in its fourth year. The Scheme encourages students over 16 and in full-time education (including mature students) to participate in choir rehearsals and church services in the beautiful acoustic of the Cathedral, in return for a monthly stipend based on attendance. It is financed principally through voluntary contributions, with occasional grants from charitable organisations and fundraisers, such as this concert.

If any individual or organisation is interested in supporting the Scheme, either through regular small donations or a one-off offering, please contact the choir master at maghnusmonaghan@hotmail.com.



Applications open on April 27 for the next cohort of students to join the scheme from September 2026. This is an excellent opportunity for budding musicians of all genres to develop their musical skills - sight-reading, working as a member of a musical ensemble, singing technique, solo performances - as well as meeting others.

If you know of potential scholars who may be interested in benefiting from the Scheme, please encourage them to submit

an application: applications from tenors and basses are particularly welcome.

The closing date for forms is May 11, after which auditions will be held. To apply email: maghnusmonaghan@hotmail.com or collect a form from your school.

Adults (particularly males) interested in joining the choir on a voluntary basis are also welcome to contact the choirmaster, either by email or after 12.30 pm Mass on Sundays.



Dungiven Lenten Retreat...

Reflecting on Dungiven Parish Lenten St Patrick R.E.A.C.H Retreat, Fr Gerry Sweeney highlights need to... Reach back to God and reach deeper into our faith



foremost were the needs of the parishioners. During our annual priests' retreat, I had the privilege of listening to Martina Purdy and Elaine Kelly speak. I felt that their personal stories would be inspiring for my parishioners, and I was not mistaken!

'Why a Retreat and not a Mission?' was a question put to me by a few parishioners, and a very good question it was. Many have had poor experiences of being preached to at Missions - the old 'fire and brimstone' approach. I have always felt that people need more, and they deserve better. More of a pilgrimage journey of discovery that leads to a deeper encounter with Jesus.

I have memories of too many recent 'missions' where the content had not changed in years; missions that were far from inspiring. Too many preachers with old memories from the past, such as "Sure you all know the TD from 'West Cork' and remember the 1959 All-Ireland final", giving the same retreat and content over and over. I couldn't tell you who my own MP is or who won last week's football match. People need more than that, especially in today's world. God's people need to be fed with the Word of God, and the grace and the power of the Sacraments.

The retreat's main theme was R.E.A.C.H - coming from the history of salvation. God has been reaching out to His people from one generation to the next. We are called to reach back to God in response. From the Old Testament to the New Testament. From Moses to St Paul, God has been calling.

Our Parish retreat was to journey along this pilgrim path, with Martina and Elaine as guides. They brought two major helps, two gateways to faith: Our Lady, Mary; and St. Patrick, the Apostle to the Irish. They gave us the examples of faith and life to help us reach back to God and reach deeper into our faith. To encounter God in a more profound and personal way through the Word and Sacrament.

So, the nightly talks of the retreat came from the acronym of R.E.A.C.H, which stands for Resurrection, Evangelisation, Abba, Christ, and Holy Spirit. The scripture for each night was presented to the parishioners as they entered the chapel for the evening service. As they departed each night, they received a gift.

On Monday, after the talk on Resurrection, they received a crucifix, a reminder that it is through His cross that we are redeemed. The following night, after the service on Evangelisation,

each member of the congregation received a bottle of Holy Water as a reminder of our own baptism, and the fact that we are sent by our own baptism to call others to follow Christ. On Wednesday evening, with the focus on Christ, everyone received a copy of Mark's Gospel - the word of God speaking to us. Thursday evening introduced a night of Adoration and Prayers for Healing through the Eucharist. That evening, everyone was presented with a prayer card for Adoration. Finally, on Friday, we encountered the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Light that shines in a world of darkness, the Fire of the Holy Spirit who descended on Mary, the Apostles, and other disciples at Pentecost. The congregation each received a candle as a little reminder that their own light can make a difference.

This retreat is only the beginning of a very precious and delicate time. As we wait and prepare for the Easter ceremonies, we need to be patient and humble. To wait for the Holy Spirit, whom Christ promised to send, to be the One who will move us in so many talented and gifted ways. All we need is Faith - Faith like that of Our Lady and St Patrick. We must be present to listen to the Word of God, and to hear that call and not be afraid.



Parish Pastoral Council share comments...

CLOSING with the celebration of the Vigil Mass by Bishop Donal in St Patrick's Church on Saturday, March 7, the week-long Lenten Retreat for the Dungiven Parish was a source of joy and spiritual nourishment greatly appreciated not just by parishioners but the many who attended from other areas as well.

Comments we received about it included: "This week felt like we were on holiday and I didn't want it to end"; "Many thanks for this retreat, I got so much from it"; and "Thank you all for a very successful Parish Retreat. It was obvious that a lot of preparation and hard work was required, but thankfully all the effort was greatly appreciated by the turnout of parishioners each morning and evening. Speaking personally, I looked forward every day to attending."

On behalf of the parishioners and those from surrounding parishes that attended, we are extremely

grateful to Fr Gerry for making this retreat possible. We have been blessed in the past with great priests, and Fr Gerry, who joined us 18 months ago, has profoundly impacted Dungiven Parish. A youthful and hardworking priest, his ability to reach into the hearts and minds of both the young and the not-so-young is refreshing, and we truly appreciate it.

We feasted on the Word of God during this retreat, and we are already looking forward to our next banquet.

Our heartfelt thanks to Fr Gerry, Martina Purdy, Elaine Kelly, Dana, her brother Gerry, and everyone who contributed to this retreat. We especially thank our wonderful parishioners, whose faithful attendance each day made it the success that it was.

Above all, we give all Glory and Praise to Christ, King of Eternal Glory!

Dungiven Lenten Retreat...

A word from one of the Retreat leaders, Martina Purdy...

A joy fanning the flames of faith in Dungiven

DUNGIVEN was always a place I would pass by on the road to Derry - and yet it has become one of the most significant stops on my Christian journey. Along with Elaine Kelly, I had been used to giving talks at parishes. But this was the first time, since our convent closed in 2019, that we had undertaken a week-long event outside of our work as pilgrim guides on St Patrick's Way.

It was daunting. And we hit the road for Dungiven recalling the words of scripture: "They go out, they go out full of tears, carrying seeds for the sowing. They come back, they come back full of songs, carrying their sheaves." (Ps 126:5-6)

It was, indeed, a joy to spend a week in Dungiven to experience the faith of the people, the hope they shared and the love they had for God and St Patrick - and, indeed, St Colmcille.

At the close of the REACH Retreat, the parish priest Fr Gerry Sweeney lit a symbolic flame of faith, hope and love outside St Patrick's Church, where all were encouraged to reach for God, a God who is always reaching for us. As the fire blazed, it was clear that the fire burned brightly in the hearts of the people - a flame of faith that burned before Elaine

Kelly and I arrived to lead the retreat. But, like any fire that is fed and tended and stoked, it bursts forth in greater strength.

"You are building on solid foundations," Bishop Donal McKeown declared at the Vigil Mass on Saturday, March 7. He congratulated the parishioners for participating so enthusiastically.

Elaine, a former barrister, and I, a former journalist, who had spent five years as Sisters of Adoration, were asked to address the themes of Resurrection, Evangelisation, Abba, Christ and Holy Spirit. REACH was designed some years earlier by Fr Sweeney.

He agreed to merge the theme with the 'Light the Fire' mission that Dana Rosemary Scallan and her husband, Damien launched in 2022. Dana shared her testimony and her song for St Patrick, 'Light the Fire' - inspired by the first Easter fire lit by St Patrick at Slane in 2033, in defiance of the High King of Tara.

How appropriate that the REACH begins with the gamechanger: Christ's resurrection - and an exhortation from the Angel in Christ's empty tomb to remember what Jesus foretold in Galilee, that He would be handed over to be crucified and that He would rise on the third day.



It was a welcome reminder that we all live in the power of the resurrection, without which our faith is in vain.

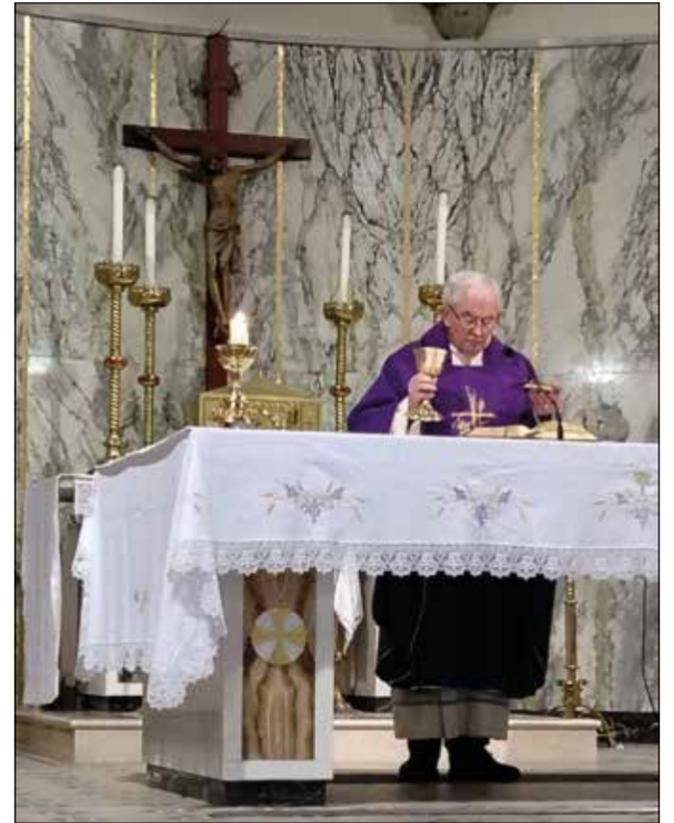
How easily we forget the empty tomb, and the power of the Resurrection, a cornerstone of our faith, which has brought hope to generations of Irish people through fire, dungeon and sword.

Hours of effort and careful thought was put into this retreat. Indeed, Fr Gerry Sweeney and the Parish Council had prepared gifts for the parishioners: a cross, a copy of Mark's Gospel, a scroll of St Patrick, to name a few.

Elaine and I were deeply inspired

by the joy of the people, who no doubt are ready to share their faith with others as disciples of Christ Jesus. Too many in our country are dying of thirst by the river of life, and we are called to tell others where they can get the 'living water' - the Holy Spirit which is gifted at baptism, renewed at confirmation and pours from the Eucharist at Mass and Adoration.

The people of Dungiven opened their hearts to us, and we did, indeed, go home rejoicing. "We received," said Elaine as we hit the road for Belfast, "so much more than we gave."



Great response to special Mass for Dungiven Parish GAA Clubs

THE Dungiven Parish hosted a special Mass on February 26, celebrated by Fr Gerry Sweeney, for all GAA clubs within the parish.

Although our community is home to many GAA clubs, we are united as one parish.

The Mass was very well attended by players, committee members, families, and supporters from St Colm's Drum, St Matthew's Drumsurn, Kevin Lynch Hurling Club, St Patrick's Camogie Club,

and St Canice's GAC.

Children and adults from across all clubs took part in this faith-filled celebration.

The Founders and deceased members of each club were remembered in prayer, and everyone received a special blessing for the year ahead.

All clubs expressed their appreciation for this special Mass, and we look forward to making it an annual event.

(Dungiven Parish Council)



Young Writers share thoughts...

THIS month, we welcome St Brigid's College pupil, Farragh Ferry, of Three Patrons Parish, Derry City, to the Young Writers' team. For her first article, Farragh writes about St Lawrence as a widely venerated martyr of the Church.

As we continue with our Lenten journey, Seán reflects on the origin and purpose of these 40 days in the lead-up to the celebration of Easter, while Alannah writes about Lent as a time of solemnity and self-reflection, and Ryan shares his research into the Nicene Creed and the Council of Nicaea, and the unification of the date of Easter celebration.

Niamh writes about her experience of Lectio Divina as a gentle, personal, and meaningful way for anyone, especially young people, to encounter God through Scripture, and Harry reflects on the history of music in the Church, sharing his wish list for Church music today.

Reflecting on International Women's Day, Erin highlights some women who have played key roles in the Church, while Clodagh shares thoughts on the purpose of suffering, and Conor writes about the ever-growing persecution of Christians around the world.



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



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

Lent an opportunity to pave road to personal betterment

by Séan

DURING this time of Lent, we must be reminded of the perseverance and trial undertaken by Christ during His time in the desert. As we live in His example, we must learn and understand the value of each and every one of His experiences. Lent is no exception; a period of sacrifice and learning in preparation for Easter, when we celebrate Christ's greatest sacrifice of all.

Lent is intended to mirror the hardship and trial Christ went through during his time in self-exile, that being 40 days and 40 nights, totally devoid of material possession and under the constant taunting of Satan. With this renowned spiritual journey of isolation, Christ represented the end of the Old Covenant, beginning with Moses leading the Israelites through the desert for 40 years before settling in the Promised Land. In this same way, Christ offered the New Covenant, with a promised land reached through faith in Him alone.

In the same way that Christ was resilient and persevering in

the face of the devil's temptation, so must we, with this Lenten period acting as a reminder of that. Philippians 4:13 reads: "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me."

The tradition of Lent emerged as an official Christian practice in the early fourth century, being formalised in 325 AD at the First Council of Nicaea, the ancient Greek city in north-western Anatolia which features in our Church's history as a pivotal site of decision making and development. Early Christians began to treat Lent as a period of spiritual preparation for the approach of Easter, including periods of fasting, usually with only one meal each day, and abstaining from particular foods such as meat and fish for the duration of the period, and also lengthened and frequent sessions of prayer.

The purpose of these sacrifices was a reminder of Christ's suffering in the desert, in which he had no food for those 40 days and nights, alone with His mind.

Persecuted Christians around the world by Conor

TODAY, across the world, Christians still undergo persecution just like from the beginning of Christianity, after the birth of Jesus. Many people are still under the belief that the days of Christian persecution are over, but that is not true at all. It can be argued that Christians undergo more suffering today than they ever did in history.

In Nigeria, around 30,000 Christians have been killed by Islamic terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram, who, in 2012, forced all Nigerian Christians to leave the north of the country or they would face death. They are a notorious terrorist group in the north of Nigeria, who consist of religious extremists who want the Islamification of the country, and are known for their brutality in killing across Sub-Saharan Africa. They had connections with ISIS and were planning to gain influence until they could overthrow the Nigerian government. In total, it is estimated they have killed

300,000 children and displaced 2.3 million people.

In another event, Pope Leo XIV brought up the massacre in Nigeria, in the Benue Province, when a village was attacked resulting in the deaths of 200 people, which was orchestrated by the Fulani herdsmen, who have many religious extremists who use violence regularly in these areas. The Nigerian government makes little to no effort to stop or prevent these attacks, and the Christian people of Nigeria have no-one to defend them.

Armenian Christians have debatably suffered the worst throughout history, with 1.5 million Armenians killed by the Ottomans (now Turkey) from 1915-16, when Armenians were sent on death marches to the Syrian desert. Around 200,000 Armenian women and children were forced to convert to Islam.

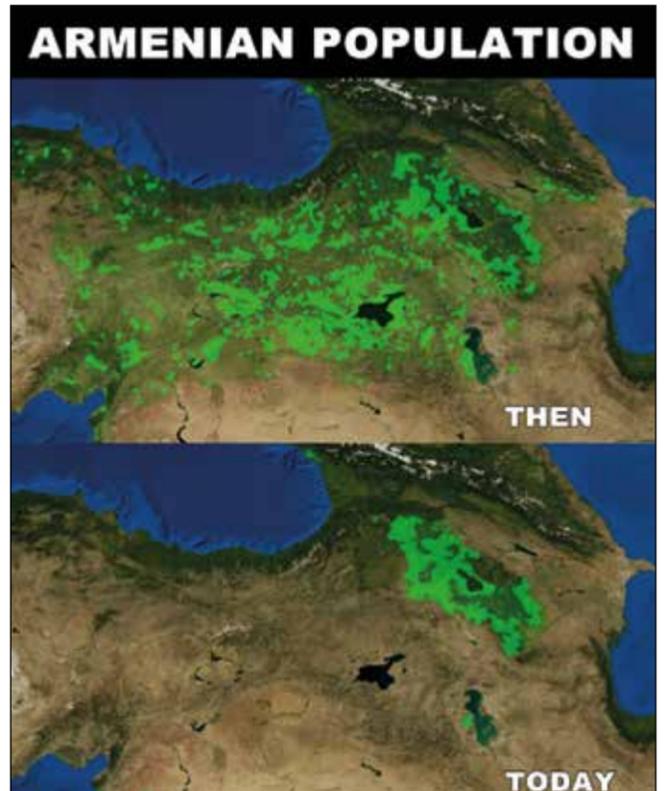
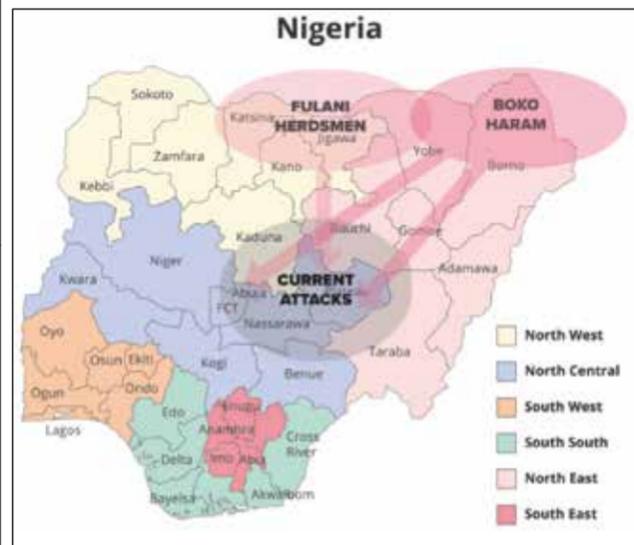
This massacring and genocide continued further, resulting in the complete annihilation of the

Armenian people from eastern Anatolia, who had lived there for over 3,000 years. Alongside the Armenians, Assyrian and Greek Orthodox Christians suffered still continues to this day under Turkey, and their ally, Azerbaijan, who slaughtered Christian Armenians in Nagorno Karabakh, with a nine-month blockade in 2023 causing almost all the Armenian people in the area to flee back to Armenia.

In Sudan, Christians also face a lot of persecution, with the RSF (Rapid Support Forces) targeting Christian civilians, causing around 150,000 deaths. Over 100 churches have been destroyed

across Sudan, some of which were converted to military bases, and many Christians forced to convert to Islam.

Sudan is ranked number four on the world watch list for most dangerous countries for Christians, with many having to flee to neighbouring African countries. The RSF originated as an auxiliary force militia known as the Janjaweed, which committed many war crimes throughout the civil war. They have a presence in many other countries, such as in Yemen and in Libya. There are believed to be Arab supremacists who capitalise off the youth unemployment in the area, encouraging the youth to join their army.



The devil, knowing that Christ was physically famished, tempted Him by saying that as the Son of God, He could turn a rock into bread and eat. However, Christ replied: "Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God." (Matthew 4:4)

In other words, we require more than just physical nourishment. Lenten sacrifices became a defining feature of our Catholic faith for the purpose of avoiding materialism. The physical things of this world may satisfy our mind and body, but only our faith in God can satisfy the soul. We need more than just bread to live, but also Christ's divine wisdom.

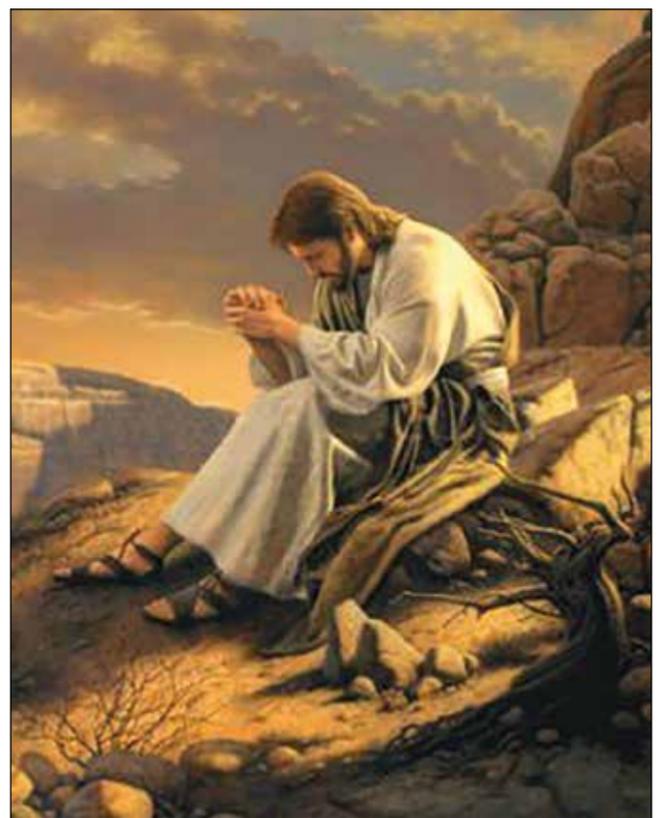
In Romans 12:2 it is written: "Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind." Lent can be treated as an annual reminder to renew our spirit by removing certain comforts, so that our soul is reboostered and prepared for Easter, when we are reminded of Christ's sacrifice for our own souls. In the same

way our Lord experienced trial and perseverance as one among mankind, we should use Lent as an opportunity to pave the road to personal betterment.

Personal betterment can come in many forms. Like the ancient Christians before us, this can include fasting and prayer, it can include the omission of certain food groups, aiding those around us who need help. I personally find physical trials the most effective means of bolstering my spirit, undertaking calculated labour of the body to remind me of the strength of my soul.

We each will approach Lent with a slightly different outlook and strategy, because every single soul is unique and comes to know God in different ways. Whichever way you choose to approach Lent, it should be treated as an opportunity to go through perseverance and trial, to affirm your relationship with Christ and prepare for the celebration of His sacrifice for the entire world.

It is written in James 1:2-3 - "Consider it pure joy, my brothers



and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance."

Young Writers share thoughts...

If God exists why do bad things happen?

by Clodagh

REDEMPTIVE suffering is the belief that suffering, when united with the suffering of Jesus Christ, can possess spiritual meaning. This does not mean that suffering is good in itself, nor that people should seek it out or glorify pain. Rather, it suggests that when suffering becomes unavoidable (a reality that every human life eventually encounters) it can be transformed into something meaningful through love, sacrifice, and faith. In this way, suffering is not merely endured but offered, becoming part of a deeper relationship between the individual and God.

For many people in the modern world, however, this idea can feel difficult to accept. Contemporary secular culture tends to emphasise comfort, efficiency, and personal happiness as the ultimate goals of life. We live in a society where discomfort is something to be solved immediately, pain is treated with medication, inconvenience with technology, and emotional distress with distraction. When suffering appears, the instinctive response is to eliminate it as quickly as possible.

Suffering is not simply a problem to be eliminated, but a mystery that invites deeper reflection on what it means to live, to love and, ultimately, to hope.

While this reaction is often both understandable and necessary, it can also encourage the belief that suffering has no purpose at all, that it is simply an obstacle to happiness rather than something that might reveal a deeper truth about human life.

Catholic philosophy offers a different perspective. Theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas, argued that the purpose of human life is not merely the avoidance of pain but the pursuit of virtue and love. From this viewpoint, suffering can become a space in which virtues such as courage, compassion, patience, and self-sacrifice, emerge. These

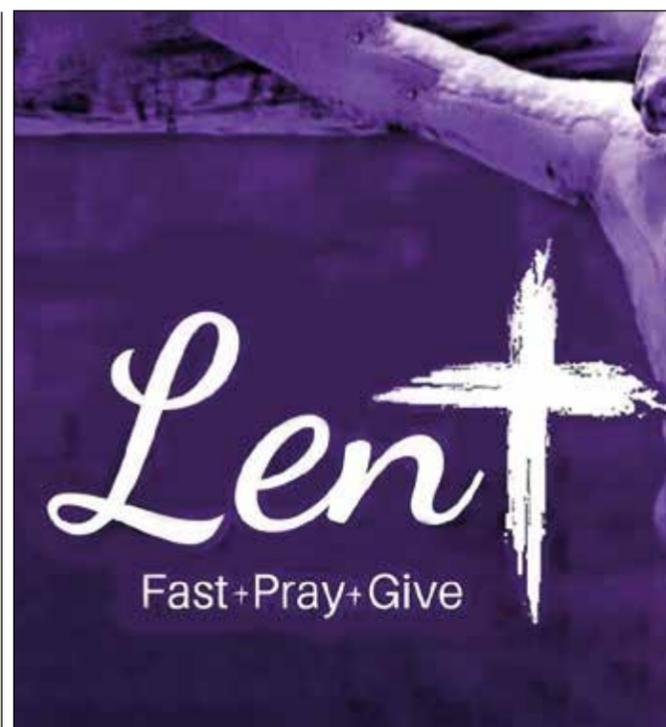
qualities often remain abstract ideals until they are tested by difficulty. Without struggle, courage would rarely be required; without hardship, compassion might never fully awaken. In this sense, suffering can reveal depths of the human character that comfort alone cannot produce.

Interestingly, similar insights appear even outside religious thought. The psychiatrist, Viktor Frankl, reflecting on his experiences surviving Nazi concentration camps, argued that the primary human drive is not pleasure but the search for meaning. He observed that individuals who could

locate some form of purpose within their suffering were often able to endure it with greater resilience than those who believed their suffering was entirely meaningless. His conclusion suggests that what truly devastates a person is not suffering itself, but the belief that suffering serves no purpose.

From this perspective, removing suffering may solve immediate pain and, in many situations, it is morally right to do so. Yet, even if every form of physical hardship could be eliminated, the deeper questions of human existence would remain; questions about meaning, purpose, sacrifice, and love. Suffering forces these questions into the open in a way that comfort rarely does.

The challenge, therefore, is not only to reduce suffering wherever possible, but also to confront the possibility that suffering itself may contain meaning. If this is true, then suffering is not simply a problem to be eliminated, but a mystery that invites deeper reflection on what it means to live, to love and, ultimately, to hope.



Lent...a time of solemnity and self-reflection

by Alannah

LENT is a 40-day season of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that begins on Ash Wednesday and ends at sun-down on Holy Thursday. It is a period of preparation to celebrate the Lord's Resurrection at Easter.

During Lent, we seek the Lord in prayer by reading Sacred Scripture and practicing self-control through fasting. It originates from Jesus' temptation from Satan in the desert, as described by Luke, "Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan River. The Spirit led Him into the desert. There, the devil tempted him for 40 days. Jesus ate nothing during that time. At the end of the 40 days, He was hungry."

For this reason, we abstain from luxuries in our lives like chocolate, sweets, or social media. By giving up stuff of importance to us, we suffer like Jesus did in the desert, and we

must avoid temptation to become more Christ-like.

Lent is a significant season in the year for Christians; a time of solemnity and self-reflection, enabling us to come closer to God through prayer and devotion. Good Friday, the Friday before Easter, is the Christian day to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus and His death. This Christian holiday is also known as Holy Friday.

For Christians, Good Friday is an important day of the year because it celebrates what we believe to be the most momentous weekend in the history of the world – "For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance; that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures." (1 Corinthians 15:3-4)

International Women's Month...

Living out our feminine genius by Erin

AS I was reflecting on the month of March, which happens to be Women's History Month, I thought of the countless women who have played pivotal roles in the Church. The celebration of Women's History Month, including International Women's Day on March 8, highlights the importance of recognising the role of women in all places they hold in society. As a young, Catholic woman, I believe that the Church is the most important of these.

In 1995, Pope John Paul II wrote a letter to women to show his gratitude and recognition toward them: "Thank you, every woman, for the simple fact of being a woman." He points out that women have contributed to humanity "just as much as men," and often "in much more difficult conditions." Pope John Paul II centred his theology around the idea of the 'feminine genius' - "Society owes much to the genius of women" - which refers to the unique talents, gifts and strengths that women bring to society and the Church. This letter highlights that the Church itself recognises the importance of women's contributions, as well as their inspiration to others. This reinforces that they possess

unique gifts and insights that are essential to the growth of the Catholic faith.

This can be seen in the Church's history and female saints who have played vital roles in spreading the faith and shaping Catholicism. Here are some examples of women in history who have brought their unique gifts to service of God and others and spreading the faith:

Mary Magdalene - Presented as a devout follower of Christ throughout the entire Gospel, who travelled with Him and helped with His mission. Eventually, after remaining present at the crucifixion, she went on to become the first witness to the resurrection. This strongly defied assumptions of women's testimony being unreliable, as she was entrusted with spreading the news to the apostles. Mary Magdalene demonstrates that women are not only passive followers, but strong leaders who are vital to the mission of the Church.

St Catherine of Siena - Devoted her life to service, prayer and charity. She demonstrated persistence and urged reform within the Church, convincing the Pope to return to Rome. She was also a spiritual teacher,

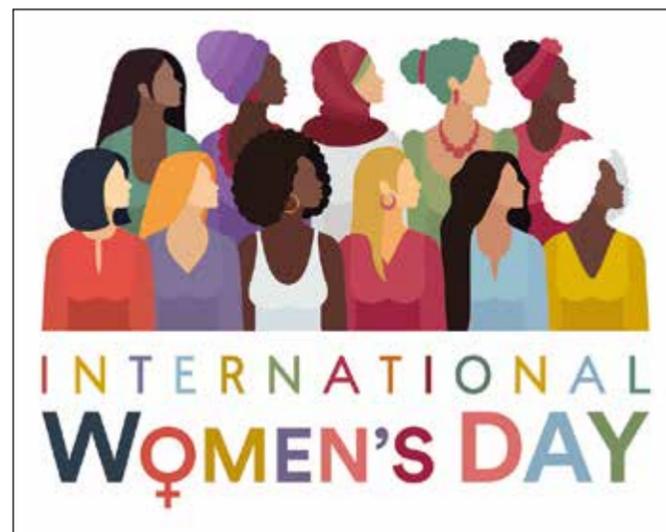
and later named a Doctor of the Church due to her significant contribution to Christian theology. Her life illustrates the 'feminine genius,' emphasising that women hold importance not only in service, but also in theological thought and leadership - their wisdom helps to shape the direction of the Catholic Church.

Mother Teresa - She founded the Missionaries of Charity, an order which focused on caring for the poorest and most vulnerable in society. Her work spread worldwide and, therefore, she was able to help thousands who were living in poverty. Eventually, she received a Nobel Peace Prize for her charity and important work. This is arguably the strongest example of Christian compassion and service, demonstrating that women also hold importance in charities and global missions. This shows us that women's compassion, leadership and empathy can leave a lasting positive impact on the entire Church and the world.

Finally, Sister Clare Crockett - Born in Derry in 1982, she spent her teenage years dreaming of pursuing a career in acting and becoming famous. However, during a Holy Week retreat in

Spain, she experienced a strong calling to religious life. By dedicating her life to God, she was able to work with young people in schools and faith retreats - inspiring many with her vibrant personality. In 2016, she tragically passed away in an earthquake in Ecuador while serving at a school. However, she continues to inspire young people through the documentary 'All or Nothing' and testimonies about her life. This shows the positive influence and joy women can bring to the Church through their faith and serving of others. Women like her will continue to present powerful teaching which strengthens the Church's mission and work.

Looking at the examples of all these women, and so many more in the history of the Church, we can be reminded as Catholic women that our faith is not just about following tradition, but about embracing our gifts and our 'feminine genius.' This can inspire us to live out our own gifts and talents, whilst also using them to serve God - such as through prayer, service, leadership or simply spreading our faith. This reminds us that even our small acts of love or charity can leave lasting impacts on the Church and world.



Young Writers share thoughts...

The Council of Nicaea by Ryan

WHILE I was attending Mass recently, I found myself very interested by the Nicene Creed. I had heard of the Council of Nicaea, but I finally decided to fully learn about what it truly led to. I wish to share with you the importance of this Council on the shaping of the Catholic Church.

In 325, the Roman Emperor, Constantine the Great summoned bishops from across the Roman Empire to a city called Nicaea, which is in modern-day Turkey. It was the first ecumenical council of the Catholic Church, and it had the purpose of setting right a wrong being committed by a priest from Alexandria, named Arius, who had been making claims that were leading to heavy debate within the church.

Arius had claimed that the Son of God, Jesus Christ was not eternal but was instead a created being that was exalted above all others, yet still a creature with a beginning. This teaching had spread rapidly with those who agreed, seeing it as more philosophically tidy than the complex idea behind the Trinity. This debate had called into question the unity of the Church, and Emperor Constantine I was concerned that it might lead to the Church's collapse through a lack of unity in teaching.

Around 318, bishops gathered at Nicaea for the council. And, together, they came to the verdict that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, or homoousios, meaning of the same substance

or nature, not similar. This definition of the divinity of Christ became the foundation of the Nicene Creed, which is why to this day Catholics still profess this Creed at Mass every Sunday.

The Church teaches that the Council of Nicaea was guided by the Holy Spirit in defining Christ's divinity. This directly abolished Arius's argument, and the Creed set about making a list of condemnations it called anathemas, which made it clear that anyone not teaching the truth as set out at Nicaea was not recognised by the Catholic Church. Arius refused to sign the Creed and was thus exiled from the Church, and his writings were burned.

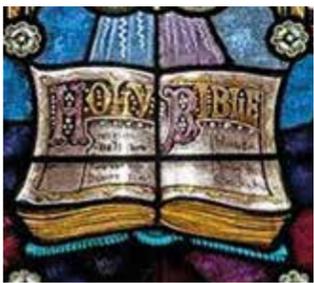
The Council of Nicaea did not only discuss Arianism, but it also laid out the date of Easter. During this time, many Christian communities were calculating it differently. Some still relied on the Jewish calendar to determine when to celebrate Easter, others computing it independently, which led to many different times at which Easter was celebrated. So, it was decided that Christians needed one clear date to celebrate Easter.

The Council resolved this issue, stating that that it would be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon, following the spring equinox. This rule was a complete unification of Christians for their most important annual celebration.

Nicene Creed

*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty,
Maker of Heaven and Earth,
of all things visible and invisible.
I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial
with the Father;
Through Him all things were made.
For us men and for our salvation
He came down from Heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary,
and became man.
For our sake He was crucified
under Pontius Pilate,
He suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into Heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and His Kingdom will have no end.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son
is adored and glorified,
who has spoken through the prophets.
I believe in one, holy, catholic,
and apostolic Church.
I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins
and I look forward to the resurrection
of the dead and the life of the world to come.
Amen.*

Lectio Divina an invite into quiet space by Niamh



IN a world full of buzzing notifications, streaming music, and auto playing videos, it can feel almost impossible to be still, yet right in the middle of that noise, God continues to speak.

One of the Church's most beautiful and time-tested ways of listening to Him is a prayer called Lectio Divina, which simply means divine reading. At first, Lectio Divina might sound complicated or reserved for monks in silent monasteries but, in reality, it is a gentle, personal, and meaningful way for anyone, especially young people, to encounter God through Scripture.

We read all the time: texts; captions; homework assignments; news articles. Lectio Divina is different. It is not about rushing through a Bible passage to understand information. It is about slowing down and allowing God to speak to your heart. St Jerome said: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ." Lectio Divina helps us move beyond knowing about Jesus to knowing Him.

Traditionally, Lectio Divina has four movements, which are not strict rules but gentle invitations. The first is 'Lectio', or reading. Choose a short passage of Scripture, perhaps the Gospel of the day. Read it slowly, then read it again, noticing a word or phrase that stands out. Do not try to force meaning. Let the text come to you.

Next comes 'Meditatio', or meditation. Ask yourself why this word caught your attention, reflect on what God might be

saying through it, and imagine yourself in the scene, allowing both your mind and heart to be present.

Then there is 'Oratio', or prayer, where you respond to God; speaking honestly, thanking Him, questioning Him, asking for help, or simply sitting with what you have received. This is a real conversation, not a performance.

Finally, there is 'Contemplatio', or contemplation, which is about resting in God's presence. There may be no words, just a quiet awareness of His nearness, like sitting with a friend, nothing needing to be said.

Some traditions also include 'Actio', or action, which is about taking what God has spoken and living it out in daily life, because prayer should shape the way we live.

As a university student, I was first introduced to Lectio Divina through the Lectio Divina Society on campus. Each week

we gathered, not as experts, but as students trying to make space for God during busy academic lives. There was something calming about sitting with Scripture together, listening in silence, and then sharing what had stood out to us.

What I noticed most was how personal the experience became. The same passage could speak in completely different ways to different people, and yet God was clearly present in all of it. In a season of deadlines, stress, and constant activity, the society became a place of peace. It reminded me that God was not waiting for me to finish university to speak to me, He was already present, walking with me through it.

Lectio Divina teaches patience in a culture of speed, helps us pay attention in a world full of distraction, and reminds us that God is not distant. He speaks through Scripture today, into our lives, our struggles, and our

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hopes.

For young writers, Lectio Divina can also help develop the ability to listen deeply. Writing flows best when we first learn how to receive. When we sit with God's Word, our own words become more honest, meaningful, and rooted in truth. You do not need candles, Latin, or an hour of silence to begin. Start small, five or ten minutes is enough. Find a quiet corner, turn off your phone, and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Some days may feel dry, while

others may feel rich. Both are part of prayer.

Lectio Divina is not about doing it perfectly, it is about showing up. In a busy world, choosing to listen can be a simple but important act. Lectio Divina invites us into that quiet space, one Scripture passage and one prayerful pause at a time. Through it, we learn that God's Word is not only on a page; it is alive, personal, and still speaking, especially to young hearts willing to listen.

Young Writers share thoughts...

St Lawrence a widely venerated martyr *by Farragh*



St Lawrence (Laurence) was one of the seven deacons of the city of Rome under Pope Sixtus II. The early Christian community in Rome needed to serve the poor as well as manage the Church's material wealth, and he was chosen for this role as deacon

due to his wisdom, commitment to his faith and dedication to the poor. Appointed to this position at a young age, he was the one responsible for caring for the needy and distributing alms. He was later appointed Archdeacon of Rome; a position that carried great trust.

Lawrence was a famous teacher in Greece, and spent his time travelling from Hispania to Rome. He was also the first one of the seven deacons to serve in the cathedral church. He is now the Patron Saint of the Poor, Cooks, Comedians, Deacons, and Fire-fighters, which is why some people now view him as being so important.

He is associated with the 'Tears of St Lawrence' (Perseid meteor shower) because the peak of the shower occurs around his Feast Day, August 10. The legend of this is that the meteors are either the

tears he shed during his pain of being burned alive, or tears of joy for his heavenly reward. He often gets referred to as the saint who got cooked alive on a gridiron. Emperor Constantine built a beautiful basilica in Lawrence's honour.

St Lawrence is best known for saying his famous dying words: "Turn me over! I am finished on this side." This is attributed to him as he was being roasted on a gridiron during his martyrdom by Roman authorities. When he was on the gridiron, in one of his hands, he was holding a palm frond. This led to him becoming the Patron Saint of both cooks and comedians. Another quote of his is: "I thank You, O Lord, that I am permitted to enter your portals." He also referred to the poor as "the church's treasure".

Something that is often talked about regarding St Lawrence

is his feature of an ecosystem, known as salt marshes-wetland that are influenced by tides. Due to extreme variations in salinity, temperature and oxygen levels, these complex environments have forced many plant and animal species to adapt to nature, which has slowly been getting more destroyed as time goes on. He was seen to be quite passionate about this topic.

St Lawrence became a saint through a process of Early Church veneration, and his sainthood is considered 'pre-congregation', because he was recognised before the formal canonisation process was established. He is a widely venerated saint, whose martyrdom in 258 AD was honoured by the Early Church, with a basilica built in his honour by emperor Constantine, and devotion widespread by the fourth century.

Prayer to St Lawrence

O Generous patron of the Church's poor, St Lawrence, pray to the One God - Father, Son and Holy Spirit, that all the poor of the Church in need, in every corner of the world, may feel the effect of the love of their brothers and sisters, who seek to help them.

Deliver the Church from the greed and envy of the powerful, and protect her rights and property, so that she may serve the needy in freedom, giving them good things for soul and body.

May we come, some day, with all those whom we helped on earth to the bright mansions of Heaven, where we will enjoy the riches of God's house and the company of the Saviour, who lives and reigns forever and ever. Amen.

De Musica et Ecclesia... *On music and the Church by Harry*



SINCE times of old, sacred song and music have been used to ornament and decorate religious ceremony. Miraculously preserved unharmed from the Red Sea, the people of God sang a song of victory to God. Later, when the Ark was taken from the house of Abnidad to the City of David, all of Israel were to play instruments before the Lord. And, St Paul showed clearly that sacred chant was used and held in honour from the beginning of the Church, when he wrote to the Ephesians: "Be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms, hymns and spiritual songs", and "When you come together each of you has a hymn".

This continued after apostolic times, up until St Gregory the Great, who carefully collected and arranged all that had been handed on by the elders, and protected the sacred chant with laws and regulations. After a while, it developed the name 'Gregorian chant', and obtained a new beauty after the eighth or ninth century,

because of its accompaniment by the organ. Then polyphonic chant began to also develop, up until times of recent.

The progress of musical art shows how sincerely the Church has desired to render divine worship ever more splendid and pleasing to the Christian people. The supreme pontiffs have always diligently fulfilled their obligation to be vigilant in this manner, eg, Pius X in "Tra Le Sollecutudini", says: "It is vain to hope that the blessing of Heaven will descend upon us when our homage to God, instead of ascending in the odour of sweetness, puts in the hand of the Lord the scourges wherewith He drove out the unworthy profaners out of the temple."

He also said that music participates in the general scope of the liturgy "the glorification of God and sanctification of the peoples", and he then lays down three qualities that sacred music must possess: It must be Holy;

It must be true art; It must be Universal.

Gregorian chant has always been regarded as the supreme model for sacred music, as affirmed in the Second Vatican Council as well, as opposed to theatrical style music which leads to Mass becoming sort of an entertainment, which it is not. The music proper to the church is vocal music, and it can also be accompanied by the organ, or other instruments within due limits.

Having looked upon the history of music, and the thoughts of the deceased supreme pontiff St Pius X, I would like to briefly offer a few thoughts. I wish there would be a return to our great tradition of chant and organ, as it is very pleasing to God and sanctifying to us, the faithful. The piano or guitar, as beautiful as they are, can fall into the theatrical style of music and hinder our worship to God and take away our attention to God at Mass. They also seem a little inappropriate for the Most Holy Sacrifice.

I also wish there was a return to Latin hymns. Expressing a universality in the liturgy and church, they are sacred, theologically precise, and timeless.

Lastly, I think we should take greater care in regard to our Sacred music in the liturgy, as I have attended many Masses in several places in Ireland, and the Sacred music seems to be neglected. Remember, as lay-people, we have a duty to possibly provide this music to the Church, if God has granted us this particular talent.

This is not meant as a criticism on anyone, but an engaging article on the history of music in the Church and my thoughts on this.

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IN THE Stillness

FAITH IN A BUSY WORLD

In a busy world, finding stillness is a deliberate act of faith, allowing individuals to surrender anxieties, hear God's voice, and gain perspective. Stillness is not mere inaction, but a grounding, trusting, and intentional practice to combat chaos, fostering spiritual growth, peace, and deeper intimacy with God.



PETTIGO, DONEGAL
F94 N289

SATURDAY 25TH APRIL 2026 10:00AM - 4:30PM
Refreshments and Lunch provided

GUEST SPEAKERS



Father Peter O'Kane
Ordnained for The Derry Diocese in 2005, Father Peter O'Kane has ministered with the Irish Dominican Community in Ireland as well as serving as a Priest in the Parishes of Waterside, Strabane and Drumragh. He now serves as a Lecturer in St Patricks Pontifical University Maynooth. Father Peter will include in his reflections finding space for Faith amid the pressures and pace of modern life, including the pull of social media and influencer culture.



Mark Harte
Mark Harte is a family man from Errigal Ciaran (Ballygawley). He is a former teacher and now works as an Irish Language Support Officer for QUB. He is a Gaelic Football Coach and is a Gaelic Football Analyst with TG4. Mark's reflections will focus on the impact of family, faith, football and career on his life.

FREE EVENT
Advance Registration is essential

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Glorious painting of St Patrick restored in Maghera



THE large image of St Patrick on the back page of this edition of The Net is the artwork of Maghera parishioner, Patricia McMaster, who was named after Ireland's Patron Saint when she

arrived into this world over six decades ago, during the month of March, in which his Feast Day is celebrated far and wide.

Patricia actually painted this image 37 years ago, and is

pictured freshening it up in time for March 17 this year, following a request from the committee of Fallagloon Hall, where it hangs upon the wall.

The 63-year-old retired teacher, who only took Art as a subject to O'level back in the day, claims that she is "not an artist by any stretch of the imagination."

The painting of St Patrick was her second big commission from within the Maghera Parish. The first was a large fabric banner for the young people of the parish to take to Galway Racecourse, for the Youth Mass there during Pope John Paul II's visit to Ireland, in 1979. She was about 17 years old at the time.

"I was asked to do it by the organisers of parish group, and the late Fr Kieran Devlin was there for the unfurling. It depicted the Crucifixion scene that is on the lintel of St Lurach's Church, in Maghera. Fr Kieran told me that it was great, but I had a fada in the wrong place on one of the words. I told him that I had gone into St Mary's Church, in the town, where there had been a fresco of this Crucifixion scene, and had taken the placing of the fada from that. He said that it was in the wrong place

on that as well, but it couldn't be changed as it was in concrete! So, I just painted it out on the banner. Fr Kieran and I laughed about that years later."

Some 10 years after that first commission, in the summer of 1989, after her first child was born, Patricia received news of her second - to paint a large image of St Patrick for Fallagloon Hall.

She recalled: "The current hall was a replacement for an older one which my family had had a great affiliation with. My father was James McCloskey, and his father, Dan had been the president of Glen AOH. When it was decided that the old hall needed replacing, my father and other members of the Committee started fundraising. My father passed away in July 1987 before the new hall was built, so the committee asked my mum for something of my father to place in the foundation as a tribute to him. He was a life-long pioneer, so she gave them his Silver Pioneer Pin.

"The Committee wanted to continue the name of St Patrick, with the connection that the local AOH Band had with the hall. They decided to get an



image of him but couldn't get one big enough, so my younger brother told them that I would paint one, and me just after having my first baby! When he called around to the house to tell me, he said that it needed to be done for the following week! When I balked at that, he just said, 'Sure, you're on maternity leave!'

served them tea." Now, that the painting has been refreshed, the impressive image of St Patrick will surely be admired by many more patrons of Fallagloon Hall, and serve to keep his key role in the spread of Christianity in Ireland to the fore for generations to come.

Meanwhile, Patricia is helping to keep the family Pioneer tradition going, and will be due to receive her Golden Pin next year. So, it will be a teetotal toast she will be giving to her mother, Kathleen, when she turns 92 on April 28!

Cloisters Charity Coffee Morning a great success

THERE was a great response to the Foyle Hospice Coffee Morning fundraiser in Cloisters Café on the last Saturday in January.

Café manager, Pat Kennedy, who is in training for running his first full marathon in London in April, with the Foyle Hospice his chosen charity to support, has

expressed his deep appreciation for the generous donations at the Coffee Morning and to all who contributed to its success.

Pat is hoping to run another Coffee Morning fundraiser on Saturday 11th April, in the hope of raising more funds for this very worthy cause.



Eangach

Eachtra ar an Chnoc, 1872



Paidir Phrionsiais

Déan gléas chun síochána id lámh díom, a Thiarna
san áit a bhfuil fuath go gcuire mé grá,
san áit a bhfuil dochar déanta, go gcuire mé pardún,
san áit a bhfuil amhras, go gcuire mé creideamh,
san áit a bhfuil éadóchas, go gcuire mé dóchas;
san áit a bhfuil dorchadas, go gcuire mé solas,
san áit in a bhfuil brón, go gcuire mé lúcháir,

A Mháistir Dhiaga, deonaigh nach n'iarraim chomh mór
sólás a fháil, seachas sólás a thabhairt,
a bheith tuigte, seachas tuiscint a bheith agam,
grá a fháil, seachas grá a thabhairt.

Óir is ó bheith ag tabhairt a fhaighimid,
is ó phardún a thabhairt a fhaighimid pardún,
agus is trí bhás a fháil a théimid i seilbh na beatha síoraí.

A Mhuire na nGrás

A Mhuire na nGrás is a Mháthair Mhic Dé
Go gcuire tú ar mo leas mé.

Go sabhála tú mé ar gach uile olc
Go sabhála tú mé idir anam is chorp.

Go sabhála tú mé ar muir is ar tír
Go sabhála tú mé ar leac na bpian.

Garda na nAingeal os mo chionn
Dia romhaim is Dia liom.



Dealbh de Mhuire san áit ar sheas sí i gCnoc Mhuire

San eagrán seo, shíl mé gurbh fhiú an rud é díriú ar eachtra thar a bheith spéisiúil nó speisialta a tharla i sráidbhaile beag tuaithe i gContae Mhaigh Eo, sa bhliain 1872. Trathóna beag, ar an 21ú Lúnasa na bliana sin, bhí Mary Byrne agus Mary McLoughlin ag siúl thar an Seipéal, agus iad ag déanamh ar an bhaile, nuair a chonaic siad triúir neamhghnách ag balla binne na heaglaise. Chuir an rud a chonaic sí an oiread sin iontais uirthi gur rith sí abhaile leis an scéal a inse. Roimh i bhfad, bhí scaifte daoine ón tsráidbhaile bailithe, ag stánadh ar an fhís seo.

Bhí triúir le feiceáil ann, agus rud éigin neamhghnách ag baint leo – ba chosúil nach raibh siad ag baint

den talamh! Bailíodh teistíochtaí ó dhaoine a bhí i láthair agus d'aontaigh siad fá cérbh iad na daoine. Ba í Muire an duine is faide ar clé, lámha sínte agus í ag guí agus coróin óir ar a ceann, in aice léi, bhí a fear céile, Iósaef, ceann cromtha, ag guí. Bhí Naomh Eoin, an Aspal, ar dheis, leabhar ar oscailt aige agus lámh in airde amhail is go raibh sé ag seanmóireacht, agus mítear easpag ar a cheann. Ansin, níos faide arís ar dheis (ar thaobh na lámhe clé don triúir) bhí altóir ann timpeallaithe ag soilse (nó aingil, mar a deir roinnt finnétithe) agus Uan Dé á glóiriú ar an altóir.

Níor tháinig aon fhuaim nó aon fhocal as duine ar bith a bhí mar chuid den fhís seo. Bhí na daoine go hiomlán dírithe uirthi ó thosaigh sé. Gnáthdhaoine de bhunadh na háite a bhí i láthair ann, bunadh na tuaithe. Ní raibh siad saibhir, bhí saol simplí acu. Bhí creideamh láidir acu. Chomh maith leis sin, bhí siad iontach críonna agus macánta fán rud a chonaic siad. D'fhan siad ann ar feadh trí uair an chloig ag amharc air agus ag rá na Corónach Mhuire. Nuair a thosaigh an fhís, bhí sé go fóill geal taobh amuigh, ach thosaigh sé ag éirí dorcha, ach chonaic siad na figiúir go fóill. Dúirt siad fosta gur fhan an talamh ar láthair na fise féin go hiomlán tirim, d'ainneoin go raibh báisteach ann, agus an ghaoth ag séideadh i dtreo an bhalla ag a raibh an fhís. Dúirt siad fosta nár phreab sí ar bhealach ar bith agus nár athraigh sé. Fís mhistéireach



An mósáic sa Bhaisleac i gCnoc Mhuire

gan dabht!

Nuair a léitear na cuntais a thugann na daoine seo, is iontach cé chomh macánta agus daonna is atá siad. Is léir go bhfaca na daoine seo rud éigin agus go ndeachaigh sé i bhfeidhm orthu.

Tá neart suntas ag baint leis an rud seo a tharla i gCnoc Mhuire (ainm tugtha i ndiaidh an eachtra) i saol an chreidimh in Éirinn inniu agus tá scrín agus baisleac anois ann. Tháinig dhá Phápa ar cuairt chuici.

Is rud é nach bhfuil a fhios ag ach an duine, gur tharla sé i ndiaidh don tsagart paróiste cuid mhór Aifreann a ofráil ar son anamacha na ndaoine a cailleadh sa Drochshaol, a tharla ní i bhfad roimhe. I gcúpla eagrán atá ag teacht, pléfeadh tuilleadh faoi theacht Mhuire go Co. Mhaigh Eo, ach anois, fágfaidh muid é leis an smaoineamh seo: b'fhéidir gur tháinig Muire le sólás a thabhairt dá clann in Éirinn, i ndiaidh an chruaáin a d'fhulaing siad, mar a dhéanann máthair mhaith.

Iubhaile Eile



Naomh Proinsias

Bliain ar leith a bhí ann anuraidh san Eaglais Chaitliceach. *Iubhaile* a bhí ann, rud a bhí le sonrú ón iomaí rud, bhí fógraí éagsúla ann, rudaí bolscaireachta a chuir in iúl fán iubhaile. B'fhéidir gur luaigh do shagart paróiste fán iubhaile agus é ag caint sa tseipéal Dé Domhnaigh. Sa Róimh féin, agus in áiteanna eile, bhí imeachtaí éagsúla ar siúl – agus clár ama imeachtaí speisialta sa

Vatacáin a thug suntas do ghrúpaí áirithe oilithrigh. Mar shampla, bhí imeacht iubhaile ann do 'thionchairí' agus don lucht a dhéanann obair scaipthe an toiscéil ar líne nó ar na meáin shóisialta. Tugadh cuireadh do ghrúpa acu teacht chuig an Vatacáin, agus bhuail an Pápa leo.

Is ón Bhíobla a thig an coincheap sin fá 'Iubhaile'. Sa tSean Tiomna, de réir an dlí a thug Dia do Mhaois, bhíodh blianta iubhaile ag na hEabhraigh anois agus arís. Ag an am seo, bhí an deis ag daoine tús nua a bheith acu, a bhfiacha a ghlanadh, agus a gcaidreamh le Dia a athnuachan. Is amhlaidh an cas dár mblianta iubhaile, agus leagtar béim mhór ar an athmhúineas agus ar an chaidreamh le Dia. Tháinig deireadh leis an iubhaile 2026 um Nollaig.

Ach anois, don bhliain 2027, tá iubhaile eile ann! D'fhógair an Pápa Leon bliain speisialta – Bliain Naomh Proinsias – ón 10ú Eanáir 2026 go dtí an 10ú Eanáir 2027.

Tá seo le ceiliúradh agus comóradh a dhéanamh ar *Transitus* (bás) Naomh Proinsias 800 bliain ó



Iarsmaí de Chorp N. Proinsias

shin. Gan dabht, is é Proinsias ceann de na naoimh is ionúine de chuid na hEaglaise. Bhunaigh sé na Proinsiasaigh, a d'fhág rian ar an tsaoil ina dhiaidh.

Thar aon rud eile, thug a eiseamláir spreagadh do mhórán as ucht a naofachta agus a spioradáltachta, agus an rud is mó, b'fhéidir, a umhlachta.

Tá seans go mbeidh muid ábalta teacht ar ais chuig an ábhar seo in eagrán eile de 'Eangach' i rith na

bliana seo. B'fhíú go mór dúinn díriú ar Naomh Proinsias ag an am seo atá stairiúil i saol na hEaglaise.

Mar fhocal scoir, más spéis le duine ar bith é, tá corp N. Proinsias le bheith ar taispeáint d'oilithrigh in Assisi ar feadh míosa, go mall i mí Feabhra go dtí go mall i mí Mhárta. Más spéis le duine ar bith é, is fiú an deis seo a ghlacadh nach dtiocfaidh arís, b'fhéidir, lenár linn.

Greencastle News

Great friendships and stories to treasure from Camino Francés

A conversation between Parish Priest, Fr James Devine and one of his parishioners sparked the initiative to plan a parish pilgrimage on the Camino. The conversation took place on Friday, July 26, 2024, the day after the Feast of St James the Apostle. Unbeknown to the parishioner, however, Fr James had felt there was a reason that such a conversation happened on that day and, the very next night at Mass, he announced for anyone interested in taking part in the Camino to get in touch with our parish pilgrimage organiser, Maria Bradley, and within less than a week she had over 90 names of people eager to do it.

And so, the journey began and our pilgrimage was organised for August 18, 2025. A total of 70 people came together to walk the Camino, most of whom were from the Greencastle Parish, with a few then joining us from neighbouring parishes.

In the build-up to it, we organised a few evening and Saturday morning walks, which were enjoyed by all who participated. However, a lot of those going preferred to prepare on their own, fitting in some walks where they could manage, given the busy time that the summer months can bring.

We headed for Dublin Airport

on the morning of August 18, a little apprehensive about what our journey might bring and, of course, everyone having some doubt in their head about the miles they were about to undertake, but all with hope of completing the journey.

We were walking the Camino Francés, from Sarria to Santiago, which is the last 100km of the French Camino. We had a five-day walking itinerary ahead, Tuesday – Saturday, covering various miles each day, from between 15-19 miles. What was unique about our pilgrimage was that Fr James Devine and Fr Daniel McFaul celebrated morning Mass each day, before heading off to complete our miles. This would normally not happen on the Camino and it was such a special way the start each day at 6.30 am, then a light breakfast and away we went.

The scenery along the way was breathtaking; all the beautiful, little hamlets we walked through to make our way to the end stage each day, meeting the locals as they went about their daily activity, and here we were amongst them feeling so very grateful and lucky to get to experience this special journey.

The rugged landscapes, magnificent forests, beautiful lands and dusty paths that we threaded along each day were

so energising, and also very reflective of what we have at home. The landscape very much reminded us all of the country we come from and what we have around us, although the sunny skies and nice heat of the Spanish sun definitely added to it. Not forgetting the many little chapels along the way still standing proudly, and a stream of pilgrims gracing their doors each day to bring their many intentions forward from their trip.

As we walked along each day, passing all the other thousands of pilgrims on their own journey, you came to realise that everyone had a reason for being there; so many stories in the dusty paths, so much reflection on life and the opportunity to just leave some things behind you, let it go and move on. Such a powerful, momentous journey to take.

On one of our walking days, Fr James suggested, if we wanted, that we might walk the first mile of our route, or at some point along the way, alone or in silence, and it was so refreshing to get time in your own thoughts and time to reflect on your own intentions. A brilliant idea that really added to our camino.

All 70 pilgrims completed the 100k on Saturday, August 23. We walked the last mile

all together as a group to our final destination, St James' Cathedral, Santiago. It was a very moving, surreal, emotional finish. We had made the journey for our own reasons, and here we were six days later, all walking as a collective group to bring our intentions to St James the Apostle, and to reflect in his beautiful Cathedral on the journey we had just made.

We stood outside the Cathedral and one of our parish pilgrims played a tune on the tin whistle, while we held the Greencastle flag. It was all so beautiful and very meaningful. We had all made the journey, walked the miles, suffered blisters, cuts and shin splints offering it all up in thanksgiving, so grateful for having been able to experience this amazing pilgrimage.

Thank you to Maria for organising an amazing pilgrimage, and many thanks to Fr James and Fr Daniel for the friendship and spiritual guidance along the way.

Everyone enjoyed it so much, with great friendships made and many stories to treasure. We are already looking forward to doing it all over again. People have been making enquires as to when we will go again, and one thing is for sure, Greencastle is certainly not finished with the Camino just yet!



Joy of connection and nature on parish youth camino

AS the parish was preparing for the Camino Pilgrimage in the Summer, we thought it would be nice to plant a seed with the youth of our parish about the importance of being together, and taking some time out to spend it with others. So, we linked in with our local Youth Club to organise a Parish Youth Camino as part of our Lenten activities.

We organised four Saturday mornings during Lent to walk in different areas of the parish, to take in different townland areas and to show the young children the beautiful area in they live in, explaining the different townlands and encouraging them to enjoy all that they could see on

these crisp, and sometimes very damp, spring mornings.

We met at different locations within the parish each week, and Parish Priest, Fr James would give us a brief talk on a different Apostle and ask the children to find out different information for the next week's walk. The children were so enthusiastic about it all and it was very encouraging to watch.

Over the four weeks, our numbers kept growing and by week four we had over 90 walkers. It proved that both young and old enjoy and thrive on connection and nature. What a gift to give to our young community, to bring them together with their peers

and friends, and to connect and communicate with each other, away from the distraction of screens and to soak up the fresh air.

It was so nice to hear their laughter and joy as they walked and ran the various routes, eager to return each week. The children especially enjoyed the fact that the adults were taking part and giving their time, away from the busyness of family life, to walk beside them.

On our final walk, the children were all presented with a small one-decade rosary bead, blessed by Fr James, who then prayed with everyone before we set off on our final route of the Parish

Camino.

Halfway along the route, all walkers were treated to a hot or cold drink at the most beautiful coffee cart, in the middle of the rugged mountain path from Davagh to Beaghmore Stone Circles. It was so nice to see everyone relaxing in the sunshine and enjoying the company of friends. When we returned from the walk to head home, all walkers were presented with their Parish Camino Passport and an Easter Egg for children.

The four-week Parish Camino was very fulfilling and most enjoyable. We look forward to building further with this in the future.



Greencastle News

Croagh Patrick fundraising climb an emotional community experience

AS a Parish, we set out to raise funds to help bring some students on a pilgrimage to Rome in the Jubilee Year of Hope. It was a bigger challenge than originally envisaged, but we were hopeful we could manage it. Fr James suggested a parish climb of Croagh Patrick and, without hesitation, the organising got underway.

We set the date for Saturday, July 5, and put our GoFundMe page live. The donations flooded in as we got closer to the climb date and the momentum got going. By the day of the climb, we had almost €9,000 raised, which

was absolutely astounding.

After further discussions, we agreed that, given the fact we did not need that amount to take the six students to Rome, we would donate the remainder to charity, and the charity chosen was Down's Syndrome.

Saturday, July 5 arrived and the weather was terrible; a typical Irish summer, with fog, constant rain and a strong breeze. However, the weather did not dampen the spirits of our parishioners. A total of 84 locals took part on the day and we were led up the famous mountain by our students

heading to Rome. It was so inspiring, as you could really feel everyone's determination to make it to the top. Each had their own challenges to get there; very much like the challenges that life can bring.

Everyone made it to the top and back down, miraculously without any injuries given the terrible conditions that we were faced with. It was very enjoyable and emotional to complete such a task with the parish community, and there was such a sense of unity among us all.

The final total raised from the climb was £13,352, which funded

the six students to Rome, and we divided the remainder to three charities closely connected to the parish: Omagh Down Syndrome Group; Downs and Proud Lurgan; and The Strathroy Group. Each charity received £2,210, and we handed all monies over on Sunday, January 18, with a little presentation and refreshments for all in the Old Schoolhouse, Greencastle.

Many thanks to all those who helped in any way with our fundraising efforts, and to everyone for the amazing support and generosity in making it all such a success.



Young Rome pilgrims share experience

IN September of 2025, me and fellow members of the Greencastle Parish, along with people from other parishes, such as Newtown Stewart and Gortin, took part in a week-long pilgrimage to Rome. I was one of the fortunate six younger members of our parish invited to come along, and I had a tremendous time on this pilgrimage.

I was able to see amazing architecture in Rome, such as St Peter's Basilica and the Sistine Chapel; two remarkable buildings with absolutely incredible paintings and sculptures. Every day, we celebrated Mass in beautiful chapels all across Rome, which made me feel incredibly enlightened and helped me further in my belief.

Even when not discussing the religious aspects of the pilgrimage, it was incredible to see throughout Rome how the city is built, and the historical landmarks in it, such as the Colosseum, which is a beautiful work of art.

The experience that I had with the people on the pilgrimage with us also allowed for some unforgettable memories to be made. It was nice seeing Fr Devine, Fr Donnelly and Fr Calhoun outside of the chapel, and getting to know them as people, separate from the clerical cloth.

As for the other younger people who came with us, it was lovely to get to know them better, and have someone on this

trip who I could relate to more. To conclude, the pilgrimage was an incredible experience, which helped me gain a better connection with God, along with my fellow man. *(Gearoid McNamee)*

My pilgrimage to Rome with Greencastle Parish was one of the most unforgettable trips of my life. One of the best moments was attending a Mass celebrated by the Pope in the Vatican area, where our group carried up a cross as part of our pilgrimage. Walking with it, praying, and seeing the immense crowd all there for God, was an eye-opening experience.

Standing in St Peter's Basilica and walking through St Peter's Square were probably the most beautiful parts of the whole pilgrimage. I also got to see the beauty of the Sistine Chapel and view the history in Rome from the surrounding landmarks, such as the Colosseum and the Trevi Fountain. Another standout was the St Mary Major, not only was it beautiful, I also learned a lot there, with all the statues of the Apostles and Fr James explaining their meaning, and seeing the original Crib of Jesus.

The pilgrimage was not only a chance to visit these places, but also a time of prayer and strengthening of faith that will stay with me for years. *(Matthew McCullagh)*

My pilgrimage to Rome with Greencastle Parish was an



incredible experience, that I am really grateful for. Exploring the city as a young person gave me a lot of independence, and I especially valued the time spent talking with Fr Donnelly, Fr Devine, and Fr Colhoun. They shared so much knowledge about the different sites we visited, helping me truly understand the history and significance of everything I saw.

It was a great trip full of opportunities that I wouldn't have had otherwise, and I am glad that I got to be a part of it. *(Colleen Brogan)*

The Rome pilgrimage was such a special and memorable experience. I really enjoyed visiting and learning about all four of the major basilicas of Rome, which helped me to understand the meaning of Christianity more deeply.

Being able to celebrate Mass together as a group, and taking time for prayer in such important and holy places, was

especially meaningful. I also loved sharing the experience with the rest of the group and my peers, as there was a great sense of community throughout the trip.

Overall, it was an unforgettable pilgrimage that I feel very grateful to have been part of. *(Caioleann Maguire)*

I am so grateful for the amazing opportunity I got to be part of the youth group that travelled to Rome on our Parish Pilgrimage in the Jubilee Year of Hope.

It was the most amazing five days, filled with so many surreal experiences. The Vatican was an amazing place to visit, and I was particularly moved at seeing the catacombs, and hearing and learning more of the history behind my religion.

Rome was such a beautiful place to see and I feel so fortunate to have experienced it on this very special trip. *(Myles McElduff)*



Nativity reflection with 'Live Crib'

AS part of our reflection on the Christmas story, we enjoyed the most beautiful Carol Service in St Patrick's Church, Greencastle, on Sunday, December 21. We were in awe at the most talented local singers and musicians and, of course, the angelic voices of our young children.

Fr James told the Christmas Story of the birth of Jesus in parishioners left the chapel after enjoying the Carol Service, they were met with a 'Live Crib' scene outside.

A bespoke purpose-built stable stood outside the chapel doors, handmade by one of our parishioners and erected by a team of helpers. Inside the crib sat Mary, holding the Baby Jesus, and Joseph by her side. The three Wise Men stood bearing gifts and the three Shepherds looked on, as they watched their little lamb, calf and donkey. A choir of little angels surrounded the stable, while the Angel Gabriel stood illuminated above it.

It was the most serene scene;

not a sound, not even from the animals, and everyone looked on in amazement, astounded by what they saw before them. There was such a reverence and calming, almost emotional, atmosphere.

It was such an amazing way to start Christmas week, to see the children's faces as they took it all in. We felt that sometimes the Nativity can become almost a story, or school Christmas play, and that maybe the true reality of it all can be lost within so many. By creating a live scene like this, we were trying to bring it to life and allow people to open their hearts to all once more. Everyone left with their hearts full of joy.

This was our first live crib, and we hope to be able to create it annually as part of our Christmas preparations.

Many thanks to our wonderful team of parishioners who organised the live crib, and to all those who participated and helped out in any way, it would not have been possible without you.



Ministering to the crucified of today, Fr John Friel CP reflects on his Passionist vocation and how...

Memory of The Passion compels us to get involved where there is suffering



THE time out from his usual duties as Superior of the Tobar Mhuire Retreat Centre, in Co Down, and assisting with the administration of St Patrick's Province in his role as Vice-Provincial, to help lead the Merville Parish Retreat was not only greatly appreciated by Fr John Friel CP for the beautiful, Donegal coastal scenery he beheld each day, but also for its proximity to the home of his birth across the border in Derry City.

Fondly recalling growing up on Fosters Terrace across from the Gas Yard, within the Long Tower Parish, the almost 70-year-old Passionist Father had a clear memory of "playing ball on the Gas Yard wall" along with his friends, saying: "They were great days."

"My father worked in the Gas Yard," he added, "and my mother did various jobs, as she needed to with there being seven of us. I have one brother and five sisters, and I am the youngest."

Nurtured in the Catholic faith by his parents, James and Kathleen, with the Rosary prayed regularly in the family home, Fr John was also blessed to serve as an altar boy for about seven years, from the age of seven to 14, in the historic Long Tower Church, with its links to St Colmcille's sixth century monastic settlement and an atmosphere filled with a deep spirituality passed from generation to generation down the centuries.

He remarked: "I often think that it is no wonder I became a Passionist, as it is the only church that I have been in that has three sets of the Stations of the Cross. It has a more than life-size Calvary and the Pieta. One side is the

Crucifixion and the other is Jesus taken down from the Cross. The spirituality of that Church is immersed in the Passion.

"I first met the Passionists there at a Mission when I was about 15. Their vocations director came to my house. I remember being a little spooked when I asked him his name and he said it was Myles. A couple of years earlier, I had served the last Mass of my cousin, Fr Myles Doherty, a Servite, and he had said to me afterwards that I would follow in his footsteps. He sadly died of a brain tumour. So, while I had found that a little spooky, I took it as confirmation too. Little did I know, standing in our house that day, that I would be presiding over Fr Myles' funeral years later, as his rector."

Helping in the sacristy in his youth, Fr John said that he was also inspired by such priests as Fr William McGaughey and Fr Willie Rafferty, as well as by the sacristan, Paddy: "I would come into the sacristy and he would be kneeling, while listening very devoutly to Mass on the speaker."

"I left Derry when I was 15," he added, "and went to our junior seminary in Crossgar, Co Down, where I am currently residing. It has ceased to be a junior seminary and is now a modern retreat house called Tobar Mhuire."

Reflecting on when he had first thought of priesthood, he said: "After the usual wanting to be a soldier, a policeman, etc, the wanting to be a priest was the one aspiration that persevered and grew stronger as I got older. I am grateful for it to this day. I was ordained in 1980 in St Eugene's Cathedral by Bishop Edward Daly. There were seven in our class and all seven are still Passionist priests.

"My initial interest in the priesthood probably came about through my cousin, Myles, being a Servite. There were regular bus runs to Benburb, so I had the opportunity there to observe religious life as a young person and I was attracted by their down-to-earth approach to life.

Cross

"As to why I chose to join the Passionists, I was inspired by their habit and cross, and the

heart that they wore. This drew me in to discover more important things about them."

Over the years, Fr John's life as a Passionist brought him into youth ministry, including working with young offenders in prisons, and he has given retreats and missions throughout Ireland and Scotland.

"I spent six years in Scotland," he recalled, "after my first assignment as a director of youth work in Dublin, which was for six years. In Scotland, I was working with young offenders and developing a youth ministry training course for the Archdiocese of Glasgow."

He went on to say: "When I was in my 40s, I was assigned to Holy Cross Parish, Ardoyne, in Belfast. It is a parish that has had an unusual amount of death and suffering due to the Troubles, so I was charged with starting up a counselling service in a time when there was none, as we knew that the people had experienced that much trauma and loss that they needed to debrief. That was set up in 1992 and it continues to this day.

"Around that time, I had completed a degree in psychology. I was also assistant chaplain in Long Kesh and was becoming very aware of the risk of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) when these men would be released. So, I petitioned my Superior to allow me to train as a psychologist, and I went to Boston College, in Massachusetts, to train. I was there for three years, and worked in a parish while there.

"I returned equipped with this new training, and went back into ministry in Long Kesh, where I met my old school pals that I had grown up with in Derry – they as prisoners and me as chaplain. I was there until it closed down with the Good Friday Agreement, and then I went to Maghaberry as chaplain."

Commenting on the spirituality of the Congregation of the Passion, Fr John noted: "We have a saying that captures our spirituality – 'The Passionists with one glance see both the Crucified One and the Crucified of today' – and that contemplative view of the Passion of Christ speaks to me

very deeply.

"The memory of The Passion is not a passive memory, it compels us to get involved where there is suffering, neglect, torture, etc. One of the places that I try to do that is the whole area of mental health."

In 2003, Fr John became involved in setting up Daneo Human and Spiritual Development Services along with Mercy Sister, Kathleen Savage. He explained: "Daneo is the surname of Paul of the Cross, founder of the Passionists. He always had a deep devotion to the Passion of Jesus and saw personal suffering as a means to being united with God. This institution was to blend healthy religion with sound therapeutic skills for a more holistic approach to helping people.

"I still work there to this day. People come for counselling, and we have priests come for support. We provide psychological screening for candidates for priesthood, and we teach various Human and Spiritual Development courses."

"I was also elected Vice-Provincial last June," he added, "so I help with the administration of St Patrick's Province, which includes Ireland, the United Kingdom and Paris.

"As current Superior of our Retreat Centre, where there are six Passionists living in community, that is my main work. I work three days a week in Daneo and my other work is to consult with our Provincial.

"So, it has been a welcome change to come to Merville for this retreat, and I am grateful to Fr Colm for the invite. When I was a seminarian, he was an altar boy in St Mary's Church, Creggan, where my family had moved to live. We both met up last June at Fr Paddy Doherty's Golden Jubilee celebration and he nabbed me to do this Mission. I don't lead Missions as much now as I would have in earlier years, but we all make ourselves available for them."

For further information about the Daneo Counselling Service and Tobar Mhuire Monastery, visit the websites at www.daneo.org and www.tobarmhuire.com



Special time of prayer with Passionist Fathers

MOVILLE parishioners have been buoyed up on their continued journey as pilgrims of hope, following a special time of prayer and reflection with Fr John Friel CP and Fr Aidan Troy CP.

The Parish had a four-day Mission led by the Passionist Fathers and the ceremonies in St Pius X Church, in the Co Donegal seaside town, were very well attended, from the 6.30 am Masses through to the time of Evening Prayers.

The theme of the Mission was 'Called to be Pilgrims of Hope Renewed', and included talks on Hope in Healing, Hope in Forgiving, and Sent in Hope, with a Mass of Intercession for the Sick and Anointing of the Sick, a day-time Children's Mission attended by the parish schools, and opportunities for receiving the Sacrament of Penance and to spend time daily in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

During the Children's Mission, Fr John and Fr Aidan ensured that the children knew that their Parish Priest, Fr Colm O'Doherty had highlighted in the planning of the Mission programme that there was to be a special time for the young people of the parish.

During this period, the pupils present for the Children's Mission had the opportunity to offer prayer intentions, and these included prayer for: everyone in the world; people who are dying; the poor and homeless; those who are sick; families and especially grandparents; and world peace.

The schools were also commended for the encouragement given to

the children to create beautiful drawings and displays, which adorned the chapel during the time of Mission.

Delighted with the success of the Parish Mission, Fr Colm thanked all involved, including: the Passionist Fathers for their "wonderful encouragement to us all as we continue our faith journey as a parish"; the choirs and singers; readers of the Word; Eucharistic Ministers; the sacristans who ensured that the church was well prepared for each of the ceremonies and Masses; Parish Pastoral Council members, who helped in the promotion of the mission and were there to welcome and assist all who attended; his secretary and housekeeper, who looked after the priests so well in the days of the mission; Caroline and Helen, who assisted at the shop; collectors at the evening ceremonies; the priests who came along and assisted at the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation; the children and teachers of the schools, who provided the beautiful artwork throughout the church; the Community Employment team who prepared the grounds in advance; and especially the parishioners of Moville, and friends from other parishes, who came out in such huge numbers to the mission and made it the success that it became.

Thanking all for their time, talents and prayers, Fr Colm concluded: "May God bless us all as we move forward together as Pilgrims of Hope Renewed."



Derry & World-wide Eucharistic Procession in honour of Our Lady

by Barry Mallett

DERRY City will, once again, host the third world-wide Eucharistic Procession on the Feast of The Immaculate Heart of Mary, Saturday, June 13.

Organised by volunteers from Derry, in collaboration with Catholic parishes around the world, the event will start in St Mary's Church, Creggan, with 24-hour Eucharistic Adoration at 10.30 am on Friday, June 12, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which will end at 10 am on the Saturday.

The Men's Rosary of Ireland will then pray the Holy Rosary, along with Women's Rosary groups, at Guildhall Square from 10.45-11.15 am. This will be followed by Holy Mass in St Mary's Church, Creggan, at 12 noon.

Afterwards, a world-wide Eucharistic Procession will make its way through the streets of Derry, ending in Celtic Park GAA Stadium with Benediction, and an

afternoon of praise and worship.

Event organisers are delighted by the level of interest that has been shown in the launching of the event, with already over 40 parishes signed up to join in with either Eucharistic Processions, Adoration or Holy Mass, in unity around the world, in the first week of launching.

Prayer groups from all over the world, such as the Marian Movement of Priests, Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, the Discalced Carmelites, Servant of God Sr Clare Crockett's Home of The Mother Order, Men's Rosary, Women's Rosary, Catholic Mothers of Ireland, HLI Ireland, Precious Life, Youth 2000, Holy Souls' Groups, Cursillo, Walk to Knock, Children's Rosary, Children of the Eucharist, Divine Mercy, Holy Cross Ministries, and Fulton Sheen Institute, with many more pledging their support and coming to Derry with flags in

hand to honour the Holy Mother of God.

In addition, Slovakian TV, Alvaro from Uniquely Mary USA YouTube Channel, and Mark McLean English YouTube channel, are flying in to cover the event, with many more local and international YouTubers and news outlets promoting press releases and covering the event, such as Life Site News, EWTN, Shalom TV, The Net Magazine, Irish Catholic Newspaper, and many more.

In the build up to the event, for the month of May, organisers are calling for people to return to Confession, Holy Mass and Adoration. Then, on May 12, the Eve of the First Apparition of Our Lady of Fatima, they are launching a world-wide St Louis de Monfort 33-day Consecration to Our Lady to cover the event in prayer.

This is a call to all the families

of Ireland to come to Derry to show their love for Our Blessed Mother, and especially a call to our youth to come and be part of this procession of love, healing, liberation from trauma, and celebration.

This procession will be a call out to the world that Ireland will never let the faith fade away, that we will, like our forefathers, stand up and walk the streets to profess our love and fidelity to our Eucharistic King and the Queen of Heaven, the Queen of Ireland, Co-Redemptrix, Mediatrix and Advocate.

For more information go to [Guardians of the Faith YouTube Channel](https://www.guardiansofthefaith.com) for all the latest updates and interviews. Or to register your parish to join in unity www.worldwidemarianprocession.com or email avemariajune13@gmail.com

WORLDWIDE MARIAN PROCESSION

Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary



SATURDAY 13TH JUNE 2026

St Mary's Chapel, Creggan, Derry

12pm Holy Mass

avemariajune13@gmail.com

worldwidemarianprocession.com

Claudy parishioner, Kieran Burns writes from Salamanca, Spain, about his ongoing journey in discerning vocation to priesthood...

Life's journey is a series of unexpected coincidences



AT this stage in my journey, I find myself in Salamanca, Spain, having finished seven weeks of a busy initiation period, with the key aim of getting all seminarians up to speed on various elements off seminary life to help us settle into the day-to-day running of the propaedeutic course.

Each morning, of the initial three-to-four weeks, saw us busy getting to grips with Spanish at the "Universidad Pontificia de Salamanca" to aid conversations with staff at the Royal Scots College for duties, or for free time when we are out exploring our surroundings with local Spanish people. Maybe I should say, trying to speak Spanish, as I have some French and, when talking to people, have found the two languages often overlaying each other, which has allowed for some entertaining conversations and strange looks. But everyone is very friendly here, we laugh it off and, between broken English, Spanish and Spanglish, we get there.

Most afternoons in the Scots College, we are kept busy with seminary specific courses: Introductions to Liturgy of the Hours (LoH); Liturgy and Music; Liturgy in the Church; and, more recently, Introduction to Priestly Formation and Spirituality traditions.

The Introduction to the Liturgy of the Hours has helped us to understand the universal structure to common community prayer, alongside daily Mass. On top of this, and to ensure that we are all in good singing voice, Fr Michael, visiting from Scotland, has provided a rapid introduction on Liturgy and Music and the importance that it plays in community celebrations. He has been very patient with us over the first few weeks, as he has taught us to sing a number of common hymns and psalms properly in support of our daily LOH and Masses.

The more recent topics, covering Priestly Formation and

Spirituality Traditions, are giving us a background in the early Church's approach to how these elements have developed over the years, and outline how the Church trains seminarians, highlighting that this journey is life-long as we continually build our relationship with Christ.

Someone reading my story at this point may be asking, how did you understand that this was the right choice for you and how did you know? Well, let us go back a few years to when it started for me.

What I thought kick-started journey to Salamanca

Around 2019/2020, I was in the process of checking if I could retire in, or shortly after, 2025 and get out of the never-ending rat race that I found myself in. I was putting plans in place whenever COVID hit us, and everything went into lock down. Given my job in the IT industry, we simply flipped to online virtual meetings easily and continued working remotely as a team, and supported clients to do the same, and life as normal continued - if you could call it normal.

However, in the run up to this global event, on a personal level, I had been feeling an emptiness and was questioning my life choices. I was at a low in my life and COVID simply accelerated the introspection and interior search. Understand, up until now, I was what is known as a workaholic. I was always chasing the next best thing for me and this sudden slow down and time to think impacted me in a way that I had not expected. I was questioning everything and re-evaluating what was important in my life. During this period, I had what I would later come to understand as the start of an 'internal awakening'.

From this introspection, I do not know why, I started to make my prayer life more consistent, and also started to get an appetite for Scripture. The regularity grew and I wanted more over the intervening

months.

As a result of this, I came to the realisation that the emptiness I felt was in some way linked to the burdens I had been carrying for many years, because of choosing the wrong path or paths from time-to-time in my life.

As we came out of lockdown, my life went back to normal and I started to travel again with work. The months went by and, during this time, my prayer life improved and my reading of Scripture increased. In late 2022, I found myself going back to Mass with my parents again, and finally built up the courage to go back to Confessions in early 2023, for the first time in a long time. I thought, given my past, that I wasn't worthy of going and asking for forgiveness, but Scripture reading had highlighted to me the importance of using this valuable Sacrament that our Lord had left us.

I will never forget the look on the priest's face when I told him how long it had been, but he then simply replied: "Firstly, welcome back! Great to see you here!" Coming out of that Confession, I felt like a great load had been taken off my shoulders. I felt light as a feather, and I had a very emotional moment following it, in the small church, as I said my penance; a feeling which I couldn't describe and still can't to this day, but I know I felt something special that day.

Eucharistic Adoration

As the months moved on, I started attending Eucharistic Adoration in my local parish chapel, and my praying got more consistent and routine. I had even started to read/pray Vespers again from the Liturgy of the Hours, something that I hadn't done since my time with the White Fathers when I was a teenager. Later in the year, after my prayer slot, which was typically in the evenings, the notion of becoming a priest started to pop into my head out of nowhere. Passing notions, but none the less clear as a light bulb in my head. But given that I had already spent nearly two years with the 'Peres Blanc d'Afrique' (White Fathers) when I was 18, I batted this off as a past memory and regret; "Been there, wore the t-shirt" attitude. However, it didn't go away, instead, it started to get more frequent.

I started to slip back into bad habits as work took over and this impacted on my consistent praying. I clearly remember on a particularly bad week, I was frustrated, and got really annoyed at something late at night. In that instant, I stopped myself and said 'this is not you, what is going on?' And I realised that I had slipped again and had stopped praying

the Rosary. So, I picked it up and prayed, and found calmness in it. Following this, I block out and protect my time for praying in my work calendar.

Shortly after, what should come back into my head, like Woody Woodpecker, was the thought: "Become a priest." This time, I don't know why, but I stopped and listened.

It took me a few months, as I prayed on it, but during the early part of 2024 I started to visit various websites, looking at religious and diocesan priesthood.

Eventually, one night in early August 2024, I wrote an email to Fr Pat O'Hagan of the Derry Diocese. I remember sitting looking at it for several hours, simply staring and thinking, am I really doing this. A real battle was going on in my head: Delete or Send? But, at exactly 00:59 hours, I remember something in my head saying "Why are you hesitating?" and I hit "Send". Soon after, we had a meet-up for a chat and I found myself being invited to Maynooth for a 'Come & See' weekend, right about the same time as I was dropped onto a huge project at work, which started to impact the consistency of my prayer and Bible reading.

While in Maynooth on the weekend, I was having severe doubts as to whether I should be there or not, when I saw the young men around me who were going through seminary. And given my past life, doubts were thickening during Mass and Adoration, as I asked myself: "Am I truly worthy of this at my time of life, given my history?"

Forgiven

Later that evening, we mingled with the guys in the common room, asking questions about seminary and getting good answers. I had an urge to leave to get back to my room and read the next section of the Bible, as that practice had suffered over the last few weeks with work, and given the doubts of my past that had built up. I excused myself, so that I could spend some time contemplating the Scripture. In doing so, I found myself reading Luke 7, and the line that caught me at the end of the chapter was "I tell you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love." Given the day I was having, this coincidental reference hit me hard.

On the car journey back to the north the next day, with the other three guys, the chat was full of wisdom, insight and shared experiences. There was a real buzz for how good the weekend was, and I was getting comfortable with a potential choice I had to make.

Now, as I previously mentioned, I was on a new project in a senior



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project management role that had just kicked off, and found myself travelling back and forth to London. In November/December, I found work again draining me and taking over my life, as the old workaholic started to drift back in. It was a distraction that was becoming noticeable, and I remember saying to the Lord one night when praying, please don't let this work get in the way of my discernment and the decision that I need to make with Your help.

Later, at the Christmas event organised by Fr Pat, I decided to take an application form and began to fill it in over the last few days of the holidays, before I had to go back to work in the new year, and started to reach out to people for references.

In late January, I had an invite to a meeting from a senior staff member from Belfast. Little did I know that I had been selected for voluntary redundancy. With my prayers before Christmas, after a few days of reflection, I found it the easiest choice I ever felt making in my life; realising that I was chasing the wrong things, given prior dissatisfaction about the roles and value that I thought I was making to society on the whole. So, I jumped ship, which freed up my time to get the application to Fr Pat and discern more about my future life. It truly felt like another little prayer being answered.

So, I handed my form into Fr Pat, and quickly took the opportunity to finally travel a little and see places that I had never made the time to investigate. One of those places being Medjugorje, in

Bosnia, in April, and later Lourdes, in June, with my mother.

The right path?

While in Medjugorje, I did what every other pilgrim did and prayed for all those who had asked, and visited the sites as many times as I could. On the second night, as I sat on Adoration Hill finishing off a few rosaries before heading back for supper at the hotel, I finished my little list of people and their asks. As dusk settled in, I got up to walk down the hill. I looked back and, in my head, I asked Our Lady if, while I was there, she could maybe find some way of letting me know if I was on the right path.

The next day, after having done Cross Mountain, I went over to St James' Chapel for Rosaries and Adoration. Even though it was low season, the Chapel was crammed door to door with people. I got a little fed-up standing at the door, with people shuffling in and out, so, I went around the back to the open area where the outdoor Mass is said, and sat in the middle, with no-one around me, and simply watched the large screen showing the Monstrance. I settled in to saying another Rosary in this peaceful place. About 20 minutes in, I got a tap on the left shoulder and a young woman's voice spoke to me in Croatian. I turned to see a Nun and apologised that I only spoke English, and she said, "Excuse me Father, can you hear my confession?" To which, all I could reply was "I'm sorry, I am not a priest", and if you had seen the clothes I had on me, you would even wonder why she approached me.

At the English Mass the following day, Fr Leon was leading

the Liturgy, and when he got to the homily he talked about there being no such thing as a coincidence. He outlined a number of examples, like it could be something someone says to you out of the blue, or it could be an unexpected action by someone after a prayer you have made, and so on. And that is when it hit me about the little Nun from the night before, and then other things started to flood in.

While in Bosnia, I had started to also say a novena to St Therese of Lisieux (The Little Flower), as I had heard people discerning had often prayed to her in the hope of getting an answer.

On returning home, I was handing out mementos to everyone and noticed I had one Miraculous Medal left, and thought, now who I could give this to. It was around 10 pm and a name came to mind. I distinctly remember my mother saying to leave it to tomorrow, but I felt a need to do it that night, so I went and visited the particular individual and found they were still up. I was invited in, once they heard where I had been, and had me do a tell all along with photos. Conscious of time, after exchanging stories on various things, I made my excuses to leave and, as I was leaving, that person wanted to give me something to say thank you to me and my mother, for thinking of her and, when I turned around, she had the most beautiful golden rose I had ever seen. My wee prayer to St Therese had been answered and that person, if she is reading this story, will now understand the emotions that I displayed when leaving their house that night.

What happened before 2019?

From what you have read so far, some people might see mysticism while others might think, oh what lovely coincidences. But, on reflection, and looking back at my life, I can now see other things that I might have missed because I wasn't open in my heart to the invitation presented to me, or where other things may have been the start of some greater plan.

Was it the time an old girlfriend said to me, "Please don't go back to the priesthood", in 1994? Was it a work colleague in London out of nowhere saying, "Do you ever miss the priesthood", in 1998? Was it the time a colleague said, "Oh, I could really see you as a priest", in 2000? Was it the time an old boss said to me, "Why do you hide behind a bushel", in 2003? Was it the fact that my parents saw me lose my way and put me at the feet of Our Lady to pull me back? Was it the Rosary that my brother's father-in-law gave me on his return from Medjugorje in the early 2010s, could Our Lady have been inviting me then? Was it the time a colleague said to me, "Ever think about going back to the priesthood", on several occasions during 2016 for some reason?

All I can clearly remember saying when it became clear to me was: "God, you have to be kidding me, I was planning on retiring really soon, riding my motorcycle around Europe and enjoying some down time."

So, here I am in Salamanca, trying to make more sense of this through the training we are receiving and within the community of 16 other likeminded men.



Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during March for:

Disarmament and Peace:
Let us pray that nations move toward effective disarmament, particularly nuclear disarmament, and that world leaders choose the path of dialogue and diplomacy instead of violence.

Prayer for Priests

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

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

Give them the grace they need to

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

Remember in prayer:

Fr John Irwin (March 1st)
Fr Charles Keaney (2nd)
All Priests (3rd)
Fr Patrick Lagan (4th)
All Priests (5th)
Fr Seamus Kelly (6th)
Fr Edward Kilpatrick (7th)
All priests (8th)
Fr Charlie Logue (9th)
Fr Paul McCafferty (10th)
Mgrs Bryan McCanny (11th)
Fr Michael McCaughey (12th)
Fr Andrew McCloskey (13th)
All Priests (14th)
Fr Peter Madden (15th)
Fr Noel McDermott (16th)
Fr Eamon McDevitt (17th)
Fr John McDevitt (18th)
Fr Anthony Mailey (19th)
Fr Kevin McElhennon (20th)
Fr Daniel McFaul (21st)
Fr Dermot McGirr (22nd)
Fr Micheal McGavigan (23rd)
Fr Brian McGoldrick (24th)
Fr Neil McGoldrick (25th)
All priests (26th)
Fr James McGonagle (27th)
Dr James McGrory (28th)
All Priests (29th)
Fr Edward McGuinness (30th)
Bishop Donal McKeown (31st)

Penance in early Christian times by Dr Seán Beattie

THE concept of penance is an integral part of Christian practice. According to the New Testament, Christ spent 40 days in the desert in prayer and fasting.

In the Ordnance Survey of Ireland, the maps of the 1830s mark out many penitential sites in the Diocese of Derry, but most have been consigned to the history books, if not totally forgotten.

One of the most famous in medieval times was at the site of St Patrick's Cross, Carndonagh. The Franciscan historian, John Colgan, writing in the 17th century, bemoaned the fact that the ancient pilgrimage associated with the monastic settlement had died out long before his time. He described the bed of St Patrick, in fact a plain stone lying on the ground, as a "penitential bed, surrounded by polished stones". The fact that the stones were "polished" has nothing to do with the decorative arts, but because of the fact that they were trodden over for many centuries by pilgrims.

In this context, the only pilgrimage site with "penitential beds", as used by present-day pilgrims, is at Lough Derg, in South Donegal.

The High Cross at Cloncha, Culdaff, has a sculpture of Saints Anthony and Paul in the desert, where they fasted for 40 days. The sculpture dates from c.1,000 AD. The Cross was the TikTok message of its day for Christians, a bold statement of the importance of penance in the medieval Christian world.

Colmcille

Colmcille (born 521) continued the work of St Patrick in spreading the Gospel. The Columban Rule emphasized the importance of manual labour, penance and mortification, as it is often called in religious works. In 563, Colmcille left his native soil and headed for Iona. Iona appealed to him because of its isolation, a place where penance could be observed.

Columbanus

Columbanus of Bangor went into exile for Christ to the Continent, and founded monasteries at Annegray, Luxeuil, and Bobbio, where he died in 615. For Columbanus, his religion involved the creation of certain ascetic qualities, which involved "application and toil". The 'Penitential of Columbanus'

is the most rigorous of all Irish penitentials, in this case, penance as applied for certain sins.

In his 'Rule', which he wrote for his monks, there were three stages in the monastic life. First, to practice asceticism, the monk was obliged to divest himself of worldly ways. In the second stage, he has to "purge himself of vices". In the final stage, he would reach a state of perfect peace with God.

His 'Rule', known as the 'Regula Monachorum', gave advice on food, diet and penance: "We must fast daily just as the body must eat daily". Monks' food should be poor and taken preferably in the evening. The seventh-century 'Life of Colmcille' tells us that as he approached death, the saint blessed a barn of grain, to ensure that the monks would have enough to eat after he died. A monastery near a river or the sea had an abundance of fish in the diet. Excavations have shown that the diet was substantial, as joints of cattle and venison have been discovered on Iona.

Monastic influences of fasting regulations

Some aspects of the Church's traditional regulations on fasting were influenced by early monasticism. Monks had limited

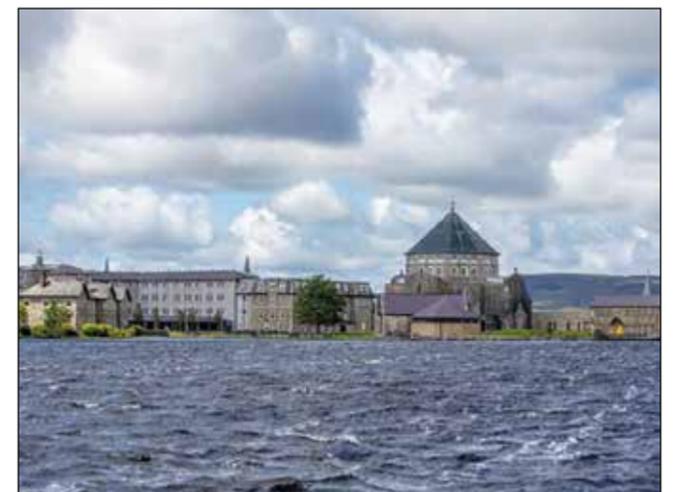
sleep, and observed three periods of fasting: Advent; Lent; and 40 days after Pentecost. Wednesdays and Fridays were days of fasting on certain occasions. In the Diocese of Derry, I knew a small number of priests who fasted on certain days of the week or had a restricted diet.

Today, salmon and oysters are regarded as high-quality foods, but in monastic times the rivers and loughs of the Diocese had abundant supplies of such foods, so they were seen as ordinary fare, which even the poorest classes could enjoy. In a recent excavation along the shores of Inch Lake, in Inishowen, thousands of oyster shells were discovered in what archaeologists call "shell middens".

Monasteries as places of hospitality and penance

Despite the asceticism and rigour of the monastic life of the monks, Early Christian monasteries were places of hospitality. If you look at a map of monastic sites in Ireland, it is clear that monasteries lay on or near main routes. Local kings resided in monasteries as they travelled across Ireland.

Monasteries also had another social function. They were



places where penitents could stay as an alternative to prison. Every monastery had a number of such penitents, who had committed crimes and came to the monastery to do penance. The penitent would be safe, but would have to observe the penitential regulations of the monastery.

Fasting and penance are closely related in many instances in the Bible. In the Old Testament, David endured an intense seven-day fast in the hope that God would save his sick child. Sadly, the child died, but David's fast had important consequences in that it brought him closer to God.

In Matthew, there are several references to fasting. It is seen as more than self-denial. In the Early Church, fasting was not an end

in itself, but an act of devotion which was designed as a means of getting closer to God. All four Evangelists have a number of references to the importance of fasting and penance.

Lessons for the modern Christian

Drawing our inspiration from Bible stories, the 'Rules' as outlined by the early saints, the sculptures on some of our early High Crosses, the penitential devotions of medieval times, and the numerous penitential sites outlined on our modern maps, some elements of fasting and penance are woven into the fabric of the teachings of the modern church.

Vocations News

Inspiring vocations retreat

THE Vocations Directors of the Northern Province hosted their annual Vocations Retreat Weekend at Drumalis, Larne, from March 6-8, when 22 men attended, ranging in age from 17-62.

The opening session was led by Bishop Phonsie Cullinan of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore, who is also Chair of the Bishops' Commission for Vocations. He was delighted to see so many men present and at various stages in their discernment path. Speaking of his own vocation story, he said, at the very outset, that the main actor in any vocation is God, and that God has a plan for each one of us, every person being as unique as their fingerprint. He pointed out that no one can discern alone, and that it is necessary to speak with someone you can trust and in whom you can confide. He advised the men on the retreat to be wary of technology which has its positive applications, but which can all too often lead people astray.

Bishop Phonsie emphasised the importance of prayer and of being spiritually attuned to God, a good question being, "What do you want of me, Lord?" A vocation to diocesan priesthood requires commitment; it also needs the accompaniment of a wise and holy spiritual director, who will "walk" with a candidate for 1-2 years before a decision is made to apply for a diocese or, perhaps, a religious order. The period of discernment and accompaniment will help a man to know himself and to know where it is the Lord is calling him.

Honesty and generosity are vital characteristics in someone aspiring to priesthood, and it is important to have the support of family and friends. Sometimes, in today's world, that kind of support may be in short supply because of fears around the lifestyle of the priest. Time, however, can be a great healer, and perseverance on the part of the candidate can often win others over to his way of thinking.

Seminary life, he said, is not always without its struggles and difficulties, but "a difficulty is not a doubt!"

Joy of Priesthood

The first talk on the Saturday morning was from Sr Mary Sheila, a Dominican nun originally from California, who is the Vocations Director for the Diocese of Limerick. The title of her presentation was 'The Joy of Priesthood', a topic dear to her heart as she had made an in-depth study of 'Joy' in the work of St Thomas Aquinas. She talked about the priest as an instrument for making Jesus present in the world, for helping people – and

himself – to answer the "Universal Call to Holiness." One great way to do this is through prayer which requires talking to Jesus, rather than simply knowing Him or talking about Him.

The priest shares in the joy of Jesus, which can come about in finding your true vocation in life, knowing what God is calling you to do, and being where God wants you to serve Him best. Joy is a response to "The Good." Joy can be physical, intellectual, charitable, or pure, but is always a shadow of God's pure joy. Just as St John says, "God is Love"; it is true to say that "God is Joy!" Jesus says, in John 15:11, that He wants His joy to be in us so that our "... joy may be complete."

Sr Mary Sheila challenged her audience to believe that the joy of Jesus in His humanity increased through His suffering, just as His knowledge increased through His life's experiences. One thing He learned was "Obedience" and, as the Bible tells us, He learned this through His suffering.

Jesus calls us all to take up the Cross and follow Him faithfully. Sloth, one of the deadly sins, is a reluctance to suffer, a refusal to change or to do the right thing, including prayer. We can grow in joy through our own sufferings, identifying with Jesus in His passion. The priest, on the day of ordination, is challenged to "Imitate what you celebrate."

A future priest is called to a certain closeness with Jesus, to be one of His privileged friends, and to share in His crucifixion over and over again. Just as Jesus asks Peter, in chapter 21 of St John's Gospel, "Do you love me?", in a time of discernment, He challenges a man to follow Him to the Cross – and beyond! It is good to ask Jesus, "Are You calling me to be a priest, calling me to greatness, and to share in Your passion and in Your glorification?"

Conspiracy of circumstances

Fr Michael McCullagh, a native of Donegal, is a Vincentian priest who currently works in ministry to priests at Knock Shrine, in Co Mayo. In his input to the weekend, he invited everyone to review the story of their life, to see where God had been at work in "a conspiracy of circumstances" which had brought them to where they are right now, and where life might take them in the future, shaping them into the person God is calling them to be, called to holiness, to be fully human, to transparency, to be authentic, to be perfect, and to be obedient.

Priestly life is a miracle and a mystery; a story of amazing grace. Whilst no one is worthy of such a call, God still invites men to priesthood. It is good for a man discerning a vocation to reflect on the priests who have been

an inspiration to him, realizing, perhaps, that the most influential aspect of any priest's life may in fact be his humanity.

The ministry of a priest is actually a variety of ministries: he is called to respect everyone; to bring joy into the lives of the people he serves; to offer reconciliation and support; to walk with his people; to pray for them; to be personally holy; to be restless in achieving his potential; to love; to endure; and to be a mystic in action.

The men taking part in the retreat were asked to discuss those aspects of priestly ministry in small groups, sharing with one another which had struck them most powerfully. To do this, they were introduced to the concept of 'Conversations in the Spirit', a method encouraged by the late Pope Francis, in which people are allowed to express their thoughts in an atmosphere of respectful listening, without interruption or contradiction, leading to fruitful discussion. It is fair to say that everyone found this to be very helpful in their own consideration of what Fr Michael had said.

Compassion and Love

The Mass on Saturday afternoon was celebrated by Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ, Bishop of Down & Connor, and the homily was given by Fr Pat O'Hagan, Vocations Director for the Diocese of Derry. Basing his sermon on the day's readings from Micah and on Luke's account of the 'Parable of the Prodigal Son', Fr Pat said that the image we get of God from both readings was reflected in the response to the Psalm for that day, namely, "The Lord is compassion and love."

Micah talks about God as merciful and forgiving, while Luke tells the story of a young man who wanders off on an adventure of self-discovery, rejecting the love of his father, until he realises who he really is and where he's called to be, and realises eventually that his father is not the man he thought he knew, and discovers that his father is actually a man of tremendous "compassion and love."

Fr Pat said that the story of the Prodigal Son is really a vocation story. He quoted Pope Leo XIV from his November 2025 letter to the Major Seminary in Trujillo, Peru, where he used to teach, in which he said that "...priestly fatherhood begets not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. Being a father is not something one does, but something one is. A true father does not live for himself, but for his family; he rejoices when his children grow up, suffers when they are lost, waits when they stray." That, in a nutshell, is the father of the Prodigal Son, a true

reflection of the God the Father, the God who is "compassion and love."

Road to Emmaus

On the Saturday afternoon, the retreatants listened to the Gospel of the disciples on the road to Emmaus, in which two of the companions of Jesus meet Him shortly after the Resurrection. At that point, they are feeling dejected because they haven't heard about the Resurrection and believe only that Jesus has suffered, died, and been buried. As they walk along with Jesus, they come to understand fully the whole mystery of His life and death.

Finally, they realise that their travelling companion is none other than Jesus Himself. When He has disappeared from their sight they run back to Jerusalem to share their good news with the others, some of whom have already come to know all that has happened.

The men were then broken up into pairs or small groups and encouraged to go for a walk, during which they could share their own vocation story and, hopefully, know that Jesus was accompanying them on the road.

Adoration

Saturday evening was a time for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, including a Penitential Service with the opportunity for Confession. The Monstrance used for Adoration had been brought to Drumalis by Bishop Phonsie, and had been blessed by Pope Leo in November last year, to be used in Ireland for prayer for Vocations.

Later this year, it will be taken around the country and will stay in different dioceses for a short period, as a focus for prayer for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

What more must I do

On the Sunday morning, Bishop Dónal Roche, an Auxiliary Bishop in Dublin, spoke about his own vocation. Discernment, he said, is all about looking for fulfilment, asking, "What must I do?" Or, more importantly, "What more must I do?" because the "basic" is never enough; a call requires a wholehearted response.

Bishop Roche talked about the difference in Irish society in the 1970s, when he was discerning, and now; how faith and the practice of the faith were taken for granted back then. Nowadays, society is different, as is the process of discernment and accompaniment. Seminary days, he said, are a time of prayer, study, and the forming of deep and lasting friendships.

For many years he ministered in schools. As a newly ordained



Bishop Phonsie Cullinan holding the Vocations Monstrance alongside Sr Mary Sheila OP, Fr Michael McCullagh CM, and two of the participants in the retreat.



A group of the men taking part in the Vocations Retreat, with Bishops Dónal McKeown and Dónal Roche, and some of the Vocations Directors of the northern province.

he encourages to work and mix together as like-minded people who are committed to following Jesus today. He encourages them to give and to share what they have, and, in his own life and ministry, like the Sower in the parable, he scatters the seed of faith in the hope that some of it, at least, will find fertile soil. Many people came to Jesus, and He healed and fed them. Not all of them stayed with Him and, on many occasions, He was left alone with the disciples. But He persevered, as we all must, clinging to Jesus through prayer, the Eucharist, the Word of God. There is, he said, no substitute for quality time spent in prayer and attentive listening to the voice of God. He ended by quoting Pope Leo, who has said, "Happy priests are possible because they're friends of Christ."

Open Forum

Bishop Dónal McKeown joined the group for the Open Forum, an opportunity for the participants to ask questions of the bishops and priests present. There were a variety of questions and comments on the subjects of discernment, public speaking, celibacy, and obedience, to name but a few.

As a bishop, he enjoys the variety of parishes and communities he visits. He senses a revival of faith, especially in young people whom

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Thirsting

Bishop Donal celebrated the Sunday Mass and preached on the Gospel of the Samaritan Woman at the Well. He said that both the first reading from Exodus and the Gospel talked of people thirsting, and of God satisfying their thirst. He asked us to consider the deserts in which we find ourselves today – the economic crisis, the threat of war, the problem of addiction and violence, negative perceptions of the Church and of people of faith. There is a desire nowadays for certainty, for stability, for acceptance by a Church that cares, that listens, that makes space for everyone, especially those who doubt and those who are on the margins.

The story of the Woman at the Well shows us that Jesus meets people where they are and engages with them in their thirst. He befriends. He doesn't judge. He doesn't contradict. He shows us that He thirsts with us, and for us.

Jesus offers water to the thirsty. He offers faith to those who doubt. He offers hope to the hopeless. He offers strength. He offers truth. He calls us all to serve Him, to recognise that we are "baptised

and sent" out into the world, to be salt and light. Jesus needs people with passion in their hearts for Him and for the grace He offers. He needs people of faith, who want to share their faith, whose faith quenches their thirsts and makes them missionaries who bring encouragement to other people.

He invited us all to nourish our faith in prayer, adoration, and silence; to celebrate the sacraments, especially Confession where we can acknowledge that we are dry, thirsty, and not growing. In keeping with the call of the Gospel of Ash Wednesday, he asked us also to fast and to be charitable. He said that a church or parish with a missionary heart will be born from the most unexpected places and people, and encouraged us to be open to the God of surprises.

He asked, who most needs grace and healing in their lives, and if we who come to Mass have the heart of Jesus that we see in the Gospel of the Samaritan Woman.

Bishop Donal concluded his homily with words to challenge especially those discerning their vocation: "Jesus has reached out to us. Are we willing to take the risk to reach out in His name? If not, you haven't got a vocation to the priesthood."

Papal blessed Vocations Monstrance Bellaghy visit

ADORATION of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in The St Carlo Acutis Adoration Chapel every Friday, from 10 am – 8 pm, with the Rosary for Vocations at 7.30pm.

On Friday, March 13, the Monstrance used for Adoration was the one blessed by His Holiness Pope Leo XIV on November 12, 2025 during an Audience with Bishop Phonsie

Cullinan, Bishop of Waterford & Lismore, and Chair of the Bishops' Commission for Vocations.

The Holy Father requested that the Monstrance be used for prayer for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Later this year, it will be taken around the various dioceses of Ireland to be a focus for prayer for Vocations.



Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

Like the deer that yearns by Fr Eamonn Kelly

THE other morning, as I prayed, I read words that are used very frequently at Mass and in the Divine Office.

"Like the deer that yearns for running streams, so my soul is yearning for you, my God."

My soul is thirsting for God, the God of my life; when can I enter and see the face of God?"

As the words came from my lips, I had quite a profound realisation of the inner desire to know and love God. God always loves us. God always takes the lead in our relationship, but the inner human response became alive as if all the nerve ends were touched by the electric power of God. The wanting a more profound response to the invitation of God was real; the desire to take things to the next level was solid and strong, the interior world was alive with longing, seeking, exploring and with an immense craving for a more complete union with the Almighty.

In the moments that followed, I was very aware that the Holy Spirit was working on and in my soul. My heart flooded with insight, with particular memories, with understanding that opened possibilities and ultimately to a time of decision making.

The Insight

The insight was clear: God was calling the sinner to realise where contentment was to be found. Often, I try to blame others for my inability to move forward and

deepen my relationship with God. However, here and now, God was making it clear that it was my desire that was aflame, that it was my soul that wanted more, that it was my body that was seeking eternal truths, that my very being was aching for something more than the normal run-of-the-mill nod of affection to God. My mind understood that if I were to respond to this wake-up call, I could – even as a broken, sinful person – make a step forward in friendship with God, through Jesus.

The Memories

The memories that were upon me were of two incidents that were no way related. The first memory was of a free day I had one November, when I worked as a salesman. I had a meeting in Dublin the following day and I decided that I would travel casually to Dublin on my free day, calling on my route to three or four friends. As I headed off, I also decided that I would call to Knock, Co Mayo, and have some time there. Travelling to Knock, I decided that if there were Confessions available, I would avail of the Sacrament. As I entered the Confessional Chapel, I noticed that there was only one other person in the place, an old priest walking over and back the chapel praying his Divine Office. When he spotted me, he went into the Confessional and I soon followed. I remember being struck with the thought: "God was actually waiting for me that day."

The second incident that I recalled that morning was when I was working as a barman. A rotten argument turned into a nasty fight, and punches and kicks being thrown. I rushed out and, before I was aware of anything, I was between the two men. I remember that I was shaking, but was aware of trying to stay calm. A few more punches were thrown but, with me in the middle, they missed and the three of us moved around in an unsteady and awkward circle. After a few minutes, that seemed like an eternity, one of the men declared that the other was not worth the bother and put down his fists and went back to his pint on the counter. The other man moved down the bar, with both men mumbling something about the other under their breath. As I returned to my post behind the counter, I was glad that I had tried to help, even though I was so fearful.

The Understanding

The understanding I received, I named 'ownership'. This moment is mine; it belongs to me. The insight is mine. The two memories are mine. The wake-up call is mine. This is not a greedy gathering of possessions or things, but it is taking ownership of what has been given to me, what is taking place in me and what will take place in me. Realising that my body, mind and soul longs for the mystery of God is a great stepping stone to the ability to walk closely with God.

Another person cannot do it for me. Another may help me on the way, but it is only I who can make the progress happen. I understood quite clearly how I often put this yearning for God on hold, as I wait for too many factors to line up: "I will move forward when there is a lot of us moving forward together"; "I will take a step closer to Jesus when I stop sinning"; "I will listen to the Holy Spirit when I get myself and others in order"; "I will walk with Jesus more closely when I am not as busy."

The understanding that I received was quite simple. I need honesty. I need to realise how much I want God, how much I need God, and how much I long for God in my life. I am a restless wreck because I seek fulfilment everywhere and anywhere except where it is to be found – in God; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The understanding that I received was personal. The Holy Spirit has moved and touched my inner world. The response needs to be personal too. The yearning was intensified but the answer was also given. The power from on high was, and is, waiting for a response from this sinner. The invitation had been issued. The request had been received.

The understanding that I received was contained in the unrelated memories. God is waiting for a deep, personal, on-going commitment, so that the soul can be alive and love and be at peace. God has, for



His own reasons, issued a request and now waits. There is fear, but the fear is to be overcome. There is uncertainty, but the uncertainty is not to hold us back. There is a lot unknown, but it is only in going to God can the unknown become the known. The sinner has heard, the Almighty has given an opportunity.

Decisions and Possibilities

When all is said and done, a decision must be made. To do nothing is, in itself, a decision. My soul had received a moment of grace, a touch of the Creator's hand and a call to leave the known realities that have failed to fulfil, and live in the One who satisfies the deepest yearning of the human. God had shared in these moments the need of the soul. God had clearly given understanding to the soul that, for the soul to be happy, it needed God – not the other way around. This sharing took away many doubts as it clarified

the pathway to happiness for the deepest part of the human being.

There are all sorts of possibilities, and no one knows the direction that the decisions will lead to. Yet, deep down, the soul knows that to be fulfilled, it must follow the call from on high. We only pass this way but once and the decisions we make influence what the future will hold. The yearning of the deer is for water. The yearning of the soul is for life without end, for deep lasting contentment, ultimately for God. I thank God for not giving up on this sinful man, who struggles for much, and for making yet another effort to get me to respond to love, in order to know love.

The above took around 20 seconds in the middle of Morning Prayer. Just like a deer silently finding the running stream and satisfying its thirst, the Holy Spirit delivered a message to bring a soul to peace.

Parish Post-its

Aghyaran

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

Ardstraw East (Newtownstewart)

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

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 11.30 am, St Eugene's Glenock.

Badoney Lower (Gortin-Rouskey)

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

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

Badoney Upper (Plumbridge-Cranagh)

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

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

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

Ballinascreen

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

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

Confessions: Holy Rosary Church every Saturday at 5.30 pm, before the Vigil Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, Holy Rosary; 9 am in St Columba's Straw; 11 am in St Patrick's, Sixtowns; 12 noon

in St Eugene's, Moneyneena.

Ballymagroarty

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

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

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

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

Banagher

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

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

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

Bellaghy

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in The St Carlo Acutis Adoration Chapel on Fridays from 10 am-8 pm, with the Rosary for Vocations at 7.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil livestreamed to Bellaghy from St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Greenlough; Sunday, 9.45 am in Ballyscullion, and 11 am in Bellaghy, live-streamed to Greenlough.

Buncrana

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament now takes place in St Mary's Oratory every Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, 6 am-10 pm, Fridays, 6am-10 pm, and on Sundays 2-10 pm.

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

Guided Holy Hour: A Guided Holy Hour of Adoration in Honour of the Holy Face of Jesus takes place on Sundays, 6-7 pm in St

Mary's Oratory. All welcome.

Rosary for Priests: Three Rosaries are prayed each Tuesday, between 1-2 pm, in the Oratory for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

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

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

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

Burt, Inch & Fahan

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

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

Cappagh (Killyclogher)

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesday from 8-9 pm in Christ the King, Strathroy, concluding with Night Prayer, and on Sunday from 6-7 pm, in Christ the King, with Devotions and Benediction.

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

Legion of Mary: Legion of Mary meets every Monday after 10 am Mass in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher. New members always welcome.

Anyone wishing to welcome the Pilgrim Statute of Our Lady into your home and pray the Rosary is asked to contact Rosaleen on 07917421119 to make arrangements with the Legion of Mary, Cappagh Group.

St Pio Novena Devotions: Novena devotions through the intercession of St Padre Pio take place on the first Wednesday of the month in Christ the King Church, Strathroy. Rosary at 7 pm, followed by Mass at 7.30 pm.

Veneration and blessing with

relic will be available after Mass.

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

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

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

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

Carndonagh

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

Castleberg & Ardstraw West

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

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

Claudy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Patrick's.

Clonleigh (Lifford)

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 11 am.

Clonmany

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

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

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

Coleraine

Society of St Joseph: The Society of St Joseph for the support of religious vocations meets on the last Monday of each month at St John's Church Sacristy, after the 10 am morning Mass, and is open to everyone. New members are welcome at any of the meetings, which support praying for and assisting to support the vocation to priesthood and the religious life.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 11 am, St John's; 7.30 pm Vigil, St Mary's Dunboe; 9.45 am, Our Lady of the Assumption, Aghadowey.

Creggan

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

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

Bereavement Support: The Parish Pastoral

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

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

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

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

Culdaff

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

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

Desertmartin

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

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

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

Donagheady (Aughabrack & Dunamanagh)

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

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

Donaghmore (Killygordon)

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

pm at St. Patrick's. **Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads. Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Patrick's; 8 pm Vigil, 9 am & 11 am, St Mary's Sessiaghoneill.

Drumquin

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

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

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

Drumragh (Omagh)

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

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

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Sacred Heart Church on Wednesdays following 10 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

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

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

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

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

Dungiven

Legion of Mary: Dungiven Legion of Mary meets every Tuesday at 7 pm in the Parish Committee Room. New members welcome. If anyone would like to have the Legion of Mary Statue, (Our Lady of Peace), please telephone 078 9552 9563. Many blessings have been bestowed upon those who have taken the statue to their home for a week. And we host the Rosary on the first Monday of each month, at 7

Parish Post-its

pm, in Emmaus Hall, beside St Patrick's Church. Special intentions are prayed for and light refreshments provided. Prayer Group: The St Canice's Charismatic Prayer Group meets each Thursday at 7 pm, in the Conference Room, and invites anyone who wishes to deepen their faith through shared Scripture, Prayer and Praise.

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

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

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

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

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed on Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 9.35 am, in St Patrick's Church.

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

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

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

Errigal

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

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

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

Faughanvale

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

Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Faughanvale Branch meets in St Mary's

Church on the second Monday of the month (not Jan July, August) following morning Mass. They pray for and sponsor vocations to the priesthood. New members are needed. The meeting only takes less than an hour.

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

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

Granaghan (Swatragh)

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

Greencastle

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

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, St Patrick's, and 11.30 am, Our Lady of Wayside, Broughderg.

Greenlough

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

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

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

Iskaheen, Drung & Muff

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

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

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed before all weekday Masses.

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

Confessions: Confessions are available in Iskaheen on Saturdays, 9.45-10 am, and in

Muff on Saturdays, 6 pm, and after 6.30 pm Vigil Mass

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

Kilrea

Eucharistic Adoration: Mondays, from 12 noon - 7 pm, at St Mary's Drumagarnier. Concludes with Public Prayers.

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

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

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

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

Lavey

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

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

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

Leckpatrick

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

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

Lifford (Murlog)

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

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

Adoration: 9.30 am-12.30 pm.

Confessions: Saturday, 6-6.15 pm

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 11 am.

Limavady

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on the first Sunday of each month in Christ the King (with Confessions) from 3-5

pm, and on Thursdays in St Mary's Church, from 1-6 pm.

Children's Prayer: A Children's Prayer Group is held in the Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly, on the First Saturday of every month, from 2.30-3.30 pm. All welcome. Contact: Kathy on 07538749627.

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

Maghera

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

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

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

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

Magilligan

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

Malin

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

Melmount

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, 11.30 am.

Moville

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

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

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

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

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

Sion Mills

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

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil; 9.30 am.

Steelstown & Culmore

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

Adoration: Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6.50 pm.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 9 am, 11 am, and 12.15 pm.

Strabane (Camus)

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

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

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every day, from 10.30 am-1 pm, in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), which is situated at the back of the Church.

Prayer Group: The Contemplative Prayer Group meets on Mondays at 8 pm in the Prayer Room in the Parochial House. All

welcome. Entry by Parish Priest's front door.

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

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

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

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

Templemore - St

Eugene's

Eucharistic Adoration: Every Sunday, there is Eucharistic Adoration from 3-6 pm and every Tuesday from 10.30 am until 7.20 pm.

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.

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

Cathedral Club: The Cathedral Club meets after the 10 am Mass each Thursday in the Cathedral Hall. Everyone is welcome to this parish social group. Refreshments will be served.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.15 pm & 7.30 pm Vigils; 9.30 am, 11 am, 12.30 pm & 7 pm.

Templemore - Long

Tower

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

to attend.

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

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

Long Tower & Brandywell Memories: A collection of old cine film transferred to DVD, taken from 1950's onward. The pack contains a double DVD with many clips of Derry in the 50s up to 80s. Much of the footage was filmed in the Brandywell area and the Long Tower School. Cost £10, available from Parish Office and Aras Cholmcille.

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

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

Siopa Cholmcille: St Columba's Gift Shop in Aras Cholmcille has a variety of Confirmation/First Holy Communion gifts & cards, candles, Rosary beads, books, occasion cards and other gifts & mementos available.

The shop is open after 10am morning Mass during the week. For enquiries, please contact Sheila Doyle/Jim Doherty via (parish office 028-7126230 or Sacristy 028-71261946) who will be happy to help.

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

Three Patrons

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

Children's Rosary: Children's Rosary takes place in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, on the second Saturday of the

Parish Post-its

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month, at 2 pm.

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

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

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

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

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

Women's Bible Study: Women's Bible Study takes place on Wednesdays from 7-8 pm, in the Upper Room, St Brigid's Church, Carnhill.

God Club: God Club is an opportunity for teenagers to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room, Carnhill, on Saturdays from 11.30 am until 12.30 pm.

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

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

Holy Hour: A Holy Hour

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Confessions: Confessions takes place in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, on Tuesdays from 6.15-6.45 pm and Sundays from 5.30-6 pm; in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, on Wednesdays from 6.15-6.45 pm, and Saturdays from 5.15-5.45 pm; and in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, on Thursdays from 6.15-6.45 pm, and Saturdays after 11 am Mass and from 4-4.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.15 pm Vigil & 9.45 am, St Patrick's, Pennyburn; 5 pm Vigil, 10.30 am & 12.30 pm St Brigid's, Carnhill; 11 am, 12.30 pm (An tAifreann Naofa), and 6.30 pm Youth Mass, St Joseph's Galliagh.

Urney & Castelfinn First Saturdays: The First Saturday Devotion and

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament take place in St Columba's Church, Doneyloop, from 12 noon until 1 pm on the First Saturday of each month.

Adoration: Weekly Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Anthony's Chapel every Tuesday, from 12 noon until 8 pm.

Cenacle: The Cenacle for Priests takes place every Tuesday in St Anthony's Chapel immediately after the 7 pm Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, St Columba's, Doneyloop; 10.30 am, St Mary's Castelfinn.

Waterside & Strathfoyle Lectio Divina: Reflect on the Scriptures with Lectio Divina in the side chapel in St Columba's Church, Chapel Road, on Thursday nights, starting at 8.15 pm - after evening Mass.

Eucharistic Adoration: There is Eucharistic Adoration in St Oliver Plunkett Church, Strathfoyle, on Mondays, 11.30 am-12.30 pm and Wednesdays from 7-9 pm; in Immaculate Conception Church on Thursdays, 1-6 pm; and in St Columba's Church on Fridays, 1-6 pm.

Confessions: St Columba's - Saturday after 10 am Mass, Monday-Friday at 7 pm, before evening Mass; Immaculate Conception, after 11 am Mass every Saturday and at 5.30 pm before evening Mass on a Saturday; St Oliver Plunkett, Every Saturday 5.30 pm, before the Vigil Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, St Columba's; 6 pm Vigil, 10.15 am & 12.15 pm, Immaculate Conception; 6 pm Vigil and 11.15 am, St Oliver Plunkett.

...other Diary Dates

Ladies' Retreat: The Sisters from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus will return to Termonbacca to lead a ladies' retreat on Pentecost weekend, May 22-24.

This is a lovely opportunity to take time out and gather in prayer and friendship. To book a place please complete a form at the link: <https://forms.gle/4gbNFutMxFaCbPjF6>

Sr Clare Prayer: 'From St Columba to Sister Clare' - Evening of Prayer in St Columba's Church, Long Tower on the first Thursday of each month, at 7 pm for Rosary (Confessions available), then 7.30pm Mass, followed by mini vigil to midnight for healing and intercession. At this Mass,

we will pray for the cause of Sr Clare in the Monastic site where St Columba knelt and prayed. Everyone is welcome to attend.

Derry Search Youth Group: The monthly Search prayer meeting takes place on the first Sunday of each month, at 7 pm Everyone is welcome whether you have been before or not. It will start with a cup of tea, then open the prayer meeting with a theme to reflect on. The meeting is in the Search centre at Iona Business Park, Southway.

Anam Óg: This faith-based youth group, for those aged 8-14 years, meets on Sundays in Termonbacca, Derry, to explore the faith through fun and

friendship, from 6-7.15 pm. We are always open to new members or anyone who wants to give it a try. If anyone wishes to sign their child up, you can do so at this link: <https://forms.gle/RFFF9kffzE5yBtq8A>

St Therese Prayer Hour: This year, it is 100 years since St Therese of Lisieux was declared a Saint. In order to mark this wonderful occasion, the Carmelites at Termonbacca Retreat Centre, in Derry, have built a new chapel which holds a first-class relic of St Therese. There is now a weekly prayer hour in the new chapel on Mondays, praying for the intercession of St Therese, particularly praying for world peace. The prayer will be from 7.30-8.30 pm and everyone is welcome to come along and join in.

With Mary in the Upper Room



Ladies Weekend Retreat

St Joseph's Termonbacca Carmelite Retreat Centre Derry BT48 9XE

22nd-24th May 2026

Gathered in prayer, open to the Spirit

Facilitated by the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus - Waterford City



€90 Full Board

To book call 02871262512 or email termonbaccaderry@ocd.ie

WALK TO KNOCK PILGRIMAGE 2026

"I Am Coming Home" - A Journey to the Lamb

Step out of the "labyrinth" of daily life and into the sunlit expanse of God's vocation. We walk for five days, uniting as one family at the foot of the Cross where the Lamb awaits.





SCAN TO JOIN THE 2026 PEACE PILGRIMAGE

REGISTRATION OPEN UNTIL MAY 2026
WALKS FROM DERRY, BELFAST & DUBLIN

VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO LEARN MORE AND REGISTER TODAY!
roadtothetriumph.com/pilgrimages-walk-to-knock/

ST COLUMBA'S CHURCH LONG TOWER

THE ANNUAL SR CLARE RETREAT

"I prefer Paradise"
Remembering Sr Clare's 10th Anniversary

PARDON AND PEACE:
REFLECTING ON THE GIFT OF RECONCILIATION

MON 13TH - SUN 19TH APRIL 2026

"BLESSED ARE THEY WHO DWELL IN YOUR HOUSE, O LORD"
FRAN BICA

MON 13 TH APRIL - FRI 17 TH APRIL	7.00am - 10.00am	Daily Mass
MON 13 TH , TUE 14 TH , WED 15 TH , FRI 17 TH APRIL	7.00pm	Evening Service with Benediction and Guest Speaker
WEDNESDAY 15 TH APRIL	7.00pm	Eucharistic Healing
THURSDAY 16 TH APRIL	7.00pm	Solemn Concelebrated Mass to mark the 10 th Anniversary of Sr Clare
SATURDAY 18 TH APRIL	10.00am - 3.00pm	Mass with Anointing of the Sick Service with Benediction and Guest Speaker
SUNDAY 19 TH APRIL	3.00pm	Closing Mass celebrated by Most Rev Donal McKeown, Bishop of Derry


MONDAY
Fr. Aidan Gannon


TUESDAY
Fr. Victor Pineda


WEDNESDAY
Fr. Dominic Byrne


THURSDAY
Fr. Eamon Gannon


FRIDAY
Fr. Thomas Gallagher


SATURDAY
Marie Padden

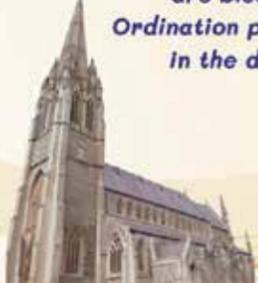

SUNDAY
Bishop Donal McKeown

To view online visit www.longtowerchurch.org

Mass of Chrism

Bishop McKeown will celebrate the annual Mass of Chrism with the priests of the diocese in **St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry**, on **Holy Thursday morning (2nd April) at 10 o'clock.**

During Mass, the holy Oils for Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick and Ordination are blessed. Also, the priests renew their Ordination promises. It is the only Mass celebrated in the diocese on Holy Thursday morning.

Parish Post-its

Eucharistic Adoration Apostolate Knock pilgrimage

THE National Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration annual pilgrimage to the Eucharistic & Marian Shrine of Knock, in Co Mayo, will take place on the weekend after Divine Mercy Sunday.

The programme gets underway on the evening of Saturday, April 18, with Adoration and Reflections of St Carlo Acutis at 6 pm, followed by the celebration of Mass in the Basilica at 7 pm and time with Mons Anthony Figueiredo, of the Diocese of Milan, who will give a talk on 'Why Carlo Acutis is a Saint of the Eucharist'.

The Sunday programme will run from 10.30 am to 5 pm, with a pilgrimage assembly period from 9.45-10.45 am in St John's Rest & Care Centre. Confessions available from 10.30 am until 4 pm in the Chapel of Reconciliation.

There will be a St Carlo Acutis Retreat for Teens (13-19-year-olds) in the Prayer Centre from 11 am until 2.30 pm. This will be led by Fr Patrick Cahill and Holy Family Mission, and with numbers limited to 120, those interested are asked to

pre-register. The retreat will include games, testimonies, basic catechesis, and crafts, with lunch provided. Contact Bairtle on 086-3020948 or email carmeluich@gmail.com.

Guided Adoration will take place in the Parish Church, from 11.30 am until 12.30 pm, led by Fr Patrick Cahill and Holy Family Mission.

After lunch, at 1.15 pm, the keynote address for the pilgrimage will be given by Very Rev Nicholas Grace, PP Clonmel (Institute of the Incarnate Word), in the Basilica. The theme of the talk will be 'Watch with Me' - the Heart of Eucharistic Adoration.

Anointing of the Sick will take place at 2.30 pm in the Basilica, followed by the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass at 3 pm, for which the chief celebrant and homilist will be Most Rev Alphonsus Cullinan, Bishop of Waterford & Lismore.

The pilgrimage will come to an end with Benediction and an outdoor Procession, with Rosary and final gathering at the Chapel of Apparition.

Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration
KNOCK
ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE 2026
Weekend after Divine Mercy Sunday

EVENING SESSION
SATURDAY 18TH APRIL
 6pm - 9pm
 in Basilica with Mass

A CALL TO PRAYER AND ADORATION
 with Mons. Anthony Figueiredo (Diocese of Milan)

PILGRIMAGE DAY
SUNDAY 19TH APRIL
 10.30am - 5pm

Fr Nicholas Grace PP Clonmel, Institute of the Incarnate Word
 Mons. Anthony Figueiredo (Saturday Programme)
 Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan Waterford & Lismore

For full programme details visit our website below
 ☎ (086) 102 7411 ☎ (087) 1045 200 ☎ (01) 662 5899
 ✉ info@eucharisticadoration.ie 🌐 www.eucharisticadoration.ie

Running a bus? Ring 086 102 7411 to receive free pilgrimage bus pack.
 Needing a bus? Ring Brendan at the above number

Diocesan Diary

Mass of Chrism: Bishop McKeown will celebrate the annual Mass of Chrism with the priests of the Diocese in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, on Holy Thursday morning, April 2 (2 April, at 10 am. During Mass the holy Oils for Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick and Ordination are blessed. Also, the priests renew their Ordination promises. It is the only Mass celebrated in the Diocese on Holy Thursday morning. Everyone is welcome to attend the Chrism Mass, or to join it via the St Eugene's parish webcam: www.steugenescathedral.com/webcam.html

Bishop Donal Jubilee: There will be a special Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral on Sunday, April 26, at 3 pm, to celebrate the Silver Anniversary of the Episcopal Ordination of Bishop Donal. Refreshments will be served afterwards in St Mary's College. Bishop Donal will also celebrate the Golden Jubilee of his Ordination to Priesthood this year. He was ordained on July 27.

Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage: The Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2026 will take

place from Monday, June 29, to Friday, July 3 (4 nights), ex City of Derry Airport. Cost of £895 is inclusive of local taxes, but exclusive of single supplements and insurance. The Pilgrimage office will open for bookings on Saturday, January 17 at 11 am. However, Gift Vouchers to any value are now available (Monday to Thursday) from the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry BT48 6UJ.

Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage: There will be a Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Fatima for young people aged 16+, for five nights from August 3-8. This will be a unique experience for young people and an opportunity to engage with their peers from around the world in a faith context. Cost is £820 and there will be a budget plan to help with this. Names and deposit of £100 are required as soon as possible to secure a place. For more info or to book contact bethany.doherty@derrydiocese.org 00442871264087

Accord Derry: Marriage preparation workshops for 2026 are - April 24/25; May 15/16; and June 19/20. Booking at www.accordni.com

DDS Daily Masses 2025-2026

St Eugene's

17 Jan, 9 Mar, 29 Apr, 19 Jun, 9 Aug, 29 Sep, 19 Nov

St Columba's

18 Jan, 10 Mar, 30 Apr 20 Jun, 10 Aug, 30 Sep, 20 Nov

The Three Patrons

19 Jan, 11 Mar, 1 May, 21 Jun, 11 Aug, 1 Oct, 21 Nov

St Mary's, Creggan

30 Nov 2025, 20 Jan, 12 Mar, 2 May, 22 Jun, 12 Aug, 2 Oct, 22 Nov

Our Lady of Lourdes

1 Dec 2025, 21 Jan, 13 Mar, 3 May, 23 Jun, 13 Aug, 3 Oct, 23 Nov

Holy Family

2 Dec, 2025, 22 Jan, 14 Mar, 4 May, 24 Jun, 14 Aug, 4 Oct, 24 Nov

Culmore

3 Dec 2025, 23 Jan, 15 Mar, 5 May, 25 Jun, 15 Aug, 5 Oct, 25 Nov

Glendermott

4 Dec 2025, 24 Jan, 16 Mar, 6 May, 26 Jun, 16 Aug, 6 Oct, 26 Nov

Donagheady

5 Dec 2025, 25 Jan, 17 Mar, 7 May, 27 Jun, 17 Aug, 7 Oct, 27 Nov

Leckpatrick

6 Dec 2025, 26 Jan, 18 Mar, 8 May, 28 Jun, 18 Aug, 8 Oct, 28 Nov

Ardmore

7 Dec 2025, 27 Jan, 19 Mar, 9 May, 29 Jun, 19 Aug, 9 Oct

Strathfoyle

8 Dec 2025, 28 Jan, 20 Mar, 10 May, 30 Jun, 20 Aug, 10 Oct

Camus

9 Dec 2025, 29 Jan, 21 Mar, 11 May, 1 Jul, 21 Aug, 11 Oct

Urney & Castlefin

10 Dec 2025, 30 Jan, 22 Mar, 12 May, 2 Jul, 22 Aug, 12 Oct

Mourne

11 Dec 2025, 31 Jan, 23 Mar, 13 May, 3 Jul, 23 Aug, 13 Oct

Donaghmore

12 Dec 2025, 1 Feb, 24 Mar, 14 May, 4 Jul, 24 Aug, 14 Oct

Termonamongan

13 Dec 2025, 2 Feb, 25 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jul, 25 Aug, 15 Oct,

Langfield

14 Dec 2025, 3 Feb, 26 Mar, 16 May, 6 Jul, 26 Aug, 16 Oct,

Sion Mills

15 Dec 2025, 4 Feb, 27 Mar, 17 May, 7 Jul, 27 Aug, 17 Oct,

Ardstraw East

16 Dec 2025, 5 Feb, 28 Mar, 18 May, 8 Jul, 28 Aug, 18 Oct,

Ardstraw W & C'derg

17 Dec 2025, 6 Feb, 29 Mar, 19 May, 9 Jul, 29 Aug, 19 Oct

Clonleigh

18 Dec 2025, 7 Feb, 30 Mar, 20 May, 10 Jul, 30 Aug, 20 Oct

Drumragh

19 Dec 2025, 8 Feb, 31 Mar, 21 May, 11 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Oct

Cappagh

20 Dec 2025, 9 Feb, 1 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jul, 1 Sep, 22 Oct

Greencastle

21 Dec 2025, 10 Feb, 23 May, 13 Jul, 2 Sep, 23 Oct

Badoney Lower

22 Dec 2025, 11 Feb, 24 May, 14 Jul, 3 Sep, 24 Oct

Badoney Upper

23 Dec 2025, 12 Feb, 25 May, 15 Jul, 4 Sep, 25 Oct

Maghera

24 Dec 2025, 13 Feb, 5 Apr, 26 May, 16 Jul, 5 Sep, 26 Oct

Desertmartin

25 Dec 2025, 14 Feb, 6 Apr, 27 May, 17 Jul, 6 Sep, 27 Oct

Faughanvale

26 Dec 2025, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 28 May, 18 Jul, 7 Sep, 28 Oct

Claudy

27 Dec 2025, 16 Feb, 8 Apr, 29 May 19 Jul, 8 Sep, 29 Oct

Banagher

28 Dec 2025, 17 Feb, 9 Apr, 30 May 20 Jul, 9 Sep, 30 Oct

Ballinascreen

29 Dec 2025, 18 Feb 10 Apr, 31 May 21 Jul, 10 Sep, 31 Oct

Dungiven

30 Dec 2025, 19 Feb, 11 Apr, 1 Jun, 22 Jul, 11 Sep, 1 Nov

Limavady

31 Dec 2025, 20 Feb, 12 Apr, 2 Jun, 23 Jul, 12 Sep, 2 Nov

Magilligan

1 Jan, 21 Feb, 13 Apr, 3 Jun, 24 Jul, 13 Sep, 3 Nov

Coleraine

2 Jan, 22 Feb, 14 Apr, 4 Jun, 25 Jul, 14 Sep, 4 Nov

Garvagh

3 Jan, 23 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Jun, 26 Jul, 15 Sep, 5 Nov

Kilrea

4 Jan, 24 Feb, 16 Apr, 6 Jun, 27 Jul, 16 Sep, 6 Nov

Greenlough

5 Jan, 25 Feb, 17 Apr, 7 Jun, 28 Jul, 17 Sep, 7 Nov

Bellaghy

6 Jan, 26 Feb, 18 Apr, 8 Jun, 29 Jul, 18 Sep, 8 Nov

Lavey

7 Jan, 27 Feb, 19 Apr, 9 Jun, 30 Jul, 19 Sep, 9 Nov

Moville

8 Jan, 28 Feb, 20 Apr, 10 Jun, 31 Jul, 20 Sep, 10 Nov

Granaghan

9 Jan, 1 Mar, 21 Apr, 11 Jun, 1 Aug, 21 Sep, 11 Nov

Buncrana

10 Jan, 2 Mar, 22 Apr, 12 Jun, 2 Aug, 22 Sep, 12 Nov

Fahan

11 Jan, 3 Mar, 23 Apr, 13 Jun, 3 Aug, 23 Sep, 13 Nov

Clonmany

12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Apr, 14 Jun, 4 Aug, 24 Sep, 14 Nov

Carndonagh

13 Jan, 5 Mar, 25 Apr, 15 Jun, 5 Aug, 25 Sep, 15 Nov

Malin

14 Jan, 6 Mar, 26 Apr, 16 Jun, 6 Aug, 26 Sep, 16 Nov

Iskaheen

15 Jan, 7 Mar, 27 Apr, 17 Jun, 7 Aug, 27 Sep, 17 Nov

Culdaff

16 Jan, 8 Mar, 28 Apr 18 Jun, 8 Aug, 28 Sep, 18 Nov

1ST FRIDAY MASS FOR LIVING MEMBERS

2025 / 2025

Magilligan 12/5/25

Granaghan 1/2/26

Termonamongan 2/6/26

Ardstraw W /Castlederg 3/6/26

Cappagh 4/10/26

Donagheady 5/1/26

Donaghmore 6/5/26

Langfield 7/3/26

Badoney Lower 8/7/26

Greencastle 9/4/26

Leckpatrick 10/2/26

Clonleigh 11/6/26

Forty Hours - February & March

Sun 1 Mar	St Teresa's	Sion Mills
Sun 1 Mar	St Patrick's, Pennyburn	Three Patrons, Derry
Sun 8 Mar	Sacred Heart Church, Derry Rd	Leckpatrick
Sun 8 Mar	St Patrick's	Dungiven
Sun 8 Mar	St Columba's, Doneyloop	Urney & Castlefin
Sun 15 Mar	St Mary's, Drumagarder	Kilrea
Sun 15 Mar	St Finlough's, Ballykelly	Limavady
Sun 15 Mar	St Joseph's	Banagher
Sun 22 Mar	St Mary's, Rouskey	Badoney Lwr (Gortin)
Sun 22 Mar	St Joseph's, Glenmornan	Leckpatrick
Sun 22 Mar	St Patrick's, Glen	Maghera
Sun 19 April	St Patrick's	Iskaheen
Sun 19 April	St Patrick's	Drumquin
Sun 19 April	St Joseph's, Galliagh	Three Patrons, Derry
Sun 26 April	St Mary's, Craigavole	Kilrea
Sun 26 April	Star of the Sea	Faughanvale

...other Diary Dates cont.

Ladies' Bible Study: Ladies interested in coming to a deeper understanding of scripture are welcome to come along to the Ladies' Bible Study in Termonbacca, Derry, every Tuesday evening from 8:30-9:30 pm. It is led by Fr Stephen Quinn ocd, who is currently working through the Gospel of Mark, which is the Gospel for Mass for this year. This Bible Study is open to all women who are interested in coming along. There is no need to book, you can simply show up. For further information contact Termonbacca on 028 71 262512.

Servant Sisters: The Sisters of the Home of the Mother are hosting weekly formation meetings on Tuesdays, at 7.30pm, in the Parochial House at Cross, Killygordon, (P93PNOX), and the weekly Holy

Hours on Thursdays at 7 pm.
Holy Souls Prayer: Under The Gaze of Our Lady of Montligeon, the Holy Souls of Purgatory Prayer Meeting takes place on Mondays after 11 am Mass in Our Lady's Chapel, within St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The Group will also meet in Termonbacca on the last Wednesday of every month, from 12.30-1.30 pm.

Polish Mass: Mass for the Polish community is celebrated in the Church of Christ The King, Strathroy, Omagh, on the first and third Sundays of each month at 10 am, and at 9.30 am every second and fourth Sunday in the Divine Mercy Chapel, at St Mary's Church, Creggan, in Derry City.

It is wonderful for us to be here *Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR*

THE Greek philosopher, Socrates, one of the most famous people ever to live, was sitting by the roadside one day, when he was approached by a traveller who was going towards Athens.

The traveller asked him: "What sort of people live in Athens?" So Socrates asked him: "What sort of people live in your own town?" "Awful," the traveller said, "they are horrible, lying layabouts." And Socrates replied: "I am sorry to tell you that you will find the people of Athens to be just the same as you have found your own people."

Soon after, another traveller came by, who also asked him: "What sort of people live in Athens?" And Socrates asked him: "What sort of people live in your own town?" "Marvellous people," the second traveller said, "kind, generous, friendly, honest people."

Socrates smiled and said: "I am pleased to tell you that you will find the people of Athens to be just the same as you have found your own people."

How we see things

This story of Socrates, which I came across in Brother Nicholas Hutchinsons' book 'Praying Each Day of the Year', Volume 1, is a great example of the wisdom of the old saying: "You do not see things as they are. You see things as you are."

We can so easily live our lives thinking that what we see is all that there is to see; what we know is all that there is to know. In the story above, we see two people whose experience of the same place, Athens, was completely different. However, the difference was in the two people, not in the people they were talking about.

You know yourself that when you are in good form, everything

seems bright. Even the rain does not bother you! You might even enjoy walking in it or, like children do, you could jump in it! But when you are in bad form even the sunshine bothers you. You pull the curtains because the sun is getting on your nerves!

This is even more true when you look at how we are generally. Some people develop to being angry all the time. When they are like that, they respond to everything in a particular way – they are forever negative about everyone and everything.

On the other hand, there are other people who have learned to be kind and patient and forgiving. With them, nothing gets on their nerves – except maybe those who are always angry and negative!

It is wonderful to be here

I chose this statement, 'It is wonderful to be here' as the heading for this article because it is in the Gospel passage that introduced the month of March on the Second Sunday of Lent, which we celebrated on March 1. It is part of the story of the Transfiguration of Christ on the mountain.

In this story, Christ helped His disciples to see the full wonder of who He was as the Son of God, and the full truth of how blessed they were to be chosen to be part of His presence in the world. They were amazed. And it was Peter, the chosen leader of the disciples, who shouted out: 'Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here'.

How about us?

We are the disciples and followers of Christ today. How do we really feel about that reality of our lives? There are many ways in which we can find the answer to that question. I want to highlight two of

those ways here.

1. Celebrating the Eucharist – especially Sunday Mass. In the Mass, we are given the most wonderful gift that God could ever have imagined. We are given a part in the death and resurrection of Christ, and are fed with His Body and Blood as our food and drink. How does that truth make us feel as we gather for Mass, especially on a Sunday – or for the Vigil on Saturday evening?

Can we say, "Lord it is wonderful for us to be here". Or is our attitude rather, "It is alright to be here", or "It is not bad being here", or "I am happy enough to be here". Those are a long way from "It is wonderful".

The place of Lent: These weeks of March, which also happen to be the main weeks of Lent, are a time in which we are especially asked to renew our faith and enliven our lives of faith in Christ.

We do this, first of all, by prayer: Spend some time each week praying in preparation for the Sunday Mass. Make it a focus for yourself, so that it does not just come upon you on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning. Think about the Scripture Readings and how they relate to your life. Pray through the prayers of the Mass, so that you can be open to what they are offering you when they are prayed in the Eucharist. And make sure to celebrate the Sacrament of Confession during this time as part of your prayer, so as to make a new beginning in your following of Christ at Easter.

Secondly, we renew our faith in Christ in the Sunday Eucharist through penance: I suggest that the best penance you can do at this time is to commit yourself to the full time of the celebration of the

Mass each weekend. And commit yourself to not just being there, but being present and taking part. This means taking an active part in the Mass through listening, praying, singing if this is appropriate, and bringing joy to others who are there, through your openness and kindness.

Thirdly we renew our openness to Christ through almsgiving: In every Catholic parish and Church throughout Lent, there are Trocaire boxes to help people in parts of the world that are suffering from violence and war, as well as from famine and drought. Be particularly generous to these, not just from your loose change but from your substance. The great gift of Christ in the Eucharist can only be truly experienced when we are being generous with others as He is generous with us.

2. Marriage & Family Life

Marriage & Family Life are two of the other places that we meet with Christ in His glory. Marriage is seen by us as a Sacrament in the Catholic Church, and the family is referred to as the Domestic Church in Catholic teaching. These weeks of March and of Lent are also a time to renew our vision for, and our commitment to, Marriage and all of Family Life.

Just as our attitudes to the celebration of the Eucharist each Sunday can be very faulty, so too our attitudes and experiences of marriage and family can be one of settling for a minimum.

Wedding vows: At every wedding in Sacramental marriage, every couple pledges their love for one another to each other for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health all the days of their lives. What an amazing undertaking that is. And

it is done freely and joyfully, and with great hope and confidence. It is wonderful to be there for them and with them.

Unfortunately, so many couples over the years can lose a lot of that joy and hope, and settle for a marriage that 'is not bad', or 'happy enough', or 'at least we are not killing one another'!

These weeks of March and of Lent is a time to renew the commitment of these vows and for couples to move away from mediocrity and towards joy in their love.

Firstly, commit to giving time to build the relationship: This could be the greatest penance that married people can do, not because it is a penance to be together, but because it is a difficult thing to take time away from other important things in life and dedicate it to the most important thing, building love and faith.

Secondly, be generous with one another: Almsgiving is about being generous with our possessions so that others can have a greater chance of happiness. In marriage, the way to be generous with one another is through how you are lavish with your affection in word and action; how you are fulsome with your gratitude and praise; how you are generous with your forgiveness and understanding. It is through these gifts that people in marriage can say, and mean, "It is wonderful to be here".

Thirdly, pray together regularly: Research has shown that couples who pray together have the greatest chance of, not just staying together, but of actually growing together in love. All love is a God gift. It makes sense that involving God in our relationships is vital for the health and well-being of those relationships. I pray that all couples will avail of this power for their love for one another.

Family, the Church of the

Home: "Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here". How many families can say that just now? Very many, I hope. But the reality often is that we settle for a lot less than that sense of wonder and gladness in our homes. As followers of Christ, it should be the aim of our family life to make our homes places where all those who live there know that they are loved and treasured. That can only happen when we set out to make it happen.

Parents need to keep remembering that their children need them much more than they need material things, even though material things are obviously very important also. Time spent together, affection and love, peace and joy, adventure, praise and thanksgiving, are the daily makings of what family can and should be for everyone in the home – and this includes the parents themselves.

If you live by yourself, your home is still a place where the Risen Christ lives. You can make your home a place of welcome for family and friends. You can make your home a place where others will find joy and gladness, and marvel at the wonder of God, who is so available to us.

Family prayer: No matter what the composition of your family is, prayer in your home is so important to help you to be alive and active to the needs of each other and of others outside your home. You will have heard this often before. You will have heard me saying this often before.

It is so vital that you would take on the challenge of it today, during these weeks of March and Lent. I pray every day, and often every day, for all married couples, all parents, all families, that God may be with you to enliven you in love. Then we can all say: "Lord, it is wonderful for us to be here."

Celebrating Catholic Mothers on International Women's Day *by Sinéad Strong*

INTERNATIONAL Women's Day is an opportunity to honour the unique vocation of Catholic motherhood in Ireland. More than a role, motherhood is a calling – one that weaves together faith, community, and love. As Catholic mothers, we are entrusted with nurturing life, guiding souls, and building homes rooted in Christ. This day invites us to reflect on the joys and challenges of motherhood and to celebrate the mission that unites us as women of faith.

Motherhood, in the Catholic tradition, is a sacred vocation. The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that parents are the primary educators of their children in faith and love. Pope St John Paul II's 'Mulieris Dignitatem' reminds us that women are irreplaceable in their capacity for motherhood – both physical and spiritual. Whether raising children, guiding others, or nurturing those in need, Catholic mothers reflect the love and tenderness of Christ.

Spiritual motherhood holds great importance, as every woman possesses a nurturing, motherly nature. We are called not only to care for our own children, but

also to extend love, support, and guidance to all those we encounter. Our vocation reaches beyond our families, inviting us to pray for others, foster virtue, and lead by example wherever we go. Through moments of sacrifice, patience, and hope – grounded in the teachings of the Church and God's grace – we become spiritual mothers to the wider community.

Mary, the Mother of Jesus, is the ultimate model for Catholic mothers. Her "yes" to God changed history, and Her loving presence continues to guide us. We look to Her for inspiration in moments of joy and challenge, trusting in Her intercession and gentle strength. Saints, such as St Monica who prayed for her son, and St Gianna Beretta Molla who lived motherhood with courage, remind us that holiness is possible in every circumstance.

These holy women show us how to persevere, serve, and love deeply. Their lives encourage us to embrace our vocation with authenticity and joy, knowing that our daily efforts matter in the eyes of God.

Being a Catholic mother in Ireland today means finding

creative ways to keep faith alive in our homes and communities. Prayer is the foundation – whether it is morning prayers, grace before meals, or the family Rosary. Attending Mass together, reading Scripture, and celebrating feast days bring faith into daily life. Traditions like blessing your children, sharing stories of the saints, and encouraging acts of kindness, help build a strong spiritual foundation.

Mothers can nurture faith by fostering open conversations, listening to their children's questions, and teaching them to trust in God. Involvement in parish life, volunteering, and supporting community events are practical ways to show leadership and build connections. Choosing gratitude and hope, especially in difficult times, creates an atmosphere where Christ's love can flourish.

Catholic mothers today navigate a landscape of cultural change, work-life balance, and societal pressures. Sometimes, living out our faith feels counter-cultural, and it is easy to feel isolated or misunderstood. The demands of modern life – juggling family, career, and community – can be overwhelming. Yet, these

challenges invite us to deepen our reliance on God and to seek support from those who share our values.

The call for justice, equality, and respect remains strong. The Church encourages us to stand firm in our convictions, trusting the Holy Spirit and our sisters in Christ for encouragement. Through adversity, we find opportunities to witness to faith and to renew our commitment to love.

Community is at the heart of Catholic motherhood. Catholic Mothers Ireland exists to support, encourage, and empower mothers across the country. Through prayer groups, retreats, online forums, and parish initiatives, the organisation helps women connect, share their stories, and grow together in faith. Spiritual friendships, mentorship, and practical resources foster a sense of belonging and solidarity.

Catholic Mothers Ireland promotes Catholic values, strengthens families, and inspires mothers to serve both their homes and the wider community. By getting involved, mothers find strength, wisdom, and courage to face life's challenges. The group

welcomes all mothers – whether seasoned, new, or searching for support – and offers a space where faith, hope, and love thrive.

Practical Tips for Mothers

- Make prayer a daily habit – morning, evening, and moments in between.
 - Celebrate Mass and feast days as a family, creating joyful traditions.
 - Share stories of Mary and the saints to inspire your children.
 - Encourage acts of kindness, gratitude, and forgiveness within your home.
 - Get involved in your parish, join Catholic Mothers Ireland, and build supportive friendships.
 - Practice self-compassion – recognise your efforts and lean on God's grace.
 - Embrace both spiritual and physical motherhood; pray for your children and for those entrusted to your care.
- Catholic mothers are a vital part of the Church and society. Your vocation is a source of light, strength, and hope for your family and community. By nurturing faith, supporting one another, and living with love, you enrich the

world around you. Take courage in your mission, and know that you are not alone.

Connect with Catholic Mothers Ireland for friendship, inspiration, and support. Share your journey, learn from others, and help build a community where faith and motherhood thrive. Let Our Lady guide your steps, and trust in God's mercy as you embrace your vocation.

On International Women's Day, let us celebrate the gift of Catholic motherhood. May you find renewed strength in your faith, joy in your family, and hope in your community. Honour the women who have gone before you and encourage those walking beside you. Turn to Our Lady in prayer, and remember that the mission of motherhood is blessed and beautiful.

For more information or to connect with Catholic Mothers Ireland, visit our website or email info@catholicmothers.ie. Together, we can weave faith, community, and love – lighting the way for future generations.

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the month of March. This month is dedicated to St Joseph, the husband of Mary and foster father of Jesus. In St Matthew's Gospel, Joseph is described as a just man. This means that he was a true and faithful person filled with justice and virtue. Joseph was given a very important task by God; he had to teach Jesus, protect Him and His Mother Mary, work hard to provide for them, and lovingly take care of the holy household. St Joseph did a wonderful job and so he is loved and celebrated by many. St Joseph, pray for us!



Lent

The season of Lent (CCC 540) continues during the month of March. Catholics are asked to do humble acts of penance, like abstaining from meat or some other food, making more time for family prayer, visiting the Blessed Sacrament, praying the Stations of the Cross or helping the elderly or lonely. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the special season of Lent. It helps us to purify our bodies and souls in preparation for the wonderful feast of Easter, when Christ overcame death and rose from the dead.



Palm Sunday

Palm Sunday (CCC 560) is the first day of Holy Week. On this day, Christians remember how Jesus travelled into Jerusalem riding on a donkey. It is called Palm Sunday because on this day people were so happy to see Jesus, and knew how important He was, that they took palm branches from the trees and waved them. As Jesus passed by, the people shouted 'Hosanna', which means 'God saves' in Hebrew. Palm Sunday is also known as Passion Sunday because Holy Week marks Jesus' passion and death. We celebrate Palm Sunday this year on March 29.

Saints of the Month

March 4 – St Casimir

March 9 – St Francis of Rome

March 17 – St Patrick

March 19 – St Joseph



St Patrick

St Patrick is the Patron Saint of Ireland, but was born in Britain. When he was 16 years old, he was captured as a slave and taken to Ireland. For six years, he took care of sheep and pigs. He was very lonely and prayed to God all the time. Eventually, he escaped from his captives and returned to Britain, where he studied to become a priest and teacher. He returned to Ireland to teach the people about God. Patrick often used shamrocks to explain the Holy Trinity. He worked many miracles as he preached and converted people all over Ireland. Many petty kingdoms across Ireland were converted to Christianity by Patrick. After living in poverty, enduring many sufferings, Patrick died on March 17, 461 AD. He is buried in Downpatrick.



The Annunciation of the Lord

On the Feast of the Annunciation of the Lord (CCC 494), March 25, we celebrate how the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Mary with a unique message. The Angel Gabriel announced to Her that She was full of grace and that the Lord was with Her. God had chosen Her to have a baby through the power of the Holy Spirit and she would call Him Jesus. This baby would be one of a kind. He would be the Saviour of the world, the Son of God (Luke 1:26-33).

Trusting in God, Mary replied 'Yes' to what the Angel had told her. She was meek and obedient to God's

will. We can learn from Mary how to live humble Christian lives and to be always ready to say 'yes' to God, as She did.

St Dominic Savio

Dominic Savio (April 2, 1842 – March 9, 1857) is the youngest person that the Catholic Church has ever made a saint on the basis of his exceptional goodness. Dominic's life shows us that no one is ever too young to grow close to God and become a saint.

Dominic was born in Italy in 1842. He came from a poor working-class family; his father was a blacksmith. His parents taught him about Jesus, Mary, and the saints, and how to pray. Dominic loved God very much.

When he received his First Communion, Dominic made a special vow to Jesus and Mary. He would receive Communion and the sacrament of Reconciliation as often as possible, and to prefer death over sin.

He loved to play sports and was well-liked by his friends at school. He encouraged his friends to be holy and tried to stop any fights that might happen among them.

At the age of 12, Dominic entered a school founded by a priest called John Bosco, who himself would also become a saint. The school Dominic attended was the Oratory of St Francis De Sales, a school, youth centre and hospice that Don Bosco had begun as part of his work with young boys. This was to become Dominic's home for the rest of his short life. One day in the school, the children were wishing John Bosco a special day, as it was the feast day of



The Annunciation

1. Catholics normally celebrate this feast on the 25th of March.
2. Joseph was of the house of _____
3. The Angel said that Mary was to call her son this name
4. The Angel told Mary not to be _____
5. In which town did the Angel appear to Mary?
6. Mary said "Behold, I am the _____ of the Lord, let it be done to me according to your word."
7. Mary was _____ to a man called Joseph ; means to be engaged to be married.
8. What was the name of the Angel who appeared to Mary?

Answers: 1: Annunciation; 2: David; 3: Jesus; 4: Afraid; 5: Nazareth; 6: Handmaid; 7: Betrothed; 8: Gabriel

St John, the same name as him. He thanked the children, and was so pleased with their good behaviour that he told them that they could all write on a piece of paper a small gift that they would like to receive from him. Don Bosco collected the papers and smiled as he unfolded them. The students did not ask for much, just simple things like sweets and treats. However, Don Bosco's eyes widened when he read what Dominic had written as his wish was very different from the rest: "Help me to become a saint!"

Don Bosco thought about this for a while; he knew that Dominic was kind, hardworking, modest and always helping others. He called Dominic to his office and explained to him that to become a saint you must be joyful, apply yourself to your work as well as your prayers, attend to other's needs and do good things.

Dominic was very happy with this advice and, as time went on, everyone at the school admired his qualities. Many of his friends joined him in doing good deeds. He had a wonderful friendship with God in the depths of his heart. His love for

God was abundant as he grew in holiness.

However, Dominic's health was not good, so he had to return home to his family. He was coughing a lot and soon became quite ill. He died at home, at the age of 14, in 1857. Just before passing away, he said to his father, "How beautiful it is, what I am seeing". It was as if he was already in Heaven. Dominic, who lived a very short life, was declared a saint by the Pope in 1954.

We are called to live lives of love, service and holiness like Dominic Savio, called to be saints. May we answer God's call with courage and joy.

St Dominic Savio, pray for us!



Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. What actor played the role of Captain Mainwaring in the TV series, 'Dad's Army'?
2. Of what country is Montevideo the capital city?
3. In cricket, what country hosts the prestigious IPL T20 competition each year?
4. Who became Prime Minister of the UK Coalition government in 2010?
5. What is the English equivalent of the American 'eggplant'?
6. In what country would you find the iconic 'River Plate Stadium'?
7. For what UK band were Hank Marvin and Bruce Welch the lead guitarists?
8. What European flag features a blue cross on a plain white background?
9. The Statue of Liberty was gifted to the USA by what other country?
10. What flower produces the spice saffron?
11. Who are the current All-Ireland football champions?
12. What European country celebrates their National Day on July 14 each year?
13. What was the surname of the character 'Jack' played by Leonardo di Caprio in the movie 'Titanic'?
14. Phnom Penh is the capital city of what country?
15. In terms of land mass, which is the largest US state?
16. In which city is the iconic Grand National horse race staged annually?
17. Who was Harry Enfield's comedy partner in 'The Fast Show' and 'Harry Enfield and Chums'?
18. Who painted the masterpiece 'Starry night over the Rhone'?
19. The largest lake in the world is actually a sea - but which one?
20. Who had a 1978 hit with the song 'Wuthering Heights'?
21. On a regular dartboard, what number is directly opposite Number 1?
22. Who played the character 'Phoebe Buffay' in the American sitcom 'Friends'?
23. What is the chemical symbol for silver?
24. Believed to be the world's oldest airline operating under its own name, to which country does KLM belong?
25. Name the Welsh comedian who hosts the panel show 'Taskmaster'?

Quiz Answers:

1, Arthur Lowe; 2, Uruguay; 3, India; 4, David Cameron; 5, Aubergine; 6, Argentina; 7, The Shadows; 8, Finland; 9, France; 10, Crocus; 11, Kerry; 12, France; 13, Dawson; 14, Cambodia; 15, Alaska; 16, Liverpool; 17, Paul Whitehouse; 18, Vincent van Gogh; 19, The Caspian; 20, Kate Bush; 21, Nineteen; 22, Lisa Kudrow; 23, Ag; 24, The Netherlands; 25, Greg Davies.

Aghyaran, Ardmore, Ardstraw West & Castlederg, Ballinascreen, Ballymagroarty, Banagher, Bellaghy, Bunrana, Carndonagh, Claudy,

Let Your Light Shine!

Moville, Newtownstewart, Omagh, Plumbridge, Sion Mills, Steelestown, Strabane, Swatragh, Templemore - Long Tower and St Eugene's, Three Patrons, Waterside

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnyloop, Drumquin, Dunamaghy, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,



Painting of St Patrick by Patricia McMaster, Fallagloon, Maghera
(see p16 for story).

Greenlough, Iskaheen, Killyclogher, Killygordon, Kilrea, Lavey, Leckpatrick, Lifford, Limavady, Maghera, Magilligan, Malin, Melmount,