



The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 118. MAY 2026

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See inside...



Glengad United Blessing - Malin



Pioneer Presentation - Desertmartin



Grotto Rosary - Porthall, Lifford.



“Do you accept that the Good Shepherd is calling you by name to follow Him?”
Bishop Donal (see p6)

Bishop Donal's Episcopal Ordination Silver Jubilee Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral on Good Shepherd Sunday.



Exams Mass - Lavey



Exams Mass - Iskaheen & Upper Moville

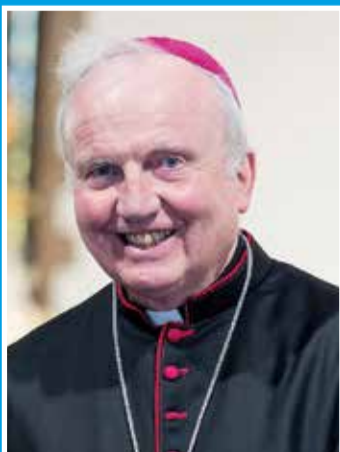


Celebrating Blessed Edmund Rice - Omagh



Busy JPPI Youth - Carndonagh

People in focus



Bishop Donal McKeown - Bishop of Derry



Anna Hasson - Dungiven



Brian McKinney - Faughanvale



Brigid Loane RIP - Desertmartin



Kathleen Doherty - Creggan

Also featuring: Young Writers Section; Children's Catechism Club - C3; Generous Desertmartin funding for Lourdes Pilgrimage; Culdaff Choir connecting God and community; Malin Well Turas; Irish Section; Creggan celebration for Bene Merenti recipient; Dungiven Legion and Blessed Sacrament Chapel; Features, Diary Dates; Quiz... and much more...

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Roisin O'Hara, Trócaire Outreach Manager NI, reflects on the Pope's May prayer intention that everyone might have food:

"Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food"

When food is wasted people are also forgotten...particularly those living in poverty



Roisin O'Hara, Trócaire Derry

IN just one sentence, the Pope's prayer intention for May captures a deeply Gospel vision of the world: a table where everyone has a place,

where creation is treated with reverence, and where food is understood not as a commodity to be discarded, but as a gift to be shared.

This prayer reminds us that hunger is not inevitable. In a world that produces enough food to feed the entire population twice over, hunger persists because of injustice, inequality and waste.

Pope Francis made this clear in Laudato Si', where he wrote: "These problems are closely linked to a throwaway culture which affects the excluded just as it quickly reduces things to rubbish." (Laudato Si', 22)

Food waste is one of the clearest signs of this "throwaway culture". When

food is wasted, people are also forgotten - particularly those living in poverty who already struggle to access nutritious, reliable food. The Pope's prayer challenges everyone, "from large producers to small consumers," to recognise their responsibility within the global food system and to live differently.

Trócaire's work on food security speaks directly into this reality. Hunger, as Trócaire understands it, is not simply about a lack of food, but about broken systems that prioritise profit over people and shortterm gain over longterm sustainability.

Climate change, land degradation, unfair trade

practices and lack of access to markets all contribute to a world where food is wasted in some places, while others go without. Trócaire's work supports smallholder farmers to address these structural injustices, helping communities to build resilience, restore their land, and secure access to nutritious food for the long term.

During Lent this year, we told the story of Uwamahoro, a young mother from Rwanda who is supporting three generations of her family; her daughter, Ineza, and niece, Vanessa, and her mother, Veridiana. Uwamahoro earns just the equivalent of 60p a day working in the local fields

as a labourer, trying to make enough each day to feed her family and send the children to school.


In Rwanda, almost 70% of farming is done by women and so, when climate change strikes, causing increasingly heavy rain storms and flooding, it is the women who bear the brunt of the devastating impacts. Crops are lost, homes are destroyed and families go hungry.

Uwamahoro's dreams are modest but profound: a kitchen garden so she can feed her children; a secure home to protect them from the rains; the chance to earn a stable income. These are not luxuries. They are the foundations of

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

Aghyaran: Thursdays, 10.30am-12 noon.	Sundays, 2-10 pm, St Mary's Oratory.	Mary's Church, Aughabrack.	7pm, St Mary's Drumagarnar. Concludes with Benediction.	before 7 pm Mass.
Ardstraw West & Castlederg: Fridays, 10.30am -12 noon, St Patrick's Church.	Cappagh: Wednesdays, 8 -9pm, concluding with Night Prayer, and Sundays, 3.30-6.30 pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.	Donaghmore: Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.	Lavey: Fridays, after 9.30 am Mass until 5 pm.	Steelstown: Mondays, from after 10 am Mass until 6.50pm.
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.	Clonmany: Tuesdays, 7.30 -8.30 pm, the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin; Wednesdays, 3-4 pm, St Columbcille Village, Cleagh;	Drumquin: Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.	Leckpatrick: Wednesdays from 8.15 am-5 pm.	Strabane (Camus): Every day from 10.30 am-1 pm in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), at the back of the Church.
Badoney Upper: Wednesdays, after 7.30 pm evening Mass until 9 pm, St Patrick's Cranagh.	Claudy: Tuesdays, after 10am Mass until 8 pm, St Patrick's Church, Claudy, and Wednesdays, after 10 Mass until 8 pm, St Joseph's Church, Craighbane.	Drumragh: Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.	Lifford (Murlog): 9.30 am - 12.30 pm	St Columba's Long Tower: Wednesdays, after 10 am Mass until 7.30 pm Mass.
Ballinascreen: First Mondays, from 12 noon-7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.	Coleraine: Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2-4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.	Dungiven: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9am-6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.	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.	St Eugene's Cathedral: Sundays, 3-6 pm, and Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.20 pm.
Banagher: Thursdays, 10.30-11.30 am, St Mary's Church, Altinure, and Fridays, 10 -11 am, St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.	Coleraine: Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2-4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.	Errigal: Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.	Magilligan: Wednesdays, 3-7 pm; First Sundays, 3-6 pm, St Aidan's Church.	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.
Bellaghy: Every Friday, from 10 am until recitation of Rosary at 7.30 pm, in St Mary's Church.	Creggan: Sundays 1.30 pm-6 pm; Mondays 10.30 am - 7 pm; Tue - Sat 10.30 am - 12 pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.	Fahan: Fridays after 10am Mass, St Murá's Parish Church.	Melmount: Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.	Urney & Castlefin: Tuesdays, 12 noon-8 pm, St Anthony's Chapel.
Buncrana: Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, Fridays, 6 am-10 pm and	Donagheady: First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St	Greencastle (Tyrone): Thursdays, 6-10 pm, St Patrick's Church.	Moville: Mondays, 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, St Pius X Church.	Waterside: Wednesdays, 6.30-8.30 pm, St Oliver Plunkett, Strathfoyle; Thursdays, 1-6 pm, Immaculate Conception Church; Fridays, 1-6 pm, St Columba's Church.
		Greenlough: Thursdays, 9am-5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.	Newtownstewart: Thursdays, 6.30-7.30 pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.	
		Iskaheen: Tuesdays, from after 10 am Mass until 2 pm, St Patrick's Church.	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	
		Kilrea: Mondays, 12 noon -		

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



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 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.



Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

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Seven priests amongst past pupils of Christian Brothers Omagh gathered for...

Celebration of life and mission of Blessed Edmund Rice by Cathy Teague



CHRISTIAN Brothers Grammar School marked the Feast of Blessed Edmund Rice with a special Mass on Tuesday, May 5, in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, bringing together students, staff, clergy, and the wider school community in a meaningful celebration of faith and tradition. The occasion was particularly significant as it marked 30 years since the Beatification of Blessed Edmund Rice in Rome, in October 1996.

The Mass was celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown and concelebrated with past pupils who have devoted their lives to the priesthood, including Fr Joe Gormley, Fr Eamon Graham, Fr Michael McCaughey, Fr Peter McCawille, Fr Cathal McKenna, Fr Gerard Mongan and Fr Pat O'Hagan. Their presence added a powerful sense of continuity and vocation, reflecting the enduring influence of the Edmund Rice tradition within the school.

Students from the Pope John Paul II group, along with Year 8-10 students, actively participated in the liturgy by carrying symbols and proclaiming the readings. Their involvement added to the prayerful atmosphere and demonstrated the importance of young people taking an active role in the life of

the Church.

Parents and guardians were also warmly invited to attend, helping to strengthen the sense of community and shared faith that is central to the ethos of Christian Brothers Grammar School.

The school was honoured to welcome two members of the Knights of Columbanus, Joey Kelly and Brian McCaffrey; Mrs Dymna Kelly, Head of the Board of Governors; and Rev Malachy Gallagher, CC Drumragh. Their presence highlighted the strong connections between the school, parish, and wider Church.

The theme of the Mass, 'To do and to teach', reflected the school motto and was closely linked to the life and mission of Blessed Edmund Rice. Students were encouraged to see how faith is not only something to be learned, but something to be lived out in action, through kindness, service, and leadership in their daily lives.

Following Holy Communion, Fr Joe Gormley delivered a short testimony and reflection, which proved both impactful and powerful for those in attendance. Speaking honestly and engagingly to the young people, he encouraged them to always choose "the right life" rather than

"the easy life." Referencing Homer Simpson, Fr Joe reminded students how easy it can be to avoid effort or responsibility, but stressed the importance of always choosing what is right, even when it is difficult.

Linking his reflection to the example of Blessed Edmund Rice, Fr Joe spoke about how Edmund Rice had seen those who were poor and in need and chose not to look away, instead dedicating his life to serving others. He encouraged students to pray the words, "Come Holy Spirit," whenever they needed guidance, strength, or help in making decisions throughout their lives.

The liturgy was both reverent and uplifting, offering students an opportunity to reflect on the example of Blessed Edmund Rice and to consider how his legacy continues to inspire the school community today.

It was a beautiful and memorable celebration for all involved; one that will remain a key moment in the faith journey of many students during their time at CBS.

Commenting on the celebration, Christian Brothers Grammar School principal, Mr Stephen Keown said: "All present shared the sense of immense pride that the school takes in the number of past pupils who have devoted their lives to the priesthood. The presence of the priests gathered served to evidence the faith that the Christian Brothers Grammar School, Omagh, has nurtured in previous generations of young men, and re-energised the school in its continued mission both today and into the future.

"It was a beautiful and memorable celebration for all involved, and a testament to a school 'Inspired by Faith and Committed to Excellence.'"

Reflection continued from p2

dignity and survival. Her story highlights a painful truth: those who contribute least to climate change are the ones who suffer most from its consequences.

Trócaire's response focuses on restoring balance - between people and the land, and within food systems themselves. Working with local partner organisations who are supporting communities with agroecological farming methods, we help communities improve soil fertility, grow diverse crops, adapt to climate shocks, and reduce dependency on costly external inputs. This approach ensures not just more food, but better food - nutritious, sustainable, and locally controlled. It also recognises the central role of women, who produce much of the world's food, yet are disproportionately affected by hunger.

Seen through Uwamahoro's

experience, the Pope's prayer becomes deeply concrete. Avoiding waste is not only about what we throw away in our kitchens; it is about refusing to waste land through unsustainable practices, refusing to waste lives through unjust systems, and refusing to waste the opportunity we have to choose solidarity with our brothers and sisters across the world.

To pray this intention sincerely, is to allow it to shape our actions. It invites us to examine our own relationship with food waste, and to advocate for food systems that place human dignity and care for creation at their heart. In doing so, we resist the "throwaway culture" Pope Francis warned against, and we take one small but meaningful step towards that Gospel vision of a just world where no-one is going hungry and everyone's rights and dignity are respected.



Inspiring talk for Iskaheen students at Exams Mass *by Grainne McCool*

THE Children & Young People Group from the Iskaheen, Drung and Muff Parish held their annual Mass for Exams on Sunday, May 10.

The young exam students participated throughout the service, and local man, Dan McCauley gave an inspirational talk.

Dan was manager of the local GAA team who led the young men through a difficult time in 2024, when a young player lost his battle with cancer, and also when the team won Championships; seeing them play the All-Ireland at Croke Park. Although defeated in that final game, they remained champions in the local parish and county at large.

Dan offered very wise advice to the young students today, just as he did the GAA team during his management. He said that there were five traits one should adhere to: Patience; Hard work; Commitment; Positivity; Don't fear failure

All five points are excellent advice to those now preparing for exams and, indeed, to all in everyday life. We need to be patient in our preparation and approach to

exams (as in football); we need to work hard to achieve in any walk of life; we need to commit to that work and give our time when preparing for exams; we need to uphold a positive attitude always, even in failure. And it is important to always accept failure as a lesson. If we don't make mistakes, we never learn from our actions. Failure must be seen in a positive light too.

Dan also spoke of the two-part image of the boat - one half sailing stormy seas, the other on calm waters. Exam time, and life in general, will always deliver difficult/stormy episodes. But, if we stay on the boat and do our best, calm waters do come.

He told the story of the GAA team connecting in a circle with a ball of string (two balls in the colour of the football team). They each wound the string around each players wrist and that held them together as they prepared to approach the game - the string that binds us together in life too. All representing the ties that bind us.

An excellent inspirational talk from Dan at this Mass allowed the entire congregation to take something from it. He delivered a

message that we could all bring to our daily lives. And to those doing exams, he simply encouraged them to do their best and that way they won't have regrets.

"Your best will always be good enough," were his final words. And those words are what we all need to reassure our young people as they prepare to sit their exams in the coming weeks.

Participants at the Exam Mass included: Symbols - narrated by Peter; Candle - Fionn; School Book - Holly; Exam Paper - Grainne; Mobile Phone - James; Careers Book - Maureen; Blanket - Mark; Calculator - Josh; Atlas - Lucy; History Book - Noel. First Reading - Aaron; Psalm - Lizzie; Second Reading - Mollie; Prayers of the Faithful - Holly; Offertory - Anna and Aine; Parent/Student Reflection - Reba and James. Music - Lizzie.

In addition, Holly and Fionn helped to organise the Exams Mass as part of their Pope John Paul II Award.

Students present received an Exam Survival Kit containing: a Candle, for prayers to light the way each day; an elastic band, as a reminder to be flexible; a

playing card, to signify dealing with challenges; Love Hearts, to never forget that they are always loved; balloon, to signify the sky being the limit; a tea bag, as a reminder to take a break; a crayon, signifying a bright future; a star, as encouragement that they will shine on exam days; a paper clip, to represent holding it all together; more sweets, for energy; mint gum, as a reminder that they are worth a mint to the world; and a cent/penny, for luck.



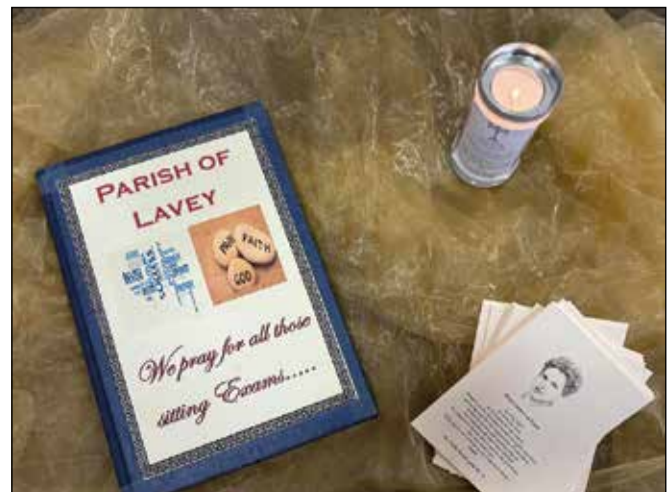
Special prayer for students at Lavey Exams Mass

THE Vigil Mass in the Church of Our Lady of Mercy, in the Parish of Lavey, on Saturday, May 2, was celebrated for the intentions of those sitting exams at this time, seeking God's guidance, peace and strength.

With the help of JPII leaders,

Paula and Michelle, the JPII Award students prepared and took part in the liturgy.

The students involved attend St Patrick's College, Maghera, St Mary's Granmar School, Magherafelt, St Pius X, Magherafelt, and St Conor's College, Clady.



May blessing for Glengad United's new grounds and facilities

MALIN parishioners gathered for the official opening and blessing of Glengad United's new clubhouse and pitch, and enjoyed a day of fun activities as part of the celebrations for the Club's 50th anniversary.

Fr Peter Devlin blessed the new grounds and facilities, while John McDaid Cooper, son of

Club founding member Barney Cooper, performed the official opening of the Crua Sports Ground.

As well as a programme of family entertainment, there was a youth football blitz, and a gala dinner in Ballyliffin Lodge Hotel.



Much appreciation for Carndonagh's busy JP II youth by Donal Farren

FOR the first time, a dedicated programme has been introduced at the Church of the Sacred Heart, Carndonagh, for those doing the Pope John Paul II Award in the parish.

Our seven volunteers have done a wide variety of projects over the year, from everyday tasks like restocking votive candles and cleaning, to preparing for special liturgical events.

In the lead-up to Christmas, they prepared five wonderful advent wreaths, helped put up all the decorative displays on the windows and the Christmas trees. Outside the chapel, they have been busy gardening.

Last October, they planted daffodils around the chapel grounds, which came out in bloom just in time for Easter. The planters around the chapel were replanted in the spring time, ahead of the Confirmations and Communions.

In preparation for the busiest week of the year, Holy Week, they showed up multiple times, emptying and refilling holy water fonts, sorting out the vigil candles and missalettes, making some flower displays, polishing brass, and more.

Some of our volunteers also participate in other areas, such as reading at Mass, and they also started the chapel's social media pages and maintain them weekly.

We are incredibly grateful for their contribution to the parish community. We recognise the importance of involving the youth in parish life and hope to continue this programme, and encourage them on their journey of faith.

In the future, we would like to have a dedicated youth leader and be able to extend the programme to a wider age group, and take on new projects.



Bishop Donal Jubilee

Faithful flocked to St Eugene's to celebrate Good Shepherd of the Diocese

Photographs by Stephen Latimer



GOOD Shepherd Sunday saw a gathering of the faithful flock from parishes across the Diocese of Derry for a beautiful celebration, in St Eugene's Cathedral, of the Silver Jubilee of Bishop Donal's Episcopal Ordination.

The Mother Church of the Diocese filled up in a very short period of time, with representatives from each parish, various organisations and outreaches, and Religious Congregations. And, pupils from primary and post-primary schools turned out to form a guard of honour as the bells rang out and a procession of almost 50 priests, along with Bishop Alan McGuckian, Down & Connor, Bishop Niall Coll, Raphoe, and Bishop Emeritus of Raphoe, Philip Boyce OCD, led Bishop Donal in procession into the Cathedral.

Members of Bishop Donal's family were amongst the congregation, along with invited guests, including Bishop Ken Good, former Bishop of Derry & Raphoe Church of Ireland, Rev Nigel Cairns, Dean of Derry, representing Bishop Andrew Forster, Church of Ireland Derry & Raphoe, representatives of other churches, and the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council, Ruairi McHugh, as well as one particularly special guest, Canon John Murray, a long-time, close friend of Bishop Donal's from their seminary days.

An Apostolic Blessing had been given by Pope Leo XIV at the Vatican on March 26 to mark the milestone, and was read by one of Bishop Donal's Vicar General's, Fr Paul McCafferty: "On the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of your Episcopal Ordination, I congratulate you on your long

years of pastoral ministry which you have exercised so diligently, firstly, as Auxiliary Bishop of the Diocese of Down and Connor, and then, as Bishop of the See of Derry, along with your zealous labours in proclaiming the Gospel of 'truth in charity'. While I express my best wishes to you, and accompany you with my prayers, I also implore for you a reward in heaven. From my heart, I bestow on you my Apostolic Blessing, as well as on your clergy, the laity and the members of your family."

After a welcome to all from Bishop Donal, three symbolic jugs of water were brought forward and poured into a water urn sitting before the altar: the first with water from St Patrick's Church, Donegall Street, Belfast, where Bishop Donal was baptised before being brought home to Randalstown, where some years later he was ordained a priest; the second with water from St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast, where he was ordained a bishop 25 years ago; and the third with water from St Eugene's Cathedral, where he was installed as Bishop of Derry 12 years ago.

Bishop Donal was then invited to bless the water and sprinkle the congregation with it, as a memorial of baptism and an aid for the baptised to be faithful to the Spirit they had received.

Later, in his homily, Bishop Donal reflected on what the readings about Jesus as the Good Shepherd, and the gate to the sheepfold, said to him 25 years after his episcopal ordination and 49 years since his priestly ordination.

Noting that "a life of faith means accepting that God has a vocation, a calling, a unique way for each of us to become a saint," he went on to say: "When I discover the

form that my vocation to holiness takes, as Jesus says, His joy will be complete in us. And, like the disciples on the road to Emmaus, we can retell our crosses and dashed plans as part of God's personal call to greatness. The first question today is simple – Do you accept that the Good Shepherd is calling you by name to follow Him and that He wants nothing but life in its fullness for you if you listen to his voice?"

Generous spirits

Highlighting that the Church is called "to build up in love the visible Body of Christ", Bishop Donal went on to consider what sort of Church Christ is calling us to be, saying: "The People of God in this diocese are gifted in many ways with leadership at various levels – in families, schools, parishes, as well as in the more formal structures. We have marvellous and creative lay movements and initiatives that have sprung up. These have not been the result of leadership from bishop or others at senior level. They have been born of generous spirits who have a deep love for God and compassion for their brothers and sisters. The Good Shepherd frees us from the illusion that it is our church and that everything depends on our plans. In the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christian Church saw that it expanded, despite itself, despite the narrowness of the Apostles' plans, and because of the driving force of the Holy Spirit, often using unexpected people."

He went on to say: "Those of us who have lived through the last half century of the Irish Church know that there was a strong narrative which said that church was over... But increasing numbers of young people are now discovering that the heaven on earth promised by the secular consumerist agenda has delivered fragmentation and a profound sense of meaninglessness, as well as a widespread assumption that human life is not particularly important and ultimately disposable if it doesn't suit me... Increasing numbers of young people are seeing the stories of St Carlo Acutis and Sr Clare Crockett, and they are daring to

believe that we can do better than the miserable message of 'eat, drink and be merry for tomorrow we die.'

"The Good Shepherd," suggested Bishop Donal, "wants us to be led forward with trust in Him... that, even on our Calvaries, grace is hard at work preparing unimaginable resurrection and new life."

He concluded: "We give thanks for the Risen Christ who is in our midst, often unseen, calling us individually and together to greatness. He is calling all of us to discern the divine vocation that we have - and to live it to the full. There is a huge need for those who will dedicate their lives to be ordained or consecrated for ministry in the Church and to the world. There is a great need in our fragmented society for those who will seek to live out their married vocation and other vocations.

"We have many models in history of outrageous disciples of Jesus. The Good Shepherd is calling us all to greatness as we listen for and to His voice today. Are we ready for the Good Shepherd to call us to greatness – or are we too afraid of that prospect?"

In a tribute to Bishop Donal, at the end, Fr Michael Canny VG spoke of the Church's mission to do as Jesus asked, 'Always and everywhere to give thanks,' remarking: "We give thanks to God because we owe everything to God and, this afternoon, we gather to give thanks because all those years ago, out the many other opportunities you had, Bishop Donal, you chose to become a priest, and, 25 years ago, you very generously said 'yes' to the invitation to serve the Church as a shepherd of God's people, firstly, as Auxiliary Bishop of Down & Connor, and 12 years ago as chief shepherd of this Diocese. You also gave yourself generously as Apostolic Administrator of Down & Connor during the vacancy there."

Encouraging teacher

He continued: "Moving from Belfast to the North West, you immediately embarked on building good community relations, especially with other Christian Churches. A role, among many others, of a bishop is to teach and you are a teacher to your very bones; a collaborative and encouraging teacher who opens doors for all of us and encourages us to learn and to grow. You walked together with us, often literally in the town, talking to people, living among your flock. You like to get out and about, to Cursillo weekends in



Bishop Donal Jubilee

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Termonbacca, walks to Knock and regular visits to Celtic Park and the Brandywell, not to talk of the endless events in between.

“As a young man, you ran marathons and took part in Maracycles from Belfast to Dublin, and back, and also took part in the Tour de Foyle some years ago in aid of the Methodist Mission, and you have undertaken many hikes in different countries in Europe.”

“Over your 25 years as bishop,” noted Fr Michael, “you have worked tirelessly in the field of Catholic education; always proclaiming that all people are made by God and loved equally by God and, hence, deserved the best and equal opportunities in life, beginning with a good education. Your experience as an educator has given you a love for young people and occasions where youth are gathered, and events like World Youth Day gatherings are important to you.”

Fr Michael also highlighted Bishop Donal’s love for languages, giving him a wider European and world view, which, in turn, had equipped him to engage with the mass media: “You have always embraced the world of radio and television, whether it be ‘Thought for the Day’, ‘Sunday Sequence’, or current issues. You have never seen the media as something to fear, but a place of encounter.”

He added: “In difficult and challenging situations, you have always tried to focus on the positive, you have tried to see beyond the darkness of the

moment and see in every person, despite human weakness, the image and likeness of a loving God. And, you always ask us to seek and discern what God is asking for our Diocese at this time.”

Remarking that Bishop Donal’s Silver Jubilee was “not the finishing line”, Fr Michael said: “It is just a significant milestone in your priestly and episcopal journey. It is an opportunity to look back with gratitude and forward with renewed purpose.”

Thanking him for the last 12 years as Bishop of Derry, on behalf of the Diocese, Fr Michael said: “I hope this gathering today conveys, in a small way, the esteem and deep affection that the people of this Diocese has for you.”

In response, the congregation broke into a loud and sustained applause of appreciation. The ceremony came to a close, as it started, with the singing of the magnificent St Eugene’s Cathedral Choir, which set the tone for the joyous celebration as directed by Maghnus Monaghan. The Choir Director had also put together a marvelous concert of celebration for Bishop Donal on the Friday night in the Cathedral, entitled ‘Exploring Mystery’, which also featured the Cathedral Choir and Choral Scholars.

It took a long time for the Cathedral to empty afterwards, with seemingly everyone lining up to personally congratulate Bishop Donal, with many grabbing the opportunity to have their photograph taken with him before moving on to St Mary’s College for refreshments.



Bishop Donal Jubilee

Bishop Donal reflects on 25 years of episcopal ministry



THE celebration of the Silver Anniversary of his Episcopal Ordination has been an opportunity for Bishop Donal to reflect on this ministry, which involves teaching doctrine, sanctifying through sacred worship, and governing Diocesan affairs.

For this edition's coverage of such a special milestone in his life as a successor of the Apostles, Bishop Donal has taken time to respond to a series of questions covering the highlights, the challenges, the various faith-related initiatives he has encountered and supported, especially in the Derry Diocese, and his hopes for the Church.

What have been the highlights of your 25 years ministering as a bishop, particularly as Bishop of Derry?

Many things have changed since 2001. Coming to terms with the failings of the past has damaged the credibility of the church in the eyes of many people. But it has also been a time of crisis for secular society: economic crashes; wars; pandemic; and fragmentation of international bodies. That has meant for a difficult time for everyone in society. It is important that we can speak the truth with love for our hurting society, which has been so let down by the promise of a secular paradise built on individual choice for the strong.

Obviously, it is very different to be a diocesan bishop with ultimate responsibility, as distinct from being an auxiliary, assisting Bishop Walsh and the Bishop Treanor. Highlights for me include two Ad Limina visits of all the Irish Bishops to Rome – in October 2006 with Pope Benedict (in my role in Down & Connor), and in January 2017 with Pope Francis (in my position as Bishop of Derry). For such an event, all the bishops travel to Rome for two weeks to meet with the heads of all the Divestures in the Vatican and to review the mission of the Irish Church. On both occasions it was a privilege to meet with the Holy Father, and to realise the enormous work that the relatively small Vatican Curia (its 'Civil Service') does in support of the 3,000+ Catholic dioceses and 5,000 bishops throughout the world.

On a local level, there are so many good things happening in the Diocese of Derry. The tragic death of Sr Clare Crockett has

proved to be a great example of how God's foolishness can be wiser than human wisdom. She has become a great local example of God at work when we least expect that.

What have been the most challenging aspects?

Leadership in any organisation is difficult at the present time. There are many pressures and much correspondence to handle. But a bishop's main task is to be the leading shepherd of the Diocese. That involves discerning how to teach and sanctify the People of God, as well as adapting to dropping numbers of clergy and the challenges of bringing the Gospel to young people. The last 25 years have been a time when it has been important to ensure that we see problems through the hope-filled lens of the Cross and Resurrection.

We have also experienced many tragedies in the diocese, including accidents, killings, suicides. But our communities and parishes have been remarkably resilient and supportive of those who are suffering.

The Covid pandemic was very challenging for our whole society. There was much uncertainty and anxiety. But I am delighted how so many parish communities found creative ways of engaging online with parishioners. Many dioceses furloughed their pastoral staff, but this diocese decided to keep personnel in place and to promote as much outreach as possible. Parishes learned new techniques and that has stood us in good stead.

The Synodal Pathway in Ireland, and in the universal church, has been unsettling for some and challenging for all of us. Part of my task has been to be sure that we are asking the right question. And that question is "What is God asking of the Irish Church/Diocese of Derry in 2026?" That means moving far beyond debates about what we think should change, and seeking to discern, prayerfully and together, how we can become a church that is built up in holiness and brings Christ to the hurting in our society. It is not a debate about what we want, but a shared search for where God is leading us. That needs quiet hearts and not just loud voices.

We have had to face the reality of a falling number of priests. Some of our clergy feel overwhelmed at times by very high expectations of what parishioners want. They have to deal with managing a lot of buildings and parish finances. In some cases, there are rural communities without a resident priest or a weekly Mass, and that leaves many people upset.

The Synodal Pathway is an invitation for parish communities to step up to the plate: to prayerfully

discern parish priorities; to develop local plans to develop sustainable faith communities; to form adults and young people to and on the faith; and to reach out to those who feel far from church and from Christ

I hope that we have started down that road of conversion of both structures to serve the mission, and how our parishes focus on 'a spirituality of communion' and on being 'schools of prayer' (Cf. St John Paul II in 2001).

How did you find adjusting to life in Derry?

It is not easy to move to a new place. But the people of the Diocese were most welcoming and I was made to feel that I belonged. I was struck by the great dignity and creativity of people who have suffered much through poverty and violence. Clergy and their parish communities play such a vital role in community cohesion and in offering ways to deal with the pain of being human.

One priest colleague said that Derry and I were good fits – it was big enough to have diversity, culture, sport and tourism, but small enough to be homely. The media have always been keen to allow Church voices to be heard, if we had something to say and were available for all questions, hard and easier.

Inter-church work has been high profile in the Diocese for many decades. It has been great to work here in a context where the churches, individually and together, are seen as valuable partners in a healthy civic society. For that, I am very grateful to people and to God.

You readily embraced the Cursillo Movement in Derry and played an important role in its survival here, what fruits have you seen as a result?

There has been a long tradition of active public ministry by lay organisations. The role played by the Cursillo movement in Derry has been among the most obvious. It involves men and women reaching out to those who bear heavy burdens and helping them to encounter the grace of God in the concrete circumstances of their lives.

As a priest and bishop, I have tried not to join any movements in the church, but to be available to support any group which is seeking to follow the promptings of the Holy Spirit. Cursillo has helped large numbers of people to become involved in their parishes. Thus, I am only too happy to walk with them and to encourage their development as a method of evangelisation.

You have also been very supportive of youth initiatives here, such as Search, the

Diocesan Youth Programme, the Catechetical Centre's sacramental programmes, The Net Young Writers etc, comment on your experience with these.

Having been involved as a full-time teacher for over 20 years has been a great blessing. There have been great events, such as: World Youth Days in 2016, 2019, 2023 and 2025; annual pilgrimages, including young people, to Lourdes; youth pilgrimages to Fatima and Medjugorje; the on-line ministry that developed during Covid; and the Young Writers' Group with 'The Net'.

We have some amazing young people with a passion for growing their own faith and for handing it on to others. I sense that we are at a tipping point in our society, where there is great disillusionment with the secular offer, and a hunger for truth, hope and belonging. These young people are preparing to step up to the plate and to lead a revival of faith, hope and love.

You are passionate in promoting Catholic education, and have hosted two RE Conferences to date in the Derry Diocese, with another coming up in August, and have held key roles with regards to youth and education, representing the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference. Comment on your experience of these.

For about 30 years, Catholic education in the North has been caricatured as divisive and a relic of the past. However, the quality of educational outcomes has been one of our great strengths. We simply outperform other sectors!

But there is also a new appreciation of our educational system, that goes beyond offering subject content. Catholic education has emphasised: the building of educational communities linked to local communities; the religious element and ethos, which ask questions and offer answers about the meaning of life; and the liturgical year and saints' feast days, which give shape to time and role models.

Our Catechetical Centre offers unrivalled support to teachers and principals in our Catholic schools. The regular RE Conferences in St Columba's College have offered the opportunity for staff to meet and share good practice. That builds a support network and promotes self-confidence in our sector.

In my years as a bishop, I have been able to speak at conferences and offer training for Catholic schools in Norway, Denmark, Poland, Germany and Italy. In many countries, Catholic education is not just education for Catholics, but a form of education that is appreciated by many from other faith backgrounds and none.

During your time as Bishop of



Bishop Donal McKewen receiving a gift of Cross from Pope Francis during the Ad Limina visit of the Irish Bishops to Rome in 2017

Derry, you have witnessed the impact of the death of Sr Clare Crockett and her conversion story, you have journeyed with her family over the past 10 years, invited the Home of the Mother Servant Sisters into the Diocese, and attended the opening of the cause for her canonisation. What are your hopes for the impact of Servant of God, Sr Clare Crockett?

Young people want role models who will inspire them. Sr Clare has burst out among us at a time of great crises for our society; war, poverty, addiction, and mental illness. She is a messenger of hope at a stressful time. Her ministry really took off after her death! God is at work in all circumstances and can bring great good out of apparent tragedy.

You make yourself readily available, and make a point of going up the town on a Saturday as a way of connecting with people. How has this helped in your ministry?

It is always important to be seen and to be accessible. I tried to do that even when I was a school principal. Walking the school yard was the best way to meet people. Shopping in the stores opposite my house is also a valuable way to get into conversations. Then there is being in attendance at GAA matches in Celtic Park and at soccer games at home with Derry City. I have also tried to be available for the local journalists – printed media, radio and television.

And, of course, we have been blessed to have 'The Net', a unique apostolate for bringing good news about our diocese, parishes and other apostolates to a wide audience. This monthly publication is the fruit of much prayer and hard work. It has done an incalculable amount of good in generating hope about God at work in Derry and about hope for the future.

From the experiences that you have had over the past 25 years as a bishop, and almost 50 years of priesthood, what advice would you give to others starting out in

this ministry?

People appreciate someone who tries to be real. Priests and bishops don't have to try to be perfect! But it is important to be a decent human being with a love of God and of people. And then we can leave the rest up to grace!

Priests and bishops are canonically obliged to pray the Liturgy of the Hours; how did you find this practice over the years?

The breviary offers an opportunity to let the word of the Old and New Testaments – and especially the poetry of the Psalms – echo in our hearts. I have been praying the breviary since entering seminary in 1968, and then recently one line from the Acts of the Apostles struck me. The verses had to do with choosing the successor to Judas, as the 12th apostle. It read: "Show us whom you have chosen to take over the ministry and apostolate"! It felt very relevant to me in 2026!

You said recently that the old model of Church was dying on its feet...but the Church is not dying. What are your hopes for the Church in the Derry Diocese and further afield?

Jesus has promised to be with His church until the end of time, and to never leave us orphans. So, we have nothing to fear. The Holy Spirit is reshaping the Church in Ireland to make us missionaries of the 21st century to those who most need healing and mercy. In this time of uncertainty, it is tempting to believe that we know for certain the way forward. Some think that we need to 'modernise' on the basis of modern political fads. We don't. Others think they have the answer in re-inventing a 19th century model of church. That is not the way forward. We will be led forward by Christ when we seek to prayerfully discern where the Holy Spirit is leading and sowing new seeds. If we think that we have the answers, we probably are not even asking the right questions!

You had a wonderful celebration of your Silver Jubilee,

Bishop Donal Jubilee

Thanksgiving for prayer answered *by Mary O'Donnell*



THE announcement of Bishop Donal's appointment as the Bishop of Derry in February 2014 will always be remembered by me as one of those moments of joy and thanksgiving to God for a prayer answered.

Sometime before this, as well as praying for guidance for the creation of 'The Net' publication to share the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese, I was also praying for all involved in the process of appointing our next bishop and that we would get the leader God willed us to have for the time that we were in.

This intention was in my prayers during a youth pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, in Co Mayo, that I ended up being part of as a support leader in one of those 'last moment' scenarios. Part of the programme for the day took place in the St John Centre and, during one of the talks, I noticed a priest sit down at the end of the row of chairs in front of me. His interest and joy in being there amongst these young people as an observer became clearly evident.

Later, at the start of the closing Mass for the day in the Apparition Chapel, I discovered that the main celebrant was the 'priest' I had noticed in St John's and that he was actually Bishop Donal McKeown of the Down & Connor Diocese – I had missed the 'Auxiliary' part of the title when he was introduced.

As he celebrated the Mass and spoke to the young people gathered, I was struck by how easily he was able to connect with them as teenagers and me as an adult. And so, as I prayed after receiving Holy Communion, it entered my head to pray that we would get a bishop like this for our Diocese.

Walking towards our bus in

the car park afterwards, I heard someone behind me asking our young people where they were from. It was the bishop who had just celebrated Mass with us, and it was on the tip of my tongue to jokingly ask him if he would like to come to Derry as our new bishop, but I was stopped by the thought that I would be interrupting his conversation with the young people, and the moment passed.

So, imagine my joyful surprise when the news eventually broke that the Auxiliary Bishop of Down & Connor, Dr Donal McKeown had been appointed as Bishop of Derry! In my thinking that he was the Bishop of Down & Connor, I didn't actually expect him to be appointed to Derry.

My memory of this is as clear as when it happened just over 12 years ago, and I believe that we did get the bishop we needed in Bishop Donal. Nobody is perfect, and in his 'down to earth' way that makes him so approachable, he has helped many to realise that even with their imperfections, God loves them and wishes to do wonderful works through them. And, it was this that gave me the courage to 'step out of the boat' and speak to him about 'The Net' faith publication that I had been praying about and working on.

Over the years since, Bishop Donal has been very supportive of 'The Net' Apostolate, as he describes it, and particularly to its young writers, with whom he happily meets twice a year for an informal chat over a cuppa. Interested in their study and offering encouragement, Bishop Donal always listens to their sharings about life as young Catholics and answers their questions.

The following are comments of

appreciation from some of 'The Net' young writers...

Tributes from 'The Net' Young Writers

"As Bishop Donal McKeown celebrates his Silver Jubilee, I think it is important to recognise the impact that he has had on so many people, especially young people across the Diocese of Derry. I have known Bishop Donal for the past seven years through 'The Net' Young Writers group, where he has always encouraged us to use our talents to promote the faith in creative and meaningful ways.

What stands out most is the trust that he places in young people. He encourages us not only to participate in the Church, but to take initiative, evangelise, and bring our faith into schools, parishes, and the wider community. Through the Diocese, he has consistently supported youth initiatives and given young people the confidence to put their ideas into action.

His support for 'An Lasair Chríost' is a recent example of the way he works with young people. Bishop Donal attended all of the preparation meetings for the event and approached every discussion with an open mind. He listened carefully to the perspective that we were coming from as young Catholics, and that trust allowed us to shape the event in the way it was ultimately carried out. Rather than simply directing us, he encouraged us to take ownership and leadership.

For me personally, as I was organising the Mass for the event, I was very grateful for the generosity of his time. He was always patient in answering my emails and questions about the liturgy, and it was clear that he genuinely wanted young people to take the leading role. Looking back, it felt less like he was simply overseeing the event and more like he was preparing and encouraging us to lead in the Church ourselves.

As a Syro-Malabar Catholic, I have also seen Bishop Donal's strong support for our community over the past 12 years. He has always made the Syro-Malabar community feel welcomed and

valued within the Diocese of Derry, and that openness and pastoral support has meant a great deal to many families.

His episcopal motto, 'Veritas in Caritate' (Truth in Charity) comes from St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians, and speaks about growing together as the Body of Christ through truth and love. I think this is reflected clearly in the way Bishop Donal has worked with young people throughout his ministry. As he marks this Silver Jubilee, I am grateful for the encouragement, trust, and support he has given to so many of us over the years, and for the lasting impact that has had on the life of the Church in Derry." *John Augustine Joseph*

"From our chats at 'The Net' Young Writers' meetings with Bishop Donal, he seemed a deeply welcoming and lovely man, always willing to listen to different questions and he gave great answers. Just, overall, I found him to be a very lovely man, who was a joy to be around and talk to." *Oisín Mulhern*

"I was fortunate enough to have the opportunity to go on pilgrimage to Rome with Bishop Donal last year. Throughout the trip, he brought so much joy and humour to everything, always making us laugh with his funny stories and light-hearted personality. At the same time, he shared an incredible knowledge of the basilicas and cathedrals we visited, telling us fascinating stories about their history, saints, and traditions that made each place come alive. His ability to combine deep faith with kindness and humour made the pilgrimage unforgettable, and it showed how much he cares about inspiring and connecting with young people." *Niamh Sharkey*

"St John Chrysostom once said, 'The soul of a bishop is for all the world like a vessel in a storm: lashed from every side... by friends, by foes... by one's own people... and by strangers.' It is not an easy duty; expectations are high, you become a visible successor of the Apostles, the first episcopal body of the Church. A very high standard indeed.

The bishop, in a general context, is often expected to be a miracle-



worker, someone highly skilled in liturgical knowledge, Church discipline and governance, administrative work and an executive decision maker. But the real value of a great Episcopacy is found within the humility of the man who bears the burden. It is a responsibility of protection, ensuring the flock are guided, helped and led towards Christ. Not only does this apply to the laity, but to the bishop's brother priests too.

Bishop Donal, is a man who is the exemplary shepherd of the flock. A listener, a voice of reason and wisdom, as well as someone who knows the present challenges we face as a society, and is not afraid to call them out. The responsibility is enormous, yet Bishop Donal has demonstrated consistently his ability to act as a faithful servant to all who are entrusted to his care and stewardship. A man of humility, of service, of fidelity to Jesus Christ our Lord, the example of, to use the words of Benedict XVI, this simple and humble labourer in the vineyard of the Lord, is a testament to all he has done for us in the Diocese.

For the young people of Derry, he has continuously proven himself to be a guardian and friend to the aspirations of the youth. We promise that we will carry on his humble service and fidelity to the Church, and we pray that he may be eternally rewarded by God." *James Tourish*

"I first met Bishop Donal at my Confirmation in 2018, so that was my first observation of his dedication to the faith in our Diocese.

The bi-annual meetings of 'The Net' Young Writers with Bishop Donal are continually an opportunity to learn and be inspired by his encouragement of the faith of young people in the Diocese, which I also noticed when he led the Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes in 2024.

Bishop Donal's contribution to Catholic education has been particularly relevant for me as a past pupil of St Columba's College, where my faith was nurtured. We have been blessed to have Bishop Donal leading our Diocese for the past 12 years." *Sean McLaughlin*

"I always found Bishop Donal to be really warm and welcoming. He always made me feel like he truly cared about what was going on for me! I always remember the first time that I went to 'The Net' meeting. I didn't really know him before I went, but afterwards I couldn't stop telling people how nice he was!" *Cara-leigh Doherty*

"In my experience, Bishop Donal has been approachable and caring, and he has taken great interest in the young writers of The Net. He has always encouraged us in both our writing and our faith. He has also shown care, even simply by asking how we were getting on in our everyday life.

Bishop Donal has always brought great positivity to all of our meet-ups and made us feel seen, supported, and inspired. I know many young people feel encouraged every day by his kindness and guidance, and he will be greatly missed when he retires." *Erin Whoriskey*

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comment on this and how you hope to spend your time when you get to retire.

I was privileged to see so many people gathered in the Cathedral, proud of who they are as the Church in this Diocese. We know that we will face problems, as the church has done in every age. But

this is a good time to be a follower of Jesus, and if we can retain our gratitude for all that God has done, we will be a blessing on our contemporaries and be amazed at what God can do for and with us.

As regards the future and retirement, we will see what God has in mind! It will be good just to be a priest and not to bear the burdens of leadership.



Bishop Donal Jubilee

Expressions of appreciation and God's blessing for Bishop Donal



THE Diocesan Catechetical Centre was delighted to be part of the celebration for Bishop McKeown's Silver Jubilee. It was wonderful to see a packed Cathedral, gathered to acknowledge Bishop Donal's 25 years of service. Among those attending were representatives from many of our diocesan schools, who were able to show their appreciation for the unstinting support that Bishop McKeown has given to Catholic education and young people.

Since Bishop Donal took on his role in the Diocese, he has generously supported the work of the Catechetical Centre; a generosity that is underpinned by his obvious passion for Youth Ministry and Catholic Education. Over the past 12 years, his encouragement for the work of the Catechetical Centre has been evident in many ways, not least in the time that he gives for events, his trust and enthusiastic support for new initiatives, and the ongoing advice he gently provides.

Bishop Donal has a clear understanding of the challenges that Catholic education, Catholic school leaders, staff and young people face. He has a great desire that our young people are celebrated, have the opportunity to develop a personal relationship with Jesus, growing fully as children of God, positive in their outlook in life and generous in their outreach to others.

We would like to thank Bishop McKeown for all that he has done and we wish him every blessing at this time of celebration. *Diocesan Catechetical Centre*

From my time in St Columb's College, I would say that Bishop Donal's deep knowledge of, and support for, Catholic education was well known before his appointment as Bishop of Derry, and that continued unabated after his arrival in the Diocese.

On a personal note, I always found Bishop Donal fully supportive of the work that I was doing, and to be deeply aware of the challenges facing school leaders in the current era.

I am particularly grateful for his listening ear and prayerful support during those times when the challenges seemed particularly

acute. *Finbar Madden, former principal of St Columb's College & current Post-Primary RE Advisor*

I have worked for Bishop McKeown, in the Diocesan Office, since he became Bishop of Derry, 12 years ago. As with other leadership roles, each day brings its own challenges to his door. Bishop McKeown has the natural ability and instinct to turn challenges into opportunities, seeing beyond immediate difficulties, and approaching situations with calmness, perspective and a deep sense of faith.

Even in difficult situations, in a gentle but reassuring way, he encourages others to view challenges as opportunities to build, renew, strengthen, and move forward with hope and confidence. He is a person of good humour, with an 'open door' office policy that reflects his approachable and caring nature. It has been both a pleasure and an honour for me to have worked with him and for him.

The bishop has shown great kindness and friendship to me, and I am very grateful for the confidence that he has placed in me time and time again, over the past 12 years. As he prepares for the next chapter of his life and ministry, I wish him good health, peace and happiness in the months and years ahead. *Teresa McMenamin.*

Vocations

I was delighted, and honoured, when Bishop Dónal McKeown asked me, in October 2021, to be Vocations Director for the Diocese of Derry. Since then, we have had many meetings and discussions about the promotion of vocations to the diocesan priesthood, and I have seen at first-hand how passionate he is, and how encouraging he is to myself and our Vocations Council in the work that we do.

Bishop McKeown always makes himself available to attend all the Vocations events taking place in the Diocese, and has always come along to the annual inter-diocesan retreat for discerners, which takes place in the Cross and Passion Retreat Centre at Drumalis, in Larne.

2023 marked a highlight in terms



of vocations in our Diocese, when Bishop Dónal ordained three priests who are all currently serving in parishes around the Diocese. They are among the seven men ordained for the Diocese in the 12 years since Bishop McKeown left his role as Auxiliary Bishop of Down and Connor, when the late Pope Francis appointed him Bishop of Derry.

On behalf of the Diocesan Vocations' Council, I would like to congratulate Bishop Dónal on the 25th anniversary of his episcopal ordination and to wish him every blessing for the future.

With his blessing and encouragement, we hope to continue the work of promoting vocations to the diocesan priesthood here in Derry, accompanying the seven men currently in formation in Rome, Maynooth, and Salamanca, including Stephen Baxter, who hopes to be ordained to the priesthood by Bishop McKeown on June 14 this year, in St Columb's Church, Waterside, the same church where he ordained him a deacon last year.

We are delighted that a healthy number of men in the Diocese are actively discerning a vocation to the priesthood, and we pray that many more will respond positively to the call to service. *Fr Pat O'Hagan*

Bishop Donal has always put me, and hopefully others, at our ease. I think he understood that informality, at a certain stage, was important. There would always be a 'getting to know you' period. I found him kind and generous with his time and open to discussion. I always saw that through Seminary time; he was available to meet up with all the discernment group and seminarians when we were home. I never felt alone; there were always priests in the Diocese to reach out to and this probably helped sustain many of us through seminary." *Deacon Stephen Baxter*

The phrase 'Once a teacher, always a teacher' reflects the idea that teaching is more than a profession, it is a calling that shapes a person's identity permanently. Educators like Bishop Donal often maintain a teacher identity even after leaving

the classroom, because teaching involves deeply ingrained values such as nurturing, mentoring, and inspiring others. These three gifted values, among others, are a good summary of my real lived relationship with Bishop Donal McKeown as Bishop-Seminarian and Bishop-Priest.

Bishop Donal has 'nurtured' me through the years of seminary, and into priestly ministry, with constant encouragement, commitment, and guided direction. These years were not always easy, especially with the loss of my father, Mickey McCaul on November 5, 2020, and other personal struggles. Yet, Bishop Donal was a steadfast presence lighting the way through those dark periods, of which I am profoundly grateful.

Bishop Donal has 'mentored' me in my priestly ministry, and as Spiritual Director for the Derry Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, teaching me how I should best serve God, His Church, and His People. Bishop Donal has been a role model for me, who has supported my growth, learning and development. He also doesn't take any nonsense from me, but rather gently and calmly guides my way and priestly mission.

Bishop Donal has 'inspired' me and countless others with his personal holiness, his humility, his teaching style, and commitment to Catholic education. I, myself, try to model my homilies on his 'three-part' model, which is always rooted in scripture, but I'm not quite there yet!

A bishop is, of course, the principal teacher of the faith in any diocese. I believe we have been truly blessed to have had Bishop Donal preach the Word of God to us over these years, teaching us the real Truth.

The phrase 'once a teacher, always a teacher', reflects the enduring impact of a teacher's role in shaping students' lives. Bishop Donal's sacred calling and ministry has created a ripple effect influencing future generations of Catholics, and inspiring us all to pursue our full potential. "To have life and have it to the full." (John 10:10)

If teachers are the reason that our children have a future, then Bishop Donal is the reason our diocese has a future. 'Once a teacher,



always a teacher' is absolutely true future. As for me, I think I have peace, joy, and happiness in the learnt many values from Bishop

Bishop Donal Jubilee

continued from page 10

Donal over the years, and one in particular: 'Once a teacher, always a student.' May Almighty God bless your generous and personable heart, Bishop Donal. *Fr Michael McCaul, CC Desertmartin and Ballinascreen*

My experience of Bishop Donal McKeown began even before I became a priest. During my time as a presenter on Highland Radio, I encountered Bishop Donal regularly through my work. I always found him to be humble, approachable, and available for interviews. Some of those interviews, I'm sure, were not particularly comfortable for him, yet he never shied away from them. That was something I admired in him then, and it is something I continue to admire in him now.

He remains very available to the media, both in times that are positive and in situations that are deeply challenging. Having since spent much more time around him at the Cathedral, I have come to know even more of his personality and character. What constantly impresses me is his availability to people, his extraordinary work ethic, and the dedication he brings to his role as bishop. I see firsthand the immense amount of work he undertakes, while at the same time retaining a gentle kindness and genuine pastoral concern for others.

He always takes an interest in people, always asking how I am, and I have also been struck by the way he walks around the town, speaking with and making himself available to anyone who approaches him. He truly is an example of a shepherd who "smells of the sheep." We are told as priests, as Catholics, and as Christians, that we must smell of the sheep, and Bishop Donal certainly lives that out.

I was so pleased to see the huge numbers of people who came to his 25th anniversary Mass in the Cathedral and to the celebrations afterwards. People were there because they genuinely wanted to be there, to express their loyalty, affection, and support for him and for all that he has done. I was particularly delighted that his

family were able to share in those celebrations with him, and that he was then able to crown the occasion with a visit to Rome to meet Pope Leo.

Please God, he will have many more years of happy and faithful service to the Lord Jesus Christ. *Fr Shaun Doherty*

Bishop Donal was patient, gentle and kind to me during my time of initial formation. He has been very supportive as my Bishop, and I am indebted to him for that. *Fr Stephen Ward*

I will always be thankful to God for Bishop Donal ordaining me as a priest; his first as the new Bishop of Derry. *Fr Sean O'Donnell*

**Lourdes...Servant Sisters...
Cursillo...Search**

I have had nearly 40 years' engagement with the Derry Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage, and Bishop McKeown is the third Bishop, after Bishops Daly and Farren, to hold office during this period. It was also under the patronage of Bishop McKeown that I undertook the role of director, a role which required a much closer relationship with the incumbent Bishop than my previous roles.

I consider myself very fortunate to have been in this role during the time Bishop Donal has been in office. His exemplary devotion to Our Lady, to the Rosary, and to Lourdes, have been a source of great encouragement to me and all the volunteers who run the pilgrimage.

He has been extremely supportive of our work, while making clear that he has confidence in us. This has been vital since we have had the difficult task of rebuilding the Pilgrimage after the Covid crisis, and the value he clearly places in quiet devotion to Notre Dame de Lourdes and St Bernadette has been inspirational in challenging times. *Charles Glenn*

We want to thank Bishop Donal for welcoming us to the Diocese and for always being so good to us. He has been a great support to us in our mission. We deeply appreciate how much he has contributed to the cause of our Sister Clare Crockett.

We thank him for being a true Shepherd and a father to each one of us, and to his whole flock; for allowing himself to be guided by the Holy Spirit; and for not being afraid to speak the Truth with love.

We pray that he will always have the Heart of Christ and that he will let Our Blessed Mother Mary lead him to an ever-deeper union with her Son, the Eternal High Priest. God bless. *The Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother*

It is a pleasure to comment on Bishop Donal's Silver Jubilee as a Bishop, and to thank him for his support for the Cursillo movement over past 12 years. He has given of his time, his energy, and has been a source of constant encouragement to all. As a community, we have witnessed his Apostolic role as a Good Shepherd in our times, both walking the walk, listening and caring for his flock.

Bishop Donal has seen first-hand the work that goes on behind the scenes in the movement in our Diocese, and his support has led to strong generational change, encouraging young people who are seeking faith and hope amid unprecedented social change in our church, and in Irish society of the 21st Century.

It is apparent to all of us that Bishop Donal is untiring for all the people of our Diocese; his presence on Cursillo weekends, his participation on the Walk to Knock, and the many unseen encounters, befriending all whom he meets.

Lost for words to sum up your gift to us, I will quote Jesus' parting words to His Apostles: "I want you to Love one another as I have Loved you"; and, "No greater love has a man to lay down his life for his friends".

Thank you, Bishop Donal, on

behalf of the Cursillo Movement in the Derry Diocese. *Thomas Gallagher*

Derry Search Youth Group would like to congratulate Bishop Donal on his Silver Jubilee, and for his ongoing support for the wonderful work that Search has been doing for 41 years. He was quick to acknowledge Search from the first week that he was appointed Bishop, something that we are extremely grateful for. He fully recognises the importance of our ministry to young people, and has always endorsed the depth of Catholic and Christian Faith that we give witness to, in a voluntary capacity, throughout these years.

Bishop Donal was influential in Derry Search Youth Group being personally acknowledged by our current Pope Leo, for our 40th Anniversary in 2025. He was extremely happy to send an accreditation, on our behalf, to the Papal Nuncio's Office, to be further forwarded to the Vatican for acknowledgement.

Whilst we fully understand his reasons for retirement, we believe that he will be missed by many groups throughout the Diocese, and can only hope and pray that his successor, when appointed, will be as kind-hearted and generous in his support to the valuable work that continues within these groups.

We wish Bishop Donal our sincere good wishes, and prayers that he might enjoy many years in good health and filled with the breath of The Holy Spirit, to allow him to 'Keep Marching' in the fields where Shepherds are needed most. May the spirit of Search's Patron, St Don Bosco walk with him, wherever he chooses to tread, and to enlighten him in all his future decisions. God bless. *Derry Search Youth Group*



Photographs by Stephen Latimer



Young Writers share thoughts...

THIS month, reflecting on Catholic churches as not only places for worship but also beautiful spaces meant to inspire, Niamh writes about how beauty has been used to lift people out of ordinary life and encourage them to think about something greater than themselves.

James, studying at Queen's University Belfast, writes about the Catholic Chaplaincy there following its re-opening after an impressive renovation, and its impact on the Church.

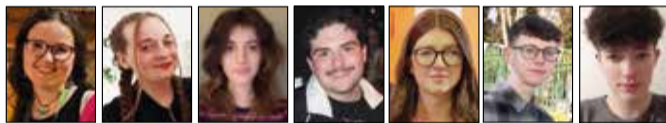
Considering the case for the authority of the Papacy, Ryan writes about Augustine of Hippo and the Pelagian crisis, and Harry reflects on reasons to pray in Latin.

Conor writes about the conversion of the Roman soldier, Longinus, who had pierced the side of Christ, and how he withstood the torture he experienced on refusing to deny his Christian faith.

Alarmed at the level of violence against women and young girls, Ellie highlights the story of St Maria Goretti and her example of faith, purity and forgiveness.



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

Lasting appeal of Catholic aesthetics suggests beauty continues to meet human need modern culture not fully replaced *by Niamh*

LONG before someone understands Catholic theology, they usually experience Catholicism through beauty. The light shining through stained glass windows, the sound of choir music in a cathedral, or the smell of incense during Mass can all leave a strong impression before any beliefs are explained.

In a culture where religion is often seen as a set of rules or ideas, Catholicism has traditionally suggested something different: beauty itself can have spiritual meaning. This focus on beauty is not accidental. Catholic churches were built not only as places for worship, but also as spaces meant to inspire awe and reflection.

From Renaissance paintings to large cathedrals, beauty has been used to lift people out of ordinary life and encourage them to think about something greater than themselves. Walking into places like St Peter's Basilica or Notre Dame de Paris, even people who are not religious often describe feeling a sense of silence, peace, or wonder.

The emotional response comes before belief or understanding for many Catholics, this connection between beauty and faith reflects an important idea: people are moved not only by logic, but also by the senses and emotions. Music, art, and architecture can express ideas that words alone sometimes cannot.

This may explain why religious beauty still matters in an increasingly secular world. Many people who would never call themselves religious still feel deeply affected by candlelit churches, sacred music, or religious paintings. The attraction is often emotional and aesthetic before it becomes spiritual. At the same time, Catholic aesthetics can seem unusual in modern culture. Today, simplicity and efficiency are often valued more than tradition or ceremony. Compared to modern minimalist spaces, Catholic churches can appear highly decorative, filled with statues, gold details, candles, and ritual. Some critics argue that these things distract from

Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen's University Belfast...a drop in the ocean that provides a tidal wave effect for the Church *by James*

ON May 3, His Grace Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ presided over the re-opening Mass of the Catholic Chaplaincy at Queen's University, Belfast, with the dedication of the altar and the keys of the renovated premises being handed over to the episcopal leader of the Diocese of Down & Connor.

In a solemn ceremony, with beautifully reverent liturgy, the Chaplaincy community and benefactors witnessed an event that will surely mark the beginning of a very promising period at the Catholic Chaplaincy.

Though no larger than, perhaps, a smaller rural parish in regard to regular attendees at Chaplaincy events and Masses, with maybe 70-100 for the Sunday 8 pm Mass, the effects of this brimming, youthful and energetic Catholic community are not to be underestimated.

What the Chaplaincy consists of is committed and devout students who want to take the faith seriously, and that itself is nothing short of something remarkable. Students want to learn all that there is, they want to delve into theology, following and reading the examples of St Thomas Aquinas (of which there is a Thomistic Institute Chapter based at QUB, dedicated to following the Angelic Doctor), St Augustine, Pope Benedict XVI and many of the other great theologians and philosophers that the Church has to offer.

With daily Mass, the spiritual nutrition of the students at Queen's is well looked after, with

Fr Dominic, the Chaplain, and Campus Ministry Coordinator, Shannon Goodwin providing exemplary pastoral support.

The effects of this relatively small, but strong force of energetic Catholics cannot be overlooked in their impact on the national Church. At the last vocations weekend for the Diocesan Priesthood, for those discerning a possible life as Diocesan Priests, nine men of the Chaplaincy attended. Furthermore, many men have already taken the step to enter seminary after their time in the Chaplaincy, with at least three in the last three years.

Now, it must be stated, and as it is important to emphasise, it is not only future clerics that the Chaplaincy has produced. Countless devout Catholic marriages have emerged from this community, strong Catholic families being, of course, the backbone of the Church.

What I have encountered is a group of driven, vibrant and committed Catholics, who are orthodox in their approach to the faith, and recognise the true and universal beauty of the Church.

Those at the Chaplaincy understand that Catholicism is a thinking person's religion. We haven't received the timeless wisdom and fruits of centuries of study from diligent monks and thinkers, to throw it away and think that somehow science, for example, contradicts religion.

Canadian clinical psychologist and renowned speaker, Dr Jordan Peterson once said: "Catholicism is about as sane as it gets." Well,

spirituality instead of helping it. Catholic tradition, however, usually sees beauty as something meaningful rather than unnecessary decoration.

Art, music, and ritual are meant to reflect dignity, mystery, and the belief that ordinary material things can point toward something greater. This idea becomes especially interesting in the digital age. Much of modern life is fast paced and constantly demanding attention. Social media encourages people to scroll quickly from one thing to another, rarely stopping to reflect. Catholic spaces often work differently. Silence, repetition, ritual, and symbolism slow people down. Even young people who feel disconnected from organized religion can still feel drawn to the atmosphere of sacred spaces, because they offer a break from the noise of everyday life.

In recent years, some younger

Catholics have even become more interested in older traditions such as Gregorian chant, candlelit liturgies, and traditional church architecture. Part of this may come from a growing dissatisfaction with digital culture. Online life can feel temporary and shallow, while religious traditions often create a sense of depth, stability, and permanence. Sacred spaces encourage people to pay attention instead of constantly moving on to the next thing.

In the end, the lasting appeal of Catholic aesthetics suggests that beauty continues to meet a human need that modern culture has not fully replaced. Even in a sceptical and highly technological age, people are still drawn to experiences that interrupt ordinary routines and create a sense of wonder. Whether someone interprets that feeling religiously or not, the power of beauty remains difficult to ignore.



Dr Peterson, I would have to concur. From medical students to those studying humanities and complex fields chemistry and physics, the Chaplaincy has a wide range of students; no one thinks that their faith contradicts the meta-physical and tangible world. All of our beliefs, attitudes and thoughts can be defended through rational discussion and debate, because that is what we should be able to do in the 21st century.

In a world that so often promotes the fantasy that religion contradicts science, or that the

Catholic faith is no more than superstitious belief, we need young, energetic and well-formed Catholics who are able to preach the Gospel authentically.

Young people want a faith that is serious in substance and in nature, a liturgy that is transcendent and reflects the sacredness of the sacrifice of the Mass. The Chaplaincy provides these things, challenging the students to be better disciples of Christ, while still enjoying their time during, what is for many, a stressful time at university.



Young Writers share thoughts...

'The case is closed' - Augustine of Hippo, the Pelagian crisis and the authority of the Papacy by Ryan

"Rome has spoken, the case is closed."

IN the year 417 AD, St Augustine of Hippo stood before his North African congregation and announced the end of one of the most dangerous theological controversies of his age, the Pelagian controversy. Pope Innocent I agreed with the decision of North African synods to condemn the movement.

Augustine announced: "The two councils sent their decrees to the Apostolic See and the decrees quickly came back. The cause is finished; would that the error were as quickly finished" (Sermon 131: 10). This quote is condensed into a memorable slogan "Roma locuta est, causa finita est", or "Rome has spoken, the case is closed."

Understanding why Augustine said this is essential for a serious reflection on why the Papacy deserves the attention, respect and obedience of the faithful. What crisis provoked these words, what they meant in the original context and the truth they contain, is what I wish to discuss.

The Pelagian Crisis serves as the background for Augustine's words. Pelagius was a British ascetic who settled in Rome and had attracted considerable admiration for his moral teaching. His error in his teaching was profound. He was teaching that Adam's sin was not truly inherited by all humanity; he believed that human beings

retained a natural capacity to choose good without requiring divine grace, and that baptism was not strictly necessary for the remission of sin. Pelagius' vision was that salvation was largely a matter of personal moral effort. He saw Christ serving more as an inspiring example than as the Redeemer.

To Augustine, this was a gutting of the Gospel, as it denied the depth of the Fall of Adam and Eve; it denied the absolute necessity of God's grace and denied the saving power of Christ's Passion. If Pelagius was right, then humanity was not truly broken, and if that was so then Christ had not truly saved us. This teaching by Pelagius cascades through every doctrine of the Catholic Church.

This controversy was not settled quickly. When two synods in the Holy Land had initially declared Pelagius as free of heresy, Augustine worked to convene two counter-synods in North Africa, at both Carthage and Mileve, in 416 AD. These two councils condemned Pelagianism and sent their findings, alongside personal letters from Augustine and four fellow Bishops, to Pope Innocent I, in Rome. Providing the Pope with the theological evidence on which he could base his judgement.

Pope Innocent I sent a decisive response. He expressed full agreement with the North

African Bishops. He affirmed the necessity of inward grace and rejected the Pelagian theory. He declared both Pelagius and his associate, Caelestius excommunicated, unless both returned to orthodoxy. The Pope's reply is what led to Augustine's famous sermon. With the words of the Pope, he was able to declare the case was now finished.

It is important to understand the weight of Augustine's words. He was not stating that the Pope's voice alone had settled the matter. Augustine was saying that the matter was now definitively settled, as the full process of the Church's judgement had been completed. The African councils had done their theological work, having argued, researched, and prayed on their point. And, following all that, they then turned to Rome.

Not due to a custom, but as Rome is the See of Peter it carries a weight of apostolic authority that no other church possesses. Rome's verdict aligned with North Africa and, with that, there was no ecclesiastical court of appeal to which Pelagians could turn to. This shows the authority of the Papacy operating as it should, that a local discernment was pursued and was then confirmed by the centre. The papacy did not replace thinking of the time but, instead, crowned the thinking of Augustine and North Africa.

So, the question is why does Rome's voice hold so much weight? The answer from Augustine's age is the same answer as today. The single most important reasoning for the Papacy and its authority is from the words of Christ Himself. "He said to them, 'Who do the people say that I am?' Simon Peter said

in reply, 'You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.' Jesus said to him in reply, 'Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah. For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my heavenly Father. And so, I say to you, you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of the Hell shall not prevail against it. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom of Heaven. Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in Heaven; and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in Heaven.' Then He strictly ordered His disciples to tell no one that He was the Messiah." (Matthew 16:15-19). Christ was designating Peter as the foundation of the visible, unified authority through which the Church would navigate the ages.

Peter went to Rome, where he died. And so, the Bishops of Rome have been his direct successors. It established the community of the Church, no matter how scattered the Church maybe, in every nation on this world. There is one unquestionable point of unity, that there is a single voice that, should the moment arise, speaks with the finality of The Lord's guidance. This is exactly what was witnessed in North Africa in 417.

A major misunderstanding of Papal authority is that it represents an imposition, that it is a heavy hand of institutional power which is suppressing the freedom of an individual conscience or a local tradition. The Pelagian Crisis, if rightfully understood, reveals an opposite truth, that the Papacy is a gift to the Church, a gift of clarity in the very confusing world we navigate.

To understand this, consider the Pelagian Crisis could have dragged on indefinitely, with each and every synod having to

weigh in and each Bishop having an interpretation, there would be no resolution in sight. The church would be fractured; the layperson would have been left completely uncertain if their baptism was necessary, whether God's grace was real, and whether Christ's sacrifice was indispensable. It was Rome and its authority that could bring about the end to this debate and bring about the needed clarity.

St Augustine knew this. For all intents and purposes, Augustine was a genius, with an independent intellect very few people possess. He, alone, could have disproved the Pelagian heresy. He gathered two councils, helped acquire theological evidence for the North African argument, and he held the sermon. But, he recognised the importance of unity within the Church; for the sake of the ordinary believer like you and me, it was a protection to have the Papacy, as it protects us from falsehoods and hidden truths. The papacy acts as a truth-worthy anchor for the Catholic.

Every generation has its own form of the Pelagian heresy, our own sophisticated reduction of the Gospel to make the truth more comfortable and manageable for the mortal mind, to make us less dependent on the divine. For Augustine, it was the denial of original sin. In other times, it was the denial of Christ's Divinity by Arius, the rejection of the Resurrection, or even today, the gradual erosion of the Church's moral teaching in favour of keeping up with secularisation of society.

In all these cases, the Papacy has guided the way. At the First Vatican Council, the Papacy was called a "perpetual principle and foundation of unity" - Pastor Aeternus. The Papacy is a voice that, when all is in a dispute, can point to what the Church has always believed and taught. Such as with the Council of Nicaea against Arianism.

We are not called to blind obedience to the Church, but to a reasoned deference. When Rome

speaks on matters of morality and faith, they are not speaking arbitrarily. The Pope in Rome speaks from a wealth of scripture, tradition, and 1,993 years of reflection and understanding. Established on Pentecost of 33 AD. When Rome speaks, as witnessed by Augustine, it speaks with the guidance and authority trusted onto Peter by Christ. It speaks with the breadth of knowledge it has accumulated in its nearly bi-millennium of existence.

In the 587,440 days since the year 417, the Church remains. And it holds the same importance for humanity as it did then; all confusion about the Gospel, grace, and the nature of being human, has not diminished in these years. What also hasn't diminished is the clarity offered by the Pope in Rome. He is not a human being imposing an imperialistic will, but the voice of Peter's successor, standing on that rock that Jesus Christ established, with the weight of apostolic continuity, who has the ability to say to a confused world what Augustine said to his congregation in Hippo: The case is finished. Now that the error might end as well.

To end, I will share a quote from Cardinal Francis George, who was next to Pope Benedict XVI at his election. The cardinal looked out towards the ancient site of Roman power and reflected on where the successors of those persecutors of Christians are. In my eyes, this quote truly shows the persistence of the Papacy and how it has stayed an authority to this world.

"I was gazing toward the Circus Maximus, toward the Palatine Hill where the Roman emperors once resided and reigned and looked down upon the persecution of Christians, and I thought, 'Where are their successors? Where is the successor of Caesar Augustus? Where is the successor of Marcus Aurelius? And finally, who cares? But if you want to see the successor of Peter, he is right next to me, smiling and waving at the crowds.'"

Why pray in Latin? by Harry

I would like to look at the question why pray in Latin. It is considered a sacred language. In his 1962 encyclical, 'Veterum Sapientia', Pope John XXIII wrote that the Latin language "has been consecrated by constant use by the Apostolic See, the mother and teacher of all churches."

Also, as it is no longer used in everyday life, Latin can make prayer feel more solemn, intentional and reverent.

It also encourages focus and discipline. Latin requires greater attention and encourages deeper concentration in prayer, rather than falling into automatic

recitation.

There is also the universality of the language to consider. Catholics who pray in Latin are united, whether they live in France, Mexico or Germany, for example, and so displaying the universal Catholic element.

It also has an inherent beauty and dignity, which is evident to those who hear it chanted, prayed or sung. Its long and short syllables and phonetic characteristics, make it poetic.

And, as Pope Pius XII stated in his 1947 encyclical, 'Mediator Dei': "Latin is an effective antidote for any corruption doctrinal truth."

"Latin is an effective antidote for any corruption doctrinal truth."

(Pope Pius XII, 'Mediator Dei')

St Maria Goretti by Ellie

ST Maria Goretti is the patroness saint of Chastity, Rape Victims, Girls, Youth, Teenage girls, Poverty, Purity and Forgiveness.

Maria died when she was only 11 years old, after defending herself from sexual assault. Her story focuses on lessons of faith, purity and forgiveness. She was stabbed with a dagger 14 times by a young man and sadly died in hospital.

I feel that her story should be shared now, especially due to all the violence against women that has happened lately. Since 2020, there have been 30 women

killed at the hands of men in Northern Ireland. Due to this, many families have been left heartbroken; children have been left without their mothers.

Northern Ireland has become one of the most dangerous places for women and young girls. I believe, due to how often these attacks have happened and how many people have been deeply hurt, that there should be more education on this topic. Although it is quite brutal, it is vital to be educated. More awareness could lead to less hurt in this world.

**TOGETHER
WE CAN
END
VIOLENCE
AGAINST
WOMEN
AND GIRLS**

Young Writers share thoughts...

St Longinus by Conor

LONGINUS was the name of the Roman centurion, a high-ranking soldier, who was responsible for piercing the side of Jesus with a lance during His crucifixion.

After he had witnessed all of the events of the crucifixion, he famously stated: "Truly this was the Son of God", making him the first to declare the divinity of Christ after the event.

He was said to be tortured by lions, which manifested as guilt, shame and doubt, terrorising him at night.

Longinus was believed to be visually impaired in some way, but was cured when the blood and water poured out of Christ's wound into his eyes. This likely confirmed his faith, as it is thought that he would have heard of, or known about, Jesus from His public ministry and miracles.

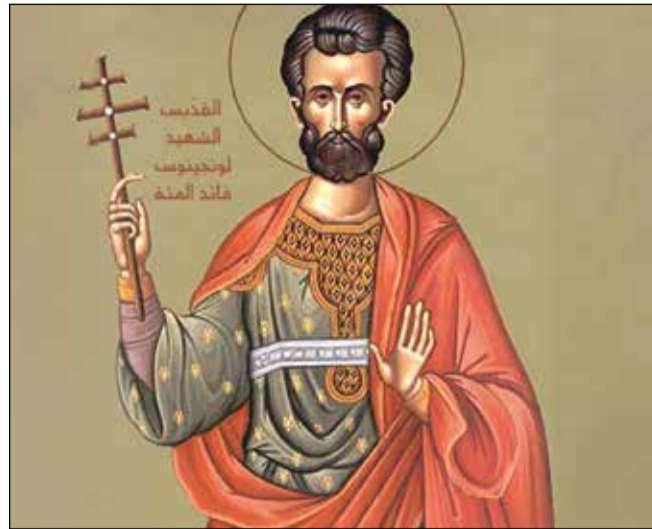
At some point, Longinus became a known convert to Christianity and began to preach the religion. As a result, he had to flee from the Romans in Palestine, and

went to Cappadocia in modern-day Turkey, where he would eventually become the Bishop of Caesarea, his home town.

Pontius Pilate eventually got word of his conversion, and ordered that Longinus be brought to him. He had Longinus' eyes removed in an attempt to mock him. Jesus had returned his vision, so they removed it from him after he refused to deny his faith.

Despite this, he kept preaching while blind, so they cut out his tongue in an attempt to prevent him from speaking. However, in a twist of events, he was still able to speak and continue preaching. Many accounts stated that it was as if God was speaking through him, as he was thought to have a thunderous voice.

Longinus was then brought into a Roman temple, where he was told to denounce his faith a third time. It is said that he grabbed a sword and sliced the head off a statue of one of the Roman gods, stating, "Let's see what your



gods do now", and the temple is said to have been shaken in an earthquake that destroyed all the Roman god statues. After this, the Romans decided they had enough of Longinus and beheaded him.

The story of Longinus stands

as evidence of the existence of Christ, as well as His miracles. A man who was lying would not take his faith to the death; his faith was so strong that no amount of persecution could persuade him to turn from Christ.

Desertmartin generous Cup of Love for Lourdes pilgrims



YOUNG Desertmartin parishioners presenting Fr Michael McCaul, CC Desertmartin & Ballinascreen, who is also spiritual director for the Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage, with a £3,503.73 cheque towards youth pilgrim costs. The money was raised through a very successful Coffee Morning in Desertmartin Hall, as well as donations from individuals and businesses.

Diocesan Youth Marian Evening

THE Diocesan Youth team, along with young people going on the Derry Diocesan Youth Fatima Pilgrimage in August, are hosting an hour of Marian Evening of Prayer in St Mary's Church, Creggan, on Wednesday, May 27, at 7 pm, to celebrate the Month of Mary.

Weather permitting, there will be an outdoor Rosary procession, a short talk on Our Lady and

The Eucharist, Adoration & Benediction, with music provided by the Diocesan Youth Music Group.

All are welcome, particularly students.

"Don't lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God." (Our Lady of Fatima.)

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 7PM

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Having enjoyed decades of singing together and forming great friendships...

Culdaff Choir invites new members to ministry of connecting God and community



This photograph was taken about 68 years ago at a Confirmation in Bocan, and includes, front l/r - Dominic McDaid, Anne McLaughlin, Mary Ruddy, Sadie Mooney and Anne Donaghy. Middle l/r - Unknown Man, Bernard McGuinness, Margaret McConalogue, Mary Coyle (National School teacher and leader), Myra McLaughlin, Bridget McColgan, Unknown Woman. Back l/r - Eilish McLaughlin, Anne McLaughlin, Unknown Lady, Patrick McLaughlin, Nuala Ruddy.

THE hills around Culdaff, in Co Donegal, are alive with the sound of hymns to Mary in this month of May, as the congregation of St Mary's Church, Bocan, join the choir in celebrating Our Lady.

The Bocan Choir has some of the longest serving choir members in the Diocese, with its guitarist and joint choir leader, Dominic McDaid clocking up 70 years, from the time he moved from serving on the altar to singing in the choir as a boy.

Others include the spritely Seamus Harkin, who is 82 years old and joined the choir about 60 years ago and his wife, Kathleen, a member for decades who said that the choir was her favourite weekly outing; Breege Kearney, with around 50 years' service; Catherine McCallion, joint choir leader and organist, who has been part of the parish music ministry for 40 years; Jane Doherty, with 32 years' service; Patricia McLaughlin, who has been a member for 25 years; Anne Kavanagh, a member for over 65 years, and Jan McGuinness for over 40 years, who along with daughter, Maria, accompanied her late husband, Bernard, who was a member from boyhood until his passing.

During a discussion with Catherine about the choir, Anne McGrory, another choir member whose parents had also sung

in and led the choir at a time, recalled an old diary with entries in it about Culdaff Choir. It was kept by a Pat McDaid, who was born in 1854 and lived in the Glebe, in Culdaff, where he had run a shop with his wife.

Delighted to share what some of the entries were, Catherine told 'The Net': "Pat had made notes about life in general, including his participation in Culdaff Choir. The first entry regarding the choir was towards the end of 1888, when he wrote, 'I sang for the first time in the gallery in the choir in Bocan on December 2, 1888.' He also noted that Bocan Chapel was seated and had repairs in 1888.

"Another entry was about a Confirmation ceremony the following year, which the choir probably sang at. He noted that there were 363 children confirmed in Bocan Chapel on August 28, 1889, by Bishop Kelly, who was in very delicate health on the day while administering the sacrament, and died a few days later on September 1.

"In another entry, he wrote that his knees were cracking from walking back and forth to Bocan Chapel. He must have walked to Bocan twice a day at times."

"There isn't much then until Sunday, January 6, 1924," said Catherine, "when he made notes on the choir concerning a holy hour from four o'clock to five

o'clock. He wrote that there were 'five persons wearing glasses in the choir' - Brigid Mary Kane, Mary Mahon, Maggie McGuinness, Miss Doherty, and himself."

Catherine went on to highlight other entries: "On February 17, 1925, he went to Mass in the morning and Benediction at 6 pm, but there was no music because the rats had eaten the bellows of the harmonium once again. And, on May 2, 1925, he wrote, 'there was a holy hour this evening and we had a very good choir, but the harmonium is still out of order and we just sang without it.' While an entry for St Patrick's Day 1926, reads that he was at Mass and sang alone in the choir.

"Then, on March 23, he noted that Miss Houston was helping Miss Deeny, a teacher in the local primary school in Gleneely, with the Mass set that they were going to play in Bocan.

Vespers

"An entry on March 4, 1926, records that he was at a Holy Hour and Miss Deeny was the organist, and another on Sunday, May 25, 1926, records that he was at Mass and Vespers in evening, and that the choir was very good.

"He also recorded that there were six Masses said in Bocan Chapel on a Christmas morning, and they would have sung at the six Masses. After three Masses, they took a break and had tea and sandwiches in the hall, and then went on with the other three Masses."

Having a long connection with the choir, Catherine found the diary entries fascinating: "I was able to go back 68 years, for which I have a black and white photograph, but this diary took me back further.

"He also mentioned a priest in it - Fr Hugh Kane buried in the same grave as Fr Paddy O'Kane. Fr Hugh was a curate in Malin and died on September 6, 1924.

He noted that Fr Hugh had died at 2 am in the morning and that there was no choir that day, nor a month later when it was his Month's Mind Mass. Fr Hugh was a grand-uncle of Fr Paddy O'Kane."

She added: "I can go back to about 1940, when a lady called Kathleen Deeny, a niece of the Miss Deeny mentioned in the diary, started playing the church organ when she was 14 years of age. She played the organ for a long number of years, up to 1965, when she got married. Her daughter, Mary Shiels, told me that there was a man called Hugh McDermott who sang in the choir, and who now lives in Carndonagh.

"A lot of people would remember walking to choir practices once a week in the chapel and Kathleen Deeny playing the harmonium in the gallery. She was a strict but good teacher."

Catherine went on to speak of the arrival of a new curate, Fr Gerry O'Neill: "He was a great piano player, so he took on board to play the harmonium or whatever, and played at Holy Hours and Devotions. He basically had some of the children from Bocan Chapel singing along with him. When he was moved on, I think that is when John Joe McGrory and his wife, Deirdre, took charge of the choir. John Joe was a good keyboard player, and his wife was a fully trained singer and had a great voice.

"When I joined the choir 38-40 years ago, guitars were introduced and the organ was played as well. A priest came to retire in the parish called Fr Cormac McGonigle, an uncle of Fr Jim McGonigle, and he was a big advocate for the choir. He introduced us to many new folk hymns which were suitable for choirs."

She continued: "We had many choir practices in Bocan old school over the years, and we



Fr Jim McGonigle with choir members on the occasion of his Golden Jubilee. Front l/r - Seamus Harkin and his grandson, Shane, Dominic McDaid (guitarist), Claire Duffy, Fr Jim McGonigle, Jane Doherty, Patricia McLaughlin, Catherine McCallion (guitarist), and Bernard McGuinness. Back l/r - Fiona McDermott, Anne Cavanagh, Kathleen Harkin, Breege Kearney, and Jan McGuinness.



Members of the current Culdaff Choir include: Front l/r - Catherine McCallion; Sandra Doherty and her daughter; Pauline McLaughlin; Breege Kearney; and Alicia Atherton. Back l/r - Jane Doherty; Seamus Harkin; Patricia McLaughlin; and Dominic McDaid. (Missing from pic - Anne McGrory and Ellie McDaid).

still have several loyal members today, though we have lost two great members - Patrick McLaughlin, who died 17 years ago, and Bernard McGuinness, who died four years ago.

"We have formed great friendships in the choir that have lasted all down the decades, and we are still great friends today. We don't actually rehearse anymore as we have been singing together for so long!"

"At the moment," added Catherine, "we are using guitar and organ for music. I play the

organ or the guitar one Sunday and Dominic McDaid plays the guitar the other Sunday. The Choir is there every Sunday for 10 am Mass, and we only attend the Vigil Masses for Easter and Christmas.

"We are always looking out for new members to help us to connect God and our community, and would encourage anyone who can play an instrument or sing to come along and join us. St Augustine believed that when you sing the praises of God, you pray twice."

Malin Turas



Derry Diocesan Knock pilgrims to join in All Ireland Rosary Rally

THE 41st All Ireland Rosary Rally will take place on Saturday, June 6, when thousands of pilgrims are expected to travel to the Eucharistic & Marian Shrine of Knock, in Co Mayo, to be part of a very special day of celebrating Our Lady's powerful prayer of protection.

The annual Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine will take place on this day, to join in prayer with those gathered for the Rosary Rally. And the following weekend, the first world-wide Marian Procession will take place in Derry City.

The key speakers this year include Fr Chris Alar, the Provincial Superior of the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception in the United States, England and Argentina, who is well known for his 'Explaining the Faith' YouTube series; Sr Angela de Fatima Coelho, who prayed at the tombs of Jacinta and Francisco Marto as a little growing up in Portugal and became vice-postulator for the cause of the three Fatima children; Fr John Keane, renowned for his healing ministry; Bishop Oliver Doeme, Nigeria, who promotes the power of the Rosary; Nikki Kingsley, a devout Muslim for 40 years who shares the story of her conversion to Catholicism; and Archbishop Eamon Martin, Primate of All Ireland, who will be the main celebrant of the three o'clock Mass and will renew the Consecration of Ireland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

The programme for the day opens with One Million Global Rosary Campaign announcement in the

Basilica at 9.20 am, followed by the first Fr Chris Alar talk at 9.30 am. There will be a Rosary & Scapular Making Workshop running in St John's Centre from 9.30-11.30 am. Sr Angela de Fatima Coelho will give her talk in the Basilica at 10.15 am, and this will be followed by a Eucharistic Healing Service there at 10.45 am.

There will be book signings by Fr Alar, Nikki Kingsley and Sr Angela in St John's Centre at 11.15 am, and again at 5 pm. At 11.30 am, Fr Marius O'Reilly will lead the First Saturday 15-Minute Meditation in the Basilica. There will be Children's Rosary and Guided Adoration, led by the Home of the Mother Sisters, from 12-12.30 pm in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

Bishop Oliver Doeme will give his talk in the Basilica at 12.45 pm, and this will be followed by Nikki Kingsley's testimony at 1.15 pm. Fr Alar will give his second talk in the Basilica from 2-2.40 pm, and this will be followed by the celebration of Mass at 3 pm, and the renewal of the Consecration of Ireland to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, with Anointing of the Sick. The singing will be by Dana and the Fr Peyton Cluster Choir.

An outside Rosary procession will take place at 4.30 pm, led by Sr Caitriona Kavanagh OP and the Children's Rosary, with singing by Dana.

Stalls in St John's Centre open at 9 am, with representatives from Totus Tuus, CAN, First Saturdays Apostolate, Children's Rosary, Fr Peyton Centre, Marian Pilgrimages, Radio Maria, Catholic Mothers Ireland, Alliance of the

Two Hearts, Pro Life Campaign, Youth 2000, Dominicans/St Martin, Fr Willie Doyle, Lough Derg, Dana - Light the Fire, EWTN, Little Nellie, Pure in Heart, LEAF, and Ballintubber Abbey.

The day before, on Friday, June 5, there will be a programme of prayer for an outpouring of graces on the All-Ireland Rosary Rally. Fr Marius O'Reilly will lead Children's Rosary and Adoration in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel from 4.45-5.15 pm, which will be followed by the celebration of Mass in the Apparition Chapel by Fr Chris Alar, Fr Marius and Fr Valerian Castelina, from 5.30-6.15

pm. The time of prayer will come to a close with Adoration and Benediction led by Fr Marius in the Apparition Chapel, from 8-9 pm.

A bill board campaign is in use this year to promote the annual Rosary Rally further, with one in Derry City, at Rossville Street, and another in Magherafelt, Co Derry, amongst almost 50 billboards erected across the island.

Rosary Rally Transport

Buses going to the 41st All Ireland Rosary Rally from the North include:

*Antrim (Belfast): Brenda Cleary - 07949 358881



*Belfast: Bernie Smith - 07956451655

*Armagh: Forkhill - Brendan McKernan - 07543 584784; Lurgan - Anto Crossey 07368 125572

*Derry: Limavady - Mairead Peoples: 0044 7743 264331; Waterside/Strathfoyle - St Eugene's Cathedral Office: 00442871262894; Bellaghy - Patrick Mc Erlean: 00447540839152.

*Donegal: Glenties, Ardara,

Killybegs, Bruckless, Inver, Donegal Town - Veronica Molloy: 087 7970531; Gweedore, Letterkenny, Donegal Town - Marian Curran - 086 8048152.

*Down: Ardglass - Sean McAlea - 0044 7504 041526.

*Tyrone: Omagh - Ann Lench - 0044 7734 562102; Castlederg/Aghyaran - Pauline McAteer - 0044 2881 671003.

To bring a bus please email allirelandrosaryrally@gmail.com

Marian Shrines answer Bishop Donal's invitation to...

Join in first ever world-wide Marian Procession led by Derry

by Barry Mallett

THE world's most recognised Marian Shrines are joining in unity and answering Bishop Donal's global invitation to join in unity with this first ever Worldwide Marian Procession, on Saturday, June 13, the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, Fatima and St Anthony.

At present, 180 parishes across six continents are onboard, with recognised Marian Shrines such as: Knock; Fatima; Lourdes; La Salette, France; Pontmain Shrine, France; Garabandal, Spain; Montligeon Shrine, France; Pellevoisin, France; Beauraing Shrine, Belgium; Sr Lucia's Convent, Combra, Portugal, where Our Lady appeared to Sr Lucia; St Anthony's Santa Cruz Chapel, Portugal, that he lived in; and many more convents and monasteries all signed up to join in.

This procession follows the City of Derry hosting two Worldwide Eucharistic processions in 2025, which saw 220 parishes across six continents join in unity. You will know them by their fruits, well the fruits from the last processions are an increase in Mass attendance and vocations, with a real hunger and desire to see these continue to help lead our youth back to God.

The event schedule is starting in St Mary's Chapel, Creggan, with 24 hours of Adoration from 10.30 am on Friday, June 12, the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, until 10 am on Saturday, June 13.

The Men's Rosary of Ireland will then lead the Holy Rosary at the Guildhall Square, from 10.45-11.15 am, and this will be followed by Holy Mass in St Mary's Chapel, Creggan, at 12 noon. Afterwards, the Worldwide Eucharistic Procession will make its way through the streets of Derry, ending in Celtic Park GAA Stadium, where there will be Benediction and an afternoon of praise and worship.

We are delighted by the level of

interest shown in the launching of the event, with already over 140 parishes signed up to join in with either Eucharistic Processions, Adoration or Holy Mass in unity from around the world.

Prayer groups from all over the world, such as the Marian Movement of Priests, the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, the Discalced Carmelites, Servant of God Clare Crockett's Home of The Mother Order, Men's Rosary, Women's Rosary, Catholic Mothers of Ireland, Legion of Mary, St Vincent de Paul, Precious Life, Youth 2000, Fr Peyton Centre, Holy Cross Family Ministries, Holy Souls Groups, Cursillo, Walk to Knock, Children's Rosary, Children of the Eucharist, Divine Mercy, Fulton Sheen Institute, and many more have pledged their support, with bus-loads from the four corners of Ireland coming to Derry, flags in hand, to honour Our Eucharistic King and the Holy Mother of God.

Alvaro, from Uniquely Mary USA YouTube, and Mark McLean, YouTube, are flying in to cover the event, with many more local and international YouTuber's and news outlets giving press releases and covering the event, such as: Life Site News; EWNT; Shalom TV; The Net Magazine; Highland Radio; Irish Catholic Newspaper; and Kevin Toland of Storm Media, advertising the event.

In the build-up to the event, we have made a worldwide call-out for people to return to Confession, Holy Mass and Adoration during the month of May. And, on May 12, the Eve of the First Apparition of Our Lady of Fatima, we launched St Louis de Monfort's 33-day Consecration to Our Lady world-wide, to cover the event in prayer, which you can still join in.

We are asking all men to wear white shirts and blue ties, and all ladies, girls, to wear blue and, if possible, mantels during

Holy Mass to make the event more reverent. We'll hopefully have a sea of Blue, as Mary's Blue Army rises.

This is a call to all the families of Ireland to come to Derry to show our love for Our Blessed Mother, and especially to our youth. It is a procession of love, healing, celebration and liberation for all the trauma of the Troubles.

This procession will be a call out to the world that the Irish 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. To Jesus through Mary.

With help, we have composed a song for the event called 'The Heart of a Mother', which will be released

soon on iTunes. We also have a GoFundMe page on the website to help fund the event, as we intend to give out over 10,000 bottles of Holy Oils, Miraculous Medals, Rosary's and other sacramentals to all who attend, so that they can bring these sacramentals back into the home.

Holy Oils are now available in the Farm Shop at Killea, being run by Gregory the Oil Man, for any families seeking these before the event.

For more information, and updates on parking facilities for buses etc, go to Guardians of the Faith YouTube Channel, or to register your parish to join in unity go to: www.worldwidemarianprocession.com or email avemariajune13@gmail.com.

Eangach

Mí Mhuire – is í a dháileann an grásta

“Bring flowers of the fairest. Bring flowers of the rarest...”

Is iad seo na focail a cheoltar go coitianta san eaglais, in go leor paróistí ar fud ár ndeoise is dócha. Dar ndóigh, is é seo an chéad líne den iomann cháiliúil Béarla ar a dtugtar ainm sa teanga sin a chiallaíonn ‘Banríon na Bealtaine’. Is é seo an cineál grá a léiríonn muid do Mhuire. Is maith linn grá ar leith speisialta a thabhairt di an mí seo, ina gcuimníonn muid uirthi agus tugann muid urraim di ina ról mar Mháthair Dé, Máthair dúinne – mháthair a bhíonn dár gcosaint agus dár dtreorú fríd an tsaol.

Is iomaí teideal atá againn do Mhuire, a thugann muid uirthi go grámhar agus muid ag cuimhneamh fá na gnéithe uilig den ról saici: Máthair na Trócaire, Banríon na Síochána, Máthair na hEaglaise, Banríon na bhFlaitheas. Ba mhaith liom féin, áfach, suntas a thabhairt do theideal amháin san alt seo, agus díriú ar roinnt de na gnéithe a bhaineann le ról ar leith. Is é sin ná, *Muire na nGrásta*.

Focal atá luaite cúpla uair san alt seo cheana féin, ach tá *ról* speisialta ag Muire. Dúirt an t-aingeal Gaibrial léi ‘*Sé do bheatha a Mhuire, atá lán de ghrásta*’. Bhí sé ag beannú di anseo go díreach sular ioncholláidh Íosa ina broinn, agus ghlac sé ár nádúr daonna chuige féin. Bhí an t-aingeal ag tabhairt aitheantais go raibh Muire lán den Spiorad Naomh. Ach ní deireadh

an scéil an méid sin. De réir creideamh na hEaglaise, bíonn an ról speisialta i bhfeidhm ag Muire agus í ag fáil dúinn grásta ó Dhia – agus ní hamháin sin – creidtear san Eaglais gur *fríd Mhuire* a thagann chugainn *gach* grásta a fhaigheann muid ó Dhia. Biodh sin gur iarr muid sin uirthi d’aon turas, nó nár iarr. Ba fríd Mhuire a tháinig Íosa isteach sa tsaol mhór – tháinig Dia i gcló an duine – agus bíonn gach grásta a thagann le hÍosa ag teacht fríd Mhuire.

Bíonn sé ina phribhiléid ag Muire a bheith mar bhronntóir an ghrásta. Is maith léi an grásta a thabhairt dúinn go flúirseach mar is muidne a clann, agus is toil léi muid a chosaint, a stiúradh, ar ár n-aistear. Is é seo an rud a léirítear ar an Bhonn Míorúilteach – a lámha sínte amach chugainn agus grásta ag teacht as a lámha. Is maith léi cuidiú linn agus is féidir linne iarraidh uirthi cuidiú linn. Ar an ábhar sinn, glaonn daoine uirthi faoin ainm sin – Muire na nGrásta. Thar na blianta, d’fhás seo mar thraidisiún san Eaglais, agus forbraíodh *deabhóid* ar leith thart timpeall air. In 1916, nuair a cuireadh Naomh Padre Pio go dtí an mhainistir in San Giovanni Rotondo ina gcaithfeadh sé an chuid eile dá shaol – ba í Muire na nGrásta patrún na mainistreach sin (“*Santa Maria delle Grazie*”). Bhí an ord Caipisíneach san áit sin leis na céadta bliain fán am, agus tá seanphictiúr de Mhuire na nGrásta go fóill le feiceáil ag an altóir

ansin sa tseanseipéal. Bhí grá ag an ord don phictiúr go traidisiúnta, agus ba ag an altóir sin a dófráil Naomh Pio an t-aifreann, agus ghuigh sé os a chomhair. Níos moille anonn, tógadh an seipéal nua, atá i bhfad níos mó, de bharr na sluaite a tháinig ar cuairt chuig Naomh Pio – agus Muire na nGrásta patrún an tseipéil sin fosta – tá a híomhá anois taobh thiar den altóir ansin fosta agus áit lánach aige ansin. Mósáic ghlórmhar.

Thig leat a rá go bhfuil deonú Dé i gceist leis an méid seo, óir tháinig na sluaite chuig an tsráidbhaile seo ar cuairt chuig Naomh Pio, agus a fuair grásta. Maithiúnas, leigheas, áthas, iompú creidimh, suaimhneas, freagraí ar phaidreacha ar a son féin agus ar son daoine eile. Áit atá in San Giovanni Rotondo ina raibh nithe maith a dtabhairt ag Dia do dhaoine, agus tá sin amhlaidh inniu. Maidir le Padre Pio, bhí grá mór aige do Muire, agus dlúthchaidreamh léi. Mhol sé do dhaoine go mór an Coróin Mhuire (an Paidrín) a rá – dar leis gur ‘gléas troda’ atá sa Paidrín don té atá i mbun catha in éadan an diabhair. Ba bhreá leis cuidiú a iarraidh ar Mhuire na nGrásta. Tá paidir galánta ann a chuireann Caipisínigh San Giovanni chun cinn, paidir ina n-iarrtar cuidiú uirthi (curtha leis an alt). Thig liom féin a dhearbhu ó thaithí pearsanta, go bhfuil sé cumhachtach mar phaidir, agus molaim do dhuine ar bith é. Tá máthair grámhar againn ar neamh atá



Muire na nGrásta in San Giovanni Rotondo

ag iarraidh muid a threorú. Ba mhaith léi a bheith fial linn, agus ba mhaith léi cuidiú linn – cuidiú linn na flaitheas a bhaint amach go háirithe. Ach tá gean aici orainn inár ngnáthchúrsaí laethúla. Labhair le do mháthair!

Mar fhocal scoir, in eagrán eile le déanaí, scríobh mé fá Chnoc Mhuire, agus ba thoil liom leanstas leis an téama sin. Tá ar intinn agam – le cuidiú Dé – pilleadh air amach anseo. Ach go gairid anseo, b’fhéidir go bhfuil nasc le déanamh anseo sa mhéid is gur tháinig sí go hÉireann le lámha agus súile ardaithe i dtreo na bhflaitheas – ag guí. Seans go bhfuil sí ag impi orainn an rud céanna a dhéanamh. Leanaimis a eiseamláir, labhairmis léi, iarraimis grásta uirthi.

PRAYER TO OUR LADY OF GRACE
venerated at the church of the Capuchins
in San Giovanni Rotondo

1 - *O heavenly treasure* of all graces, Mother of God and my Mother Mary, since you are the first-born daughter of the Eternal Father and hold in your hands His Omnipotence, be moved to pity my soul and grant me the grace which I fervently ask of You. *Hail Mary...*

2 - *O merciful dispenser* of divine graces, Mary most holy, Mother of the Eternal Incarnate Word Who has crowned you with His immense wisdom, look upon the greatness of my sorrow and grant me the grace I need so much. *Hail Mary...*

3 - *O most loving dispenser* of divine graces, Immaculate Spouse of the Eternal Holy Spirit, most holy Mary, who have received from Him a heart which is moved to pity by human misfortunes and which is constrained to offer consolation to those who suffer, be moved to pity my soul and grant me the grace which I await from you with full confidence in your immense goodness. *Hail Mary...*

O my Mother, treasurer of all graces, refuge of poor sinners, consolation of the afflicted, hope of those who despair and most powerful help of Christians, I place all my confidence in you, being sure that you will obtain for me from Jesus the grace which I so much desire, if it is for the good of my soul. Amen. *Hail Holy Queen...*

With ecclesiastical approval

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Paidir na gCaipisíneach do Mhuire na nGrásta (Aistriúchán garbh)

A Chisteoir Neamhaí na nGrásta uile, a Mhuire, a Mháthair Dé is a Mháthair liom! Ós tú céadghin iníon an Athar Shíoraí, agus ós rud é go bhfuil a Uilechumhacht i do lámha agat, glac trua ar m'anam agus bronn orm an grásta a iarraim go dúthrachtach ort. Sé do Bheatha a Mhuire...

A Dháileoír Thrócairigh na ngrásta neamhaí, a Mhuire RóBheannaithe is a Mháthair an Bhriathair Ionchollaithe Shíoraí, a rinne tú a corónú lena eagna ollmhór, amharc ar mhéid mo bhróin agus bronn orm an grásta atá de dhíth orm go mór. Sé do Bheatha a Mhuire...

A Dháileoír RóGhrámhair na ngrásta diaga, a chéile gan smál an Sprioraid Naomh Shíoraí, a Mhuire RóNaofa, a fuair croí uaidh a bhíonn corraithe le trua a ghlacadh do anachain daoine, agus a dtugtar uirthi sólas a thabhairt dóibh siúd a bhíonn ag fulaingt – glac trua do m'anam agus tabhair dom an grásta a iarraim ort go foighneach, agus go muiníneach as do mhaitheas ollmhór. Sé do Bheatha a Mhuire...

A Mháthair liom, is tú cisteoir gach grásta, foscadh don pheacach bhocht, sólas don té a bhíonn ag fulaingt, dóchas an duine gan dóchas, agus cuidiú róchumhachtach gach Críostaí. Is asat atá mo mhuinín uilig, agus tá mé cinnte go bhfaighidh tú dom, ó Íosa, an grásta a iarraim – má tá sin ar son leasa m'anama.

Go mbeannaítear duit a Bhanríon Naofa...

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.

Slógadh na Corónach Muire – Bígí ansin!

Beidh imeacht mhór ar siúl i gCnoc Mhuire ar an 6ú Meitheamh, agus beidh na mílte duine ag triail ann le freastal ar Shlógadh Uile-Éireann na Corónach Muire. Tá an slógadh seo ag dul ó neart go neart i bhfírinne le blianta beaga anuas – rud atá soiléir don té a fhreastalaíonn nuair a fheiceann siad slóite daoine ansin, idir óg agus aosta, as gach cearn den tír (agus fiú níos faide i gcéin).

Cad é a tharraingíonn daoine ansin? Ceiliúradh mór creidimh atá ann cinnte. Ach tá fíorbhuntaistí spioradálta á bhfáil ag daoine ann, agus mothaíonn mórán go mbíonn siad neartaithe sa chreideamh sa acu, sa chaidreamh sa acu leis an Tiarna, agus leis an Mhaighdean Mhuire.

Go lánach san imeacht, bíonn mórshuíl ollmhór ann ina n-iompraítear dealbh de Mhuire an Chnoic, deirtear an paidrín agus cantar amhráin.

Tá clár iomlán aochaintoirí le bheith ann i mbliana, mar a bamlaidh sna blianta eile – rud a thugann deis do dhaoine éisteacht le cainteanna ar ábhair spéisiúla, nó ábhair a thugann

ardú croí nó spreagadh. I mbliana, mar shampla, beidh an sagart Meiriceánach mór le rá – An tAth. Chris Alar – ag caint. Tá clú ar an Ath. Chris ó de bharr na léachtaí a thugann sé ar réimse leathan ábhar, a n-amharcan mórán ar fud an domhain orthu – ar chainéal Youtube ‘*Divine Mercy*’ de chuid na Marian Fathers. Beidh easpag ár ndeoise féin ag caint i mbliana fosta – an Easpag Mac Eóin. Beidh leabhair le ceannach, agus beidh síniú leabhair ann fosta, i measc mórán rudaí eile.

Níl spás go leor anseo, áfach, le sonraí a thabhairt fá gach rud eile, ach molaim go mór do gach duine smaoinemh fá bheith i láthair – ócáid speisialta amach is amach. Mar dhlaoi mhullaigh – déanfaidh an tArdeaspag Éamon Martin Éire a choisreacan do Mhuire mar chuid den Aifreann ar 3 a chlog.

Beidh busanna á réachtáil ó áiteanna fud fad ar Éirinn. B’fhiú an rud é a sheiceáil, an bhfuil ceann i do cheantar féin.

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Tributes paid to former teacher and youth promoter, Kathleen Doherty...

Creggan Bene Merenti recipient showed up...stayed the course...and put others first *Photographs by Stephen Latimer*



THE noon Mass in St Mary's Church, Creggan, on Sunday, May 10, was an extra special occasion, with Bishop Donal there to present the prestigious Bene Merenti Medal to the inspirational Kathleen Doherty for her great services to parish life, especially for the youth.

Bishop Donal was the main celebrant of the Mass, and he was joined by Fr Daniel McFaul, PP, and Fr Ignacy Saniuta CC, with members of St Mary's Creggan Scouts and St Eugene's Scouts assisting as altar servers, in a tribute to Kathleen's contribution to scouting life in Derry.

And, in a nod to her teaching days in St Mary's, the choir for the Mass consisted of members of St Mary's College Choir, directed by principal, Brendan McGinn.

In his homily, reflecting on the Readings of the day, Bishop Donal remarked: "Parish is at its best when those who celebrate the mystery of divine love are driven out to build community, bringing the mystery of the Cross to heal the wounds of those who have been scarred by life. Community will thrive, not just with more money but with generous loving hearts."

He went on to note that Kathleen, whom he would afterwards present with the award from Pope Leo XIV for her work over many decades, "has let herself be led by a prayerful heart and to be surprised by the great things that God can do to surprise us."

He added: "She has known and

shared the God of love and the love of God in little things and in large things, never putting herself forward but keeping in the background. And she has been strengthened by her life of prayer, especially in this fine church that sits at the heart of this strong community. For the great work of God on the Cross and for the wonderful work of great people on the ground, today we give thanks and praise. Amen."

After the homily, Bishop Donal blessed the Bene Merenti Medal and presented it to Kathleen, and the support from the large congregation for this acknowledgement of such a great life of service was evident when all rose to their feet for a sustained round of applause.

Commenting on the occasion, Fr Daniel said that it was "an emotional, but wonderfully happy day for the parish"

Saying that Kathleen "richly deserved" the Bene Merenti Medal, one of the highest honours a lay person can receive from the Holy Father, he added: "This medal isn't really about one moment. It is about years. Years of showing up. Years of helping out. Years of caring, organising, supporting, encouraging, and praying. The kind of service that often goes unseen - but never unfelt."

"In speaking of those years, it is only right that we also remember Kathleen's late husband, Hugh, who was always by her side. So much of what Kathleen has given

to this parish was shared with him; his quiet support, his presence, and his partnership were part of that same faithful service."

Kathleen's contribution to parish life, continued Fr Daniel, "has shaped this community in ways that are hard to measure. She has been part of the very fabric of who we are. So many have been helped, supported, or inspired by her in one way or another. What makes it even more special is the way she has done it all - with humility, warmth, and a deep, quiet faith."

"We are proud truly proud that one of our own has received this honour. But more than that, we are grateful for her generosity, kindness, faithfulness, and friendship."

Congratulating Kathleen on behalf of the parish, he said: "Thank you for all that you have given, and continue to give. This award may come from Rome, but its roots are right here, in the lives you have touched and the community you have helped to build."

Commitment

At a celebratory dinner the night before, Stephen Mallett, of North West Youth Services, also paid tribute to Kathleen, noting that she had lived and served in Creggan Parish all her life: "For her, community isn't an abstract idea, but a daily commitment, a commitment sustained over decades with her quiet determination, consistency, and that deep sense of responsibility that she carries and has instilled in all of us who know her."

"She left Ireland for South Africa after graduating and returned as the Troubles broke out, and during that time one of her lasting contributions was the development of scouting in Derry. Kathleen, Reggy Ryan and others were determined to create a safe place for children and young people."

He went on to recall: "I was a member of her first cub troop, First Derry, in the 70s, operating out of the old barn of the

Parochial House in Beechwood, and then later scouts and venture scouts. When they bought the house in Crevagh, she allowed us to take over the back garden, with her husband, Hugh teaching us pioneering and rope work."

"She then became regional commissioner for scouting and helped develop numerous troops all over the region, encouraging young people to participate in large numbers. Long before we in the youth service spoke about outcomes or strategies, she understood the importance of giving young people structure, values, responsibility, and a sense of belonging, encouraging them to lead, to serve, and to look beyond themselves."

"Her impact goes far beyond that," added Stephen, "She has helped us strengthen youth services across the city and the wider region. The work we have been engaged in over the past 30 years has improved youth services far and wide, and by extension saved countless lives, kept young people from risk and prison, and supported so many young people to achieve and succeed, and all of that work goes unnoticed by most of society."

"She has always been steady and fair, steering and guiding, never seeking recognition. Above all, she has recruited, mentored, and developed countless leaders. Many of the people currently serving in our schools, youth organisations, and community groups first stepped forward because Kate saw something in them and helped them believe in themselves."

"She also deserves special recognition for helping guide communities through and beyond the Troubles. When fear, division, and mistrust were still real, Kathleen was a calm, reassuring presence, who understood that peace had to be built patiently, relationship by relationship. She encouraged leaders to work co-operatively across communities and traditions, promoting dialogue, cooperation, and understanding, even when it was



difficult.

"Because of the trust she helped foster, especially between youth services and policing, many young people were offered alternatives at critical turning points. Pathways were created where none had existed, futures were redirected, families supported, and lives changed, because relationships had been built and protected over time."

He then highlighted: "At the heart of all of this is her faith. Her commitment to the Church is lived, not symbolic; a stalwart

of parish life who has worked to ensure that dignity, service, compassion, and care are carried forward in practice. She also insisted that the leaders she helped develop understood their responsibility to protect and safeguard those in their care, especially the most vulnerable."

"Kathleen's life," concluded Stephen, "reminds us that communities are not held together by grand gestures, but by people who show up, stay the course, and put others first."



A life lived in pursuit of better services for youth of Derry and beyond



THE eldest of 11 children, Kathleen Doherty (nee McMillan), no doubt, got plenty of experience in leadership and being a role model to her younger siblings, which stood her in good stead as she embarked on a life of working with and for young people, as well as rearing her own family.

Born in post-war London in 1947 to Derry couple, Elizabeth (Winnie) and James (Jim) McMillan, Kathleen grew up in Derry, where her parents had been successful in getting a newly built home in Dunmore Gardens, Creggan.

The family were strong members of the community when St Mary's Church opened in 1958, and Kathleen attended Rosemount PS, which is now St Anne's, St Marys School and Thornhill College, before completing her teaching diploma at St Maria Assumpta Teacher Training College in London. While there, she did her RE Certificate in the Jesuit College, and her Youth Leader Diploma in Wandsworth Technical Institute.

Returning to Derry in 1970, Kathleen got her first teacher position in St Mary's Secondary school, and later completed Bachelor's and Master's Degrees in Education at the University of Ulster.

Around this time, she also joined First Derry (St Mary's) Catholic Boy Scouts of Ireland (CBSI) as an assistant leader, helping to give young boys an alternative to the conflict relating to the Troubles. Founding a second St Mary's CBSI group, Kathleen was in the training team and greatly supported the spread of Scouting throughout the Catholic community in Derry. Becoming regional commissioner for scouting in 1988, she held several regional and national roles, giving

over 20 years of service.

Fr Rooney, as Creggan Parish Priest, knew of Kathleen's youth leader qualifications, and asked her to join the St Mary's Girls' Club that had been set up by Sr Ann Doherty, of the Sisters of Mercy. When Sr Ann retired, she handed the reins over to Kathleen.

She was also asked to join the St Mary's Youth Association management committee, that had been set up to plan and access funds for the opening of a youth centre in Creggan, bringing the girls' club and boys' club together. It was opened in 1973, and was the first purpose-built youth club in Derry. Kathleen has been chairperson of St Mary's Youth Club since 1994, and recently overseen the reconstruction of the building at a cost of £3.5m.

Commenting on her involvement in the development of youth services in the North West, Kathleen recalled: "All youth services were based in Belfast, and each youth club stood on its own, competing for funds. After many years, Youth Work Alliance was established with the help of Professor Sam McCready, who was a lecturer in Youth and Community Work at University of Ulster, and had written a history of Youth Services in the 70s. We had a shared vision. He is now chairman of Youth Work Alliance in Northern Ireland, which represents voluntary youth providers at a local and regional level."

Helping to develop North West Youth Service, Kathleen noted that it now supports more than 25 Youth Clubs in Derry, Strabane and East Donegal.

Discretionary Disposal

In the 1990s, Kathleen set up a Young Person Community

Forum. She led the conversation between local youth services and police regarding the criminalisation of young people in the late 90s early 00s. This resulted in the policy of discretionary disposal, which allowed officers to use judgement and refer young people to youth services before court. This initiative was so successful that it was rolled out regionally, and has been developed further in the North West to include prevent and deter and, most recently, the common purpose and collaborative models.

Commenting on this, Kathleen said: "Young fellas would be stoning police vehicles, and the same young fellas would maybe have about 10 charges against them strung out, giving them a criminal record. We worked through the sergeant and he was able to stop that happening and instead have all the charges up together as one, big charge."

She went on to recall other community police initiatives: "When I was in St Joseph's Boys' School, I got the police to come in as part of a project for English GCSE. Boy racers were rampant in the area, so the police staged an accident and the boys had to write about it. The hope was that this education would increase awareness of road safety."

"Also, Strathfoyle Community Police brought youth leaders together for youth training. They had the leaders act as the police, and the police acted as young people in re-enacting some of the challenging situations that were happening in the community. Through this, the youth leaders came to a better understanding of why the police acted as they did towards young people in those challenging situations."

Kathleen retired from teaching in 2008, as vice-principal of St Joseph's Boys' School, and, in 2014, she led the Shared Education in Contested Spaces Programme, in partnership with Queen's University Belfast, to show how collaborative networks improve communities and schools. She led the programme for over three years and its legacy has seen the continuation of many of the shared education processes that were piloted by her and the programme.

"We got nine schools involved in this programme, which was funded by Atlantic Philanthropies," recalled Kathleen, adding "It started off as one morning a week and then, as it expanded, I was doing it full-time."

She continued: "The Honourable Irish Society had asked me to be their representative on the management committee. We started out with four primary schools, including St John's and Holy Child, both in the Creggan, and Lisnagelvin PS, in the Waterside. Through the Community Safety team, I met Ballougry PS Board of Governors' chairman, and when he heard about the Shared Education Project with Queens, he asked me if they could get involved."

"As part of that project, the P7s studied a book called, 'Divided City', which was about Glasgow. Somebody had produced it as a musical. I got funding to get a group of teachers over to see it. We then got funding to put it on in Derry in 2013, as part of the City of Culture celebrations. We got nine schools involved to put on the stage show in the Millennium Forum, including: St Joseph's Boys' School; St Mary's; St Cecilia's; Thornhill; St John's PS; Holy Child PS; Ballougry PS; and Lisnagelvin PS. I think this was the most ambitious scheme we were ever involved in. It was great and we couldn't have done it without Geraldine O'Connor, the principal of St John's PS."

Parish Service

As well as being influential in the development of youth policy and an advocate for its implementation, the 79-year-old has given service in the Creggan Parish throughout her life, serving as a Eucharistic Minister and Catechist, pioneering the Baptismal programme, and serving on the parish renewal committee. She also worked with the Marriage Tribunal.

Sadly, Kathleen's husband of 53 years, Hugh Doherty, died in May last year. He had also been a founding member of the Scouts in Derry. The couple were blessed with four children - Grainne, Roisin, Bobby and Aine, who have gifted them with three

grandchildren, Cara, Riley and Thomas.

With both Kathleen and Hugh involved in the Scouts, their children grew up in the scouting family, and got so much from it that Roisin went on to become a scout leader in the Long Tower, though is no longer involved, while Grainne runs a scout group and her husband runs the cubs in Inch, Aberdeenshire, and Bobby runs a scout group in Somerset. In Derry, there are currently two Scouting groups - St Mary's Creggan and St Eugene's

I think being in the scouts gives young people great life skills and it gets them outside," remarked Kathleen, adding: "There is a good moral code to live by."

As a teacher, Kathleen found that the Scouts used methods that were very progressive compared to what was used in teaching, highlighting one as being how to write aims and objectives: "I would have implemented these methods in my teaching, as I found they made learning fun. In the school setting, a lot of stuff was boring."

The first teacher in her family, Kathleen said that initially she had wanted to be an accountant, until her father talked out of it: "He thought that teaching was a better career for a woman, pointing out that if I had children, I would be able to be home with them during the school holidays."

A secondary school teacher until the last five years of her career, when she worked in primary schools, Kathleen loved the profession. She remarked: "I loved the team of teachers that I worked with. I was very blessed, and many of them got involved in the voluntary youth work that

I was doing, both in the Church and the Scouts. I found that a lot of people were willing to offer their talents voluntarily, as long as they were asked."

Still recovering from the wonderful surprise of being awarded the Bene Merenti Medal, a prestigious honour bestowed by the Pope on members of the clergy and laity for exceptional service and long-standing dedication to the Catholic Church, and one of the highest recognitions that a lay-person can receive, Kathleen recalled her reaction on hearing the news.

"I was shocked when Fr McFaul and Stevie Mallett came out to the house, along with my sister, Eileen, to tell me that I was getting the Bene Merenti medal," she remarked, adding: "It is a gorgeous medal and it is great to get acknowledgement from the Church especially."

In the days following the news breaking about her receiving the Medal, Kathleen has been kept busy with media interviews, and she was invited to the Mayor's Parlour for a reception that was attended by family members, and Fr McFaul and Stevie.

Receiving this special accolade in the month of Our Lady has been all the more special for Kathleen, who has had "a life-long love for Mary".

Indeed, the Mother of God has been very helpful over the years in getting Kathleen out of bed in the morning to get a good headstart on the day's events. She revealed: "I have always used the three Hail Mary's to get up in the morning, since hearing that praying these before you go to sleep is a sure way of getting you up for the start of a new day."



Future looks bright for Faughanvale May Well tradition

THERE was a great turnout, on what as a lovely evening, for the annual May Eve prayer gathering at the Holy Well, at Flowerfield, on the outskirts of Eglinton Village.

Led by Fr Noel McDermott, PP Faughanvale, and Mgr Andy Dolan, the Rosary was prayed, the Well blessed, and bottles filled with Holy Water and sealed with grass, as per tradition.

This was a continuation of the long-held May Eve tradition, which down the years attracted crowds of the faithful from various parts of the parish to honour the memory of the 17th century priest, Fr Elliott, who had often taken refuge at the Gallagher homestead in the Penal Days,

when priests were hunted down by soldiers.

Tradition holds that he walked and prayed around the well that provided water to the Gallagher household, and it is thought that he would have blessed it. Forced to flee from Ballygudden, Fr Elliott headed to Derry and crossed the Foyle to get to Donegal, but he was captured and reportedly hanged at Burnfoot.

Many have gone to the Well to pray and find peace of mind, with some claiming to have received cures. One of those present was 76-year-old parishioner, Brian McKinney, who has shared his memories of the May Well tradition.

He recalled: "Fr Felix O'Neill would arrive at 9 am to say the Rosary and bless the water at the May Well, on the Eve of May. As a child, I was taken to the May Well on May Eve before the sunset.

"I grew up on Ballygudden Road, so I would walk to the well, passing through three fields to reach it. Once there, we would kneel and pray three Hail Marys, an Our Father, a Glory Be and the Memorare. We would then then fill our containers, take a drink and bless ourselves. To seal the water, we pulled a clump of grass from around the Well to act as a cork.

"We also threw a silver coin into the Well as an offering to God.

Finally, we tied a ribbon to the tree growing beside it, and, as we tied it, we spoke to God of our prayer intentions."

"We took the holy water home," added Brian, "to use throughout the year to bless our home. Our families would drink it by taking three sips and then bless themselves. People had great belief that there was a cure in the water."

Delighted that Fr McDermott and Mgr Dolan have revived the May Well tradition, he remarked: "It is wonderful to see the number of people taking part in recent years, particularly so many young people. This will ensure the tradition continues in the future."



Diocesan Youth fundraising concert for Fatima

FUNDRAISING continues for the Derry Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Fatima, which is fast approaching. It is hoped that many will come along to support a fundraiser concert on Saturday, June 6, in St Anne's Hall, Brisland Road, Eglinton, at 7.30 pm. Tickets for the night of entertainment cost £10. There will also be prizes raffled and light refreshments provided. For tickets or more information contact 028 71 264087.

Desertmartin Pioneer presentations



MEMBERS of the Desertmartin Pioneer Total Abstinence Association who received their Pioneer emblem and certificates on from Fr Michael McCaul.

Front l/r - Trea McIvor, Kevin Walls, Mary Toner, Brian Tohill, Fr Michael, Kathleen Walls, Anna Rea and Madonna Devlin (secretary).

Back l/r - Margaret Shaw, Nuala McBride, Olive Walls, Veronica Wilson, Barney Walls, Bernie McCann, and Kathleen McCann.

Missing from the photograph, who also received certificates, are Loreta O'Hagan, Rosemary Fox and Mary McPeake.

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Beautiful statue of Our Lady brought to suffering Desertmartin home over 20 years ago still...

Touching hearts through draw to pray the Rosary

THE Walls family in Desertmartin have a beautiful statue of Our Lady that was gifted to them on the passing of its keeper, which they bring from their home to the local hall to grace faith events there, and there is a very special story about the Rosary attached to it.

Our Lady's statue ended up in the home of Francis and Brigid Loane, in the townland of Luney,

after their daughter, Nuala, bought it 24 years ago during a time of great sorrow for her family.

Taking up the story, Nuala recalled: "This statue of Our Lady sat in the window of a small shop in Coalisland 24 years ago. It was November 2002, and at this time our family was suffering a great loss; my brother, Francis had been murdered.

"To help us cope, we all prayed

the Rosary at nine o'clock every night. Some met up at my mum and dad's house to say it as a group; others prayed it in their own homes. We all felt close to each other at that time every night.

"Every time I passed that shop in Coalisland, I couldn't help but see the beauty in Our Lady's face. I felt it calling to me. So, I bought the statue on a Monday and stopped

in Stewartstown, where a priest blessed it. That evening, I took it to my mum and dad's and, at nine o'clock, we prayed the Rosary in front of it."

She added: "During the last year of my mum's life, 2023 to January 2024, she had it as a center-piece in her bedroom. I was glad that Olive and Gerard agreed to take the statue. They are doing a great thing in sharing it with the people

of their parish in Desertmartin."

First cousins of Brigid, Olive and Gerard Walls lived less than a mile away from her family home, so they all grew up together and had a close bond that lasted through the years.

"Brigid was a very holy woman and had loads of holy statues," recalled Gerard, adding: "She was dedicated to the Rosary and made Rosary beads for the foreign missions. She also initiated a Rosary group that went around about 12 houses in our townland of Luney. It was a weekly gathering to pray the Rosary together, with each home in the townland taking a turn.

"It was going for about 20 years, until the Covid lockdowns, and then Brigid took unwell and it didn't start up again, but a neighbour was saying to me recently about it, so maybe we will get it going again."

He continued: "When Brigid died, her daughter, Nuala asked us if we would be interested in having the statue, maybe for use in the parish hall. So, my sister, Olive and I have had it in our home for

two years now, along with large Rosary beads that belonged to Brigid too.

"It is a beautiful statue of Our Lady. It sits in the corner of our main living room, under the Sacred Heart picture. People always remark on it when they first come into the room.

"We pray the Rosary together beside it every night, and include prayers for those who are sick in our family and the parish.

"Sometimes we take it to the hall for appropriate functions, such as for the tea after the Lourdes Thanksgiving Mass celebrated by Fr Michael McCaul last September, and the recent Lourdes Coffee Morning fundraiser."

With conversation about reviving the Rosary Group in the townland happening to take place in this month when we honour Our Lady, with a particular focus on praying the Rosary, maybe that is the little nudge from Brigid and Our Blessed Mother needed to get it going again in these times when this powerful prayer is much needed.



Gerard and Olive Walls, and their sister, Von



Great turnout for May Rosary at Porthall Grotto



Dungiven Parish News

May a special month for Dungiven Legion of Mary 'Queen of Peace'



Anna Hasson, centre, who celebrated her 80th birthday, and Mary McKnight, left, who celebrated her 60th birthday.

THE exact year that The Legion of Mary 'Queen of Peace', Dungiven, was formed is not known; however, it is believed to have been established sometime between 1974 and the early 1980s. The group remained active thereafter, with the exception of a break of around four years during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Parish stalwart, Anna Hasson joined the Legion of Mary, Dungiven, in 2007, and recalls that Annie Jo Kealey, the current

sacristan at St Patrick's Church, Dungiven, served as president until the group's activities paused during the Covid-19 pandemic. Annie Jo joined The Legion of Mary in 1993, and her role as president began in 1998/99.

In February 2024, encouraged by Fr Séamus Kelly, Anna revived the group with the support of another former member, Mary Grieve.

Current members Mary McKnight (secretary) and Martina McNicholl have always had a

great devotion to Our Lady, and had expressed a desire to join the Legion of Mary should it ever be reformed. Anna then recruited parishioner, Mary O'Kane. Shortly afterwards, another parishioner, Mary McCloskey, joined after hearing about the group from a fellow member.

The Legion of Mary, Dungiven, meets weekly to pray the Rosary and the Legion prayers. Members also organise the visitation of the statue of Our Lady to homes that have requested it for the week, allowing families to pray the Rosary together each day. Many parishioners request the statue for significant occasions throughout the year, such as to remember a loved one on an anniversary or birthday, to pray for a sick family member or friend, or during examination times, to name but a few.

The committee also meets to discuss and plan the work carried out within the community, including their monthly Rosary for parishioners and visits to local primary school children preparing for Confirmation and First Holy Communion. During these visits, the committee distributes Miraculous Medals to each child and provides a brief overview of the work and mission of the local Legion of Mary.

The monthly Rosaries take place on the first Monday of each month, and are offered for different intentions throughout the year. The

May Rosary was dedicated to those sitting exams, awaiting test results, or facing testing times.

It was also an opportunity to celebrate a special occasion, as Mary McKnight, secretary of The Legion of Mary, had recently celebrated a milestone birthday. The committee and those attending the Rosary commemorated the occasion afterwards, with tea and birthday cake.

May 13 this year marked the 109th anniversary of the apparition of Our Lady of Fátima. To commemorate this special occasion, The Legion of Mary hosted a Rosary for peace in the world, in families and in all hearts.

This date is significant for another reason too. Anna Hasson was born on this very day 80 years ago. There was great enthusiasm among committee members and Anna's many friends in the parish to celebrate the birthday of someone who is deeply loved and respected by all who know her.

One of her sisters in The Legion of Mary said: "It is no surprise that Anna was born on such a significant date dedicated to Our Lady, so strong is Anna's devotion to the Mother of Jesus. After all, it was Anna who revived The Legion of Mary in 2024. She is a truly dedicated and devoted sister in the Legion, and a wonderful role model for us all. We are truly blessed to be guided by her."

Anna has always been an active volunteer in Dungiven Parish and continues to give of her time so generously. Alongside being a longstanding member of The Legion of Mary, she is also an active member of the Vocations Society of St Joseph, the Charismatic Prayer Group for over 30 years, and serves as a Eucharistic Minister to the sick. For more than 30 years, Anna also volunteered with St Vincent de Paul and The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, as well as assisting with collections at weekend Masses. There are, undoubtedly, many other

voluntary roles and acts of service that have not been mentioned.

The Rosary on the Feast of Our Lady of Fátima provided the perfect opportunity to acknowledge Anna's milestone birthday. She is not someone who seeks the limelight, and remains a humble lady who has touched the lives of so many people. We are all richer for knowing her. If ever there were a life from which to take inspiration, one would have to look far to find a better example than that of Anna Hasson.



The Blessed Sacrament Chapel... Jesus is the centre of our faith!

REFLECTING on when he arrived in Dungiven as Parish Priest in September 2024, Fr Gerry Sweeney recalled Annie Jo, the sacristan, asking if he could do something about the Blessed Sacrament Chapel...especially the tabernacle.

Agreeing, he remarked: "The sacred space needed care. The Blessed Sacrament in the monstrance was not secure; anyone could have walked in, taken it, and walked out. My main concern was that the Lord, the centre of our faith, was vulnerable.

"As I looked around the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, it wasn't conducive to silent adoration. The focus should be on Our Lord, but there were too many distractions; the skylight was leaking and buckets had been placed to catch the drips."

James Kerlin, a long-time parishioner and volunteer who was charged with the repairs, reported: "Over several years, there had been water ingress through the glazed roof turret. Investigations identified where the water was entering and what remedial work was required.

"Although the renovation was initially estimated to take up to

seven weeks, the Blessed Sacrament Chapel remained closed for three months due to several factors. The chapel was built about 25 years ago, and the required materials weren't available locally and had to be sourced from afar. Severe wind and rain also delayed work; a blessing in disguise, as the bad weather revealed additional areas of water ingress."

Fr Gerry reported other issues: "The pews were uncomfortable, so parishioners used chairs placed around the side of the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. Thus began the refurbishment.

"In conversation with a brother priest, Fr Joe Gormley, ICS Church Furnishers were recommended. The brief was simple: a blank canvas with the Blessed Sacrament as the focal point; everything must point to Christ. What we have today is the design work of Gavin and his team at ICS."

Describing the new lay-out, he said: "As you enter the Blessed Sacrament Chapel, an open screen stops you in your tracks. To the right, an image of Christ on the far wall displays the Alpha and Omega - the beginning and the end. On your right-hand side is a shrine

to Our Lady facing her Son in the tabernacle, directing us to Him.

"On either side of the tabernacle are two icons: Mother and Child; and St Patrick. During our recent Lenten parish retreat, the leaders, Martina and Elaine, spoke of 'doorways of faith.' The first is Mary, who brought Jesus to us and continues to do so. The second is St Patrick, whom Martina and Elaine described as the apostle to the Irish, who lit the fire of faith that is now being rekindled.

"The newly refurbished Blessed Sacrament Chapel now has 30 comfortable new seats, plus a new altar, ambo, and celebrant's chair, allowing us to celebrate Mass there."

A parishioner who is a regular visitor to the Adoration Chapel said: "As a parish, we have been very blessed for many years to have Eucharistic Adoration available to everyone five days a week. As a person of faith, visiting the Blessed Sacrament has been part of my being for many years - a space where I go to sit quietly in prayer with my God.

"Earlier this year, the decision was made to carry out some maintenance and redesign the

sacred space. At first, I arranged to visit neighbouring parishes, but as the weeks passed, work and family commitments made that difficult. As Lent approached, I felt a great loss. When a friend asked why, I told them it felt like grieving; the ache in my heart and stomach was very real.

"Over time, I reached a gentle acceptance and looked forward to the Oratory's re-opening, which happened on Easter Monday. My heart was bursting with joy when I stepped into the sacred space once more; it felt like re-uniting with a dear friend.

"Being in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament is such a privilege each time you seek Him, and I can truly say that this has been enhanced by the gentle design and ambience of the space now. The furnishings and soft lighting allow all of our parishioners and many from other parishes to come spend some time in prayer.

"Thank you to Fr Sweeney and all those who worked on the oratory. We, as a parish, now have a beautiful space for Adoration which I would encourage everyone to visit."



Sr Clare Retreat...

Sr Clare had great desire for perfection...her motivation was love for Jesus *(Photographs by Gerry Temple)*

THE annual Sr Clare Retreat in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, which encouraged people to reflect on the gift of reconciliation, had powerful talks by the celebrant priests and guest speakers during the evening services.

On the Monday evening, Fr Shaun Doherty, who had just arrived back from Medjugorje earlier that day, remarked on the "really deep peace" he experiences while there on pilgrimage.

Recalling Sr Clare's sister, Megan sharing how deeply her experience of Medjugorje had impacted her, Fr Shaun mentioned that he had seen a picture of Sr Clare in a house of prayer he had visited there just a few days before, adding: "There are images of Sr Clare all over the place in Medjugorje, such as been her impact."

He went on to say: "One of the great aspects of Medjugorje is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. You can really feel the beauty of this Sacrament there. Hearing confessions is a powerful experience for a priest everywhere, but especially in Medjugorje, as there are many confessing there who have not been to confession for maybe 30, 40, 50 years.

"People wait for hours as there are so many for Confession in Medjugorje, but no-one complains. There is a deep peace and people are happy to wait. There are people in tears with joy and relief afterwards. Penitents are sent away lighter, free and ready to start again."

Commenting on the Gospel reading about the Good Shepherd leaving 99 sheep to look for the lost one, Fr Shaun said: "It doesn't make

sense to leave 99 to look for one, but that is how much God loves us. He won't give up on any one of us, and that is why Sr Clare's story speaks so powerfully. Hearing her joy and enthusiasm for Jesus in her video, she had to be someone touched deeply."

He went on to note: "Faith had not been central to Clare's life, but everything changed for her. I suppose Jesus said to her 'I did this for you, what are you going to do for Me?'. And, I suppose He is saying that to all of us. Sr Clare had a personal encounter with Jesus that Good Friday. It was like she was found, and she had to keep choosing to return and keep growing.

"Conversion is a life-long journey. God will never give up on us. We don't have to be perfect. A question for us is, 'Am I ready to let myself be found again?'"

Fr Shaun then encouraged people to offer whatever they were struggling with to Jesus present in the Blessed Sacrament, and to pray that Jesus would open hearts and minds.

The special guest for the night was scheduled to be Sr Kirsten Gardner, of the Home of Mother, who is the postulator for the sainthood cause of Sr Clare Crockett. However, she was unable to make it and so, Sr Rachel read Sr Kirsten's talk based on the Retreat's 'Pardon and Peace' theme, on her behalf.

Recalling reading Sr Clare's notes taken during prayer and spiritual quotes, as part of her research for writing 'Alone with Christ Alone', Sr Kirsten remarked: "On the outside, Sr Clare was always laughing and

joking, but she had an interior depth that I could never have imagined, and a deep love for Jesus. And, she truly expressed deep pain when she offended Our Lord."

Referring to Clare's experience as a teenager in a night-club, when Jesus asked her, 'Why do you continue to hurt Me?', Sr Kirsten said: "She grew more in love with Jesus and asked for help in not sinning...She knew that this grace was received in Confession."

She went on to highlight an experience by Sr Clare in 2012 during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, when she was able to go to Confession at Calvary: "When Clare entered the confessional, the priest said - 'I have been waiting for you.' She cried tears of repentance and the priest said, 'Little one, Jesus knows we are not like Him'.

"She told him that she thought that her lack of faith was her worst sin. The priest told her that Jesus was full of compassion."

On another occasion, during Sr Clare's first month in Ecuador, she had felt the need to go to Confession, but the Sisters' truck had been stolen and she had no transport. "So, Sr Clare turned to God in a childlike manner," said Sr Kirsten, "and asked Him to put a priest in her path so that she could confess her sins. Later that day, a priest came along and she was able to have Confession."

She went on to note: "Sr Clare's last confession was in April 2016, at the time of the floods. The Italian priest who had heard that Confession, remarked that she had a great desire for perfection. Her motivation was love for the Lord."



Servant Sisters extend welcome to Crossroads Corpus Christi procession

THE Home of the Mother Servant Sisters are extending a warm welcome for people to join them for their Corpus Christi procession honouring the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist.

The procession will start at St Patrick's Church, Crossroads, outside Killygordon, Co Donegal (F93 T656), on Sunday, June 7, at 4 pm.

First Communion children are invited to come dressed in their communion attire. Tea and refreshments will be available afterwards.

The celebration will be preceded

by 40 hours of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in St Patrick's Church, beginning on Friday, June 5. To sign up contact: 0862167501 or 0879622970.

Also, First Friday Mass will be celebrated at 7.30 pm, with the weekend Vigil Mass, on June 6, at 6 pm, followed by a guided Holy Hour at 7 pm, and the Sunday Mass will be at 10 am.

"Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament has His hands full of graces, and He is ready to bestow them on anyone who asks for them." *(St Peter of Alcantara)*

St Canice of the Roe Valley by Dr Seán Beattie

MOST people are aware of the three Patron Saints of Ireland, but few would name the 10 Patron Saints. One of them, St Canice (also Cainneach, Kenneth), who was born near Limavady, is closely associated with two of the great rivers of the area, the Faughan and the Roe.

A contemporary of Donegal-born Colmcille, Canice was a major figure in the history of Christianity in the Early Church in Ireland. He was born c.516 in the townland of Drumramer, four miles east of Limavady. His father, Lughaidh, was a bard from Waterford, and his mother was Maul. Canice was baptised by St Lurach of Maghera, a relative of his mother's. There was a tradition to baptise children in a well in the townland of Ballycrum, known locally as St Canice's Well, said to have curative powers. In the Ordnance Survey Memoirs (1834), reference is made to the healing powers of its waters, an indication that this belief was embedded in the local heritage.

Early Life in Co Derry

It was in this area that the saint spent his early years, before undertaking his studies for the priesthood in Clonard monastery, in Co Meath. The following year, he continued his studies at Glasnevin, Dublin, under St Mobhí. The earliest written references to him are in Adhamhnán 'Life of Colmcille', which chronicles several journeys taken by the saint to Iona.

The Feast Day of Canice is October 11, which he shares with Mobhí. Canice's Feast Day is recorded by Usgard of St Germain des Pres, Paris, in his martyrology; an unusual distinction for an Irish saint, which was compiled by orders of Charles the Bold. The Saint's Feast Day was also recorded by scribes in a ninth century calendar on the Reichenau, in Lake Constance.

Like many saints of this era, he was a missionary in Scotland. Several stories abound about his prowess, his holiness and his humour. It is important not to take them all too seriously, but there is occasionally a grain of truth.

St Canice and The Annals of the Four Masters

'The Annals of the Four Masters', written in 1616, are regarded as one of the great compilations of Irish history. They were not published in book form until several centuries later, owing to a shortage of funds. The name of Canice is recorded in relation to events in 1197 AD, many centuries after his death, as follows:

The Age of Christ, 1197. John de Courcy and the English of Ulidia, marched with an army to Eas-Creeva, and erected the castle of Kilsanctan, and wasted and desolated the territory of the Kienaghta. (Eas-Creeva is Salmon Leap, Coleraine; Kilsanctan is probably Mount Sandal, Coleraine, and Kienaghta is the Barony of Keenagh, which was named after Cian, and the tribe of Cianachta, the descendants of the tribe of Cian).

The Annals continue to describe the destruction of castles and churches of the district. De Courcy was a leader of the Normans who attempted to establish a base in the northern regions of the country. The castle at Greencastle, Co Donegal, was one of their outposts. The Normans came up against Flaherty O'Muldory, who is described as Lord of Kinel-Owen and Kinel-Conell from Donegal. In plain terms, the O'Muldorys were Kings of Donegal and parts of Tyrone as we know it today, although the family name has receded from history and is rarely mentioned in the history books.

A battle took place at

Faughanvale and O'Muldory was victorious. The Annals claim that the victory was secured with the help of the son of Ardal MacLoughlin, through the intercession of Sts Colmcille, Canice and Breacan. The three saints are mentioned because it was their churches that had been plundered. In notes on the Annals, the editor who worked on the original documents in 1856, John O'Donovan, added a note that Canice was the Patron Saint of the territory of the Kienaghta, ie. the Barony of Keenagh. In other extensive notes, O'Donovan also drew on information provided by the 17th century Franciscan historian, John Colgan, who was born in Carndonagh, Co Donegal, and knew the northern districts of the country thoroughly.

Why Canice is important in the Annals

The reference to Canice in the Annals is significant. First, he is given the same status as Colmcille and Breacan. Second, the fact that through his intercession, the battle was won, highlights his prominence in the ecclesiastical history of north Co Derry.

Celebrating Derry's Patron Saint

A wonderful programme of prayer and fun for all has been organised for this year's celebration of St Columba, Derry's Patron Saint.

In the lead-up to the Feast Day on June 9, there will be a Family Fun Day at Long Tower School Playground on Friday, June 5, from 1-3 pm; and a Céilí Mór in the Lower School Hall from 8-10 pm.

Then, on Monday, June 8, there will be an All-Night Vigil of Adoration in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, from 8 pm - 6.30 am.

On the Feast Day, Tuesday, June 9, Mass will be celebrated at 7 am at the Hawthorn Tree, with another

Thirdly, he was still revered in medieval times.

The ruins of Faughanvale old church, featuring a gable and window arch, date from medieval times, c.1626. They are now embraced in ivy and may mark the site of an Early Christian settlement in the graveyard of the Protestant church of St Canice. As part of the Plantation, the Grocers' Company built a new church in the centre of the estate.

Canice's Legacy

Canice gave his name to five churches in Ireland: Eglinton, two in Finglas (Dublin) and two in Kilkenny. Three belong to the Church of Ireland and two are part of a Catholic diocese. There are a number of saints that belong to different faiths in the Diocese of Derry. In one sense, they empower local parishes to engage in community, inter-faith and cross-community work.

For example, the Parish of Faughanvale, Eglinton, organised a pilgrimage in Canice's memory, and a booklet was published on his life by St Canice's Jubilee Committee and St Canice's Rectory in Eglinton. A primary school in Dungiven, St Canice's,



St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

also holds his name; the Cathedral in Kilkenny is named after him, and there is also a holy well called Kenny's Well. He has achieved the status of a diocesan patron.

Many churches in Scotland are named after him. His regular journeys to Iona and his missionary activity are well documented. In Ireland, excavations have been carried out

on an ecclesiastical site at Finglas, where he founded a monastery beside a stream, c.560 AD.

Canice died c.599 and is believed to be buried in Kilkenny, although a wealth of folklore and myths have surrounded his burial.

For a guided tour of the Kilkenny cathedral, contact administrator@stcanicescathedral.com.

Celebrating St Columba

All-Night Vigil

Monday 8th June:

Opening Mass: 7:30pm

9pm: Night Prayer

Monday 9th June:

12 midnight - 6am: Rosary on the Hour

6.30am: Morning Prayer

7am: Open Air Mass at the Hawthorn Tree/ Fr Lynch's Grave

St Columba's Long Tower

COME JOIN US

Long Tower PS presents

ST.COLUMBA'S Céilí Mór

Fri 5th June

Long Tower PS Lower School Hall

8pm - 10pm

Music by: CCE Baile na gCailleach
In Aid of School Funds

Long Tower PS presents...

Family Fun Day

in the afternoon and traditional music, song and dance at night!

Family Fun and Games:
School Playground: 1pm - 3pm
Céilí Mór
Lower School Hall: 8pm - 10pm

Friday 5th June 2026

For More Information Contact Us 028 71261484

All proceeds to Long Tower PS

Celebrating St Columba's Day at Long Tower

Fri 5th: Family Fun Day - Long Tower School Playground: 1pm - 3pm; Céilí Mór in Lower School Hall: 8pm - 10pm
Monday 8th: All-Night Vigil of Adoration: 8pm - 6.30am
Tuesday 9th: 7am Mass at Hawthorn Tree; 10am Mass for Schools and Families; 6.30pm: Vespers at Bell Tower, Lumen Christi College
7pm: Rosary in Irish at Calvary
7.30pm: Mass of St Columba to mark 80th Anniversary of Consecration of Long Tower church celebrated by Fr John Joe Duffy, PP Creeslough followed by procession to St Columba's Well and Party in Lower School Hall

Friday 5th - Tuesday 9th June, 2026

Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

Our need of The Holy Spirit *by Fr Eamonn Kelly*

THE disciples got things wrong often. Their personal reality and understanding needed stretching and reshaping often, before they could even begin to take on board the teaching of the Saviour. Often in the Gospels, we read "they failed to understand", or "they did not know what He meant", or "they did not realise what He was saying and were afraid to ask".

Yet, it was Jesus who picked the disciples. He saw their potential. The lived experience of the disciples was that they failed to understand what was taking place as Jesus walked and talked with them. At the most basic level they knew what was taking place, but on the deeper level they were quite out of their depths. They did not comprehend the meaning of the actions of Christ as He cured the sick, gave sight to the blind and raised the dead. Sure, they followed Jesus and they looked after the people who surrounded Jesus. However, often they made a mess of things. These chosen followers were failures in discipleship.

Peter said that he did not know Christ. Judas tried to force the hand of Jesus. Judas went on to betray Jesus. Andrew seems to have been only interested in prompting others

to action. Philip could not make up his mind. Thomas doubted. Overall, they scored extremely low marks in the discipline of discipleship. In today's language, the disciples could have been dismissed from office for the confusion that surrounded them.

Then something wonderful happened that changed all. There was a major transformation. Peter, for example, moved from "I swear that I do not know the man Jesus" to "Peter stood up and addressed them in a loud voice: 'Men of Israel, listen to what I am going to say: Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God by the miracles and portents and signs that God worked through Him when He was among you, as you all know. This man, who was put into your power by the deliberate intention and foreknowledge of God, you took and had crucified.'"

The failures began to experience success. The cowards became people of action. The doubtful were convinced and the unbeliever converted. The dread that had reduced the disciples to terror-stricken dummies was changed into complete confidence in the Son of God. The change that happened was the Holy Spirit entering their

lives at a deep level.

Jesus had said, "the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name will teach you everything and remind you of all I have said to you." The Holy Spirit is the promise of Jesus to His disciples. The Holy Spirit is the power needed within the human soul for transformation to take place. It is the power which empowers movement from 'failure in following' to true disciple. During the trial of Jesus, Peter denied that he even knew Jesus to a little woman at the charcoal fire. None of the disciples, except John, seems to have stayed with Jesus to Calvary. We even read that one of them ran away naked. But all changed when the Holy Spirit entered the lives of the disciples.

Change

Now of course, as Catholics, we hold that the promises of Jesus are for us as well as for the people who lived during His earthly time. And so now, now we come to the hard bit. This is where we need to be straight talkers. Many of us do not want to change anything. We are not that interested in letting Jesus or His Holy Spirit change any aspect of our lives. We like to 'live near Christ' rather than 'live with

Christ'. We like to be contactable now and again rather than be in constant contact with Jesus. Mostly, we want to live in a nice, comfortable friendship rather than in discipleship. Here the human needs honesty, stripping away the shadowy world of pretending, the artificial world of imitation and the mockery of play-acting.

In telling the disciples about the Holy Spirit, Jesus shows that He realised the truth of the human situation. As He speaks about the Holy Spirit, explaining that without this help, the disciple would continue to struggle, Jesus shows His understanding of the nature of the human being. Jesus saw that His teaching would be too much for them without the help of the Holy Spirit. He instructs His followers to go nowhere until they are clothed with the power from on high. He himself would have to undertake the opening up of the Father's Kingdom alone. He had to go alone to stand in front of Pilate, alone He had to pick up the Cross, and it was on His own that He had to go into death and into the underworld.

After the resurrection took place, then the power of the Holy Spirit could be poured on humanity, beginning with the disciples. It



would be after the release of the Holy Spirit that the meaning of the words and actions of Jesus would make sense, and the disciples would begin - at last - to comprehend the meaning of the life and death of Jesus. The Holy Spirit would convince the disciples that Jesus alone makes salvation possible, and that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the only one who can offer genuine union with God.

The Holy Spirit is also for us. The Holy Spirit is the converter of hearts and the helper that enables us to live better lives. Today, you and I

are invited to ask the Holy Spirit to enter our lives, so that we may embrace discipleship and a more committed Christian life. Even though there is resistance, we can still ask the Lord Jesus to send the one He promised.

Many times, the early disciples got it wrong. It was the Holy Spirit who put them onto the right way. We have often got it wrong too. The Holy Spirit is willing and able to improve our lives. We are invited to call on the Holy Spirit, so that we may be true followers and become real disciples of the Lord Jesus.

Vocations News

Pray for Deacon Stephen Baxter on forthcoming ordination to priesthood *by Fr Pat O'Hagan*



ON Sunday, June 14, Stephen Baxter will be ordained a priest for the Diocese of Derry.

Born in Shantallow in 1979, Stephen was baptised in Steelstown. He received his primary education in Dungiven Road PS (now Good Shepherd PS), Derry, and served as an altar boy from 1987-1990. He attended St Columb's College, Derry, from 1990 - 1997.

Stephen worked with Translink for 19 years, initially as a driver, later as an inspector. It was while he was working there that he began to discern a vocation to the priesthood. Accepted as a seminarian for the Diocese in the summer of 2019, he began a

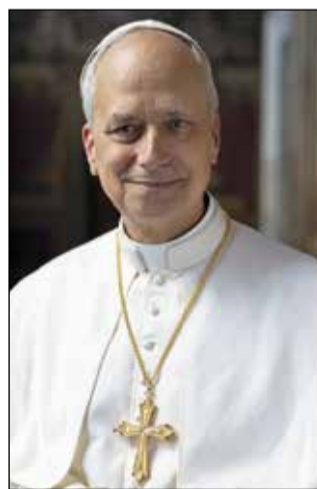
propaedeutic course of study at the Scots' College in Salamanca, Spain, in January 2020.

Shortly after the programme began, the Covid-19 pandemic hit the world. Stephen and his fellow students were advised to return home to continue their studies by distance learning. He graduated from St Patrick's Seminary, Maynooth, in 2022, with a Diploma in Philosophy, and for the past four years he has been studying Theology at the Pontifical Beda College in Rome. Over the years, he has gained pastoral experience in a number of parishes around the diocese during holidays and breaks from seminary.

Bishop McKeown will ordain Stephen in St Columb's Church, Waterside, Derry, the same Church where he ordained him a deacon in June of last year. The ceremony will begin at 3 pm.

We wish Stephen every blessing as he prepares for ordination, and for his life and ministry as a priest. We offer him the traditional 'Ad Multos Annos' - a prayer that he will enjoy many happy years in whichever parishes he will be called to serve the people of the Diocese of Derry.

Pope's monthly intention



The Holy Father has asked for prayer during May for:

Everyone might have food: Let us pray that everyone, from large producers to small consumers, be committed to avoid wasting food, and to ensure that everyone has access to quality food.

Prayer for Priests

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

As they stand before us as

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

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

Remember in prayer:

All Priests (1st May)
All Priests (2nd)
Fr Michael Porter (3rd)
Fr Roni Zacharias (4th)
Fr Ignacy Saniuta (5th)
Fr Stephen Ward (6th)
Fr Gerard Sweeney (7th)
Fr Joshy Parokkaran (8th)
Fr John Walsh (9th)
Fr Alex Anderson (10th)
Fr Patrick Arkinson (11th)
Fr Patrick Baker (12th)
Fr Declan Boland (13th)
Fr Eugene Boland (14th)
Fr Francis Bradley (15th)
Fr Manus Bradley (16th)
All Priests (17th)
Fr Brian Brady (18th)

All Priests (19th)
Fr Thomas Canning (20th)
Fr Michael Canny (21st)
All Priests (22nd)
All Priests (23rd)
All Priests (24th)
Fr Colum Clerkin (25th)

Fr Roland Colhoun (26th)
Fr Michael Collins (27th)
All Priests (28th)
Fr Patrick Cilly (29th)
Fr Brendan Crowley (30th)
All Priests (31st)



A PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD

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

(Based on the words of Pope Leo XIV)

Anyone considering a vocation to the diocesan priesthood, please talk with your local priest, or contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan, at (028) 7938 6259 or at 07703444280.

Parish Post-its

For additions/amendments please email: editorthenet15@gmail.com or message 07809292852

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

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary pray the Rosary every Sunday evening at 6 pm at the Grotto beside St Mary's Church. All are welcome.

Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Vocations Society of St Joseph in the parish has eight members and meets on the first Monday of each month. They fundraise at least once a year and contribute a donation to the Society annually.

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

ALPS Charity Talk: A representative from mental health charity, 'ALPS' will give a talk about suicide prevention on Wednesday, May 20, at 7 pm, in Aghadowey Hall.

Sr Clare Talk: Sr Mary, of the Home of the Mother Servant Sisters, will give a talk on the life and legacy of Servant of God Sr Clare Crockett, on Thursday, May 28, at 7 pm, in St John's Church.

Missionary Talk: Sr Noelle, Loreto, will give a talk on her missionary work in Sudan on Friday, May 29, at 7 pm, in St John's Church.

Gospel by Candlelight: A Gospel by Candlelight evening by Owen Mac, with full live band, will take place in St John's Church, on Friday, June 26. Doors open at 7 pm and show starts at 8 pm. Tickets, costing £15, are available at St John's Parish Office – telephone 028 70343130, email: dmcp parish.com – or at Spar Shop, Laurel Hill, 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: Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support. The Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support Group meets on the second Sunday of each month at 3 pm in the Parochial House community room. All are welcome to share a cup of tea, have a chat, remember and talk about their loved one and find support with others experiencing similar feelings. In addition to the group, there is an ongoing opportunity to speak on a one-to-one basis with an experienced grief counsellor. The contact number for more information on the group or to arrange one to one support is 07907085178.

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

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

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

Culdaff

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

are for the Re-decorating Fund.

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

Desertmartin

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, Aughabrack, on First Fridays, after 10 am Mass until 12 noon.

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

Donaghmore

(Killygordon)

Corpus Christi: The Servant Sisters are extending a warm welcome for all to join them for their Corpus Christi procession honouring the real presence of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. The procession will start at St Patrick's Church, Crossroads, on Sunday, June 7, at 4 pm. First Communion children are invited to come dressed in their communion attire. Tea and refreshments will be available afterwards.

The celebration will be preceded by 40 hours of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in St Patrick's Church, beginning on Friday, June 5. To sign up contact: 0862167501 or 0879622970. Also, First Friday Mass will be celebrated at 7.30 pm, with the weekend Vigil Mass, on June 6, at 6 pm, followed by a guided Holy Hour at 7 pm, and the Sunday Mass will be at 10 am.

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

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

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

Praise.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Errigal

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

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

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

Faughanvale

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

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

Rosary for Priests and for Vocations: A Rosary for priests and vocations is

recited each Monday before morning Mass.

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

Granaghan (Swatragh)

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

Greencastle

Croagh Patrick Climb: The Parish is organising another Croagh Patrick climb on Saturday, May 30 as a fundraiser for the Pope John Paul II students' pilgrimage to Poland and the local Down's Syndrome charities. For further details, and to book a place on the bus, contact Maria on 07768395038. Donations can be made at: <https://gofund.me/819daf5ea>.

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, live-streamed to Bellaghy; 11 am, live-streamed from 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 - 7pm, at St Mary's Drumagarnier. Concludes with Public Prayers.

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

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

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

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

Lavey

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

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

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

Leckpatrick

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

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

Lifford (Murlog)

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

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

Adoration: 9.30 am-12.30 pm.

Confessions: Saturday, 6-6.15 pm

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 11 am.

Limavady

Ordination: Parishioner, Conán McGonagle will be ordained to the Sacred

Priesthood on May 28 at the Cathedral of St Cecilia, in Omaha, Nebraska. Fr Conán will offer his First Mass in St Marys on June 1, at 7 pm. Refreshments will be served in Bethany after the Mass.

St Finlough's Hall: The 40th anniversary of St Finlough's Hall will be celebrated on Saturday, May 30, after 6 pm Mass. Tea and refreshments will be served in the Hall. Admission: free. All welcome to attend.

May Rosary: The daily May rosaries continue at 7 pm every day at the grotto at St Mary's and St Finlough's. Everybody welcome.

Rosary Rally: A bus to the All-Ireland Rosary Rally in Knock will be departing St Mary's, Limavady, on Saturday, June 6, at 8 am. Bring a packed lunch. Anyone interested please leave your name and number at the parish office or contact Mairead Peoples at 028 777 22121.

Cemetery Sunday: The blessing of graves will take place at Roemill, 6 pm, Sunday, May 31; Christ the King, 6 pm, Sunday, June 7; St Mary's, 6 pm, Sunday, June 21; and St Finlough's, 3 pm, Sunday, June 28. Please bring Holy Water to sprinkle on the graves of your loved ones.

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.

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Mary's Church on Thursdays, from 1-6 pm.

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

Guided Talk: Local historian, Bob Curran will give a talk on Saturday, May 30, at 11 am, meeting at St Aidan's Church Carpark. Light lunch will be provided. Register interest for catering purposes by contacting the Parish Office.

Blessing of Graves: The annual Graveyard Mass will take place on Sunday, June 28, at 3 pm, at the new altar.

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

Music: Music continues on Thursday evenings at 8 pm in Moville Men's Shed. Love Music? Just Show Up! Singers, players, and socialisers alike are all welcome for a relaxing evening at one of the few Shed activities open to both men and women.

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

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

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

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

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

Sion Mills

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Fridays, from

10.30 am – 6.30 pm (ending with Benediction if priest available). The Blessed Sacrament can also be adored in the Adoration Room in St Theresa's anytime while the Church is open.

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil; 9.30 am.

Steelstown & Culmore

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

Adoration: Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6.50 pm.

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

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

Strabane (Camus)

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

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

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

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

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

Padre Pio Mass: The Padre Pio Mass takes place in

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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

Celebrating St Columba: All welcome to the celebrations for the Feast of St Columba. In the lead up to it, there will be a Family Fun Day at Long Tower School Playground on Friday, June 5, from 1-3 pm; and a Céilí Mór in the Lower School Hall from 8-10 pm. Then, on Monday, June 8, there will be an All-Night Vigil of Adoration from 8 pm - 6.30 am. On St Columba's Feast Day, Tuesday, June 9, Mass will be celebrated at 7 am at the Hawthorn Tree, then at 10 am Mass will be celebrated for Schools and Families. At 6.30 pm, Vespers will be prayed at the Bell Tower, in the grounds of Lumen Christi College, with the Rosary prayed in Irish at The Calvary at 7 pm, and at 7.30 pm the Mass of St Columba, to mark the 80th Anniversary of the Consecration of Long Tower Church, will be celebrated by Fr John Joe Duffy, PP Creeslough, followed by the procession to St Columba's Well and party in Lower School Hall.

'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.

Sioipa 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 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 & Castlefinn

Blessing of Graves: Graves will be blessed after 7 pm Mass, offered for the deceased, at Castlefinn on Tuesday, June 2, in St Mary's Church, and in Doneyloop on Thursday, June 4, in St Columba's Church.

First Saturdays: The First Saturday Devotion and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament take place in St Columba's Church, Doneyloop, from 12 noon

...other Diary Dates

Vocations Society of St Joseph Pilgrimage: The annual Vocations Society of St Joseph (Young Priests' Society) Knock Pilgrimage takes place on Saturday, June 27. Anyone interested in travelling with the Clonmany branch contact Kathleen on 0877963542.

Silent Retreat: Fr Kilian Byrne, Foyer of Charity, will lead a silent retreat at Termonbacca, Derry, from July 13-19, costing £395 full-board. Contact Helen at 00353861678027 or hellywilliams@gmail.com. Info at www.foyerofcharity.ie.

Youth 2000 Summer Ball: Youth 2000 are hosting a 30+ Reunion Ball on July 25 at the Osprey Hotel, Naas, with Holy Mass celebrated beforehand at 4 pm in Newbridge. Last year, Youth 2000 celebrated its 35th anniversary. Since Youth 2000 arrived in Ireland, many people have been impacted by its work and mission, with many personal encounters of Jesus in the Eucharist and life-long friendships. Many beautiful vocations have also been discovered and nourished through Youth 2000. This event is a wonderful opportunity for all friends, benefactors, former volunteers and retreatants to gather to reminisce and celebrate all that Youth 2000 has given. It is also an opportunity to find out more about how to support this generation of Youth 2000 volunteers and leaders. Tickets are now available through Eventbrite using the link in our bio. More

information is also available on our website at youth2000.ie

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

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 Wednesdays from 6.30-8.30 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.

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>

information is also available on our website at youth2000.ie

Parish Post-its

...other Diary Dates cont.

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 a weekly prayer hour on Mondays in the Termonbacca St Therese Chapel, which contains first-class relic of St Therese, praying for her intercession, 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.

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 7.30 pm, in the Parochial House at Cross, Killygordon, (F93PN0X), 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.

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

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

Men's Rosary: The Men's Rosary takes place on the first Saturday

of every month at Market Street, Omagh (opposite Primark) and at the side of O'Neill's Sports Store, near Guildhall Square, at 1 pm. All Welcome!

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

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

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

Diocesan Diary

Marian Evening: The Diocesan Youth team, along with young people going on the Derry Diocesan Youth Fatima Pilgrimage in August, are hosting an hour of Marian Evening of Prayer in St Mary's Church, Creggan, on Wednesday, May 27, at 7 pm, to celebrate the Month of Mary. Weather permitting, there will be an outdoor Rosary procession, a short talk on Our Lady and The Eucharist, Adoration & Benediction, with music provided by the Diocesan Youth Music Group. All are welcome, particularly students. "Don't lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God." (Our Lady of Fatima.)

Youth Fundraising Concert: To raise funds for its Fatima Pilgrimage, Derry Youth Ministry is hosting a concert on Saturday,

June 6, at 7.30 pm, in St Anne's Hall, Brisland Road, Eglinton. It is hope that many will come along to support the young people and enjoy a great night of entertainment and refreshments. There will also be a raffle. Tickets are £10. For tickets, or further information, contact 028 71 264087, or email: ddcc@derrydiocese.org.

Diocesan Knock Pilgrimage: The Derry Diocesan pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic & Marian Shrine at Knock, Co Mayo, will take place on Saturday, June 6, in conjunction with the All-Ireland Rosary Rally. Buses will leave St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, at 8 am. Cost £50, which includes dinner in Knock House Hotel following the conclusion of Mass in the Basilica. To book please contact Karen on 048 7126 2894 or by email at cathedral@derrydiocese.org.

Forty Hours - May & June

Sun 31 May	St Mary's	Clonmany
Sun 31 May	St Patrick's	Claudy
Sun 31 May	St Patrick's	Badoney Lower (Gortin)
Sun 31 May	St Patrick's, Keenaught	Desertmartin
Sun 7 June	St Mary's, Killyclogher	Cappagh
Sun 7 June	St Patrick's	Aghyaran
Sun 7 June	Oratory of Mary, Mother of God	Newtownstewart
Sun 14 June	St Mary's	Lavey
Sun 14 June	St Mary's, Aughabrack	Donagheady
Sun 14 June	Our Lady of the Assumption, Aghadowey	Coleraine
Sun 21 June	St Columba's	Glendermott
Sun 21 June	St Aengus, Burt	Fahan
Sun 21 June	Sacred Heart	Carndonagh
Sun 28 June	St Joseph's, Craighane	Claudy
Sun 28 June	St Patrick's, Cranagh	Badoney Upper (Plumbridge)
Sun 28 June	St Eugene's, Moneyneena	Ballinascreen

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

Bunrana

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 / 2026

Magilligan 12/5/25

Granaghan 1/2/26

Termonamongan 2/6/26

Ardstraw West /Castledearg 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

40 HOURS ADORATION

Will take place in **St Mary's Church, Clonmany** next Saturday May 30 & Sunday May 31

Opening with 9:30am Mass on Saturday until 5pm.

Continuing after 11:30am Mass on Sunday and closing with a holy hour from 6-7pm.

All are welcome to visit during these days & times.

The 40 Hours Adoration is a traditional Catholic devotion featuring 40 hours of continuous, solemn prayer before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in a monstrance. The 40-hour timeframe symbolically represents the time Jesus's body traditionally rested in the tomb.

We invite people to offer some time in adoration during the two days.

A sheet is available at the back of the Church this weekend to record names and times of people who will commit to half an hour or longer.

Please fill in your name on the sheet—there should always be someone present while the Blessed Sacrament is exposed.

Could you not watch one hour with me?

— Matthew 26:40

The Way...The Truth...The Life *Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR*



ONE of the very many significant developments of technology today is Google Maps. No matter where you are going, all you have to do is put the address of your destination into your phone and some wee woman or man will direct you all the way!

One of the advantages of this is that there is never any need to get lost again – as long as you input things properly or you do not depend on someone else with you to keep you right! The big disadvantage of this development is that we will no longer meet people along the way, who try telling us how to get to where we are going. To me, that is a great loss!

I have met some wonderful people along the road over the years, in different parts of the country, people whom I would never have met without getting lost. Now they are gone forever – unless I turn off Mr Google, Ms Alexa and their strange family.

The Word of God for May

For us, as followers of Christ, the month of May begins with the Liturgy of the Fifth Sunday of Easter. The Gospel for that day talks about the journey that Jesus is on, a journey that his disciples cannot understand.

He tells them: "There are many rooms in my Father's house. I am now going to prepare a place for

you, and after I have gone and prepared you a place, I shall return to take you with me; so that where I am you may be too. You know the way to the place where I am going."

Thomas said: "Lord, we do not know where you are going so how can we know the way?" Then Jesus said: "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life."

Come follow me

Our Christian faith is not primarily a religion of doctrines and laws, even though these are very important in it. Our faith is first and foremost about our relationship with Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. This relationship is a personal one for each of us. But it is never a private relationship. It is always in the context of the community of the Church, which is the Body of Christ in every place and every generation.

The focus of our relationship with Christ is beautifully seen in that statement from the Gospels: "Come, follow me". Then the questions have to be asked: Where is He going? Where is He leading us to? These are the questions of our Christian spirituality and way of life. And they are questions that show us that our relationship with Christ is not a static one, in which we have Him in our hearts, but rather a dynamic one in which we

are constantly moving along with Him in our journey of life and faith.

One of my favourite hymns is 'Give me joy in my heart, keep me singing'. I like it particularly because of the verse that goes: 'Give me faith in my heart, keep me searching.' There is always more to be discovered and to be lived because of Christ.

Towards the true God of Jesus Christ

We, personally, and the Church generally, have not always been faithful to God as revealed to us by Jesus Christ. At times, we relate to God as being very distant from our lives, far away from us in time and space, and no one is in any great hurry to get to God. Or at other times, we present God as being a vindictive God, who is out to get us and punish us for our sins. How often were we told as we grew up: "Don't do that, God is watching". And it always seemed that it was only the things that we were doing wrong that God was watching!

How often our spirituality has been one of dread of meeting God at death because we will be punished for all that we have done wrong in life. None of these images of God, and many more like them, have anything to do with the true God as revealed to us by Christ.

God is love

The main place towards which Christ leads us into a knowledge of, and love for, the true God who loves each of us with, what St Alphonsus de Liguori, the founder of the Redemptorists, called a "mad love". Jesus does not just teach us that God exists, but shows us that God is passionately in love with each one of us.

The Gospels tell us: "God loved

the world so much, that God has given us God's own Son." Jesus is the truth of the extent of God's love for us, especially as we see Christ dying on the Cross, and as we venerate Christ risen from the dead and living in us and among us.

Jesus is also the way to knowing our God as we commit ourselves to the faith that Peter expressed when the disciples were asked: "Who do you say I am?" Peter replied: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."

Far from being at a great distance from us, God has become very close to us through the human flesh of Christ, the Son of God and the Son of Mary.

And far from being out to get us, as many people imagine, because of Christ we know that the only full judgement that God makes of us is: "I love you, you are mine." That is why Jesus teaches us to call God our 'Father'.

In the Scriptures, God is also talked about as our 'Mother'. Of course, we talk about God like this because this is the only way we can even vaguely understand the wonderful love that God has for us, a love that nothing can ever change or take away. The picture of a father or mother holding their new-born child, often with wide-eyed wonder, looking adoringly at this new creation of their love, is the great picture of God's love for us that the Scriptures reveal to us. God truly adores us.

We are sisters and brothers

When we acknowledge Christ as the Son of the living God, we are saying that He is the only one who can show us what true human living is. By taking on our human flesh, Christ has become the way, the truth and the life of human

existence. He reveals to us, by His presence with us, the deepest truths of our human lives.

We are created in the image and likeness of God. Because of this, we believe that every human person is sacred and to be revered, from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death – and way beyond into eternity. We can know that we are following Christ, when we are true to this wonderful reality.

We are created for eternal life. In the Gospel of John, we read: "Eternal life is this: to know You, the one true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." Eternal life does not begin with death, as we might imagine, but rather with our conception. It is an everlasting journey into the wonderful, unfathomable, mystery of God, which we can come to know now through this life, and continue to know and love through eternal peace and joy.

We are members of the Body of Christ. Through Baptism we have been given the same mission that Christ had – to make God's name known and loved and to bring the good news of God's love for, and God's forgiveness of, each person known to the ends of the earth. We do this as a community of believers and not just as individuals. This is why we are called to build up the life of our faith communities in our parishes and other groupings. Each one of us has our own part to play in this, our own gifts to share in the evangelisation of the world around us.

We are temples of the Holy Spirit. At different times in her journey of faith in Christ, the Church has had to adapt to different needs in order to bring Christ to the world of the day. At this time, we are facing the challenge of the need for all the



Fr. Johnny Doherty CSsR

baptised to use their gifts and to take their place fully in the life of parishes and other communities of faith, so that Christ can be proclaimed and believed in. We are temples of the Holy Spirit, not so much that we have the Holy Spirit as a possession that we hold to ourselves, but as a power that we constantly release into the world we live in. This is obviously where Christ is leading us today, otherwise the Church will die in our own places and for our own people.

Conclusion

Maybe we have a very important lesson to learn from how we use Mr Google and company today! Just as we tune into them for instructions about how to get to our destination, so we need to tune into the Word of God in the Scriptures, and in the teaching and Tradition of the Church, in order to be in touch with how Christ, The Way, The Truth, and The Life, is leading us today.

The destination is clear. The ways of getting there are often not so clear. Sometimes also these ways are difficult for us to want to follow. If we follow Christ, we are guaranteed the fullness of life and the abundance of eternal happiness.

Reflections from a Catholic perspective... Navigating spiritual frustration and finding healing

You are not alone *by Sinéad Strong*

We live in a world that is so busy, with multiple ways for us all to 'stay connected', and yet so many of us feel completely disconnected and isolated. The irony is hard to miss; more notifications, more group chats, more scrolling and, somehow, less real belonging.

On top of that, we are sold the idea that life must look picture-perfect: the perfect home; the perfect car; the perfect family; the perfect body; the perfect routines. And if we don't achieve it all, we must be failing. So, we push harder. We pack our schedules. We run ourselves thin trying to make life feel 'better', and to be honest... it is exhausting.

If that is where you are right now, I want you to hear this with all the warmth we can offer as a Church family: you are not alone. And you don't have to earn your way back to peace. Jesus speaks to the worn-out and overburdened with an invitation to come to Him and find rest (see Matthew 11:28-30). That is still His heart towards you today.

Disconnection doesn't always look dramatic. Sometimes it is quiet. It is showing up to work and feeling like you are just getting through the day. It is being surrounded by people and still feeling unseen. It is keeping up with messages but avoiding honest conversations. It is turning up to Church, singing along and still feeling like you are on the outside looking in.

- We move too fast to notice what is happening inside us.
- We compare our real lives to someone else's highlight reel.
- We fear being a burden, so we keep things surface-level.
- We have been hurt before, so we keep our guard up.
- We try to carry everything alone, believing we 'should' be able to cope.

If any of that resonates, please hear this: feeling disconnected doesn't make you weak, and it doesn't mean something is 'wrong' with you. It often means you are

human - made for relationship - and you have been trying to meet deep needs with shallow substitutes. God is not intimidated by your honesty. In fact, honesty is often the doorway back to Him and back to others.

Performance

The world is very good at turning life into a performance. It tells us that the goal is to look like we have it together, and that our worth rises and falls with our achievements, our productivity, our appearance, our relationships, even our children's behaviour. That mindset keeps us chasing and striving, always one step behind the version of ourselves that we think we should be. And if we are not careful, that same pressure can slip into our faith. We can start treating Christianity like a checklist - quiet time done, serving done, smiling done - instead of a relationship with a living Saviour.

But when your identity is built on

performance, rest feels like failure. Slowing down feels irresponsible. Asking for help feels embarrassing. And, eventually, we don't just feel tired, we feel empty. Exhaustion can be a warning light on the dashboard of the soul, telling us that we need more than a break, we need a different foundation.

God doesn't invite you into a picture-perfect life. He invites you into a real one, marked by grace, growth, and relationship. The heart of our faith isn't self-improvement; it is being known and loved. Not because you earned it, but because God is good. We are saved by grace, not by striving (see Ephesians 2:8-9).

God's call is not isolation. From the beginning, we were created for connection, with Him and with one another. When life is heavy, the answer is not to pretend it isn't. The answer is to bring what is heavy into the light. Healing often happens in the presence of God and in the

safety of sincere community. That is one of the reasons the Church exists; not as a place for perfect people, but as a family learning to walk with Jesus together.

Reconnection rarely happens through one big moment. More often, it begins with small, honest steps, taken consistently. If you are a mum looking for faith-filled friendship locally, it may help to connect with Catholic Mothers Ireland through a nearby 'Pray & Play' group (Rosary, a cuppa, and time for the children to play) or through our WhatsApp community and morning Rosary. If there isn't a group near you yet, we also share guidance on starting one in your parish; sometimes it only takes two mums and a willing hall. To enquire about local groups or membership, you can contact us via their main website and 'Connect and Contact' page.

If you are reading this and quietly thinking, "That's me," I want to say it again: you are not alone. You



don't have to keep running on empty, and you don't have to carry everything by yourself. God is not standing over you with a checklist, He is inviting you to come closer, to rest, and to be renewed.

Lord Jesus, I'm tired and I need You. Help me stop pretending and start coming home to Your love. Give me courage to reach out, humility to receive help, and grace to take the next small step. Restore what feels disconnected in me and draw me into deeper relationship with You and Your people. Amen.

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the month of May. This month is dedicated to the Blessed Virgin Mary. We offer up special prayers and devotion to Mary, who always leads us to Jesus. A traditional custom to show our love for the Mother of Jesus is the making of a May Altar. A statue of Our Lady is placed on a table and surrounded by fresh flowers. Another custom is a May Crowning of Mary as the Queen of Heaven, by adorning Her statue with flowers.



In May, we honour Mary on two beautiful Feast Days. On May 13, we celebrate the Feast Day of Our Lady of Fatima, when the Blessed Virgin appeared to three young children and called for prayer and conversion in the world. The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is on May 31. On this day, we honour how Mary, while carrying her Son Jesus within her womb, went to visit her cousin, Elizabeth to offer her charitable help and to tell of God's great mercy. However, this year Pentecost Sunday falls on May 31, so the Church will celebrate this great Feast on that day instead.

This year, the entire month of May falls within the liturgical season of Easter. So, with Spring upon us blossoming new life, we celebrate the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven, and we wait eagerly for the marvellous Feast of Pentecost, the Descent of the Holy Spirit and the beginning of the Church. The month of May is bursting with Christian joy.



The Ascension of Jesus (CCC 659)

“Then He took them out as far as the outskirts of Bethany, and raising His hands, He blessed them. Now as

He blessed them, He withdrew from them and was carried up to Heaven.” (Lk 29:50)

The Ascension of Jesus is a mystery of faith. It always falls 40 days after Easter, which is a Thursday, but most parishes now celebrate this important Feast on the following Sunday. The word ‘Ascension’ means to go up and, on this day, we remember how the earthly body of Jesus went up into Heaven. Jesus was with His disciples on the Mount of Olives, outside Jerusalem. He told them that soon they would receive the power of the Holy Spirit, and to go to preach the Good News of His Resurrection to the whole world. After Jesus ascended, an angel appeared and promised that one day Jesus would return.

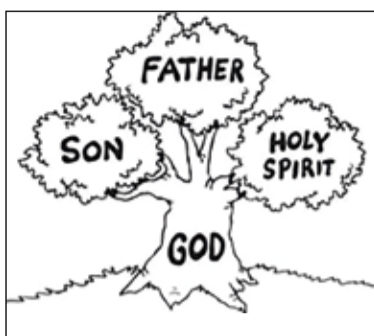


Pentecost

Pentecost is celebrated 50 days, or the seventh Sunday, after the Resurrection of Jesus on Easter, and concludes the Easter season. The word ‘Pentecost’ means 50, and marks the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles. For this reason, it is often called ‘the birthday of the Church’ (CCC 1076).

At Pentecost, Mary, accompanied by a couple of other women and the disciples, were in an upper room in a house in Jerusalem. While they prayed together, a strong wind came up with a loud noise, and flames of fire came to rest above the heads of the apostles. Immediately, they were inspired and filled with courage and strength to go and spread the Word of God.

On that first Pentecost Sunday, over 3,000 people were converted and baptised.



Trinity Sunday

Trinity Sunday is celebrated on the first Sunday after Pentecost and lasts only one day, which is symbolic of the unity of the Trinity. On this day, we remember the truth that God is made up of the Father, the Son (Jesus) and the Holy Spirit.

It is a central mystery of our faith (CCC 234) and a little difficult to understand that there can be one God, yet three persons to God. The bible reveals that there is only one God, but that this God is made up of three parts, The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The word we use to describe this 3-in-1 God is 'Trinity'. This word is made up of the word 'Tri', which means three, and the word 'unity', which means one or being unified together.

Our Lady of Fatima

The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared six times to three shepherd children - Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta. Between May 13 and October 13, 1917, She appeared in the little village of Fatima, in Portugal. Our Lady brought a special message from God for everyone to hear. She promised that the world would be at peace and that many souls would go to Heaven, if people listened to Her requests and obeyed them. Her three requests were penance, prayer and devotion to Her Immaculate heart.

Our Lady told the three children

that a great sign from Heaven would happen so that everyone would believe. This miracle took place in Fatima on October 13, 1917, and was witnessed by 70,000 people. It is called the ‘Miracle of the Sun’. Everyone could stare perfectly at the sun without blinking or hurting their eyes. The sun rotated in the sky, became large and small, drew close to the people and then far away from them. Everyone who saw this said that the sun was dancing. It was an extraordinary event that even made unbelievers fall to their knees and beg God for forgiveness.

The message Our Lady brought to Fatima still applies today. She asked that everyone pray the Rosary every day to overcome evil in the world. Centuries earlier, Our Blessed Mother Mary had given us the Rosary, a very powerful weapon, to keep us safe from harm in this world. The Rosary is like the sling-shot of King David that killed the mighty enemy because the power of God was behind it. When we pray the Rosary, we have the power of God in our hands which protects and guards us and leads us to God.

O my Jesus, forgive us our sins, save us from the fires of hell, lead all souls to heaven, especially those in most need of Thy mercy.

(Our Lady at Fatima, July 13, 1917)



Saints of the Month

- St James & St Philip, Apostles – May 3
- St Matthias – May 14
- St Philip Neri – May 26
- St Augustine of Canterbury – May 27

The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

“My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour, because He has looked upon the lowliness of His handmaid. Yes, henceforth all generations will call me blessed” (Luke 1:46-48).

The Feast of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary is May 31. Visitation means ‘the visit’. The Angel Gabriel told Mary that Her cousin, Elizabeth was going to have a baby boy, so Mary set off at once to visit Elizabeth.

Mary, too, was expecting a baby; Baby Jesus. When She arrived at Elizabeth's house, the Holy Spirit revealed to Elizabeth that Mary was going to become the Mother of God. Elizabeth greeted Mary with the words “Blessed art thou amongst women and blessed is the fruit of thy womb” (Luke 1:42; CCC 2676).

While Elizabeth and Mary greeted each other, the baby boy in Elizabeth's womb leapt for joy. He would later be called John the Baptist.

Elizabeth asked Mary, “Why should I be honoured with a visit from the Mother of my Lord?” Mary responded in humility and spoke of how God had blessed Her richly. “Holy is His name,” Mary exclaimed.

During Her visit, the Blessed Virgin Mary brought many graces to Her cousin, Elizabeth's house. St John the Baptist, while still hidden in his mother's womb was cleansed of original sin. His father Zechariah, who had lost his voice, got his speech back after John was born. St Elizabeth was filled with the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Mary remained at Elizabeth's house for three months before returning to Nazareth.

Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. Which constellation in our solar system is also referred to as 'The Great Bear'?
2. What is the only letter of the alphabet that doesn't feature in the list of US states?
3. Entomology is the official name for the study of what?
4. In what sport was China's Wu Yize recently crowned world champion?
5. Of what country is the Mackenzie the longest river?
6. On what everyday item would you find a little piece of plastic known as an 'Aglet'?
7. What is the largest bone in the human body?
8. From what plant form does the vanilla pod come?
9. What actress plays the title role in the movie 'Erin Brockovich'?
10. Of what South American country is La Paz the capital city?
11. What team won football's European Champions League competition in 2025?
12. Who wrote the popular novel 'The Jungle Book'?
13. In which city would you find 'Gorky Park'?
14. How much actual playing time is there in a regular game of American Football (NFL)?
15. Which popular weather presenter recently retired after 28 years at the BBC?
16. In which US city was the bar room TV comedy 'Cheers' set?
17. Which is the world's only bird that can fly backwards?
18. In the film 'Billy Elliott', what job did Billy's father do to provide for the family?
19. Which is the largest of the Caribbean islands?
20. From what town in Northern Ireland does former World Snooker champion Denis Taylor originate?
21. Who painted the iconic 'Last Supper'?
22. Which country won this year's Eurovision Song Contest?
23. In what continent would you find the Gobi Desert?
24. Which William Shakespeare play provided the iconic 'to be or not to be' soliloquy?
25. What is the capital city of New Zealand?

Quiz Answers:

- 1, Ursa Major; 2, Q; 3, Insects; 4, Snooker; 5, Canada; 6, At each end of a shoe-lace; 7, Femur; 8, Orchid; 9, Julia Roberts; 10, Bolivia; 11, Paris Saint-Germain; 12, Rudyard Kipling; 13, Moscow; 14, One hour; 15, Carol Kirkwood; 16, Boston; 17, Hummingbird; 18, Coal Miner; 19, Cuba; 20, Coalisland; 21, Leonardo Da Vinci; 22, Bulgaria; 23, Asia; 24, Hamlet; 25, Wellington.

Aghyaran, Ardmore, Ardstraw West & Castlederg, Ballinascreen, Ballymagroarty, Banagher, Bellaghy, Buncrana, Carndonagh, Claudy,

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