The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 123. NOVEMBER 2026

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Bereavement Support - Kilrea & Desertoghill

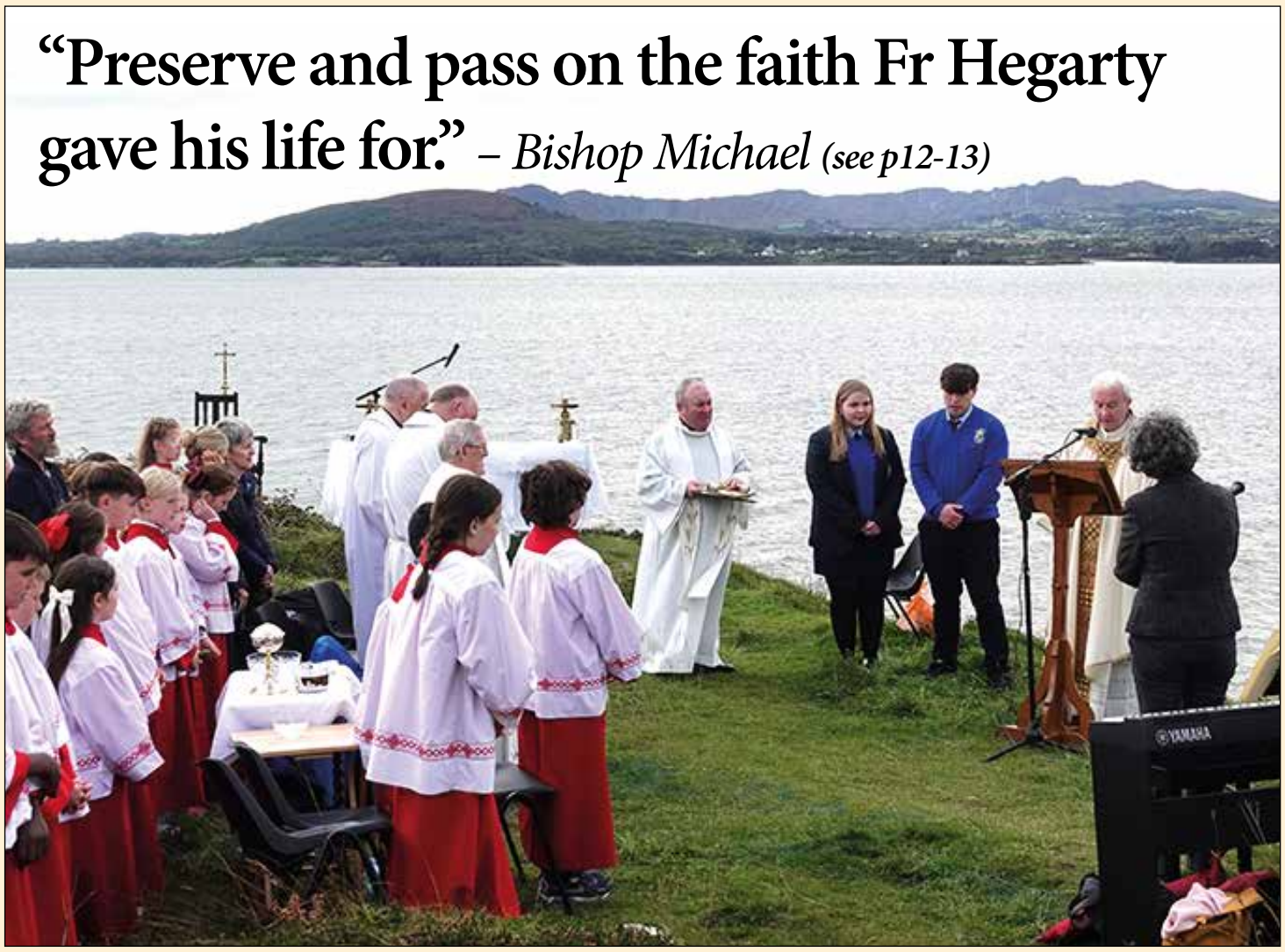


Eucharistic Miracles - St Eugene's



Lough Derg Day of Prayer - Donagheady

"Preserve and pass on the faith Fr Hegarty gave his life for." – *Bishop Michael* *(see p12-13)*



Bishop Michael celebrating Mass at Fr Hegarty's Rock, Buncrana.



Pre-Christmas Novena - Long Tower



Mass for Deceased - St Malachy's GAC Castledawson



Harvest Thanksgiving - Iskaheen & Upper Moville



Parish Mission - Errigal

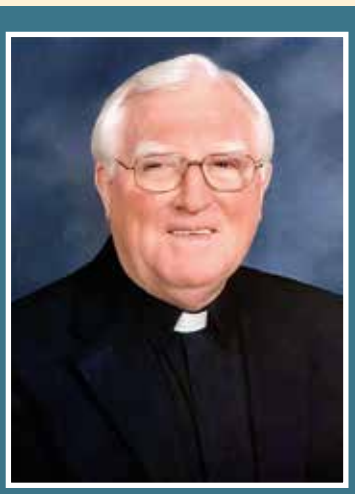
People *in focus*



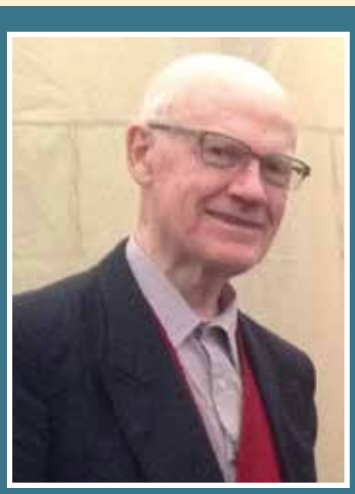
Bishop Donal McKeown - Bishop Emeritus of Derry



St Carlo Acutis



The late Fr Brendan McKeefry - Craigavole



The late Fr John McLaughlin SSC - Moville



The late Liam Grant - Derry & Fahan

Also featuring: Young Writers' section; Children's Catechism Club; Nazareth House PS to launch Sr Clare song; Our Lady of Fatima PS special gift; St Eoghan's PS mural; Holy Child PS celebrates 70 years; Termoncanice PS marks 140 anniversary; Catholic Mothers' All Saints' party; Coleraine Family Prayer Book; St Eugene's Day of Prayer; Legion of Mary Inishowen historic milestone; Synodal Assembly report; Vocations News; Irish page; Features; Parish Post-its & Diary Dates; Quiz… and much more…

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The NET
Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

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Sr Deirdre Mullan reflects on the Pope's November prayer intention for the proper use of wealth:

"Let us pray for the proper use of wealth, that not succumbing to the temptation of selfishness, it may always be put at the service of the common good and solidarity of those who have less."

Every gift of time, talent or treasure can help build a more just and generous world



Sr. Deirdre Mullan

POPE Leo's prayer intention for November invites us to consider what we possess, how we use it, and whose lives might be changed by our generosity.

It also echoes the concerns of his first encyclical, 'Magnifica Humanitas', on safeguarding the human person in the age of artificial intelligence. Signed on May 15, 2026, the 135th anniversary of Leo XIII's 'Rerum Novarum', and published 10 days later, it brings the Church's social teaching to bear on urgent questions about human dignity, work, solidarity and our shared future.

This rich and demanding document deserves careful reading. At its heart are three questions that offer a framework for our November reflection.

1. Where are we going?

This question has challenged the people of God in every generation. Answering it requires us to pay attention to the world as it is, especially to the lives of those whose suffering is too easily overlooked.

As Cardinal Blase Cupich has observed: "The Church can only be credible if fully engaged in the world and attentive to what happens in people's real lives, as well as to the forces that influence politics and public opinion."

His words echo Pope Francis' insistence that reality must take precedence over ideas. Today, as powerful movements on the political right promote narrow self-interest and hostility towards outsiders, this call to engage with people's lives becomes ever more urgent. Pope Leo's quiet, firm leadership invites us to draw deeply on our faith, listen to one another and help heal the fractures of our age.

2. Toward what goal do we wish to orient ourselves?

The common good must be more than an aspiration. It must shape our priorities and decisions.

Many challenges facing the human family are matters of life and death: unequal access to healthcare, exposed so starkly during the pandemic; racial and social injustice; the mistreatment of migrants; the suffering caused by poverty and addiction; and the threat climate change poses to life on Earth.

These challenges are compounded by the growing concentration of wealth and power in fewer hands, giving a small minority disproportionate influence over the media, democratic elections and public policy. The use of such power to support authoritarian movements threatens human rights and democratic accountability. Meanwhile, a renewed arms race feeds on fear and hostility, diverting resources from urgent human needs, while the rapid advancement of artificial intelligence, without adequate safeguards or public scrutiny, raises profound questions about livelihoods, truth, freedom and human dignity.

How might our local churches create spaces for honest dialogue about these realities? Whose voices are missing from

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

Aghyaran: Thursdays, 10.30am–12 noon.
Ardstraw West & Castlederg: Fridays, 10.30am –12 noon, St Patrick's Church.
Badoney Lower: Tuesdays, after 12 noon Mass until 5pm, St Patrick's Gortin; and Wednesdays, Mass 7.30pm, Adoration and Confession until 9pm, St Mary's, Rouskey.
Badoney Upper: Wednesdays, after 7.30pm evening Mass until 9pm, St Patrick's Cranagh.
Ballinascreen: First Mondays, from 12 noon-7.30pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.
Banagher: Thursdays, 10.30-11.30am, St Mary's Church, Altinure, and Fridays, 10 –11am, St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.
Bellaghy: Every Friday, from 10am until recitation of Rosary at 7.30pm, in St Mary's Church.
Buncrana: Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, Fridays, 6am-10pm and Sundays, 2-10pm, St Mary's Oratory.
Cappagh: Wednesdays, 8 -9pm, concluding with Night Prayer, and Sundays, 3.30-6.30pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.
Claudy: Tuesdays, after 10am Mass until 8pm, St Patrick's Church, Claudy, and Wednesdays, after 10 Mass until 8pm, St Joseph's Church, Craigbane.
Clonmany: Tuesdays, 7.30 -8.30pm, the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin; Wednesdays, 3-4pm, St Columbcille Village, Cleagh; Fridays, 3-6pm (Rosary at 5.40pm), St Michael's Church, Urris.
Coleraine: Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2-4pm, with Rosary at 3:45pm.
Creggan: Sundays 1.30pm-6pm; Mondays 10.30am - 7pm; Tue - Sat 10.30am - 12pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.
Donagheady: First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St Mary's Church, Aughabrack.
Donaghmore: Tuesdays, 10.30am-7.30pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.
Drumquin: Wednesdays, 6pm until Mass at 7.30pm.
Drumragh: Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30pm.
Dungiven: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9am-6pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9am-8pm, in Adoration Chapel.
Errigal: Mondays, after the 10am Mass until 2.30pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.
Fahan: Fridays after 10am Mass, St Mura's Parish Church.
Greencastle (Tyrone): Thursdays, 6-10pm, St Patrick's Church.
Greenlough: Thursdays, 9am–5pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.
Iskaheen: Tuesdays, from after 10am Mass until 2pm, St Patrick's Church.
Kilrea: Mondays, 12 noon - 7pm, St Mary's Drumagarner. Concludes with Benediction.
Lavey: Fridays, after 9.15am Mass until 5pm.
Leckpatrick: Wednesdays from 8.15am–5pm.
Lifford (Murlog): 9.30am - 12.30pm
Limavady: First Sunday of each month from 3-5pm in Christ the King Church (with Confessions), and on Thursdays in St Mary's Church, from 1-6pm.
Magilligan: Wednesdays, 3-7pm; First Sundays, 3-6pm, St Aidan's Church.
Melmount: Mondays, after 10am Mass until 6pm.
Moville: Mondays, 2-9pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9pm, St Pius X Church.
Newtownstewart: Thursdays, 6.30-7.30pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.
Sion Mills: Adoration takes place in the side chapel (Oratory) and will be available every day during the Church's opening hours, moving to the main body of the chapel on Fridays, from 11am-6.50pm, ending with Benediction before 7pm Mass.
Steelstown: Mondays, from after 10am Mass until 6.50pm.
Strabane (Camus): Every day from 10.30am-1pm in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), at the back of the Church.
St Columba's Long Tower: Wednesdays, after 10am Mass until 7.30pm Mass.
St Eugene's Cathedral: Sundays, 3-6pm, and Tuesdays, 10.30am-7.20pm.
Three Patrons: Tuesdays from 11am-7pm in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh; Wednesdays from 10.30am-7pm, in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, and seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, from 8am until 8pm.
Urney & Castlefin: Tuesdays, 12 noon-8pm, St Anthony's Chapel.
Waterside: Mondays, 11.30am-12.30pm; Wednesdays, 6.30-8.30pm, Strathfoyle; Thursdays, 1-6pm, Immaculate Conception Church; Fridays, 1-6pm, St Columb's Church.

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

The NET
Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Supporting us:

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

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

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

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The ministry of
The NET
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Reflection on National Synodal Assembly…

Synodality takes root when our relationships reflect the welcome, truth and mercy of Christ *by Bishop Michael Router*



Bishop Michael in reflective mood during the celebration of Mass at Fr Hegarty's Rock, Buncrana

THE National Synodal Assembly in the City North Hotel, Gormanstown, Co Meath, on October 17 was, for me, a deeply moving occasion. It brought together the fruits of years of prayer, listening and discernment across Ireland. Personally, it marked a milestone because it was a moment I had advocated for and worked towards in Kilmore, Armagh and nationally for over 25 years. I felt gratitude for the journey and renewed hope for the Church's future.

My involvement began in 1997, eight years after my ordination, when my home diocese of Kilmore began reflecting on pastoral development in preparation for the Jubilee Year 2000. Clergy and lay people gathered, over three years, to consider the future of the diocese and how our parishes could respond to changing circumstances. We discovered the value of sitting together, sharing experience and listening to what God might be asking of us.

That preparation led to a three-day diocesan assembly in Cavan in October 2000. Proposals included a diocesan pastoral centre, parish pastoral councils and greater shared responsibility for decisions and action. I was instantly attracted to the approach and the method. I could see how much wisdom, faith and generosity became available when people were invited to contribute. Later, as Director of Pastoral Development and Adult Faith Formation in the Diocese of Kilmore, I helped organise further diocesan assemblies in 2007 and 2014.

Those experiences convinced me that this was the way forward. Since becoming a bishop in 2019, I have continued advocating for an Irish synodal pathway leading to a national assembly. I was, therefore, delighted when the bishops announced that pathway in March 2021. Its central question went to the heart of our task, "What does God want from the Church in Ireland at this time?"

That question reminds us whose Church we are. Synodality begins with belonging to Christ and, together, seeking His will. Every baptised person has gifts to offer, experiences from which others can learn and a responsibility for sharing the Gospel. Bishops, priests, religious and lay people have distinct vocations, but all belong to the same People of God. We need one another if we are to fulfil the mission entrusted to us.

This understanding has deep roots. In the Acts of the Apostles, the early Christian community gathered to address difficult questions through discussion, testimony and discernment. In the third century, St Cyprian of Carthage understood his leadership in relation to the counsel of his clergy and the participation of his people. Listening together belongs within the Church's tradition and helps authority to be exercised as a service to communion.

Lay people

The Second Vatican Council gave fresh expression to this vision. In 'Lumen Gentium', par 37, it affirmed that lay people should make their needs known to their pastors with freedom and confidence. Their knowledge and competence enable them, and sometimes oblige them, to express their views on matters concerning the Church's good. Synodality offers a practical way of allowing that teaching to shape ordinary parish and diocesan life.

At the heart of this is the Holy Spirit. Prayer to the Spirit has been indispensable throughout my life. From my earliest days, I have depended on His guidance, strength and reassurance. Without that help, I could scarcely have considered a vocation to priesthood. Anything worthwhile in my ministry has depended on his inspiration. The synodal journey has strengthened my conviction that the Spirit continues to work most effectively through the whole community.

My experience of the Irish synodal journey has been overwhelmingly positive but, of course, there have been disagreements, disappointments and resistance along the way. Change can create anxiety, especially when it challenges familiar ways of exercising responsibility. Nevertheless, approximately 120,000 people have participated. Behind that figure are people bringing their faith, questions, hopes and concerns into a shared search. Their contribution deserves serious attention and a response that can be recognised in the Church's life.

For me, the assembly brought that journey into focus. It was, as I mentioned already, very moving to see years of effort reaching this moment of national discernment. I thought of those who had sustained similar hopes long before the present process began and of the many people whose contributions had helped shape the proposals. There was much to be thankful for. The gathering also made clear that our listening must now bear fruit.

Among the proposals receiving strong recommendations were parish communities as places of faith formation, renewed catechesis and sacramental preparation, and support for faith within the home. There was encouragement for youth coordinators, youth advisory committees, pilgrimages and pathways of intentional discipleship. These offer practical possibilities for helping people know Christ, grow in faith and discover that they have something valuable to contribute. Evangelisation and renewal run through them all.

Wounds

I was particularly encouraged by the emphasis on healing, accompaniment and belonging. Many carry wounds that affect their relationship with the Church. Survivors of abuse must be heard with humility and their experience should influence our actions. Others have become distant through disappointment, painful relationships or a sense that there is no place for them. The Gospel calls us to approach each person with compassion and respect.

The gifts and contribution of women, pastoral accompaniment and the needs of people at the margins remain essential to our discernment. We must keep listening and asking how the underlying need can best be addressed.

The road to Emmaus gives us a beautiful model. Jesus draws near to two disappointed disciples and walks beside them. He listens to their account of what has happened, opens the Scriptures and helps them understand their experience differently. They recognise Him in the breaking of bread and return to share their joy. Patient accompaniment leads to renewed faith and the courage to become witnesses.

This has much to teach us in Derry. Some people experienced earlier consultations as limited or saw little evidence that their contributions mattered. We must take that seriously. Parish pastoral councils must continue to play a meaningful role and opportunities for participation made accessible. Our communities should be places where people can share faith and pray together, so that they discern how their gifts serve the common good.

Our responsibility also reaches beyond those already attending. We must draw near to people who struggle to see the Church's relevance and share our faith with humility. Prayer, Scripture and the Eucharist will sustain that work. Synodality takes root when our relationships reflect the welcome, the truth and the mercy of Christ.

I left the assembly in Gormanstown thankful and hopeful. A gathering can mark a turning point, but renewal grows through the work and effort that follows in our homes, parishes and diocese. My hope is that we will continue this journey with trust in the Holy Spirit, helping one another recognise Christ beside us and finding fresh courage to share His message of love and mercy with others.



Buncrana folk gathered with their shepherds for the celebration of Mass at Fr Hegarty's Rock.



Meeting some school children and staff en route to Fr Hegarty's Rock, Buncrana.



Bishop Michael in conversation during a recent walk to Fr Hegarty's Rock, Buncrana, for the celebration of Mass.



Bishop Michael with the delegates from the Derry Diocese at the National Synodal Assembly in Co Meath.



National Synodal Assembly delegates gather to ponder fruits of prayer, listening and discernment across Ireland.

Continued from p2

our conversations? And how might listening together lead to practical action?

Our goal must be communities in which every person's dignity is recognised and protected, and those with the least power have a meaningful voice.

3. What direction should we choose as a people and as a human community?

November's prayer intention asks us to examine where we are going, who is leading us, and what values guide our choices. Its challenge is particularly clear for those entrusted with wealth and influence.

As I reflected on this, I found encouragement in my colleague, John Studzinski, founder and benefactor of the Arise Foundation, which works against human trafficking and modern slavery, and of which I am a trustee.

At a time when the concentration of wealth and cuts to vital services leave so many people vulnerable, John offers a hopeful example of resources placed at the service of human dignity. His commitment shows how generosity can support those confronting exploitation and help create the conditions for lasting change.

He often recalls Jesus' teaching that much is required of those to whom much has been given (Luke 12:48). For John, this responsibility finds expression in action, personal engagement and volunteering.

Service brings us closer to other people's lives. We may begin by believing that we are giving our time and experience, only to discover how much we receive. Through encounters with people who are marginalised, poor or vulnerable, God holds up a mirror to our assumptions and invites us to change.

Whatever our financial circumstances, each of us has something to offer. Time is precious. So are our talents, our attention and our willingness to stand alongside another person. God calls us to place these gifts, together with whatever material resources we possess, at the service of the common good.

Faced with these threats to human dignity and our shared future, it is easy to feel powerless. Yet, each of us can contribute: by serving our neighbours; challenging injustice; and joining with others to hold those with wealth and power accountable. Personal generosity and the pursuit of a more just society belong together.

Pope Leo's intention is, therefore, both a challenge and an invitation to hope. Every act of compassion matters. Every gift of time, talent or treasure can help build a more just and generous world.

The question for November is simple: What have I been given, and how will I use it for the common good of others?

Sr Deirdre Mullan is a Sister of Mercy from Derry. She is the coordinator of the Mercy Girl Effect, an NGO in association with UNICEF. She also serves on several boards, including the Arise Foundation – London.

St Eugene's Parish News...Celebrating St Carlo Acutis

Inspiring day of prayer at Cathedral in honour of St Carlo Acutis *by Anne Marie Hickey - Pastoral Coordinator*













ST Eugene's Cathedral in Derry hosted a special Day of Prayer on Sunday, October 11, in honour of St Carlo Acutis, the young saint whose extraordinary love for the Eucharist continues to inspire people of all ages throughout the world.

The afternoon offered a wonderful opportunity for people to come together in prayer, reflection and thanksgiving, drawing inspiration from the life of a young man who showed that holiness is possible in the ordinary circumstances of everyday life.

From 2-7 pm, the Cathedral provided a welcoming and prayerful setting, with a varied programme including music, Eucharistic Adoration, prayer, Confession, and a film on Carlo's life. Throughout the afternoon, the Rosary was prayed and sacred music was provided by Fidelma Legge, Anne Marie Hickey, McGinley School of Music, Lauren Doherty and the Columba Community. Aidan Watkins was the organist for the afternoon. The music certainly helped create an atmosphere of peace and devotion.

Visitors were invited to spend time in Eucharistic Adoration in the Mother Teresa Chapel, offering a precious opportunity for quiet prayer before the Blessed Sacrament. One of the central features of the day was the opportunity to venerate a relic of St Carlo Acutis in the main aisle of the Cathedral. The Sacrament of Reconciliation was also available, allowing those present to experience God's mercy and forgiveness. A special petitions area provided an opportunity for people to bring their personal prayers, hopes and intentions before God, while a screening of 'Journey with Carlo' offered an insight into the remarkable life and enduring spiritual legacy of this young saint. The day culminated in the celebration of Mass with Bishop Michael Router, bringing the day of prayer to a fitting and meaningful conclusion.

St Carlo Acutis, who died in 2006 at just 15 years of age, is remembered for his deep devotion to the Eucharist, his kindness towards others and his remarkable ability to use modern technology to share the Catholic faith. His life reminds us that sainthood is not something reserved for another time or place, but a calling open to everyone. His well-known words, "The Eucharist is the highway to Heaven," were at the heart of the day's celebrations, reminding all present of the importance of placing Jesus in the Eucharist at the centre of our lives.

The Day of Prayer was also a reminder of the importance of creating opportunities for people, particularly young people, to encounter Christ and discover the beauty and richness of their Catholic faith. The programme brought together the traditional devotions of the Church with the inspiring story of a modern young saint, demonstrating how faith can speak meaningfully to every generation. The day offered an opportunity for spiritual renewal, quiet reflection and a renewed appreciation of the gift of the Eucharist.

As the Church continues to celebrate the life and witness of St Carlo Acutis, his message remains both simple and powerful: Holiness begins with loving God, serving others and allowing Christ to guide our everyday lives. May the example of St Carlo Acutis continue to inspire our young people, strengthen our families and encourage all of us to grow in faith, hope and love.

Only God can satisfy the deepest hunger within the human heart – *Bishop Michael*



THE Day of Prayer in St Eugene's, on the eve of the Feast Day of St Carlo Acutis, came to a close with the celebration of Mass by Bishop Michael Router, who was delighted to welcome the large congregation and the many young people in particular, with several schools represented.

Offering the Mass in thanksgiving for the Italian teenager's witness, Bishop Michael spoke of how, through prayer, the Eucharist and acts of charity, Carlo had shown that holiness "is not for a select few, but is possible for everyone, especially when Christ is at the centre of our lives."

Referring, in his homily, to the message of the Gospel for the day, that God is continually inviting all into a deeper relationship with Him and how this invitation can easily slip down the list of priorities, with so much competing for people's attention, the bishop went on to remark how, at a very young age, Carlo had understood what many can take a lifetime to appreciate, that "if God is inviting us to something, we should not keep putting Him off."

He also noted: "Carlo was very much a person of his generation. He loved computers and technology, enjoyed football and had many of the interests of other teenagers. Yet, in the middle of all that, he made room for God. He went to Mass as often as he could, prayed the Rosary, went regularly to confession and spent time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament – the eternal feast."

Highlighting the connection with day's readings, with both Isaiah and Jesus using the image of a banquet, a feast, to describe God's relationship with us, Bishop Michael said: "The Eucharist, the eternal, feast, was at the very centre of Carlo's life. He famously described it as his 'highway to Heaven'. He used his considerable computer skills to catalogue Eucharistic miracles throughout the world because he wanted other people, especially young people, to understand that Jesus is really present in the Eucharist.

"They say that over 60 percent of practicing Catholics don't believe that Jesus is really present in the consecrated bread and wine. Remember that is 60 percent of practicing Catholics who believe it is just blessed bread and wine and nothing more. The real presence of Christ is central to our faith and beliefs. It is the source and summit of our faith, and it is the nourishment we need to journey with and towards God."

He added: "St Carlo lived in a world of computers, entertainment and endless distractions, but he knew what his priority was. This is an important example for us today. Our phones and devices can fill almost every spare minute we have. We can be connected to hundreds, or even thousands of people, and yet rarely find the time to attend a celebration of the Eucharist, or even 10 minutes to be quiet with God.

"The characters in today's Gospel were not necessarily doing bad



St Eugene's Parish News...Celebrating St Carlo Acutis

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things; one went to his farm and another to his business. Their problem was that other things had become more important than the invitation they had received. The same danger exists for us. Work, sport, entertainment and possessions all have their place, but none of them can satisfy the deepest hunger within the human heart.

"St Carlo discovered where that hunger could be satisfied. He once said that the more often we receive the Eucharist, the more we become like Jesus and experience a foretaste of Heaven. That is exactly the banquet Isaiah describes today: the place where God satisfies the deepest hunger of his people."

"St Carlo also discovered that receiving Jesus must change the way we live," said Bishop Michael, noting: "At school, he defended those who were bullied, particularly children with disabilities, and befriended young people experiencing difficulties at home. His love of the Eucharist led naturally to love of other people. This is the challenge we should take away from this day of prayer, because God continues to say to each one of us what the king says in the Gospel, 'Everything is ready. Come to the wedding feast.'

"As we leave here this evening, through the intercession of St Carlo Acutis, may we discover some of the strength he had, particularly as he held on to his faith despite indifference and the strength he showed in facing his illness and death. Hopefully, we will never become so busy and distracted that we ignore God's invitation, to let the Eucharist become for us, as it was for Carlo, the road that leads us closer to Jesus and, ultimately, to the great banquet of Heaven."

Concelebrating at the Mass were Bishop Donal, Fr Colum Clerkin, and Fr Shaun Doherty, with Fr Paul Farren assisting. And the ceremony was greatly enhanced with the beautiful singing of Sally Mae Comey.











Eucharistic miracles exhibition attracts visitors from near and far *by Anne Marie Hickey*

A special exhibition celebrating the Eucharistic Miracles of the World, designed and created by St Carlo Acutis, attracted visitors from near and far to St Eugene's Cathedral Hall, Derry, from October 9-16. Throughout the eight-day exhibition, people travelled distances to visit this remarkable display, which offered an opportunity to explore the extraordinary stories of Eucharistic miracles throughout the world.

The International Exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles was originally researched and created by St Carlo Acutis, the young Italian Saint whose deep love for the Eucharist and remarkable use of modern technology have inspired people across the world, particularly young people. Carlo, who died in 2006 at just 15 years of age, dedicated much of his short life to sharing his Catholic faith.

Through his knowledge of computers and the internet, he created an exhibition documenting Eucharistic miracles from different countries and centuries, helping others to discover and appreciate the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. His well-known words, "The Eucharist is my highway to Heaven," were at the heart of the exhibition and served as a powerful reminder of the central place of the Eucharist in Catholic life.

Over the course of the week, the Cathedral Hall became a place of welcome, discovery, reflection and faith. Visitors of different ages and backgrounds took time to explore the displays, read the remarkable accounts and reflect on the mystery of the Eucharist. Particularly encouraging was the interest shown by those who travelled long distances specifically to experience the exhibition. Their journeys reflected the growing devotion to St Carlo Acutis and the desire among so many people to deepen their understanding of the Catholic faith.

Our parish post primary and primary schools paid more than one visit to the exhibition, giving students the opportunity to learn about the various Eucharistic Miracles throughout the world. For many visitors, the exhibition was much more than a collection of historical accounts. It provided an opportunity to pause amid the busyness of everyday life, reflect on their relationship with God and rediscover the beauty and significance of the Holy Eucharist.

The exhibition also highlighted the extraordinary legacy of a young person who understood that holiness is not something reserved for a particular age or generation. Carlo demonstrated that faith can be lived in ordinary everyday circumstances and that modern technology, when used positively, can become a powerful means of evangelisation. His simple yet profound words, "Not I, but God," continue to inspire people to place Christ at the centre of their lives.

The hosting of this international exhibition at St Eugene's was a wonderful opportunity to share Carlo's message with the wider community and to welcome pilgrims and visitors from beyond the parish and diocese. It was particularly moving to see the interest in the exhibition and the willingness of so many people to make a special journey to experience it. The response demonstrated that the message of the Eucharist remains as relevant and powerful today as ever.

The exhibition concluded on Friday, October 16, leaving behind a lasting message of faith, hope and inspiration. St Eugene's extends sincere thanks to everyone who visited, to those who travelled from near and far, and to all who helped make the exhibition possible. A heartfelt thanks to all the volunteers who gave of their precious time to staff the exhibition and make sure the visitors received a warm welcome. Above all, the week was a celebration of the gift of the Eucharist and the extraordinary witness of St Carlo Acutis, whose life continues to remind us that holiness is possible for everyone and that the greatest treasure we possess is Christ, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament.

St Carlo Acutis pray for us.











Nazareth House PS family excited to launch Sr Clare song 'All or Nothing'



NAZARETH House Primary School, in Derry, is launching its recently recorded 'All or Nothing' song in honour of past pupil, Servant of God Sr Clare Crockett, on Friday, November 13.

Speaking to 'The Net' prior to the launch, the principal, Mrs Roisin Blackery said that the Nazareth House PS family felt honoured that Sr Clare had once walked their corridors and wore their uniform, and had wanted to do something to pay tribute to her.

"When Sr Clare died there was a massive ripple effect in our school community," recalled Mrs Blackery, adding: "We felt that it was very important to keep her spirit alive here and to honour her legacy. As she used song in her ministry, worked with children and brought joy wherever she went with her guitar, we decided to take that slant.

"Under the direction of our music co-ordinator, Joanne Higgins, a little sub-group from the school choir composed a song together, calling it 'All or Nothing'. The children basically made an acrostic poem from all the letters of Sr Clare's name and the lyrics of the song were formed from that. It is very child-like, being written by children for children. We would love to share it on and so, it will be available for any school that wants it."

Following an appeal for help in getting the song professionally recorded, the first reply came from New Gate Arts & Culture Centre, based in city's Fountain area.

Grateful for the help of local media in promoting the appeal, including Radio Foyle, which broadcast the children singing the song, and BBC News, which also covered the recording of 'All or Nothing', Mrs Blackery expressed deep gratitude for New Gate doing the recording free of charge.

Principal of Nazareth House PS for four years, after having taught there from 2012, Mrs Blackery said: "We are very proud of the children involved in this and the resilience of our school family, considering everything that we have been through.

"We had to move out of our school building when it was discovered that the roof was unstable. At first, we spent about a month in a local youth club facility. Then, after last Christmas, St Anne's PS took us in and we were there until mid-February of this year, when we moved back into our own building. The roof needs a full refurbishment, leaving the second floor out-of-bounds, so we only have the use of the ground and first floors. We will be moving out again in June to a modular village in the grounds of Lumen Christi College, while the work is underway."

Saying that it was good to have something positive to talk about, after having been through this particularly difficult time, Mrs Blackery commented on how Sr Clare's legacy was being kept alive in the school: "Our children know a lot about Sr Clare. They know there is something very special about her and she is spoken about often. We have read the children's book, entitled 'When I Was Little', which is comprised of stories written by Sr Clare to inspire children.

"We also have a little group called 'Sr Clare's Nazareth House Friends', which aims to spread joy like Sr Clare did. This group wrote a school prayer for Sr Clare and they do little acts of kindness, such as going around with a plate of chocolate, giving out prayer cards etc. Now in its third year, the group is led by our P1 teacher, Shauna Molloy-O'Dowd, and includes two representatives from each year group. They are chosen by teachers at our staff meeting and change every year. It is a beautiful role and the children love it. They talk about Sr Clare, what she did and what they could do.

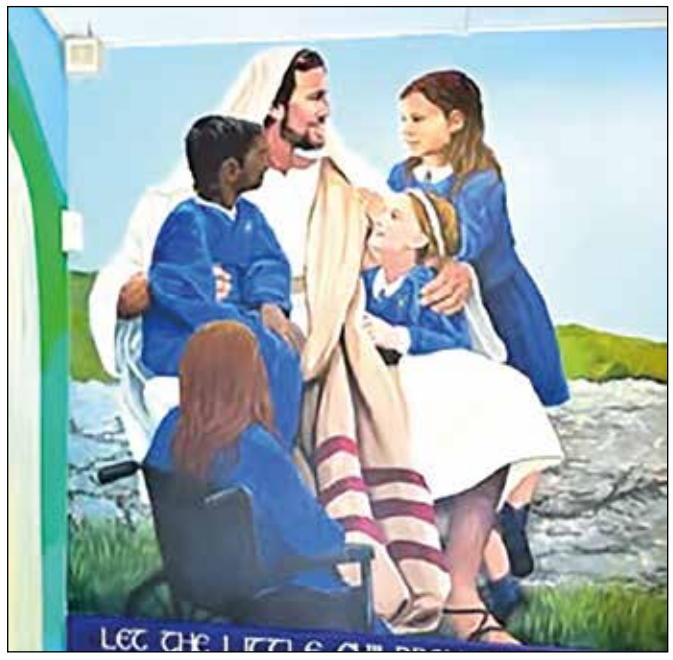
"They will take a leading role at the launch of our song, during which they will talk about Sr Clare. We feel that this is a lovely way of marking Sr Clare now being a Servant of God and her ongoing cause for canonisation."











Framed jigsaw a precious gift to Our Lady of Fatima PS

THE pupils and staff of Our Lady of Fatima Primary School, in the parish of Faughanvale, were delighted recently to receive a very special and meaningful gift of a beautifully framed jigsaw depicting Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Telling the story behind the gift, the principal, Jack Logue said: "The intricate jigsaw was carefully and painstakingly completed by Patrick Cairns, the grandfather of two of our pupils. Having completed a number of beautiful jigsaws, Patrick very kindly invited his grandsons to choose one from his collection to present to their school. The boys selected the wonderful image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help, which he then, very generously, had professionally framed."

At a recent school assembly, the boys proudly presented this very special gift to Mr Logue on behalf of their grandfather and family.

"The school community is deeply grateful for such a thoughtful and generous gesture," remarked the principal, adding: "The framed image now takes pride of place on our main school corridor, where it will be seen each day by pupils, staff, parents and visitors.



"More than simply a beautiful piece of artwork, it is a wonderful reminder of Our Lady's loving care and protection, and of the strong bonds of faith, family and community that are so important to the life of our Catholic school.

"We sincerely thank Mr Cairns and the entire Cairns family for their kindness and generosity. This beautiful gift will remain in our school for many years to come and will serve as a lasting legacy of one family's special connection with Our Lady of Fatima Primary School.

"Our Lady of Perpetual Help, pray for them."

Mr Logue also highlighted a wonderful Assembly led by the school's P7 pupils a few days after St Carlo Acutis' Feast Day in October, which shared the story of this remarkable young saint whose faith, kindness and love of the Eucharist continue to inspire people around the world.

Delighted to have welcomed their parish priest, Fr Noel McDermott, along with Rosemary and Bernie from the local Legion of Mary, the principal said: "As it was the month of the Holy Rosary, we were fortunate to have a beautiful statue of Our Lady, loaned to us by the Legion of Mary for the week.

"Thanks to Bernie for leading us in a decade of the Rosary, and to Miss McGuigan and our choir for the beautiful rendition of 'Our Lady of Knock'.

"The children spoke with confidence, reverence and enthusiasm, demonstrating the hard work they had put into preparing the Assembly. We are incredibly proud of the respectful and thoughtful way that they shared St Carlo's message of faith and holiness."



St Eoghan's PS Moneyneena unveil beautiful mural

ST Eoghan's PS, Moneyneena, in the Parish of Ballinascreen, began the new school year with the celebration of Mass and the unveiling of a new mural.

Including the inscription of Jesus' words, 'Let the little children come to me', the beautiful image of Jesus sitting chatting to three school children completes a beautiful, welcoming prayer space in the reception area of the rural school.

The unveiling of this third mural was in celebration of the Catholic faith of St Eoghan's school community, and its inclusivity.





Creggan's Holy Child PS marks 70th anniversary with walk down memory lane

HOLY Child Primary School has celebrated 70 years as a center of education in the Creggan Parish.

The school community marked the occasion with a special opportunity for past pupils and staff members to enjoy a walk down memory lane and a catch-up, while enjoying a cuppa and some sweet treats.

Amongst the special guests were Bishop Michael Router, Eamonn Broderick of CCMS, Children's Commissioner, Chris Quinn, First Minister, Michelle O'Neill, the Mayoress of Derry, Grace Ui Niallais, Board of Governors' members, and the priests of the parish, Fr Daniel McFaul PP and Fr Ignacy Saniuta CC.

The school was opened in 1956, when Bishop Neil Farren blessed it and the 384 pupils, aged 5-7 years old, and 10 teaching staff.

There was great interest in mementoes displayed, including old photographs and newspaper cuttings, and a video covering life at Holy Child over the past seven decades.

The principal, Mrs Pat Concannon expressed her pride in leading such a wonderful school community, describing the occasion as "celebrating our past, our present, and looking ahead to a bright future."

"This milestone," she added, "belongs to every teacher who dedicated their life to our classrooms, and every parent who trusted us with their children's future.

"At the heart of Holy Child have always been our children, our families, our faith and our community. We are blessed to have St Mary's Church just behind us and such a strong relationship with our priests, Fr Daniel McFaul and Fr Ignacy Saniuta, as well as the wider Creggan community."

Reflecting on the thousands of children that have walked through the doors of Holy Child PS over the last 70 years, Mrs Concannon said: "Wherever life has taken them, a little part of their story began here. That is the privilege of a school. We don't simply educate children. We help shape lives."

As part of the celebrations, the pupils were encouraged to imagine what their school might look like in 30 years' time, and they certainly came up with some creative ideas

Those gathered to celebrate the 70th anniversary were encouraged to share a message, hope or wish for the future of Holy Child PS, to be kept in a special time capsule which will be opened on the occasion of the school's 100th anniversary in 2056!



Photography by Jim McCafferty











Great day of friendship and fun at Termoncanice PS 140th celebration

TERMONCANICE Primary School, in Limavady, has celebrated an amazing 140 years with a special gathering of the school community.

The principal, Leo McCloskey, was delighted to welcome former staff members and families to join them for the occasion.

"It was a day when you felt so proud to be part of this wonderful Termoncanice community," remarked Mr McCloskey, adding: "Teachers, past and present, gathered alongside our families to celebrate 140 years of Termoncanice. It was a great day spent with friends. All there helped shaped Termoncanice into the special place that it is today."

While the children enjoyed the antics of Parky the Magician, mouths were watering with the delights served up for the Potluck Afternoon Tea, as the conversation and the craic flowed during a wonderful time of reminiscing.

A Mass to celebrate the milestone will take place in April.

















Young Writers share thoughts...

THIS month, we welcome St Brigid's College students and Three Patrons' parishioners, Beth Harkin, Molly McKeever and Niamh Murphy to the team.

For her first sharing, Beth writes about the importance and power of prayer in her life, while Molly highlights the commandment, 'Thou shall not kill' in the wake of the failed execution of American prisoner, Christa Pike, and Niamh reflects on living out faith in our social lives.

Conor shares his research into the arrival of Christianity in Ireland, and James writes about the importance of action being the fruit of communication with God in prayer, while Harry ponders the purpose of knowledge, highlighting that education should help us to understand truth, judge wisely and live well.

Feeling blessed to be able to spend time in Eucharistic Adoration in the Queen's Catholic Chaplaincy, as she adjusts to university life, Erin reflects on how spending time with Jesus eases any stress and deepens her peace as He draws her closer to Him.


Beth Harkin, Derry City Deanery


Cara-leigh Doherty - Derry City Deanery


Molly McKeever, Derry City Deanery


Nieve Browne, Derry City Deanery.


John Agustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery.


James Tourish, Derry City Deanery.


Erin Whoriskey, Derry City Deanery


Ryan Duffy, Derry City Deanery


Niamh Murphy, 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.

Action without prayer...like a bird without wings *by James*

ST Josemaría Escriva, the great Spanish priest and founder of the Prelature of Opus Dei, once wrote in his seminal work, 'The Way' - First, prayer; then, atonement; in the third place, very much 'in the third place', action.

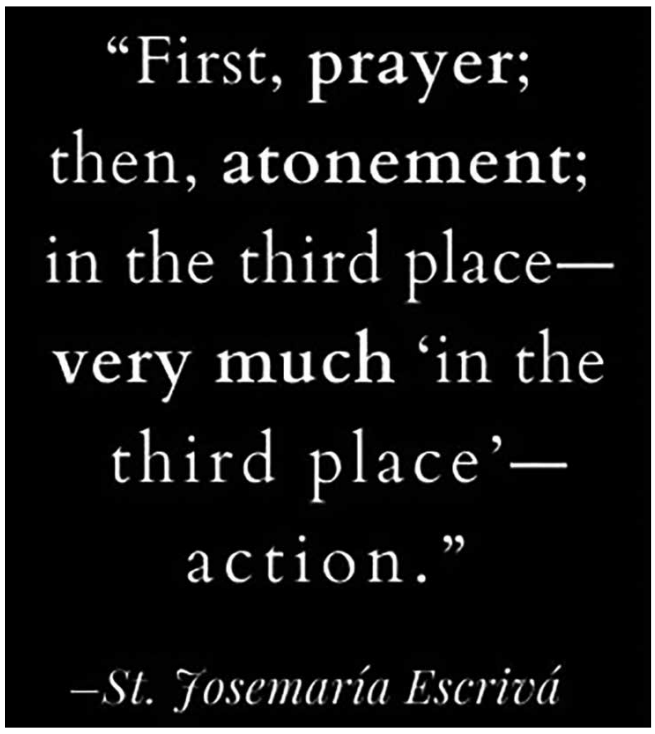
We often have great ideas for solving the issues we see in the Church. We think of establishing groups, committees, founding initiatives, and eagerly seek to 'get involved'. We should be reminded, however, that action should be the fruit of our prayer, that we are deliberate in how we approach the means of our apostolate and doing the work of our Lord.

It is interesting, from the Gospel accounts, that Christ did not send the 12 Apostles 'out into the deep' from the moment He called them. We remember, of course, that a period of three years would pass before that significant moment of Pentecost, in which the Holy Spirit would come down on that upper room, invigorating the zeal of the first bishops of the Church, to 'go and make disciples of all nations' (Matt 28:19), and do what the good Lord had so chosen them for.

In that time of three years, they accompanied our Lord in His divine ministry. They were taught how to pray, how to trust in God their Father and, at times, were even rebuked when they made mistakes, albeit always in the spirit of charity. No one can be expected to be perfect and, on a relevant note, we should not feel that we can never be in a role of mentor or friend because of our own deficiencies; all of us have a part to play in the building up of the kingdom.

However, whatever action we may take, let it first be the result of fervent prayer, and preceded by atonement, where we make right, the wrongs that we have committed; recognising our faults but duly resolving them before we set off with our apostolic zeal.

Before we talk to our friends about Jesus Christ, do we talk to Jesus Christ about our friends? Do we maintain a constant and open dialogue with He who loves us and is interested in the very inner workings of our daily lives? May we develop a prayer life that recognises our Lord, yes as our Saviour, Redeemer, and Sovereign of the Universe, but also as a friend, as someone who wants us to aspire to virtue, to care for others and to rectify our wrongs.



I have always found it heartening, when I read about 'contrition' for our sins, that there is 'imperfect' and 'perfect'. The former being that we are sorry for our sins, other than for a love of God, for example, out of common decency, a fear of Hell, or recognising the immorality of sin. The latter, suitably named 'perfect' in our contrition, is that we are sorry because we love God, and do not seek to hurt Him. Our Lord, the Good Shepherd that He is, wants us to hate sin, most certainly, but above all, to love Him.

Let us speak to God in our daily prayer about our planned actions, about our ideas, about the most minute details of our seemingly ordinary lives, asking for His grace and help in navigating the ways of our lives and the Apostolate that we carry out in them. And may we allow ourselves the opportunity to be totally astonished by His divine interest in all of it.

Commandments still extremely relevant in today's society *by Molly*

AS Catholics, it is important to note that the 10 commandments are still extremely relevant in today's society. 'Thou shall not kill', in particular, seems to have been forgotten. Have we become desensitised to murder? Homicide is the primary reason inmates in the US are executed since the reintroduction of the death penalty (Death Penalty Information Center, 2026).

On September 30, Christa Pike, a prisoner in the US who was convicted of murder, was supposed to be dead. The death row patient received two lethal injections, yet she survived her execution. She was unconscious for days afterwards and was horribly confused upon her awakening. Despite having severe injuries in her arms from the shots, she has made a decent recovery, and I believe this is for a reason.

"To take a life when a life has been lost is revenge, not justice" (Archbishop Desmond Tutu, 2011). No matter the crime someone has committed, God's teachings must be followed: "Do not kill." Even though Pike herself has broken this commandment, it must be remembered that she was serving time for this, and justice was served. Only God decides when it is our time, only He has the authority to end a life.

The fact that the debate of Capital Punishment is still ongoing astonishes me, because what power does killing a person give? In the words of Gandhi: "An eye for an eye makes the whole world blind."

Particularly in the New Testament, scripture keeps teaching us the same message, and yet, humanity seems to keep missing it. Peace. We hear it every Sunday at Church, "Peace be with you." And yet, somehow, no one is listening. Death isn't peace, so neither is killing someone. We should love our neighbours, but also remember to love our enemies, just as Jesus taught.

Jesus taught that the two greatest commandments are, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul with all your mind and with all your strength", and "Love your neighbour as yourself" (Mark 12:28-31).

Pike's injuries could well be long-term, but as of now it is unclear. This situation could affect her for years to come, which is entirely inhumane. She shouldn't have even been in an execution room in the first place, no one deserves to be. Tennessee haven't decided publicly if they will try to execute Pike again, but the answer is right in front of them. God has spoken. Taking a life is never valid in any scenario.

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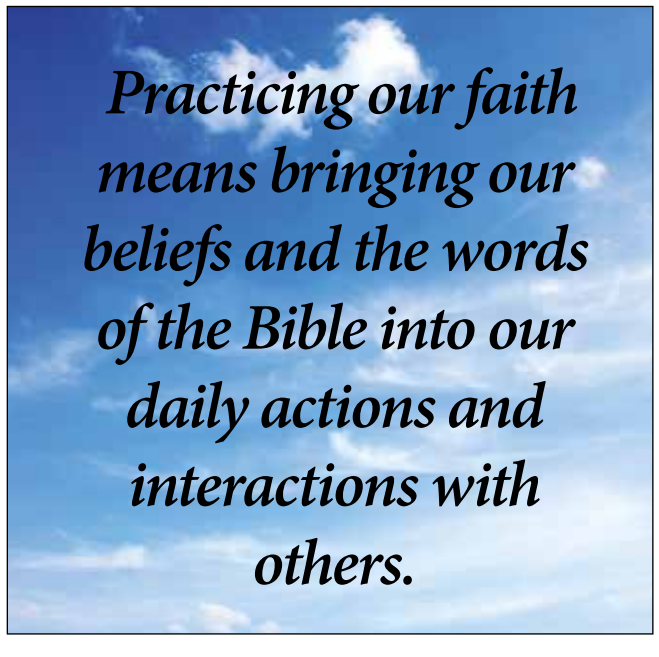
Living out faith in our social lives *by Niamh M.*

AS Catholics, our faith is not only about the beliefs we carry in our hearts, but it is also how we carry out and display our beliefs in the world. The Catholic social teachings encourage us to look beyond ourselves and see what others need. Through helping and giving to others, we, as Catholics, act as God's hands, and His heart.

We believe that each person is created by God, meaning that every individual, no matter their race, age, background, or abilities has a purpose, worth, and deserves the right to their dignity. Catholics are responsible for practicing these beliefs by respecting everyone they cross paths with; this ranges from classmates, teachers, and even people who are new in our lives, and recognising that they are the creation of God. This teaching brings us to protect those who might be mistreated or overlooked, such as young children, the elderly, or those struggling with physical or learning disabilities, teaching us that we should stand up for our companions.

Practicing our faith means bringing our beliefs and the words of the Bible into our daily actions and interactions with others. We do this to embody our compassion and love for our brothers and sisters. It can be something as little as offering up kind words to another individual, being patient with others, and simply showing others that we care for them. By acting with kindness and respect, we are not just improving our own relationships with God, but we are also changing the overall community by promoting positivity, friendliness, and integrity.

Practicing our faith is a commitment which can be inserted into all aspects of our daily lives. At home, we can put our beliefs into action through providing our families with a loving, supportive environment, encouraging them in all they do. In our communities, we have many ways to turn our beliefs into actions. Things like volunteering time and talents to local youth clubs, businesses, or charities is an excellent way for Catholics to practice faith; it allows us to give back and help those in need.



Young Writers share thoughts...

The importance of prayer *by Beth*



TODAY, we have many distractions that may prevent us from coming towards God, whether that be school life, work, or your own personal life, but it is so important that we take time to spend in prayer. Sitting in silence can be so difficult for these reasons, requiring us, as followers of Jesus, to remain disciplined and willing to push ourselves for the sake of developing a special relationship with the Lord.

I, personally, would have struggled as a young child to maintain prayer. I didn't exactly hold it with the upmost respect, as I failed to understand its significance. However, now, as I have come closer to God, I have truly recognised the power prayer holds. As a teenager who didn't regularly pray in silence years prior, I now pray every single day. I obtain a reassuring and pure feeling when prayer is involved within life itself.

A few weeks ago, I attended a religious social gathering with about 50 people who were keen on learning more about Jesus and His teachings. We sat and prayed together to help each other in our spiritual journey and gain a real sense of peace. It was a surreal experience; I felt so welcomed as well as understood.

Through prayer, there comes a lot of self-reflection and a higher understanding of who you are and what your purpose is in God's will; to live your life for Jesus, through your words, actions, and deeds, all of which will comeback a 'hundredfold'. In Mark 10:29-30, Jesus promises that any sacrifice made to both follow Him and the Gospel, will be repaid in present life and in eternity. This emphasises the importance of prayer, because through that time of reverence, a sense of understanding and willingness is gathered. The Rosary is a beautiful way to pray, as it serves as a scriptural meditation on Jesus' life, conveyed through the understanding of the Virgin Mary. Through Mary, Mother of Jesus, the Rosary brings us closer in our Catholic faith as it honours Her and Her maternal intercession; presenting Mother Mary as a spiritual guide towards Jesus. I find that when praying the Rosary, the repetition of the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be seem to quieten my mind from daily distractions, my stress is relieved, and my worries end.

St Teresa of Avila, the Patron Saint of Prayer, is a perfect example of the importance of prayer. When she was just a girl, she was captivated by the lives of saints, and her growing love for holiness led to her attempted running away with her brother, with the ambition of dying as a martyr for Christ at the age of seven. The death of her mother, when Teresa was 14, deeply affected her Like many young people, she struggled with the interests and desires of the world.

However, at the age of 20, after inner conflict, she entered the Carmelite Convent, dedicating her life to God. Her consistency of prayer didn't come until a serious illness left her bedridden for almost a year, even to the peak of death. During this worrisome time, she devoted herself fully to prayer and spiritual reading. She began to practise mental prayer with restored dedication and progressively entered spiritual deepness with God.

St Teresa of Avila's life is a powerful testament to the transforming love of God and the power of prayer. As followers of Christ in today's world, it can be very difficult to find the time for prayer due to the ups and downs life prevails upon us, but it is our duty to prioritise this spiritual consistency as it benefits everyone in our community as well as ourselves. We, as Catholics, lift each other up and grant the grace needed to benefit and shorten the time of spiritual purification of the souls in purgatory; ultimately, highlighting that prayer is not a 'daily task' for us, but the very essence needed to nourish and replenish our relationship with God.

Adoration…heart to heart with Jesus *by Erin*

IN today's busy world, other responsibilities and distractions in our daily lives can take our attention away from Jesus. Sometimes, we forget to set aside time to spend with Him. Eucharistic Adoration gives us an opportunity to be still and spend time in the presence of God.

Fr Mike Schmitz said: "I don't know anyone who has made an attempt to pray a daily Holy Hour whose life hasn't been changed." This quote inspired me to think about the beauty of Adoration and dedicating time for Jesus – it allows us to open our hearts to the Lord in prayer. Praying a Holy Hour is not simply about spending an hour sitting in the chapel or in prayer, but allowing Jesus to work within us and transform us.

Ever since arriving at university, I have been privileged to attend Adoration at Queen's Catholic Chaplaincy every week. This has encouraged me to reflect on how blessed we are to have the Blessed Sacrament, and how simply being in His presence can help us grow in love for Him and bring greater peace to our everyday lives. When I am having a stressful week, I know that I can come to Jesus with all my worries and fears. I can trust that He is listening and He knows how I feel. We do not always need the right words, but we can be present and open, and Jesus will always be there for us.

Adoration and prayer also allow us to grow in our relationship with Jesus, just as spending time with the people we love brings us closer to them. For me, personally, it has helped me to recognise God's presence more clearly in my life and deepened my prayer life. We are invited to experience a deeper transformation of the heart, and we can bring others closer to God through our own witness, sharing His love with others.

Adoration can remind us that we have a personal and active relationship with Jesus and not just a passive one. He invites us to come to Him as we are and open our hearts to His love. We should not take this gift for granted, but rather make a conscious effort to spend time with Jesus, remembering the words of Fr Mike Schmitz of how it can deeply impact our lives. Daily prayer and silence are also powerful tools to allow this transformation.

Overall, the more we open ourselves to Jesus' love and give our time to Him, the more He can transform our hearts and help us reflect this love in daily life.

Knowing how to act well *by Harry*

Knowledge can help us recognise the good, but we must also freely choose to pursue it.

WHAT is the purpose of knowledge? Is education, whether at school or university, simply about accumulating a large amount of information so that we can sound intelligent? Or is there a deeper purpose to learning?

Aristotle begins his work 'Metaphysics' with the famous statement: "All men by nature desire to know." He believes that the desire for knowledge is natural to human beings. We see this in everyday life through our curiosity and our desire to ask fundamental questions, such as "Why does anything exist?" or "Does God really exist?"

Aristotle distinguishes between five intellectual virtues: epistēmē, or scientific knowledge; nous, the intellect's grasp of fundamental principles; sophia, or theoretical wisdom; phronēsis, or practical wisdom; and technē, or craft and productive knowledge.

In this essay, I will focus on phronēsis, practical wisdom, which concerns knowing how to act well.

In his 'Nicomachean Ethics', Aristotle explains that the purpose of studying ethics is not merely to know what virtue is, but to become virtuous. This suggests that moral knowledge should influence how we live. For example, someone may understand that patience is a virtue, but this knowledge becomes practically significant when they choose not to retaliate against somebody who insults them.

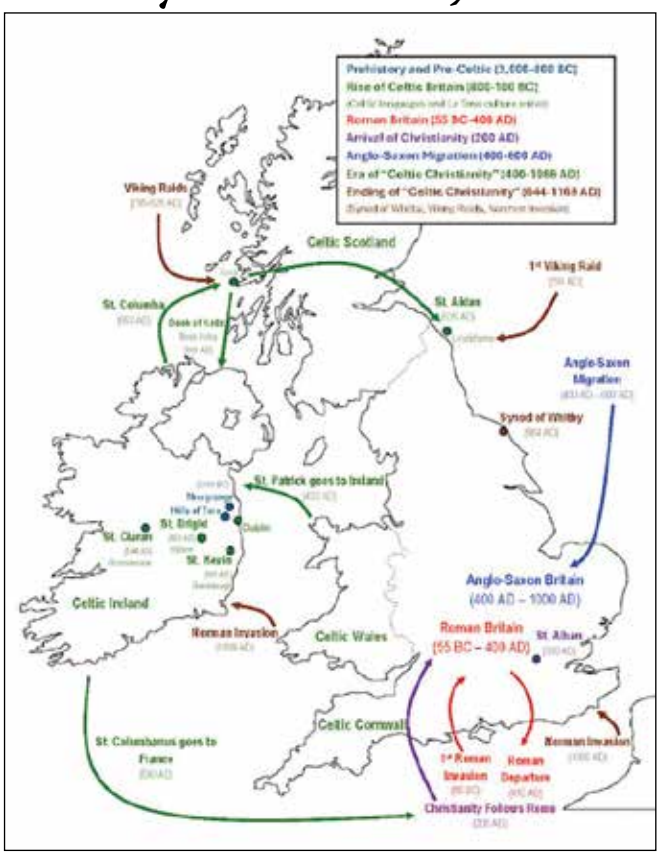
This is particularly relevant to Catholic life. When we study the Catechism, Sacred Scripture and the writings of the saints, our aim should not simply be to acquire theological information. We should also seek to live as better Christians; practising charity, justice, temperance and the other virtues.

However, possessing knowledge of the good does not guarantee that we will choose it. We may know what we ought to do and yet fail to do it. This is a problem explored by Aristotle through the concept of akrasia, or weakness of will, and reflected in St Paul's discussion of the struggle between willing the good and failing to accomplish it in Romans 7:19.

As Catholics, we recognise our need for God's grace. Through prayer, the sacraments and cooperation with grace, we seek to grow in virtue and charity. Knowledge can help us recognise the good, but we must also freely choose to pursue it.

Ultimately, education should be more than the accumulation of information. It should help us understand the truth, judge wisely and live well. For the Catholic, this intellectual formation should also serve the pursuit of holiness and a deeper relationship with God.

Arrival of Christianity in Ireland *by Conor*



IRELAND was one of the first places in Europe to convert to Christianity and has a long history with the religion. It took around 250 years, from 350AD to 600AD, for Christianity to become dominant on the island and become the religion that the vast majority of people followed.

Christianity first came to Ireland some time before 400AD. It is believed that it came from missionaries from the Roman province of Brittania. The first settlement created was in Ardmore, which was believed to become Christian between 350AD and 450AD. It was established by St Declan. Leinster and Wicklow were converted around 431AD by Palladius, who was the first Bishop to arrive in Ireland. He was sent from the Roman Gaul province (modern day France) to convert Ireland.

In 432AD, St Patrick arrived on the island at the Bray River, in Wicklow, and was relocated north after being rejected by the local inhabitants. He converted large numbers of people in areas such as Armagh and Downpatrick. He had also carried out lots of missionary work across many other parts of the country.

He laid out the foundation of the religion in the island and converted many kings and noble families, creating a powerful framework for Christianity to spread further. His way of teaching also helped many of the people to understand the religion, such as using the shamrock to represent the Trinity.

By 500CE, Christianity became the majority religion in most of the island, and many monastic establishments arose across the country, such as: Clonard, founded by St Finian; Clonfert, by St Brendan: Bangor, by St Comgall; Clonmacnoise, by St Kieran; Killeaney, by St Enda; and, in the seventh century, Lismore, by St Carthage and Glendalough by St Kevin.

By 600CE, missionaries from Ireland were converting pagans in Britain, such as the Anglo Saxons on Northumbria, as well as later Mecia and Essex. Even before that, in 563, St Columba crossed the sea to set up a monastery on the island of Iona, off the coast of Scotland. This continued across Scotland and by the time St Columba died, in 597, Christianity had been preached all across the Scottish Highlands and western islands by Irish missionaries.

The last pagan communities in Ireland were present around the 800s, in areas such as Meath and Waterford, but these would soon convert as the decline of Paganism continued.

Errigal Parish News...

Parishioners from Ballerin, Glenullin and Garvagh joined visitors from neighbouring parishes for a special week of prayer, reflection, healing and renewal, writes Anthony McCloskey…

Letting the light through…faith renewed at Parish Mission

THE Errigal Parish Mission brought people together in Ballerin and Glenullin for a memorable week of faith, prayer and community.

Led by Fr John Hyacinth Walsh OP, of the Dominican Order, with the support of Fr Brendan Crowley PP, the Mission took place in St Mary's Church, Ballerin, and St Joseph's Church, Glenullin. At its heart was Christ's invitation in St Matthew's Gospel: "Come to me, all you who labour and are burdened, and I will give you rest."

Those words set the tone for a week centred on faith, prayer, healing and renewal. Morning Masses and evening devotions offered parishioners an opportunity to step back from the busyness of everyday life, pray together and reflect on their relationship with God and with one another.

The programme included early and mid-morning Masses, evening devotions, opportunities for Confession, a youth evening, 'Blessing of Roses', and prayers for the sick. The relics of St Martin de Porres also held a special place during the week, reflecting the Dominican character of the Mission.

Fr John's teaching was one of the highlights. His reflections combined a deep message of faith with warmth, humour and stories drawn from ordinary family and community life. Parishioners particularly appreciated his ability to speak about serious matters in a way that was accessible, encouraging and often very funny.

A message running throughout the week was that nobody needs to be perfect before coming to God. Fr John reminded those attending that everyone experiences weakness, regret and difficult periods, but these do not place anyone beyond the reach of God's love.

Reflecting on the calling of the first disciples, Fr John explained that God comes looking for us, often meeting us in the middle of ordinary life. The purpose of a parish mission, he said, was not to offer a "magic wand", but to point people towards God and help them recognise that they are already known and loved.

Fr John also drew on the stories of Peter and Judas to reflect on failure, forgiveness and the choices people make after things have gone wrong. Although both had failed, Peter was able to move forward by accepting forgiveness. Using the image of light and shadow, Fr John encouraged people not to remain trapped by past mistakes or regrets, but to turn towards the light and the possibility of a new beginning.

For many parishioners, the evening devoted to the sick was among the most moving moments of the week. Reflecting on Christ's healing of the leper, Fr John spoke about the loneliness and isolation that can accompany illness. He reminded those present that no one should ever be defined by a diagnosis.

Healing

He also drew an important distinction between being cured and experiencing healing. Healing, he explained, does not always mean that illness or suffering will be taken away. Instead, it can bring the grace and strength to carry suffering, to forgive, to let go of anger and to recognise God's love in the midst of difficulty.

As parishioners received a blessing, the church offered a quiet and prayerful space for those living with illness, those caring for loved ones and those carrying unseen burdens. The sight of the parish praying together for strength, healing and peace captured much of what the Mission was about.

It was also encouraging to see children, young people and families attending throughout the week. The Mission's youth evening provided a particular opportunity for younger parishioners to take part, while their presence throughout the week helped make the Mission a gathering for every generation of the parish.

The Mission took place at a particularly fitting time in the Church's calendar, encompassing the Feasts of All Saints and All Souls. On All Saints' Day, Fr John shared an image that stayed with many of those listening. Saints, he said, were not distant or untouchable people, but ordinary human beings who "let the light through", like sunlight passing through a stained-glass window. Holiness, he reminded the congregation, could be found in small acts of patience, mercy, kindness and care.

Reflecting on the week, Fr Brendan said: "Errigal Parish has a























Errigal Parish News...

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strong sense of faith, and I have been greatly encouraged by the positive feedback received following the Mission. It was wonderful to see people coming together for prayer and reflection. There is a real sense of life and growth within the parish, reflected in the different groups and initiatives taking shape. I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to Fr John for leading the Mission and for the warmth, wisdom and encouragement he shared with us throughout the week."

Jane Leadon, Chair of the Parish Pastoral Group, added: "It was wonderful to see the Mission come together through the generosity and support of so many people across the parish. We hope its message of healing, forgiveness and hope will remain with people long after the week itself. We are deeply grateful to everyone involved in the planning and preparation, and to all those who generously gave their time and helped to make it such a meaningful week for the parish."

Renewal does not always begin with something dramatic. Sometimes it begins by making time for prayer, forgiving an old hurt, showing mercy, helping someone who is struggling or welcoming another person into the life of the parish.

The Errigal Parish Mission gave people an opportunity to pause and begin again. It brought the parish together through prayer, laughter, healing and hope, while reminding everyone of Christ's simple invitation: come as you are, with whatever burdens you carry, and find rest.





















Youth encouraged to have courage in their faith and let it flourish

THE Pope John Paul II Award pupils from various schools and the Errigal Youth Ministry group led the Rosary, with reflections, as part of the Friday evening Mission service in St Mary's Church, Ballerin.

This was thought provoking and encouraged the young people of the parish to unite together as a team with responsibility. They got to meet Fr John and gained confidence by contributing their efforts in this way. They also distributed gifts to the congregation at the end of the Mission service, speaking to the other parishioners as they departed the church, making this an intergenerational event filled with much joy and love.

The Children's Liturgy team had a Mission Special event on the Sunday in St Joseph's Church, Glenullin. The pre-school to Primary 4 children reflected on the importance of a Mission in the parish and missionary priests. They considered God's love. There were wonderful discussions and suggestions on how parishioners could work together to grow and spread God's word and love. Thought was also given about All Saints and Souls in Heaven, and how to pray and live by their example.

The children worked earnestly and produced a beautiful display, which they laid out in front of the altar on their return to the church for all the congregation to see.

The youth of Errigal are always encouraged to participate and have collective ownership of their church, alongside their peers and elders. The Mission created opportunities for our youth to connect and share faith and friendship, and acted like a catalyst to have courage in their faith and let it flourish.

Catholic Mothers host lively Saints party in Killyclogher







Buncrana Parish News…

Celebrating Mass at historic Lough Swilly landmark, Bishop Michael urged…

Preserve and pass on the faith Fr Hegarty gave his life for



ONLY three weeks after his installation as Bishop of Derry, the Most Reverend Michael Router paid a Sunday pastoral visit to the parishes of Burt, Inch & Fahan and Desertegney & Lower Fahan (Buncrana), when he celebrated Mass at Fr Hegarty's Rock.

Blessed with beautiful weather for the occasion, Bishop Michael enjoyed a scenic shore walk accompanied by the clergy and people of the parish, and was particularly delighted to be greeted en-route by a long line of schoolchildren waving papal flags on Porthaw Beach. He walked the beach with the parish priest, Fr Francis Bradley, to meet and talk with the children and their teachers.

Commenting on the visit, Fr Francis told 'The Net' that they were delighted to have Bishop Michael amongst them, "on what was an unseasonably warm and sunny day, for what was a spectacularly wonderful occasion".

"He walked with us on a Synodal walk from the Stone Jug and celebrated Mass on Fr Hegarty's Rock, before returning then to Cockhill Parish Hall for tea and refreshments," recalled Fr Francis, adding: "The turnout was splendid, the welcome warm, the support immense and the faith tangible.

"In the midst of a sometimes stiff Atlantic breeze, he joked about not being blown into the water, seemingly perched as he was on the edge of the Lough. But, from there he commanded a great view of the gathering and the Statue of Friar Seamus Hegarty OP, and he offered a most memorable Mass, recalling the courage and hope which Fr Hegarty had in abundance, and asking God to grant us the same gifts for the challenges in our own time."

Describing the music and singing as outstanding, the parish priest went on to say that the joy and contentment of those gathered there, of all ages, was clear to be seen.

After visiting Fr John Walsh in his home, Fr Francis reported that Bishop Michael "returned to Derry with a spring in his step and firm in the knowledge that he will always be welcome in these parts."

He added: "It was a truly wonderful occasion, made possible only by the devotion and help of huge teams of people: our stewards and volunteers; choirs and musicians; farmers and bakers; schools and Parents' Associations (especially at St Oran's NS); and by all who came to celebrate. To them all, and to God Himself, we must always be thankful."

Blown away by the beautiful Buncrana shore walk and setting for Mass, Bishop Michael was also struck by the magnificent sculpture commemorating the friar who had been cruelly martyred there for his Catholic faith under the Penal Laws.

Addressing the large number of people assembled, he said: "We gather not only to worship God and hear His Word, but also to give thanks for the witness of Fr Séamus Hegarty, whose faithfulness and courage continue to inspire the people of Inishowen."

Reflecting on the Gospel story of a king who prepared a wedding banquet, to which those invited were not interested in attending, so tied up were they in their own concerns, the bishop remarked: "It is a strange story in many ways, but it reminds us that God's invitation is not always welcomed or accepted. Sometimes it is simply ignored and at other times those who carry that invitation are met with hostility and rejection."

He continued: "Standing beside this statue of Fr Séamus Hegarty, we are reminded of a time when responding to God's invitation and sharing it with others could cost a person their life.

"Fr Hegarty lived during one of the most difficult periods in the history of the Catholic Church in Ireland. Ordained by St Oliver Plunkett in 1672, he ministered here in Inishowen at a time when Catholic priests faced persecution and when the celebration of Mass and the practice of the faith could involve enormous personal danger.

"According to local tradition, Fr Hegarty was forced into hiding in a cave along the shores of Lough Swilly. Yet, he continued to minister to his people. He could have chosen an easier and safer life, but he remained faithful to his vocation and to the community he had been called to serve. Eventually, he was betrayed and killed."

Courage

"What strikes me most about his story," added Bishop Michael, "is not simply the terrible manner of his death, but the courage and determination with which he lived his life. He believed that his faith was something worth preserving, something worth sharing and, ultimately, something worth dying for.

"Thankfully, we do not face the same dangers today. Nobody here is likely to be arrested for attending Mass here this afternoon, or imprisoned for speaking about Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, the Church in our own time faces a very different kind of pressure.

"Across much of Western society, religious faith is increasingly regarded as something private, something that should be kept out of public conversation. The Church is often marginalised, sometimes analysed unfairly and increasingly disregarded. Many people, particularly younger generations, are growing up with little knowledge or experience of the Christian faith, so, perhaps our greatest danger is not outright hostility but indifference. Like the guests in today's Gospel, people can become so absorbed in other priorities, especially in gathering wealth, that God's invitation simply passes them by."

He went on to highlight the importance of their synodal walk: "We have been asking ourselves three questions: What is God asking us to become? What gives me hope for the Church? And what is one gift I could offer the Church?

"I believe Fr Hegarty's life offers us an answer. God is asking us to become a more courageous, confident and missionary Church. Not a Church that retreats into itself or spends its time lamenting the past, but one that is willing to go out, to engage with people, to listen to them and to speak openly and joyfully about the faith that gives meaning to our lives.

"We should never underestimate the importance of that witness. Faith is passed on primarily through relationships, through parents and grandparents, teachers, neighbours and friends who are willing to share what they believe and explain why it matters to them."

Sharing what gives him hope, Bishop Michael said: "Gatherings like this one. People who care enough about their faith to walk together, to pray together and to ask what God wants of them. The generosity and goodness that continue to be found in our parishes and communities."

"As for the gift each of us can offer," he continued, "perhaps the greatest is simply a willingness to speak about our faith without embarrassment or apology, and to help another person discover the











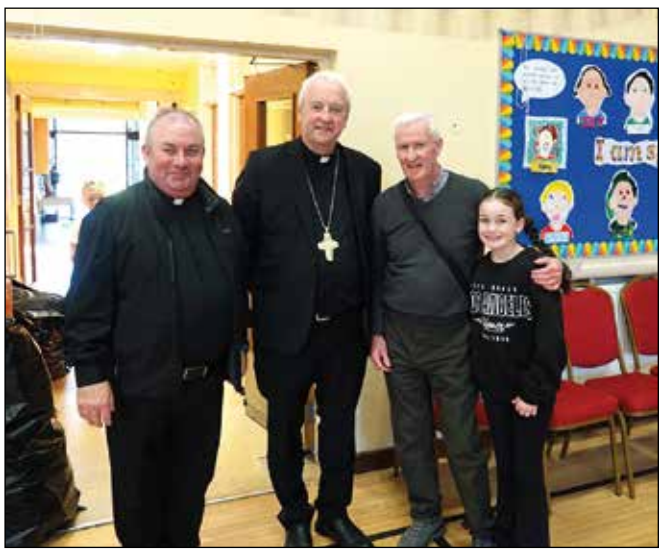






Buncrana Parish News…









Jesus opens a door that others prefer to keep closed – *Bishop Michael*

THROWING Open the Doors to Christ – the annual nine-Sunday Parish Novena in Buncrana, was officially launched in St Mary's Church, Cockhill, on October 25, by Bishop Michael.

Honouring Pope St John Paul II, the Novena is a time of prayer for a renewal of faith, prompting Bishop Michael to begin with a question – how can we bring the faith to others and help them discover the joy that has sustained and comforted us over the years?

Taking the Novena theme as a starting point, he noted that Pope John Paul II had spoken the words, "Open wide the doors for Christ", at the beginning of his pontificate in October 1978.

"His invitation began with the reassuring words, 'Do not be afraid'," remarked Bishop Michael, adding: "He knew that opening our lives to Christ requires courage. We may be comfortable with familiar religious rituals and customs, but hesitate to allow the Gospel to challenge our attitudes, our relationships and our priorities.

"A door can be opened a little, while the chain remains attached. We can welcome Christ on our own terms, keeping certain parts of life beyond His reach. This novena invites us to ask whether a door within us remains closed, perhaps a reluctance to forgive, a fear of change, or an unwillingness to speak about our faith."

Referring to Matthew's Gospel, 9:10-13, he described how we encounter Jesus sitting at table with tax collectors and sinners: "The Pharisees question His disciples about the company He keeps. Jesus responds that it is the sick who need a doctor and tells them to learn the meaning of God's words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice'. He has come to call sinners.

"Jesus opens a door that others would prefer to keep closed. He sits with people whose lives have attracted criticism and condemnation. His willingness to share their table gives them an opportunity to encounter Him, hear His teaching and discover the mercy of God the Father. His welcome opens the possibility of conversion and a deeper relationship with God.

"We can recognise here what we now describe as a synodal style of evangelisation. Jesus draws near to people, shares their company and engages them in matters of faith and life. He teaches through relationships, allowing people to encounter the truth through His presence and His words. The synodal method has its roots in this approach, meeting people where they are and accompanying them towards a fuller life with God."

Pondering this challenge, Bishop Michael asked: "Are we willing to sit with people whose choices or opinions differ from ours? Can we listen patiently before offering advice? Can someone who has become distant from the Church experience, through us, the welcome of Christ?"

He went on to say: "Many here remember John Paul II's visit to Ireland in September 1979, the crowds, the enthusiasm and the sense of belonging. Much has changed since then. Faith can no longer be taken for granted. Many families know the sadness of seeing children or grandchildren drift away from the Church. The terrible failures of people within the Church have also wounded lives and damaged trust.

"Yet Christ has not abandoned His people. At the beginning of the 21st century, John Paul II reminded us that our salvation lies in a person rather than a formula. That person is Christ. Renewal begins with knowing, loving and listening to Him and allowing His presence to shape our lives.

"That is also the purpose of the synodal pathway we have been following in Ireland. Over five years, approximately 120,000 people across this island have contributed to a process of prayer, discernment and deliberation, including many from this parish and this diocese. People have spoken honestly about their faith, their wounds, their disappointments and their hopes."

Fruits of listening

Commenting on the National Synodal Assembly, the weekend before, bringing the fruits of that listening together, he said: "I believe it marked the most significant moment in the life of the Catholic Church in Ireland since John Paul II's visit in 1979. Its significance will become clear through the life it inspires in our communities.

"The Assembly considered proposals under five pathways; a Church that proclaims the Gospel, builds belonging, offers healing, accompanies people and empowers them for ministry and shared responsibility. Together, they point a way forward that we cannot ignore.

It proposes reaching out to people who have drifted away or feel disconnected from the Church and that begins with listening. We need to hear people's questions and understand their experiences. Sometimes an invitation to return begins with a conversation in which someone discovers that their story matters.

"Think again of Jesus at Matthew's table. Those gathered around Him could hear His













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joy of knowing Jesus Christ.

"St Paul tells us, 'I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.' That confidence sustained Fr Hegarty through extraordinary difficulties. It can sustain us too.

"The most fitting tribute we can pay to Fr Hegarty is not simply to preserve his memory in stone, important though that is, but to preserve and pass on the faith for which he gave his life.

"We have walked together today. Now we must continue that journey together, with courage, hope and renewed determination to ensure that the invitation of Christ is heard and welcomed by generations yet to come."

The various parish choirs joined together to sing at the Mass, and, afterwards, everyone went back to St Oran's school Cockhill for tea and buns.

Buncrana Parish News…

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invitation because He had first drawn close to them. We, too, must be willing to take that first step, trusting that Christ is already at work in the people we meet."

Bishop Michael added: "The Assembly also proposed making our parishes places of life-long faith formation. Our understanding of faith cannot remain where it was when we left primary school. Adults need opportunities to explore Scripture, ask difficult questions, learn to pray and discover how the Gospel speaks to everyday life.

"There are proposals for youth coordinators and advisory groups, for helping young people become committed disciples and for sharing the Gospel through digital media. John Paul II recognised the generosity and spiritual hunger of young people. We must make room for their questions, recognise their gifts and give them real opportunities to contribute.

"Other proposals call for resources for prayer in the home, renewed sacramental preparation and the development of catechists. Those preparing for sacraments need a community that will continue to accompany them afterwards."

Highlighting that Pope John Paul II had insisted that the Church's mission belongs to all the baptised, Bishop Michael said: "Each of us has someone we can encourage, some wisdom we can offer, some experience of God's goodness we can share. We need the courage to say, simply and without embarrassment, why we pray and why Jesus Christ matters to us.

"The mercy Jesus showed at Matthew's table must become visible in our communities and this, and the other proposals that emerged from our synodal assembly, all needs prayer. John Paul II wanted Christian communities to become schools of prayer. During this novena, we can deepen our friendship with Christ through His word and quiet attention to His presence.

"Perhaps, each of us could make one commitment, maybe to pray with someone at home, to read the Gospel, to offer time to the parish, or begin a conversation with someone who feels forgotten. Please God, the intercession of St John Paul II will help us throw open the door to Christ and renew His Church in this parish, this diocese and in this country."

Running to December 20 and beginning each Sunday at 7 pm, the ceremony comprises of readings, the Rosary, a guest speaker, the Novena prayer and petitions, a Eucharistic Healing Service, and Benediction, with the parish Pope John Paul II Award participants on hand to welcome those attending and to also take part.

The Scoil Naomh Iósaf Community Choir, based in the Illies, provided the wonderful music and singing for the launch of the Novena, which ends each night with a special prayer for Bishop Michael.

Delighted with the turnout for the launch of the pre-Christmas Novena, parish priest, Fr Francis Bradley went on to highlight the launch of an important initiative on the second night, when Garda Chief Superintendent, Goretti Sheridan was the guest speaker.

He said: "November 1 began our 'November Remember - Safe Driving Area' initiative. For November, the Month of the Holy Souls, people are being asked to undertake a pledge of safer driving and use of the roads - there have been so many road traffic fatalities locally that, in addition to praying for the Holy Souls, our memory of how or where they died might inspire us to take greater care and show even more respect for life."

The remaining speakers include: the recently ordained Fr Stephen Baxter (November 8); Patricia Úi hArlaigh, principal of St Carlo Acutis NS, Gortahork; Fr Francis Ferry, chaplain to Letterkenny University Hospital; Sr Orla Treacy, from the Congregation of Jesus, formerly the Loretos, speaking about her work in South Sudan; Mickey Bradley, who will speak on the work of the Divine Mercy Prayer Groups; and Marguerite Hamilton, of the Columba Community.

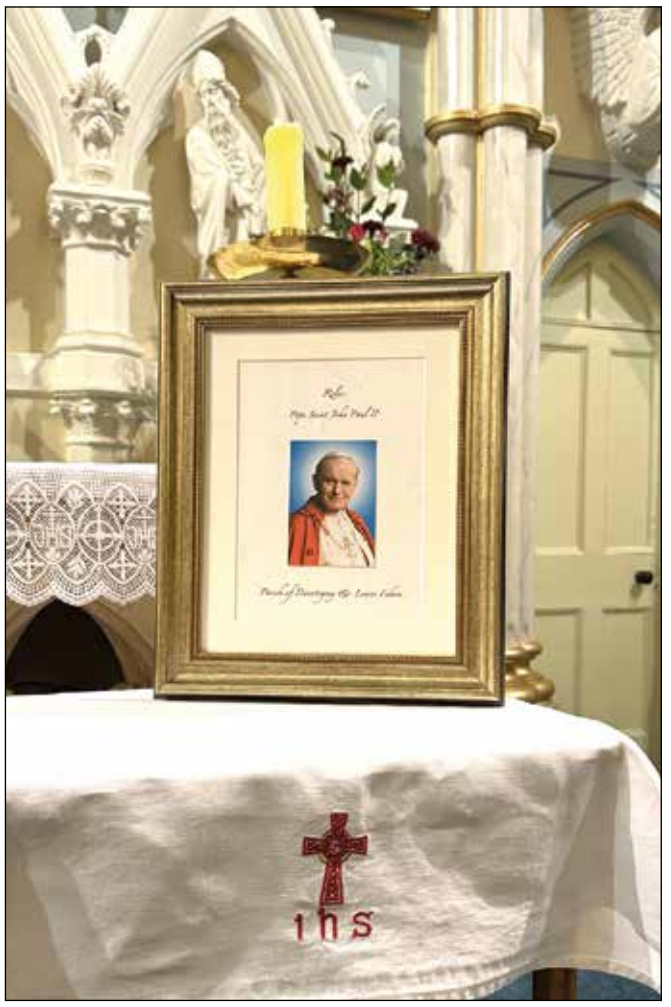
The Novena finishes with a Christmas Penitential Ceremony on Sunday, December 20.

















Long Tower Parish News…

Great interest in annual Novena in preparation for Christmas



THE St Columba's Long Tower Solemn Novena of Healing on the nine Sundays before Christmas has been drawing great interest, with this year's theme, 'Make me a channel of your peace', in celebration of the 800th Jubilee Year of St Francis of Assisi.

So far, there have been talks on 'Mary, Help of Troubled Hearts' by Franciscan Friar of the Renewal, Fr Bernard, 'Mary, Help of Families' by Bernie Millar, 'Mary, Mother of Mercy' by Fr Conor McGrath, and 'Mary, Woman of Faith' by Niamh Sharkey.

The remaining talks will be delivered by Rev Philip Kemmy, on 'Mary, Star of Hope', Sinead Strong on 'Mary, Bearer of The Light', Rev Declan Shannon on 'Mary, Cause of Our Joy', and Rev Dr John McKeever on 'Mary, Queen of Peace'.

The theme for the closing of the Novena on Sunday, December 20, will be 'Mary, Our life, our sweetness and our hope'. The closing programme will include a Carol Service and Nativity Drama.

Beginning at 6 pm each night, the Novena programme includes the praying of the Rosary and Novena prayer, petitions, a short talk, and Eucharistic Healing Ceremony with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

All are welcome. You can also join via the Long Tower Webcam :www.longtowerchurch.com/webcam. Cloisters Cafe and Siopa Cholmcille are open after the Novena.

Parking is available at Long Tower Primary School Car Park, via Bishop Street, from 5-7.45 pm each Sunday of the Novena, in the hope of significantly easing congestion around Charlotte Street and the Flyover. So, as many as possible are asked to consider using this facility and to avoid double parking and blocking access to residents' homes on Charlotte St and surrounding residential areas.



Photography by Stephen Latimer













Iskaheen & Upper Moville Parish News…

Harvest Thanksgiving at St Columba's Drung







Bellaghy Parish News…

St Malachy's GAC Mass for deceased members

ON the Feast of St Malachy, November 3, Fr Pat O'Hagan, PP, Bellaghy (Ballyscullion) celebrated Mass for the deceased members of St Malachy's GAC, Castledawson, in the Club Pavilion.

About 80 people gathered, including Mrs Rose Mackle, who, at 98 years of age, is the oldest member of the parish community.

Rose is pictured with Fr Pat and other members of St Malachy's, as well as the choir, which included some of the Club's camogie players.











Coleraine Parish News

Family Prayer booklet

A Family Prayer Booklet has been produced for the Coleraine Parish, which incorporates the areas of Dunboe, Macosquin and Aghadowey.

The booklet contains a number of traditional prayers, which are laid out for each day of the week.

It also includes other family prayers and children's prayers.

Maghera Parish News

Wonderful Knock pilgrimage with Legion of Mary *by Angela Lagan*

ST Patrick's Parish, Maghera, Legion of Mary travelled by coach to Knock Shrine on Sunday, September 27, with 48 pilgrims from the South Derry area to participate in the annual Legion of Mary ceremonies.

The annual event is always much anticipated by Maghera parishioners and well supported.

The overall attendance at Knock Shrine was huge in number and the Basilica was packed at 3 pm for Mass and the Blessing of the Sick.

This was followed by the Legion's procession of beautiful banners, from all over Ireland, up to the High Stations of the Cross on the hill, whilst reciting the Rosary that was relayed from the Basilica and singing 'Ave Maria.' It was a wonderful sight to see, enhanced by a sunny afternoon.

Everyone enjoyed a spiritual day of healing and happiness, and were most appreciative of the

immense work done by the local Maghera Praesidium, with its involvement in organising the pilgrim programme, Rosaries in transit and keeping everyone safe.

Donagheady Parish News...

Lough Derg pilgrimage lovely time of prayer together







Eangach



An Paidir

Ár nAthar, atá ar Neamh
Go naofar d'ainm
Go dtaga do Ríocht
Go ndéantar do thoil ar an talamh
Mar a dhéantar ar Neamh.

Ár nArán laethúil,
Tabhair dúinn inniu,
Agus maith dúinn ár bhfiacha
Mar a mhaithimidne dár bhféichiúna féin.
Agus ná lig sinn i gcathú
Ach saor sinn ó olc.
Áiméan

Glóir don Athair

Glóir don Athair, agus don Mhac, agus don Spiorad Naomh

Mar a bhí ar dtús, mar atá anois, agus mar a bheas go brách
Trí shaol na saol



Seoda na Róimhe





Le déanaí, bhí an t-ádh orm dhul ar cuairt ar an Róimh ar saoire, cathair atá líon lán den stair agus den chultúr. Dar ndóigh, tá an oiread sin leibhéal den stair a thitamach ansin leis na mílte bliain, rud a chuaigh i bhfeidhm ar an oidhreacht chomhchoiteann atá againn mar Eorpaigh, agus ar fud an domhain fiúamháin. Anuas air sin, is ollmhór ról na Róimhe inár n-oidhreacht mar chríostaithe (ról lárnach), rud a fheiceann an cuairteoir go furasta nuair a bhreathnaíonn sé ar heaglaisí iomadúla scaipthe ar fud na cathrach.

Tá ceithre Baisleac Pápach ann sa Róimh (i measc na gcinn eile – is eaglais le stádas ar leith atá i mbaisleac). Is fiú don té a thagann ar cuairt chun na cathrach, cuairt a thabhairt orthu seo.amhail mar a thagann cuairteoirí, turasóirí agus oilithrigh chucu inniu, tháinig daoine ag triail orthu le tamall iontach fada. Oilithrigh a bhí sna daoine seo a rinne turais mhóra deacra. Tá na baisleaca pápacha ollmhaisithe, déanta d'aon turas le Dia a ghlóiriú fríd an fhoirgneamh féin. Níos doimhne, is áiteanna beannaithe iad, atá sáite sa ghuí a rinne an oiread sin d'oilithrigh romhainn. B'onóir dom a rian a leanstan, ar cuairt chuig trí cheann de na baisleaca seo.

Basilica Papale di Santa Maria Maggiore

Suite níos cóngaraí do lár stairiúil na Róimhe atá Santa Maria Maggiore (.i. Mórbhaisleac Mhuire). Bhí an áit seo i mbéal an phobail le déanaí óir is anseo a roghnaigh an Pápa Proinsias mar áit churtha. Go stairiúil, bhí áit churtha ann taobhamuigh se sheanbhallaí na cathrach, inar cuireadh corpán na ndaoine a fuair bás den phláigh. Tógadh an baisleac anseo. Chuaigh seo i bhfeidhm go mór ar Phroinsias. Inniu, tá a thuamba simplí le feiceáil ann. Níos faide ar aghaidh, i seipéal ag an taobh, tá íocón den Mhaighdean Muire - Salus Populi Romani – rud a chiallaíonn 'Sláinte Mhuintir na Róimhe'. Go traidisiúnta, ba ar Mhuire a thiontaigh na daoine in aimsir an tinnis, agus i gcruatáin an tsaoil. Ní hé sin an t-aon seoid san eaglais bheannaithe seo. Os comhar na haltóra, is féidir leis an oilithreach dul síos, agus os a chomhar, taobh thiar d'fhuinneog, tá an Cliabhán Beannaithe le feiceáil, inar luigh an leanbh Íosa é féin, agus a tugadh chun na Róimhe ón Mheán Oirthear!

Ar dheis ansin, tá seomra eile ina bhfuil an Taibearnacal, ina gcoinnítear an tSacraimint Naofa, maisithe le hóir, agus aingle órga timpeall air. Ar an díon, tá pictiúir de dhaoine ón tSean-Tiomna, agus ainmneacha. Seo iad ginealach Chríost, a luaitear sna Soiscéil. Is léir an téama a cheanglaíonn achan rud sa Bhaisleac seo – Ionchollú Chríost! An Mistéir lárnach inár gcreideamh. Tháinig Íosa ar talamh ina dhuine daonna, ionchollaithe i mbroinn Mhuire. Bhí sé mar chuid de theaghlach. Rugadh é, luigh sé i gcliabhán. Seo é fírinne ár gcreidimh. Tugann sé é féin dúinn mar Arán na Beatha agus maireann sé linn mar sin, ar bhealach fisiceach. Tugtar tús áite don Eocairist sa bhaisleac leis an Taibeanacal mór, agus seomra d'Adhradh na Sacramainte.

Baisleac Eoin

Tá Baisleac Eoin 'Laterano' suite níos faideamach ón chathair, go díreach taobh istigh de na seanbhallaí Aurelian. Tá gné speisialta ag baint leis an áit seo, óir tá onóir ag an Bhaisleac Lateran nach bhfuil ag eaglais ar bith eile. Is í seo an mháthair-eaglais do na caitlicigh uilig ar fud an domhain. Tá féile ar leith sa bhliain eaglasta a chomórann a thiomnú faoin Phápa Sylvester, ar 9ú Samhain, sa bhliain 324. Tá ról speisialta ag an bhaisleac seo. I bhfad sular tógadh Baisleac Pheadair (san fhoirm ina bhfuil sé inniu), bhí na pápaí bunaithe anseo i mBaisleac Eoin. Inniu féin, is anseo atá cathaoir an Phápa – an Cathedra – a gcaithfidh sé suí air ar mhaithe le fógairtí oifigiúla a dhéanamh fá chreideamh ("Ex Cathedra"). Seo baisleac ollmhór a bhfuil neart staire ag baint leis. Spéisiúil go leor, tá doirse móra ar an bhealach isteach atá iontach sean ar fad - na doirse ón tSean-Seanad Rómhánach féin! Tá dealbha móra ar an dá thaobh den taobhroinn, dealbha de na hAspail agus de Naomh Pól. Tá altóir mór ann le forscáth órga. Is féidir siúl taobh thiar de, agusamharc ar chathaoir an Phápa.

Baisleac Pheadair – an Vatacáin

Is cinnte gurbh é ceann de na deiseanna is speisialta a fuair mé agus mé thall, ná a bheith ábalta cuairt a thabhairt ar an Vatacáin, agus siúl isteach fríd Bhaisleach Pheadair, an áit a bhfuil an Pápa bunaithe inniu. Tógadh an baisleac anseo, ar an láthair a cuireadh Peadar, an chéad Phápa, chun báis de réir ordú an Impire Nero. Adhlacadh Peadar cóngarach dó sin, agus tá príomhaltóir na baislice tógtha go díreach os cionn an tuamba inniu. Tá scála na háite seo deacair a chur i bhfocail, tá sé mór ar fad, agus iontach galánta. Is iomaí píosa ealaíne mór le rá is féidir a fheiceáil istigh ann, ó fhorscáth Bernini thar an phríomhaltóir, go Pietà Michaelangelo, agus rudaí eile nach iad. Ach níos tábhachtaí, is féidir teacht anseo agus mothú a fháil go bhfuil tú ag guí cóngarach do chroí na hEaglaise. Tá na focail a dúirt Íosa le Peadar os do chionn: "TU ES PETRUS…" "Is tusa Peadar, agus ar an charraig seo a thógfaidh mé m'Eaglais".

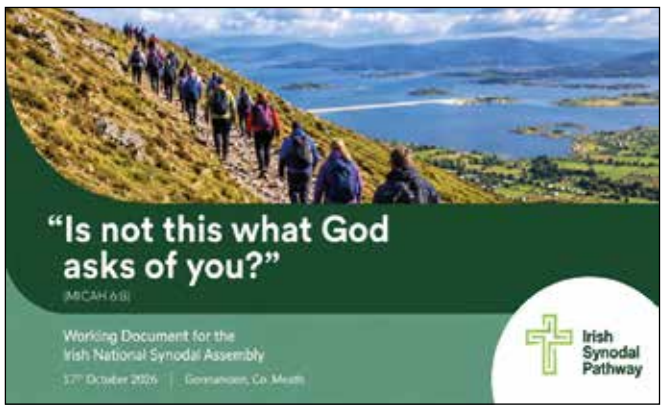




Pathways for renewal…

An ordinary everyday way of being Church at parish level

by Anne Friel



SOME friends asked me what happened at the National Synodal Assembly in Gormanstown on October 17. They hadn't asked me about earlier gatherings! Even though some haven't been much involved in local or national synodal conversations, there was a recognition that something was happening, something hopeful and positive. A move from 'maintenance to mission'. This meeting was a key moment for the Catholic Church in Ireland.

Over 300 delegates met in City North, Gormanstown, Co Meath, to discern communally 'pathways for the renewal of the Church in Ireland that have emerged from the Synodal process'. It was not solely a gathering to vote on 35 proposals. Delegates mainly came from dioceses, as well as from religious congregations and Catholic Associations, with invited guests from other major Christian churches in Ireland.

This synodal pathway had been convened five years ago by the Irish Bishops and, in his opening address, Archbishop Eamon Martin told us that the bishops were committed to this journey. He said that synodality is "a way of being Church, centred on prayer and encounter with Christ, nourished by the Holy Mass and the sacraments; a Church of all the baptised, journeying and discerning together; a missionary Church, called to bring the message of salvation to this time and this place; a faithful Church which echoes the words of our Lord Jesus that 'the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe the Good News!' This is a 'call to pastoral conversion.'"

The coming together at this Assembly followed five years of praying, meeting and listening, discerning and asking, "What is God asking of the Church in Ireland today?" In Derry, it started with the gatherings in parishes and then conversations in Inishowen, Co Tyrone, Co Derry and Derry City, at deanery level, from 2022.

Each diocese was asked to send eight delegates, including the bishop. Delegates from the Derry Diocese were: Bishop Michael Router, Bishop of Derry; Fr Kevin McElhennon,

Diocesan Council of Priests, Cappagh Parish Pastoral Council and Diocesan Synodal Team; Mark Holloway, Maghera Parish Pastoral Council and Diocesan Synodal Team; Anne Friel, Chair Diocesan Synodal Team; Dympna Kelly, Drumragh Parish Pastoral Council and Diocesan Synodal Team; Lizzie Rea, Youth Director, Derry

"It was not solely a gathering to vote on 35 proposals. Delegates mainly came from dioceses, as well as from religious congregations and Catholic Associations, with invited guests from other major Christian churches in Ireland."

Diocesan Catechetical Centre and Diocesan Synodal Team; Áine Gallagher, Interim Director of Operations, Derry Diocesan Trust; Sr Evelyn Fergus, Sister of Our Lady of Charity of the Good Shepherd and Diocesan Synodal Team; and Tony Brennan, attending as National Coordinator Pope John Paul II Award. There is a list of all delegates at www.synod.ie.

Before the Assembly, the Working Document, 'Is not this what God asks of you?', was circulated. I highly recommend that you read this, as it outlines what was heard during the synodal journey. It provides a theological reflection on the emerging vision of Church, it describes five Pathways for the renewal of the Catholic Church in Ireland, and it asks us why this matters in Ireland today, looking at all of this in the context of the signs of the times in Ireland and across the world. This document can be accessed Working-Document-of-the-National-Synodal-Assembly-on-17-October-2026.pdf.

Before we attended, delegates were asked to read, reflect and pray with each section of the Working Document. We were asked to notice, 'what draws us, what unsettles us, where we recognise something of the Gospel, where the Spirit might be asking the Church to change, deepen or begin again, and where questions remain.' We were asked to read each section prayerfully. Our delegation also met beforehand and the wider Diocesan Synodal Team had met to pray with and discuss the range of proposals.











PATHWAY NO.	PROPOSAL NO	PROPOSAL TITLE	HR*	R*	RFD*	NR*
1	1	Build communion with those struggling to see relevance of church	42%	36%	19%	2%
1	2	Challenging language and style at universal level	41%	20%	26%	13%
1	3	Renewed emphasis on inter-Church encounter and dialogue	28%	39%	27%	6%
1	4	The parish / local faith community as a faith formation space	65%	23%	12%	0%
1	5	Youth co-ordinators and youth advisory committees	53%	31%	15%	1%
1	6	Pathways of intentional discipleship for youth and young adults	52%	31%	16%	0%
1	7	National digital strategy for youth-focused online content	51	30	17	1
1	8	Engaging with Irish society in discerning the common good	63%	22%	14%	1%
2	1	Ministry of listening, welcoming and belonging in dioceses / parishes	39%	35%	21%	6%
2	2	National commission for faith-based social infrastructure and abiding	15%	31%	34%	20%
2	3	Pathways of belonging for young people through pilgrimages and gatherings	55%	33%	9%	3%
2	4	Ministry with the Travelling People	26%	31%	33%	11%
2	5	Women visible and valued in liturgy, public prayer and discourse	38%	23%	22%	16%
2	6	National office for women (mainstreaming women's inclusion	12%	6%	27%	56%
3	1	Healing as a priority in the future work of the synodal process	67%	22%	10%	1%
3	2	A commission for healing	37%	27%	25%	12%
3	3	Places of encounter	32%	25%	36%	8%
3	4	The pastoral care of women at the margins	28%	24%	37%	11%
4	1	Communities of accompaniment, discipleship and belonging	53%	32%	11%	3%
4	2	Review of catechetical provision and sacramental preparation	69%	15%	14%	1%
4	3	Nurturing the domestic church: home-based faith tools	44%	32%	19%	4%
4	4	Mentoring and accompaniment of married couples	32%	30%	29%	10%
4	5	Family ministry team	28%	35%	28%	9%
4	6	Pastoral accompaniement of people who experience brokeness in realationships	38%	32%	26%	4%
4	7	Womend and the domestic church	20%	20%	40%	19
5	1	A permanent national ecclesical council	35%	16%	31%	18%
5	2	Formation for co-responsible ministry in a synodal Church	57%	28%	11%	4%
5	3	The ministry of Catechist, both instituted and commissioned	56%	35%	7%	1%
5	4	National framework for co-responsibility and synodal ministry	44%	28%	20%	8%
5	5	Recognition of lay ministry and co-responsible leadership for lay men and women	49%	27%	19%	4%
5	6	Piloting co-responsible models for mission and pastoral leadership	38%	33%	21%	8%
5	7	National office for life-long adult faith formation	58%	25%	14%	3%
5	8	A national review in light of paragraph 60 of the "Final Document"	41%	17%	22%	20%
5	9	On-going exploration of women's ministry, including the diaconate	42%	12%	19%	27%
5	10	National formation and training pathway for youth and young adult ministry	52%	32%	14%	3%

*HR = I highly recommend, *R = I recommend, *RFD - Requires further discernment, *NR = I do not recommend

The Assembly

We met at City North at 8.30 am, finding our seats. The session started at 9.30 am with introductions, welcome and prayer. We sat at tables of eight. Any concerns that there was a lot to do and a reliance on voting technology were unnecessary – the day, overall, ran to time and the voting technology worked! It was thoughtfully organised. Individuals were invited to speak on any of the proposals for one minute, and the number of people taking up that invitation increased during the day.

Prayer underpinned the day. There was continuous prayer in front of the Blessed Sacrament in a separate room. Delegates began the day with prayer, and we prayed as we discussed each Pathway and before we voted on proposals. The day ended with Mass, sending us out to our parishes. Music added to the day.

> “It was not solely a gathering to vote on 35 proposals. Delegates mainly came from dioceses, as well as from religious congregations and Catholic Associations, with invited guests from other major Christian churches in Ireland.”

We listened to Cardinal Mario Grech, the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, who, in a video message, expressed his admiration for the Irish Synodal Pathway, asking us to focus on moving from maintenance to mission, rather than concentrating on managing decline.

The sharp, sunny weather allowed us to go outside during breaks, to think and meet the friends we had made throughout the synodal journey.

Pathways for Catholic Church in Ireland

The five Pathways described in ‘Is not this what God asks of you?’ were: The Church that proclaims the Gospel; The Church as a community of belonging; The Church as a place of healing; The Church that accompanies; and The Church that empowers for Ministry and co-responsibility.

These Pathways were broken into a total of 35 proposals that were prayed with, discussed and voted upon at the Assembly. The Pathways had come from the priority areas that had been identified over the last five years of synodal listening. We recognised most of the themes that we had heard in the gatherings we had across the Derry Diocese – being a Church of welcome and belonging, a Church where everyone’s gifts and vocation are respected, where we can learn about our faith and pass it on to our children and grandchildren, where our young people can grow in their faith.

For each Pathway, we spent time in prayer, led by Dr Jessie Rogers, then had a 20-minute conversation at our tables where everyone was encouraged to speak, a final prayer and hymn, and then we voted on each proposal. The outcome of a vote was shared before we moved onto the next proposal. In our conversations, there seemed to be general concern about the number of recommendations focusing on establishing national committees and structures. It wasn’t clear what some of these proposed new bodies would do and whether they could stall progress in some areas. Some expressed concerns that there were proposals with a focus on specific groups that left out other groups, and I believe that resulted in some potentially surprising votes.

Recommendations

Delegates were asked to vote on each of the 35 proposals under the headings: ‘I highly recommend’; ‘I recommend’; ‘requires further discernment’; and ‘I do not recommend’. We were advised that ‘requires further discernment’ was not a vote against a proposal, but highlighted to bishops that further thought was needed. The outcomes of the voting are listed in the table below and have been shared with the Irish Catholic Bishops Conference for its consideration.

We didn’t agree on every issue, but there was a shared recognition that we belonged together, having a common faith and love and a common mission. Pope Leo’s chosen theme for Mission Sunday (October 18) reflected the Assembly – ‘One in Christ, united in mission.’

Some Key messages

Pathway 1

There was widespread support for our parishes and local faith communities being reclaimed as places where faith formation is central, holistic, lifelong, relational, and co- responsible.

The proposals with a focus on young people were welcomed, including having youth coordinators and youth advisory committees, developing pathways of intentional discipleship for young people and a National Digital Strategy for Youth.

Pathway 2

Having a simple, visible ministry, made up of trained parishioners and clergy, whose role is to be present to listen deeply and to welcome people, especially those who feel unsure of their place in the Church, was strongly supported. There also was a large support for developing pathways of belonging for young people through pilgrimages and gatherings.

The proposal of establishing a National Office for Women received most votes under ‘I do not recommend’ and ‘requires further discernment.’ There was some surprise and, I believe, sadness in the room. On discussing with others present, some felt it wasn’t totally clear what the role of this new Office would be, although one speaker highlighted that it would be a kind of ‘ombudsman.’

Pathway 3

There was widespread support for continuing a consistent focus on healing as part of the synodal process, that the truth-telling of those who have suffered might lead to transformation. The recommendation was that the Irish Episcopal Conference, and the Association of Leaders of Missionaries and Religious in Ireland, would explicitly commit to maintaining ‘healing’ as a priority in future synodal processes.

Pathway 4

There was an emphasis on training for all forms of ministry, not simply developing new training programmes, but including a culture of accompaniment where people can encounter Christ and grow together in faith. There was good support for the Church in Ireland fundamentally reviewing

> “There also was strong support for passing on the faith through families. It is important to invite and support families in accompanying their children in faith at home, providing home- based faith tools, and seeing grandparents as a key existing support system.”

catechetical provision in the context of preparation for the sacraments, beginning with the Sacrament of Confirmation.

There also was strong support for passing on the faith through families. It is important to invite and support families in accompanying their children in faith at home, providing home- based faith tools, and seeing grandparents as a key existing support system.

Also, strong support for the Church promoting the pastoral accompaniment of people who experience brokenness in relationships, linking with the universal Church in further discernment of this issue, finding a balance between fidelity to Church teaching and the Church’s call to mercy.

Pathway 5

There was a strong vote for setting up a national office for Life-long Adult Faith Formation to provide resources and direction to parishes and dioceses. All baptised people are co-responsible for the life and mission of the Church and this will help all to find their role. Appointing dedicated Catechists to work locally, and have a specific role in accompanying others, was another key action, although we need to ensure that they have specific, agreed roles. Linked with this is having a national process for recognising, commissioning and supporting lay ministry that provides, ‘theological grounding, pastoral guidance and practical pathways for implementation’, as well as forming lay and ordained people for co-responsible ministry.

The second-last vote of the day was on the Church in Ireland advocating for on-going exploration of women’s ministry, including the diaconate. A number of people spoke to this proposal. This received greater support than the earlier Office for Women proposal, with 54% highly recommending or recommending ongoing exploration, 19% voting for further discernment, and 27% voting ‘I do not recommend’. I mention these due to the media coverage.

Closing words

In closing, Archbishop Eamon highlighted that we are entering a practical and action-focused phase with the challenges that this will present. He asked who was here, who was not here, and how do we change the balance of the presence in this room? How is the Holy Spirit kicking the tables today? How do we create space and time for the Holy Spirit? He said that it was “important to communicate the message that we are serious about moving from maintenance to mission, to rebuild faith and practice here in the Church in Ireland”.

The next phase of the Synodal journey was to refer the results of this Assemby to the Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference at their next meeting.

Irish Catholic Bishops’ Conference

The Irish Catholic Bishops met during the week following the Assembly, welcoming its statement and recommendations. They noted a number of important themes that came from conversations including:

- Having more opportunities to deepen faith and understanding of Catholic teaching;
- Making healing a priority in the Church’s ongoing work;
- Developing and recognising more shared leadership and responsibility, as well as greater recognition of women’s contributions vocations and ministries within the Church;
- Desire for stronger engagement with young people;
- Engaging with society and the value of the social teaching of the Church.

Although a fuller report will be provided, progress will begin now with bishops bringing proposals back to their dioceses and parishes, looking at what is already happening, and which recommendations can be implemented right away. Synodality must grow from the grass roots, from the gifts of people in parishes going in love to spread the Word of God. It was important that they also mentioned that there will be a sharing of learning between dioceses across Ireland.

Bishops identified the following next steps:

- Immediately reviewing the work of Parish and Diocesan Pastoral Councils;
- A commitment to further developing the ministry of Catechist;
- There was considerable support for recognising and developing the gifts and responsibilities of women within the Church, even where delegates differed about structures through which this should happen;
- A desire for practical change happening at parish level as opposed to having a top- down approach, or establishing national structures.

> “Having a simple, visible ministry, made up of trained parishioners and clergy, whose role is to be present to listen deeply and to welcome people, especially those who feel unsure of their place in the Church, was strongly supported.”

A key theme of the Assembly was that this was an important day but ‘the work of becoming a more synodal and missionary Church belongs to all of us.’

More information, in written and video format, can be found at: www.synod.ie; http://theway.ie; www.catholicbishops.ie; www.derrydiocese.org/synod.

“When we learn to listen to one another, to share responsibilities, and to recognize the action of the Spirit in the various Churches, we are not merely improving the way we work: we are becoming a Church that is better able to engage with the men and women of our time and to bear witness to them of the joy of the Gospel.”

(Pope Leo XIV, Extraordinary Consistory, 26 June 2026)

Anne Friel is Chair of the Derry Diocesan Synodal Team.







Kilrea & Desertoghill Parish News…

Bereavement Support Group responding to massive need for comfort after loss



Parish Bereavement Group, l-r, Sinead, Moira, Eily, Anne, and Denise

IN this month of November, during which there is a particular focus on remembering and praying for deceased loved ones, visiting graveyards and gathering as parish families for Masses of Remembrance, the Parish of Kilrea & Desertoghill's much appreciated bereavement support group has met for its fifth monthly meeting since it was set up in July.

Known as 'Comfort After Loss', the support group was one of the first initiatives to evolve from a Parish Survey carried out last December by the then newly established Parish Pastoral Council, with the support of Fr Chris McDermott CC and Fr Brendan Crowley Adm.

One of the team of five facilitating the 'Comfort After Loss' group is Moira Dawe, who is also chair of the Pastoral Council. Reflecting on the development of the bereavement support group, Moira recalled: "We put out a parish survey to try to determine what parishioners felt was needed in the parish, and held a coffee morning during which people filled out the survey. We got about 150 replies, which we analysed to determine needs and, from this, it emerged that one of the key needs highlighted was bereavement support.

"As a Pastoral Council, we were very mindful about not putting extra strain on our priests, Fr Chris and Fr Brendan. We are fortunate to have families of two funeral services living in our parish community – Dempseys and McKiernans, which provide a lot of practical and spiritual support, so we approached them."

With both Moira and the vice-chair of the Pastoral Council, Sinead Kearney, having experienced close family loss, they were personally aware of the need for support in bereavement, so when this was highlighted in the Parish Survey they started talking about what they could do.

"With the survey also revealing an interest in more coffee mornings, we organised a Spring Coffee Morning fundraiser, and chose CRUSE and the White Butterfly Foundation as our charities to benefit from it – each receiving a £750 cheque from the £1,500 raised," said Moira.

She continued: "We also asked CRUSE what they could offer to help with the launch of a bereavement support group, and they did a presentation on Understanding Your Bereavement to about 15 people, at a pre-launch of the group. CRUSE brought a couple of bereavement support volunteers to this as well.

"We then had a discussion as a Pastoral Council about what to officially call the support group, and we decided on 'Comfort After Loss'. We thought that it might be helpful to have a couple of our members help facilitate the monthly group, so that is Sinead and myself.

"As we are not experts in grief support, we decided to gather a parish bereavement support team of five, which includes a former palliative care nurse, Anne, and Eily, a representative from McKiernans Funeral Services.

"People bring different strengths to the support team. I am a firm believer that when you are being called to be a missionary disciple, you respond."

"The group began in July with a small number, so it is quite an intimate gathering of 8-12 people at this stage," remarked Moira, adding: "We have monthly meetings in the Marian Hall, with different activities. It runs from 7-8.30 pm, with tea/coffee on arrival, and we start and end the sessions with prayer reflections.

Memory

"One of our first activities was to create a memory tree. We wrote down the names of our loved ones on tags, spoke about them and prayed for them, and then put the name tags on the tree. The White Butterfly Foundation does memory tiles for parents who have lost children, so, in September, we went for a session of making memory tiles with Selina, where we put on the name of our loved ones and a design, with the faithful robin often the choice.

"In October, we did floral arrangements in memory of our loved ones, for each to take home. It so happened that we had another parish coffee morning coming up and everyone kindly said that we could use the floral arrangements for this.

"For our November session, we had an evening of music, poetry and reflection within the group. Everyone took along a piece of music that meant something to us at this time of year. And, in December, we will be meeting in Crossroads PS for a night of 'Christmas Wreaths and Robins'. Following a brief demonstration, we will make small wreaths. A friend of mine is knitting little robins that people can take home for their Christmas tree."

"We have had a mental health and well-being talk as well by one of our bereavement support team members, Louise," recalled Moira, "and Marian, a social worker from Kilrea Health Centre, links in with us and has let us know what support the Centre offers regarding loneliness, such as the Chatty Bus.

"So, the group is going well and we are hoping to grow it in time, and get speakers in. We also have a stall with relevant books about grief, which can be borrowed and returned, and there are resources from CRUSE too. In addition, we signpost people to additional support services."

Feeling the benefits of the group herself, Moira shared her own experience: "In 2020, I helped my husband with end-of-life care for his mother, and in 2023 we moved here from England to care for my elderly mum. When my dad died 27 years ago, there was no bereavement support, and when I was doing 24/7 end-of-life care for my mum, I found spiritual support really helped me. I think it is lovely in our Catholic tradition that we have a Month's Mind Mass and Anniversary Masses.

"With the 'Comfort After Loss' group, it is really helping me to be able to voice my loved ones' names and share a bit about them with the others. I find the sessions very prayerful, even though we are not praying all the time – just at the beginning and the end. My purpose through the group was to help others, but it is also helping me. It is a great place of comfort.

"Those who attend gradually become more comfortable and can speak or just listen. We have had tears and laughter. It is a safe space for people to come together, where all are aware that what is shared in that space is confidential."

Moira went on to say: "I find that the group is quiet, spiritual accompaniment. We pray for those who share names during the sessions and afterwards. We don't forget about people, but keep them in prayer, so in this way it is quiet accompaniment. It is comforting to have people journeying with you rather than going through it on your own.

"There is a massive need for this support. Already, we have been asked if we would extend it to beyond the parish and if we would consider going cross-community. The group was set up in response to a parish need. At the minute, it is an intimate group as we feel that we need time to grow it and embed it within our parish community, and we look forward to extending it in the future."

The group is open to all parishioners and anyone wanting to make enquiries can contact Moira on 07515562797 and Sinead on 07729891596.











Our Memory Tree, where we placed the names of our loved ones

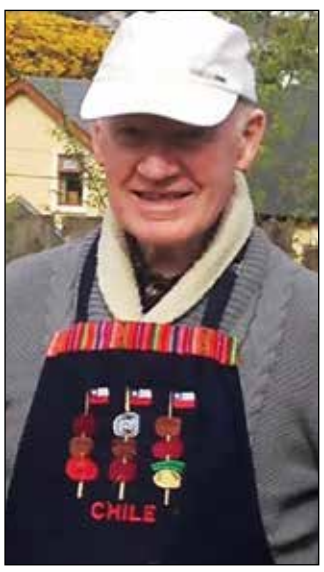




November Remembering…

Fr John McLaughlin SSC…

A dedicated and much-loved priest blessed with a missionary spirit



THE late Fr John McLaughlin, SSC who died back in February of this year, was an encouraging voice regarding the ministry of 'The Net', for which he kindly wrote an inspiring monthly column sharing his memories and experience of Church as a Columban missionary in Chile. He is greatly missed and especially remembered in prayer during this month of November.

Fr John's first sharing in 'The Net' was his faith story in the September 2020 edition, in which he explained that, after spending almost 60 years of priesthood between the Dublin Diocese and Chile, he had returned to live in Moville, Co Donegal, where he had been born and bred, received his childhood sacraments, served as an altar boy and was nurtured in his faith by his family and community, evoking a sense of having "come full circle".

The son of Charlie and Maureen McLaughlin, both pharmacists, Fr John recalled growing up with his younger sister, Anne, and brother, Tony, in a home where the Rosary was prayed every night. After his primary school years in Moville, he attended the Holy Ghost Fathers' College in Blackrock, Dublin, like many other boys from Donegal at the time. At 18, he went on to attend Clonliffe College Seminary, and also studied for a BA in Philosophy at UCD.

Surrounded by priests in the family and those he served for as an altar boy, he said that thoughts of priesthood had been always there. He was ordained in Clonliffe, in June 1963, for the Dublin Diocese and spent about 14 years ministering there. In 1976, he was released for a few weeks to go on a trip to Brazil organised by the Irish Missionary Union; the Kiltegan Fathers, St Patrick's Missionary Society, were the hosts at the time. On his return, he wanted to go back there, but was sent to Chile instead, as a Diocesan volunteer priest, in 1978, when he was 41 years old.

After spending time at language school in Bolivia, he was just getting into his work with the Columbans in Chile when he became sick with typhoid, which took him about a year-and-a-half to recover fully from. During holiday time, he enjoyed living with families, where he got a great experience of the culture of the country. It was a whole new way of life, especially in poorer areas, with a much wider range of pastoral activities than he had been used to in Dublin, and the impact of the political scene under the dictatorship of the military and General Pinochet.

Contracted for six years from the Dublin Diocese, Fr John became so involved in pastoral programmes there that he wanted to stay on beyond this, and was granted another year. But, on his return to the Dublin Diocese, he found himself thinking about how to get back again to Chile! Waiting the required two years before re-applying, he was successful in returning there. After his sister, Anne, contracted Meningitis in 1988, which left her bed-ridden, Fr John returned home for a couple of years to spend time with her and his parents, who were both in their 90s and residing in a home. During this period, he worked in St Mark's Parish, in Tallaght, before returning to Chile. He then joined the Columbans as a permanent member in 1992.

After a few years in Santiago, he spent 11 years in Valparaiso starting new communities. In all, he spent about 33 years in Chile before returning to Ireland to retire in 2015, after celebrating 50 years of priesthood. It so happened that a house in Moville had been left to the Columbans and they wanted someone to live in it, and Fr John was only too delighted to return to his childhood hometown.

As well as celebrating Mass in the parish sometimes, he got involved with the Legion of Mary and the Men's Shed, and was greatly appreciated for his wisdom and humour.



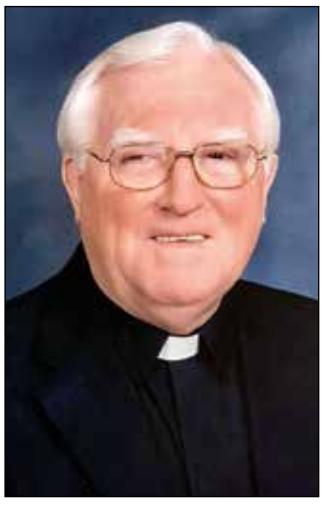
Aged 86 when he died, Fr John's Requiem Mass was celebrated in St Pius X Church, Moville, with the main celebrant being Fr Jim McGonagle, who had been in the same class as Fr John during his time studying Theology in Maynooth. He is buried in Ballybrack Cemetery.





Fr Brendan McKeefry…

Inspired by witness of priestly vocation as joyful and meaningful



THE family of the late Fr Brendan McKeefry, who died on June 22 at his retirement home in Sacramento, California, after 59 years of priesthood, have bequeathed his chalice, paten and vestments to St Mary's Church, Craigavole, Co Derry.

Born on St Patrick's Day 1944 to Mary Catherine (nee McKenna) and Michael McKeefry, Fr Brendan was the sixth of the seven children raised on the family farm in the townland of Tamneyrankin, a short distance from Swatragh.

After his primary schooling, he attended St Columb's College, in Derry, as a boarder, before going on to study for the priesthood at All Hallows Seminary, Dublin, having been inspired during this time at St Columb's by a priest for whom the priestly vocation was a joyful and meaningful one.

Ordained for the Diocese of Leeds, in England, on June 18, 1967, at the age of 23, Fr Brendan served in parish ministry and religious education, before transferring to the Diocese of Sacramento in 1979, where he served in several parishes over a 40-year period.

He retired in 2012 after 45 years of priestly ministry, but remained active in priestly service whenever needed, often serving military families at the National Cemetery at Dixon.

In an archived reflection on his retirement, Fr Brendan wrote: "At 76 years of age, the evening of life has announced its arrival. Life is closing in around me. I have to try to name the truths I find difficult to accept and face the facts of life as a retired priest. I cannot camouflage intimations of mortality or the disconnectedness and isolation of a cleric growing old.

"As I come to the last chapter of my life, interests diminish and some eventually melt away. I cannot just sit looking out the window or curse the darkness or do nothing. I cannot lapse into negativity… yet, this is understandable, even inevitable. Faith and trust in God is what sustains any of us as we deal with life issues, not merely discuss them.

"Pope Francis constantly reminds us that we are 'tillers of the garden', not curators of a museum. Instead of hankering for past success, security, power, honours, titles, position and influence, he tells us that we should become a poor Church, a little Church, a simple Church, a humble Church, a forgiving and welcoming Church.

"What we need is a new vision, a new balance, a new openness, a less judgmental approach as we together try to shape the Church of the future. Priests need to be men of faith as daily work and responsibility expands rather than contracts. We need a lot of energy and commitment to carry our daily ministry.

"We have to become people of faith, joy, and hope. Instead of being 'Lone Rangers', we priests need a collegial spirit, a spirit of inclusiveness, a spirit of realism, and to be above all good listeners! Pope Francis has been a great light – a breath of fresh air.

"Personally, retirement is great – I am enjoying it immensely and glad to be of some assistance somewhere sometimes. So, as the shadows lengthen, the evening comes; the busy world is hushed; the fever of life is almost over; day is nearly done and a 'new sprint' is being ushered in by the old man from Argentina. Bravo!"

Preceded in death by his parents, and brothers, Patrick Joseph (PJ), Michael, and sister, Gertrude Ward, Fr Brendan is survived by his brothers Peter and John, and his sister, Mary Kneeland.

His funeral took place at St Mary's Catholic Cemetery, Sacramento at the beginning of July, after which his remains were brought back to Ireland. A short prayer service took place on his arrival at St Mary's Church, Craigavole, where he remained overnight. It was here that he had served Mass as an altar boy, celebrated his first Mass as a newly ordained priest, and presided at his parents' funerals, as well as family weddings.

Following the celebration of Mass, Fr Brendan was buried with his parents in the cemetery adjoining the Church of St John the Baptist, Swatragh, on July 10.



Fr Brendan with his siblings - back l-r, Peter, John, Michael and Patrick Joseph, and front, Mary and Gertrude_



Olive Kearney (née McKeefry), John McKeefry, and Fr Chris McDermott with the vestments, chalice and paten bequeathed to St Mary's Church, Craigavole.

November Remembering…

Liam Grant…

A man of deep faith and strong witness

THE sudden death of the well-known and much-loved Liam Grant, at the end of July, left a deep sense of loss of another great friend of 'The Net'. He was a friendly face at many faith events and always happy to help out by taking photographs if need-be.

The high esteem in which the 58-year-old was held was evident in the large number of people that attended the wake and removal of his remains from the family home at Fahan, Co Donegal, to St Mary's Church, Cockhill, Buncrana, on the evening before his funeral, and at the Requiem Mass for him on Friday, August 7.

Amongst the congregation were Liam's many friends from such groups as the Men's Rosary, Cursillo, Flame of Love, Youth 2000, Pro-Life, Mary's Meals, and Lough Swilly RNLI in Buncrana, from which he was delighted and honoured to receive a 30-year Long Service Award in 2023, for his steadfast support.

Liam was a man of deep faith and wasn't afraid to witness to it. He also had a great volunteering spirit and was a willing helper at events near and far, from within his parish and the Diocese to national events, like the closing Mass in Dublin for the visit of Pope Francis in 2018, for the World Meeting of Families.

The main celebrant at his Requiem Mass was Fr Paddy Baker, who recalled his first encounter with Liam at a youth congress in Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana, in October 1993. Saying that he remembered the occasion vividly, as the terrible carnage of the 'Trick or Treat' shooting at the Rising Sun Bar, in Greysteel, had happened at that time, Fr Paddy recalled: "The Gardai arrived to tell us about the tragedy, as there were some young people from there at the youth event.

"We priests were standing around when a young man came up to us and said that it would be good to pray for those hurt. It was Liam Grant. Over 30 years later, Liam still had that thoughtfulness. It was so him to think more about others than himself."

Describing Liam as "a man of a deep and lively faith", Fr Paddy added: "He was a shining light for all of us to see and was so involved in his parish. He loved coming to the chapel and being involved. And he was very involved with the RNLI. He was a great fundraiser for them and a great advocate for Mary's Meals."

He noted that Liam loved going on pilgrimage to various holy shrines, especially Medjugorje, which he found to be a great place of peace and prayer. And that he loved visiting people, particularly those who lived alone.

"We live in a culture that is very self-seeking, where it is all about 'me', but Liam stood in stark contrast to that," said Fr Paddy, adding: "It wasn't all about Liam, but about all of us gathered here, and that is why so many came to pay their last respects to him."

Finding it fitting that he had been 'called home' in the garden in







the arms of his mother, who had brought him into this life, Fr Paddy went on to refer to Jesus' words in the Gospel about there being many rooms in His Father's House, saying: "Well, if there is no room for Liam, we are in trouble!"

Paying tribute to Liam at the end of Mass, on behalf of his parents, Vincent and Una, and siblings, Roisin, Ita, Maeve and Tom, his younger brother, Vincent fondly recalled his life and expressed gratitude for "the love there was for him everywhere he went", saying: "We have been told that he was treasured in so many places and that his thoughtful prayers, and deeds, will be sorely missed."

A great supporter of the Inishowen Men's Rosary, Liam had arranged for the men who first started the Men's Rosary in Ireland to join the Inishowen group in praying the Rosary on the first Saturday of October. This went ahead as planned, with the men remembering Liam, and praying for his soul.

Liam was buried in Cockhill Cemetery, and we continue to remember him in our prayers for the dearly departed, especially during this month of November.

Celebrating annual VSSJ Mass on Feast of St Francis of Assisi, Bishop Michael highlighted…

Christ is still calling and still says to ordinary people the same simple words…"Come, follow Me."



THE Vocations Society of St Joseph within the Diocese gathered in the Iona Retreat Centre at Termonbacca on the fourth Sunday in October for its annual Mass, celebrated by Bishop Michael Router, followed by its annual general meeting.

Welcoming the Society's members, who had travelled from different parts of the Diocese to pray together for vocations, while giving thanks for all who respond generously to God's call, Bishop Michael felt it fitting that the Gospel of the day had an image of the vineyard carefully prepared by its owner and then entrusted to others to cultivate and make fruitful.

Highlighting that it was also the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, whose 800th anniversary of his death is being commemorated in the Church this year, the bishop noted that Francis had discovered his vocation by "listening attentively to Christ and then having the courage to respond wholeheartedly".

In his homily, Bishop Michael spoke further about this, saying: "Francis began life wanting many of the things people have always desired, wealth, excitement, popularity and success. But gradually he began asking deeper questions: What am I doing with my life? What kind of person do I want to become? What is really worth living for?

"His answer came through his encounter with Christ. Praying before the crucifix in the ruined church of San Damiano, Francis heard Christ say, 'Francis, go and repair my house'. At first, Francis thought He meant the building he was in. Eventually, he understood that Christ was asking him to help rebuild the Church as the wider community of God's faithful and he would do that by living the Gospel radically and wholeheartedly."

"In many ways, the story of Francis is a story of vocation," remarked Bishop Michael, saying: "God called him. Francis listened. He struggled to understand what was being asked of him. And, eventually, he responded. That is how vocation often works.

"We sometimes imagine that a vocation to priesthood or religious life arrives with absolute certainty, that somebody suddenly knows exactly what God wants and everything falls neatly into place. Usually, it is much quieter than that. It may begin with a thought that keeps returning, a question that will not go away, a sense that God might be asking something more of me. That is, perhaps, where the work of the Vocations Society of St Joseph becomes so important. You help people to listen for that call. Through your prayers, your encouragement and your financial support for students preparing for priesthood, you help people who are trying to discern whether God is calling them to work in a particular way in His vineyard.

"You also, through your work, remind the wider Church that vocations are everybody's concern. The priesthood is a wonderful way of working in God's vineyard. A priest has the privilege of bringing the love and presence of Christ into the ordinary lives of people. He stands at the altar and celebrates the Eucharist, brings the mercy of God to people in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, baptises children and accompanies families, celebrates marriages, visits the sick and sits with families in times of bereavement and loss. He shares some of the happiest moments in people's lives and is invited into some of their most painful moments as well."

Going on to highlight that priesthood "is not a vocation for perfect people", he said: "There wouldn't be too many of us here if perfection was part of the job description! It is a vocation for ordinary people who gradually discover, as Francis did, that Christ is asking something of them and who are prepared to say, 'I will try'."

Commenting on another important aspect to the work of the Vocations Society, Bishop Michael said: "You rightly promote not only vocations to priesthood and religious life, but the vocation of the laity. We must remember that everyone has a vocation. Every baptised person has been given a part of God's vineyard to cultivate. For some, that vocation will be priesthood or religious life. For many, it will be marriage and family life. For others, it will be lived through particular forms of service to the Church and to society, but whatever it is, none of us are spectators in the vineyard.

"St Francis certainly understood that. He was never ordained a priest. Yet 800 years after his death, he remains one of the most influential Christians who ever lived because, very quickly, Francis began producing the fruit that God seeks from His vineyard. Where others ignored the poor and the leper, Francis saw brothers and sisters. Where society valued wealth and possessions, Francis chose simplicity. Where people saw creation as something merely to possess and exploit, Francis saw brother sun, sister moon and a world filled with the goodness of God. Where others chose conflict, Francis became a peacemaker, even crossing the battle lines of the Crusades to meet the Muslim Sultan, seen very much as the enemy, in a peaceful and respectful way."

Finding it remarkable that 800 years after his death, St Francis of Assisi "is still relevant, still young and fresh and his life has something very important to say to us about vocations", Bishop Michael pointed out: "He discovered his vocation because he was prepared to ask the deeper questions about his life and then to listen for Christ's answer. We need to help young people to ask those questions again. Not simply, 'What career will I have?' 'How much money will I earn?' 'Where will I live?' 'What will make me successful?' But also, 'What does God want me to do with my life?' 'What gifts has He given me?' 'Where can I use them?' 'Who is God calling me to become?'

"In the midst of these questions, we sometimes need the courage to ask a young man quite directly, 'Have you ever thought about priesthood?' Not to put pressure on him or because we have already decided his vocation for him. But simply to plant a seed and allow God to do the rest."

He continued: "A young man who feels even the slightest pull towards priesthood does not need to have everything worked out. Francis certainly didn't. The first step is simply prayer, listening to Christ and, perhaps, having the courage to speak to somebody who can help with the discernment."

Referring to the stark warning at the end of the day's Gospel, that the Kingdom will be given to a people who produce its fruit, Bishop Michael remarked: "Christianity cannot simply be something we inherit from our parents and grandparents, an identity we carry or a tradition we preserve. Like Francis, each of us must decide to live it."

He concluded: "For the Vocations Society, there is always the question, 'Who am I encouraging to reflect on what God might be calling them to do in His vineyard?' Today, I thank you for doing precisely that. For praying for vocations, for encouraging vocations to priesthood and religious life, for supporting seminarians financially and spiritually, for encouraging the holiness and spiritual growth of your own members and for reminding us through your example of the vocation of every baptised person.

"I pray that St Joseph, who quietly listened to God and faithfully carried out what was asked of him, will continue to guide the work of your Society. May St Francis, 800 years after his death, continue to challenge all of us to listen when Christ speaks to us and to have the courage to respond. Because the vineyard still needs workers, Christ is still calling and he still says to ordinary people like us the same simple words, 'Come, follow me'."

The court cairns of Ireland *by Dr Seán Beattie*

THE month of November is a time when we remember our departed friends and family. In pre-Christian times, the dead were venerated in a special way. Stone monuments were constructed, for example court cairns, that stand across the Diocese and bear this out. They were initially reserved for chieftains and elite members of society. Most of the court cairns in Ireland are to be found in the nine counties of Ulster.

Monuments in stone

On a recent guided tour of archaeological sites which I led in the Diocese, I visited several ancient monuments associated with the last resting place. Archaeologists have technical terms for all of them: court cairns; cromlechs; wedge tombs; and cists (pronounced 'kists'). In ancient times, our ancestors erected monuments to the dead and thousands of them still exist across the country. Slabs of stone of up to 10 feet were assembled to form a burial place, usually for chieftains or their leaders. No significant grave goods have been found in any of the tombs, but pieces of flint, beads and small pieces of decorated pottery have occasionally been found.

Tyrone can lay claim to having the greatest number of court cairns in the Derry Diocese. Tyrone has 21 and Derry has four court cairns. In this issue, I am looking at court cairns only.

Co Derry

Knockoneil Court Tomb is in Co Derry and is one of the court cairns included in the 'Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy, The Court Cairns of Ireland', by Professor R de Valera, in which he lists 218 court cairns. The survey lists tombs dating from the Bronze Age; it is known locally as the Giant's Grave, a common description in other areas for such structures. When de Valera visited the site in 1960, he said it was "very well preserved." He described the main gallery with two chambers, a court and a small ante-chamber. He wrote: "This is a very fine monument and compares favourably with western examples, such as Creevykeel, Co Sligo."

Co Tyrone

Most of the court cairns in Co Tyrone are described by de Valera as in "fair preservation". Ballywholan, near Clogher, has a magnificent dual-court cairn. Some excavations have been carried out at this site in 1897.

Co Donegal

In Co Donegal, the Temple of Deen is a court cairn in the Culdaff area of Inishowen. It is a larger structure, with a dividing stone slab in the centre. De Valera suggested it had a two-chambered gallery. It was originally covered by a mound of clay and stones, but only part of the cover remains, the rest having succumbed to the weather. It is situated in a dramatic location with views across the countryside. It forms part of a Bronze Age Triangle, with a stone circle and another tomb forming the other ends. Dating from about 2,000 BC, it served many purposes over the generations, and the reference to a 'Temple' may relate to Druidical worship at some point in time.

The northern half of the country has the largest number of such monuments and many of them are located in coastal locations. The sea was the highway for early peoples who first settled along bays and inlets. Such graves did not normally contain grave goods but small objects, such as pieces of pottery, have been found in tombs that have been excavated. No excavation has taken place at the Temple of Deen and so it remains in relatively good condition. It is included in 'The Court Cairns of Ireland', the national survey carried out by Professor de Valera. He described it as "fairly well preserved" in 1960.

During the Land War of the 1880s, the Temple of Deen was a favourite meeting place for the Land League, which led a campaign of non-payment of rent. Protesters came to the site because of its historic connections.

Access

The court cairns are in private land and it is not advisable to enter lands without permission. If there are livestock in a field, it is unsafe to enter. Court cairns are to be found on working farms and are generally not protected from livestock. The fact that they have survived in their present state for almost 4,000 years is an indication of the reverence in Ireland for the dead, both in pre-Christian and in modern times. Most landowners act as caretakers.

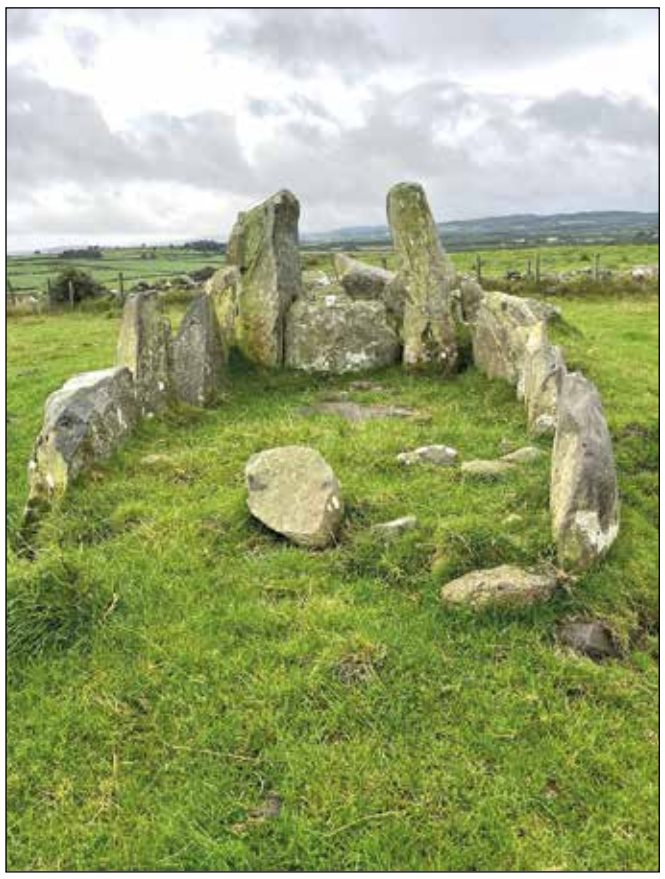
Rules for Christian burials

Although Christianity was introduced into Ireland in the fifth century, it was only from the early eighth century that the Church authorities introduced rules regarding the lives of Christians, including rules for burials. There was a perception that it was inappropriate for baptised Christians to be buried among so-called 'wicked' pagans. The age-old tradition that people should be buried with their ancestors was acknowledged, however. In the Bible, Jacob and Joseph requested that their remains should be brought back from Egypt to the land of their ancestors in Canann. In Adomnán's reflections on Colmcille, he notes that an angel accompanied Colmcille to Heaven. The belief that an angel accompanied the soul to Heaven was well established in the Early Christian world.

The earliest rules regarding burial of Christians are found in 'Collectio Canonum Hibernensis', dating from early medieval times. Monks were encouraged to approve burial in the church to which they were attached. Monastic sites usually have rough stone markers identifying the graves of monks and those associated with the monastery. In convents, in the Derry Diocese, there was a tradition that there were separate burial grounds for nuns, eg, Thornhill College grounds, formerly the Convent of Mercy, Derry, where burials of nuns still take place. However, in many graveyards in the Diocese today, headstones have been erected over the graves of nuns buried in their local parish graveyard.

Graveyard Sunday

November traditionally has been the month of the Faithfull Departed. Recently, in the Derry Diocese, Graveyard Sundays have grown in popularity. Graves are cleaned and decorated with flowers also. In some families, visitors arrive from abroad to be present at the ceremony. Thus, from earliest times to the present day, Ireland is a country that shows great respect for the dead.



Temple of Deen, a court cairn at Culdaff, Inishowen.

The wishes that truly matter this Christmas *by Roisin O'Hara*

"THE Nativity of Jesus rekindles in us the gift and task of bringing hope whenever hope has been lost because 'with Him, joy flourishes; with Him, life changes; with Him, hope does not disappoint." (Pope Leo XIV Homily at Christmas Eve Mass, 2025)

I am sure that I was not alone in being thoroughly disheartened to see shops full of Christmas 'stuff' in the middle of September! Honestly, it seems like Christmas is getting into the shops earlier and earlier every year…before we know it, the selection boxes and the Christmas lights will be competing with the gardening gear in the shopping aisles in Spring!

I love Christmas, not least seeing the excitement of my wee niece as she shows off the presents that she has gotten from Santa and her adoring family. But I think all of us are becoming more aware of the damage that too much 'stuff' is causing to people and the planet, particularly all of that plastic, whether in the form of toys or packaging or glitter!

We are becoming all too aware that, while these big business owners are raking in the millions, there are people in communities all over the world who are struggling to survive. We are aware, too, that Christmas joy is not something experienced by everyone, that there are children for whom the season holds just another day of pain, hunger and fear.

Earlier this year, we spent time talking to more than 30 children in Rwanda, Lebanon and Guatemala about their hopes and wishes. Some were the kinds of things we might associate with childhood, while others were heartbreakingly simple: enough food; clean water; a safe home; or peace. These are things every child should have, not things they should have to wish for.

So, as Christmas approaches, many of us begin searching for gifts that express something deeper than a seasonal gesture. Trócaire's 'Gifts of Change' offer a meaningful alternative, giving family and friends a gift that helps transform lives in communities facing poverty, conflict and climate change. From providing clean water, school lunches and emergency food, to supporting mothers, farmers and families rebuilding after crisis, each gift creates real and lasting change. Through these gifts, we can celebrate Christmas in a way that reflects the Gospel values of solidarity, compassion and hope.

This year's collection includes more than 20 life-changing gifts, ranging from a £5 Gift of Soap to larger community-focused gifts, such as repairing wells or providing solar-powered water pumps. Every gift purchased is sourced in country and supports Trócaire's work to save lives, support women and girls, respond to climate challenges and promote justice around the world.

So how do they work? You choose a Gift from the brochure and you will receive a beautiful card, or e-card, that you can personalise and send to a loved one. Meanwhile, your gift will be used to support families and communities living in poverty, helping them to change their lives for the better!

Last year, I bought my sister's family a goat for Christmas. I'll admit that they were a tiny bit disappointed that they didn't get an actual goat, as they thought, given the price of petrol, it would be a whole lot cheaper to run than a lawnmower, but they were absolutely delighted with their beautiful card that told them that a family in Malawi did receive a goat on their behalf, and that that goat would provide lots of nutritious milk for that family and would help the children grow up healthier and stronger. And one day that goat will have baby goats of its own, providing more milk that can be sold at market, so it really is the gift that keeps on giving!

Trócaire Gifts are the wishes that truly matter this Christmas. They are gifts that bring joy, change and hope to our brothers and sisters across the world. You can find them at Gifts of Change - Trócaire.

If you would like to make Trócaire Gifts available in your parish, we have parish packs available that can be sold after Masses. For more information contact: Fionnuala McGuinness at Fionnuala. mcguinness@trocaire.org.

(Roisin O'Hara is Trócaire's Outreach Manager NI)

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TOGETHER FOR A JUST WORLD



Ruach…Breath of the Spirit

Mary's 'Yes' *by Fr Eamonn Kelly*

MARY, the Mother of Jesus, is a great challenge to all who desire to follow Her Son. She is Mother but also servant. She is honoured but also slave. She receives the Son of Almighty God into Her womb but walks in faith.

Mary's surrender to the will of God is a challenge to all people to look honestly at life. Mary's great 'fiat' (yes) to God places before us two colossal realities that can go under many titles: sin and forgiveness; truth and lies; faith and lack of faith; humanity and God; unclean and purity; passing and eternal. Mary, with Her "Let what you have said be done to me", challenges the adult Christian to get real.

Few adults are willing to look at truth with a pure openness. We blame others, we blame society, culture, or the world, or things, or situations, or civilization, or the organisation, or the club, or even the general public. We look everywhere and anywhere to avoid looking at reality.

Let me make it more concrete. Mary's response to Gabriel's invitation from God, encourages me to look at my life and put it into the context of faith. When I pretend, I can blame outside forces for my sin. When I say 'it was his fault or her fault' then, as an adult Christian, I fail to accept my accountability. When I say 'it was their fault that I sinned', then I do not take personal responsibility for my actions and for my lack of action. Adam blamed Eve. Eve blamed the serpent. And when I, as an adult Christian, try to point the finger to another for my sin, then I am hiding from the truth.

The truth is: I am a sinner. This statement of reality has immense meaning for my future. So, I state the certainty of my existence once more: I am a sinner. The seeming contradiction must logically follow, 'I hate being so but I also love being so'. If I did not love being a sinner so much, I would change.

Adam and Eve both over-reached. They thought they were better than they were. I often think that too. They thought that they could be like God. They forgot their limitations, their brokenness, their lack of truth and their inability to be perfect. I, too, lack sincerity, fail in my desire for goodness, truth and beauty. I often overstep the mark in relationships, hurting people and failing to show love.

Spiritual freedom

Yet, I do not give up. I am a sinner through and through. That is important for me to realise. For development of faith and spiritual freedom, it is important that I remember the situation that I am in. However, thanks be to God and praise be His holy name, my being a sinner is not the most important reality. There is a greater reality; God's love poured into human living leading to the sinner being freed.

Examining Mary's 'Yes' to God in Her life, gives new hope to the sinner that I am. Her 'Yes' allows the Son of God a body from which He has redeemed me, forgiven my sins, established my passageway to oneness with God and allowed the sinner to return home to God's heart. Mary's 'Yes' led to humanity's greatest glory; the salvation Jesus won for us on the Cross of Calvary leading to the glorious resurrection. Mary's 'Yes' reminds us of the new Eve, the new beginning in our relationship with God, and the unconditional love that The Creator God has for the creatures that He has made, even the sinful ones like me; especially the sinful ones like me. The power of the working of the Holy Spirit is seen in Mary's 'Yes' as there is no force, no pretending, no play-acting, but two earnest hearts seeking an eternal home.

Mary asked, 'How could this be?', and was told that it would happen through the power of the Holy Spirit. She was reminded that nothing was impossible to God. This is the great joy of Mary's 'Yes'. Nothing is impossible to God. A sinner, even one like me can be renewed. Nothing is impossible to God. How can this happen? Through the power of the Holy Spirit! The Holy Spirit seeks an eternal home in your heart and waits for your response.

You see, God chose you and I to be with God and live with God for all eternity. It is beyond my understanding as to why He would decide to do that, but that is what He has done. St Paul puts it clearly: "Before the world was made, He chose us, chose us in Christ, to be holy and spotless, and to live through love in His presence'. That was a great decision by God. It now leaves us with a decision to make: To accept or reject the new chance!

Mary was told that all would happen through the power of the Holy Spirit. She was reminded that nothing was impossible to God. Maybe it is time for you to accept this good news. I know that it is time for this sinner to accept it.



Prepare the Way of The Lord! *by Sinéad Strong*

ADVENT is almost here - a beautiful season of hope and joyful anticipation as we wait for the birth of Christ. But it can be hard to hold on to that when there are parties, shopping, school events, and endless lists everywhere. In the middle of it all, the Church gently reminds us to slow down and remember what Christmas is really about.

That does not mean saying 'no' to every celebration. It simply means finding a little quiet in our days, so that we are not only getting ready for Christmas, but getting our hearts ready for Christ.

Protecting the quiet

The world seems to start celebrating Christmas earlier every year. So many of the things filling our calendars are good and joyful, but they can still leave us arriving at Christmas Day completely worn out.

We may not be able to make Advent perfectly quiet, but we can protect a few small moments. Turn off the radio for one car journey. Light the Advent wreath at dinner. Leave the 'phone in another room while you pray. Arrive at Mass a few minutes early. Quiet does not have to be long to become holy.

Prayer & fasting

The Christian calendar was traditionally marked by fasts that helped people journey through the Church's seasons with greater attention and purpose. One of these is the Nativity Fast, a 40-day period from November 11 (St Martin's Day) until Christmas Eve. Similar to Lent, it is sometimes known as St Martin's Lent. Fasting was never only about food; it was a way of making space for God and remembering that our deepest hunger is for Him.

The Nativity Fast gives us that same invitation. We might simplify a meal, spend less, cut back on social media, or choose a quiet evening instead of another commitment. A small sacrifice, offered with love, can gently turn our thoughts back to Christ.

It is a beautiful way to prepare, but it is not meant to become another burden. If you are already overwhelmed, begin gently: Fasting is about drawing closer to God, not following rules perfectly; do what you can peacefully - health, family needs, and the stage of life you are in all matter; pair a small sacrifice with prayer or an act of kindness.

Preparing as a family

For mothers especially, Advent can feel like another season of organising everything for everyone else. But our own preparation matters too. Children do not need an elaborate programme. A simple family prayer, a candle at dinner, a Nativity scene, or a Scripture verse before bed, can give the whole home a sense of waiting.

You could also choose one family sacrifice or act of service: Pray for someone who is lonely; donate food; save a little money for a family in need; or add a piece of straw to the crib after an act of kindness.

And if family prayer is noisy or imperfect, don't worry. Bringing children to God as they are is already an offering of love.

A book for the journey

Advent is also a lovely time to dust off that pile of books you have been 'meaning to read' and get started. Choose one good spiritual book, leave it beside your Bible or favourite chair, and read a few pages each day.

It might be about prayer, the saints, Scripture, Our Lady, or the Incarnation. The aim is not to race through it, but to let one good book keep drawing your mind back to God.

Prepare the heart through Mercy

Advent also gives us a chance to look at anything weighing on our hearts. Is there an apology we have put off, someone who needs our patience, or a resentment we need to hand over to God? The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a beautiful way to begin again.

Mercy can be practical too: Check on a neighbour; write to someone who is grieving; invite a person who may be alone; or give quietly to someone struggling with the cost of Christmas. When we make room for others, we make room for Christ.

Advent is not about creating a perfect Christmas. It is about preparing a willing heart for Christ.

Make room for Christ

This Advent, why not choose three simple anchors: a short daily prayer; one small sacrifice; and a few pages of spiritual reading? They may seem modest, but they can quiet the noise and open the heart. Because at the heart of Christmas is the birth of Our Lord. Jesus really is the reason for the season. All our prayer, fasting, reading, and small sacrifices are simply ways of making room for Him. God sees your effort and your heart.

Advent is about love, hope, and joyful expectation - not stress or perfection. Let us keep our eyes on Christ and prepare the way of The Lord, one peaceful choice at a time. Then, when Christmas Day comes, we can celebrate with hearts that are ready and join with the choirs of angels in singing, "Joy to the World—the Lord is come!"

If you are interested in finding out more about Catholic Mothers Ireland, please visit www.catholicmothers.ie.

Historic milestone as Legion of Mary Inishowen Curia celebrates 500th meeting *by Theresa McGinley*



THE Inishowen Curia of the Legion of Mary proudly celebrated a monumental milestone on Wednesday, October 7, marking its 500th curia meeting. Legionaries from across the peninsula gathered in Clonmany to commemorate over 41 years of continuous prayer, administrative devotion, and active apostolic service to the local community.

Operating under the title 'Our Lady Queen of the Home', and answerable to the Derry Comitium, the Inishowen Curia oversees the local parish groups (praesidia) throughout the region.

Reaching 500 monthly meetings highlights the enduring faith, resilience, and commitment of generations of local members, who have volunteered their time to strengthen the spiritual fabric of Inishowen.

The Legion of Mary, founded globally in 1921 by Frank Duff, relies heavily on its structural meetings to fuel its active works. For decades, the Inishowen Curia has managed vital spiritual and social outreach programmes across local parishes. These include home and hospital visitations, Pilgrim Statue look-after, supporting youth ministries, and offering comfort to the sick, elderly, and lonely.

Reflecting on the achievement, members expressed deep gratitude to the spiritual directors, past and present officers, and all dedicated legionaries whose unwavering faith made this golden milestone possible.

The evening in Clonmany was a time of joyful reflection, prayerful thanksgiving, and a renewed commitment to serving the people of the Inishowen peninsula for many years to come.

Vocations News

Fr Pat O'Hagan's second report on the National Vocations Directors Conference at Knock Shrine…

God, what do you want me to do?

"A priestly vocation is not the beginning of the Christian call, but one possible mature fruit of an encounter with Christ, discipleship, self-gift, invitation, accompaniment, and discernment."

In his second talk to the Vocations Directors of many of the dioceses of Ireland, Fr Stephen Langridge spoke of what he called, 'The Anatomy of a Vocation'. Following on from what he had said previously, he said that vocations come from within a parish that aims to make disciples rather than only from events, poster campaigns, or recruitment.

In terms of our faith, we need to know what the Church teaches, what the Bible says, who Jesus is, and how He calls us out of our apathy to be transformed, energised into following Him as disciples. We can encounter and get to know the living Christ in people who already know and follow Him, and who inspire us to follow Him ourselves, and who might inspire some men to choose priesthood.

A vocation requires listening to the voice of Jesus. Sometimes He speaks to us through one another, especially through people who already know, love, and serve Him. Belonging to a community of faithful disciples, where holiness, faith, and prayer are normal practices, is the perfect environment for fostering a vocation to the priesthood, despite the surrender and sacrifice it entails, but knowing that following Christ is worth the cost.

The seminary is where the good work done in a parish and in a good Catholic school can be deepened as a candidate progresses towards priestly service; where foundations in prayer are strengthened, where men are accompanied by their peers and by seminary staff, where they are encouraged to serve God's people, challenged to grow intellectually, and to mature spiritually.

A true disciple is someone whose whole life belongs to God, who doesn't ask what the Church or the parish can do for him/her, but who contributes to the life of the Church by using their God-given gifts. A true disciple will ask, "Jesus, what do you want me to do with my life?" Vocation becomes possible when the question changes from, "What portion of my life will I give to God?" to "Does my whole life belong to God?"

"Lord, what do You want?" – that is both a dangerous prayer and the beginning of freedom.

In the story of Samuel, it is the older, wiser Eli who helps the young, inexperienced Samuel to know that the Lord is calling him and teaches him to respond to God's invitation. The men God is calling to priesthood today need other (perhaps older and wiser) people to guide them, and help them along their way to discerning what God is asking of them. That could be a parent or other relative, a teacher, a priest, a parishioner, someone who has noticed a gift and can, with a helpful word, open possibilities and encourage the next step.

It is God who calls, and who alone can give the growth needed, through the gifts of the Holy Spirit. But God works through His people, helping the men He is calling to grow through faith, fellowship, and companionship towards holiness; a holiness that will inspire someone to offer his life to the Church as a priest.

Vocations Directors have a specific role in a diocese, but all of us are called to be disciples of Jesus Christ, and to encourage the men of today to offer the gift of everything that they are to the Lord. When a man knows what it means to be a disciple, the vocational question will be opened for him. It won't be something that comes out of the blue but will, instead, be the most natural thing he will ever hear when he asks the simple, but life-changing question, "God, what do You want me to do?"



Pray and fast for Vocations - Pope Leo XIV *by Fr Pat*

AT the beginning of his Apostolic Visit to South America, Pope Leo asked the bishops of the world to encourage their people to pray and fast for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

The Holy Father reminded the people of Uruguay that, a few years ago, when there were no candidates entering seminaries or religious houses, the bishops had asked the people of the country to pray and, as the Pope stated: "Our God hears our prayers!"

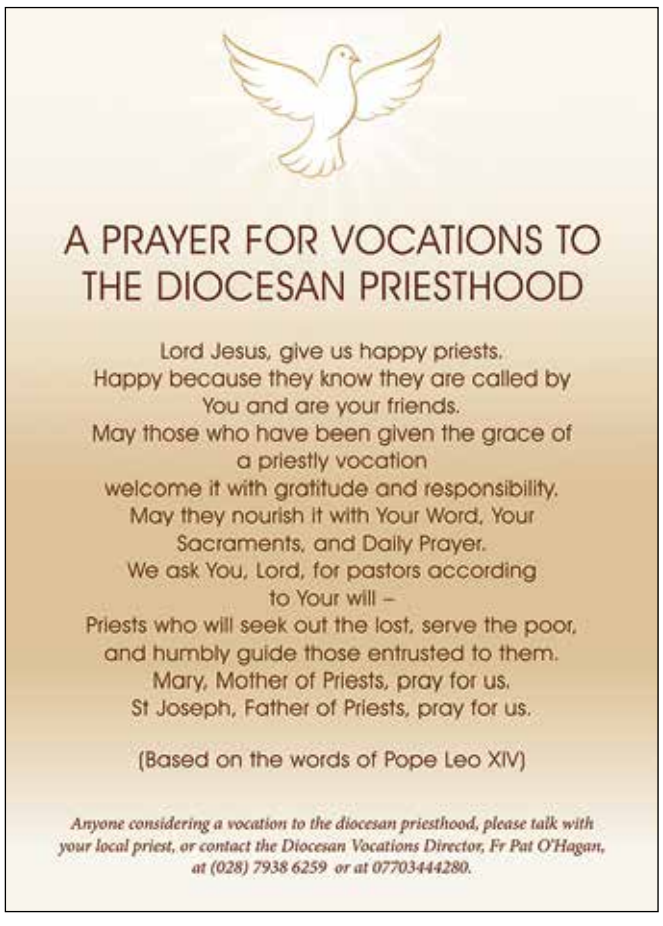
Can we do something similar here in our own diocese? Thank God, we have seminarians and other men currently discerning their vocation to the priesthood, but we need to pray for an increase. We need to "...ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest" (Matthew 9: 37-38).

If you spend time in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, offer some of that time to praying for Vocations. If you pray the Rosary, dedicate at least one decade to that intention.

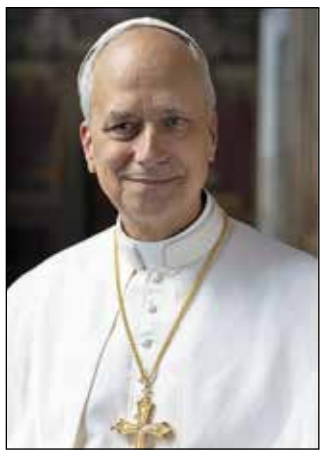
Maybe, as Pope Leo has suggested, you might fast and offer your fasting or abstinence for Vocations. It could be from food or drink. It could be from swearing or taking the Holy Name of Jesus in vain. It could be from speaking ill of your neighbour. It could be taking the time to check in on an elderly person living alone. It could be making a donation to a worthwhile cause. It could be...you can fill in the blanks for yourself, whatever you believe you could do to pray that more men and women will answer God's call to serve Him and the Church as priests and religious.

As Jesus said to His disciples: "There are some things that come about only through prayer and fasting." (Mark 9:29).

(Fr Pat O'Hagan is the Derry Diocesan Vocations Director, and can be contacted via - Tel: (028) 79386259 or email: pgoh2111@gmail.com.)







Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during The Holy Father has asked for prayer during November for:

The proper use of wealth:

Let us pray for the proper use of wealth, that not succumbing to the temptation of selfishness, it may always be put at the service, the common good and solidarity of those who have less.

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 be served but to serve.

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

Remember in prayer:

Fr Neil Farren (Nov 1st)
Fr Paul Farren (2nd)
All priests (3rd)
Fr John Forbes (4th)
All Priests (5th)
Fr Paul Fraser (6th)
Fr John Gilmore (7th)
Fr Joseph Gormley (8th)
Fr Eamon Graham (9th)
Fr Dermott Harkin (10th)
Fr Karl Haan (11th)
All Priests (12th)
Fr Malachy Gallagher (13th)
Fr John Irwin (14th)
Fr Charles Keaney (15th)
All Priests (16th)
Fr Gerald Hasson (17th)
All priests (18th)
Fr Seamus Kelly (19th)
Fr Edward Kilpatrick (20th)
All priests (21st)
Fr Charles Logue (22nd)
Fr Paul McCafferty (23rd)
Msgr Bryan McCanny (24th)
Fr Michael McCaughey (25th)
Fr Andrew McCloskey (26th)
Fr Patrick Lagan (27th)
Fr Michael McCaul (28th)
Fr Noel McDermott (29th)
Fr Eamon McDevitt (30th)

Vocations Holy Hours

DIOCESAN Vocations Holy Hours will take place in St Columb's Church, Chapel Road, Waterside, from 8-9 pm, following the 7.30 pm Mass on December 1.

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 on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month.

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)

Remembrance Mass: A Remembrance Mass for those who died during the past year will be celebrated in St Mary's Church, Rouskey, on Wednesday, November 18, at 7.30 pm.

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

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

Badoney Upper (Plumbridge-Cranagh)

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

Confessions: Confessions are available on Saturdays at 12 noon in Sacred Heart Church, Plumbridge, and before 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

Mass for Deceased: The annual Mass for deceased parishioners will take place on Tuesday, November 17, at 7.30 pm in Holy Rosary Church, and Wednesday, November 18, at 7.30 pm in St Patrick's Keenaught. The names of all who died, or were buried, in our parish since last year's Parish Mass of Remembrance will be read out at this Mass. After all the names have been read, an adult member of each of these bereaved families will be invited to carry a lit candle to the altar. Each family should ensure that an adult has been selected to represent them. Candles will be provided at the back of the church during this Mass.

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.

Legion of Mary: The Legion meets on Wednesday evenings at 5.45 pm. Anyone willing to do Our Lady's work is asked to call Patricia on 028 71417867.

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 and 9.15 am on alternate Sundays in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, 10.30 am in St Mary's Church, Altinure, and 12 noon on alternate Sundays 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

Parish Novena: The annual nine-Sunday Parish Novena – Throwing Open the Doors to Christ – continues until December 20, in St Mary's Church, Cockhill, beginning each Sunday at 7 pm. Each evening comprises of readings, the Rosary, a guest speaker, the Novena prayer and petitions, a Eucharistic Healing Service, and Benediction. The remaining speakers include Fr Stephen Baxter, Patricia Ui hArlaigh, Fr Francis Ferry, Sr Orla Treacy, Mickey Bradley, Marguerite Hamilton, and Fr Bradley.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament 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 every Monday-Thursday 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)

Mass of Remembrance: The annual Mass of Remembrance for those who died in the parish during the past year, will be celebrated on Wednesday, November 18, in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher, at 7.30 pm.

Mary's Meals Fundraisers: Mary's Meals will be holding a Craft Fair in Beragh Hall Pavilion on Saturday, November 21, from 11 am to 4 pm. And it is hosting a Coffee Morning in Strathroy Community Centre on Saturday, November 28, from 11 am to 1.30 pm.

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 9.10 am; in St Mary's Church, Knockmoyle, every Tuesday at 8 pm; and in Corpus Christi Church, Mountfield, every Thursday 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.

Pray & Play: Catholic Mothers Ireland host a Pray & Play Group in Omagh Pastoral Centre at 11 am on the fourth Tuesday of each month, offering mums an opportunity to connect for a time of uplifting prayer, heartfelt conversation and fun moments together. For further information contact Sinead on 07523104760.

Holy Souls Prayer: The Holy Souls Prayer Group meets on the first Thursday of each month, at 7 pm, in Christ The King Church, Strathroy.

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

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

Confessions: Confessions are heard on Saturdays after 10 am Mass and again from 5.45-6.15 pm, in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher.

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 and 12 noon, Christ The King, Strathroy; 9 am & 11.15 am, St Mary's, Killyclogher.

Carndonagh

Good as New: The Good as New Shop for Church funds has re-opened. All washed and clean donations are welcome. Telephone Bernie on 0861734977 or Don on 0868554796.

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

Castlederg & Ardstraw West

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6.15 pm Vigil and 11 am, Castlederg; 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 for peace on Wednesday evenings at 8.30 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

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; 9.45 am, Our Lady of the Assumption, Aghadowey.

Creggan

Bible Study: St Mary's Bible Study Group meets in the Mercy Chapel for a sharing of the readings for the Sunday Mass on Wednesdays from 6-7 pm, followed by the Rosary. New members are welcome.

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

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

Desertmartin

Knit & Natter: Knit &

Parish *Post-its*

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)

Holy Hour: Prayerful reading of the Scriptures & Rosary with the Home of the Mother, Servant Sisters every Tuesday from 6.30-7.30 pm at St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill, Ballybofey, and every Thursday from 7-8 pm at St. Patrick's.
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Patrick's; 8 pm Vigil, 9 am & 11 am, St Mary's Sessiaghoneill.

Drumquin

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed each Tuesday morning at 10 am in St Patrick's Church, Drumquin. During October, it will be prayed at the Grotto every Monday evening at 8 pm.
Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 6 pm – Mass at 7.30 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: Vigil 5 pm, and 11 am on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays.

Drumragh (Omagh)

Gospel Choir: Dublin Gospel Choir will be singing in Sacred Heart Church on Sunday, November 29, at 6.30 pm. Tickets, priced £20, are available from Top News and the Parish Office, or line at www.eventbrite.co.uk (search Dublin Gospel Choir). Limited tickets available. Unreserved seating.
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 6.30 pm.
First Saturdays Devotion: First Saturday Devotions take place in Sacred Heart Church, beginning at 9.10 am with a 15-minute meditation, followed by the praying of the Rosary, then the celebration of Mass at 10 am, with Confessions afterwards. The intention is to make reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
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 in Sacred Heart Church.
Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil, 10 am and 12.30 pm, 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 9.30 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, Drumsurn; and 4.30 pm, Immaculate Conception, Gortnaghey.
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: 4 pm, Saturday, and 11 am Sunday.

Greencastle

Divine Mercy: The Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed on the First Tuesday of every month at 12.15 pm before Mass in St Patrick's Church, Greencastle.
Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in St Patrick's Church on Thursdays, 6-10 pm.
Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 7.30 pm Mass on Fridays in St Patrick's, Greencastle.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, St Patrick's, and 11.30 am, Our Lady of Wayside, Broughderg.

Greenlough

Rosary: Tuesday Night Rosary is prayed at 7.30 pm in the Church.
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Oliver Plunkett's Church from 9 am-5 pm on Thursdays.
Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil, 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 Mass, until 2 pm, in St Patrick's Church, Iskaheen.
Divine Mercy: Divine Mercy Devotions take place on Wednesdays after 10 am Mass 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.
Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Muff & Iskaheen Branch of the Vocations Society of St Joseph meet on the first Wednesday of the month after 10 am Mass.
Confessions: Confessions are available in Iskaheen on Saturdays, 9.45-10 am, and in Muff on Saturdays, 6 pm, and after 6,30 pmVigil Mass
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 11.30 am, Sacred Heart Church, Muff; 5 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Columba's, Drung; 9 am, St Patrick's, Iskaheen.

Kilrea & Desertoghill

Eucharistic Adoration: Mondays, from 12 noon - 7pm, at St Mary's Drumagarner. 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; 9.30 am St Mary's, Drumagarner; 12.15 pm, St Mary's, Craigavole.

Lavey

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Fridays after 9.15 am Mass 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: 8.30 am alternate Sundays, St Mary's Church, Cloughcor, and St Joseph's Church, Glenmornan; 12.15 pm, 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.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil; 9.45 am.

Limavady

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.
VSSJ Prayer: The Vocations Society of St Joseph, for the Limavady, Ballykelly and Glack areas, meets in Conference Room at the back of Christ the King Church, Limavady, on the third Tuesday of the month (except July & August) immediately following 10 am Mass/ Rosary. We need men and women to help us support seminarians through prayer and fundraising.
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

Untier of Knots Novena: The nine-week Novena to Our Lady, Untier of Knots, is underway. The Novena is prayed on Wednesdays and begins after the 7.30 pm Mass in St Mary's Church.
Holy Face of Jesus: The Holy Face of Jesus prayers take place every Tuesday after the 9.30 am Mass and Divine Mercy.
Pray & Play: The Maghera Parish Pray and Play for Parents, Grandparents & Tots (three years old and younger) meets every Friday, in the Fairhill Youth Centre, after the 10 am Mass. It runs from 10.30 am until 12 noon.
Confession: Daily after morning Mass (except Sunday and Holydays), and St Mary's at 7 pm on Wednesdays (before evening Mass) and Saturdays at 11am/12noon and 5.30pm/6.15pm
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil and 11.30 am, St Mary's; 9.30 am, St Patrick's.

Magilligan

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

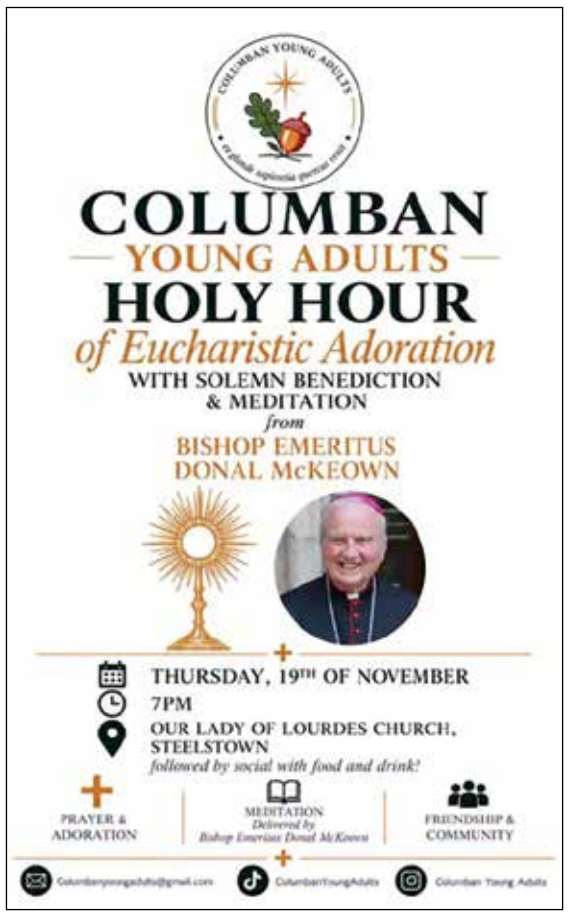
Malin
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, and 10.30 am, St Patrick's Church; Vigil 8 pm, Star of the Sea Church; 9 am, St. Mary's Church.

Melmount

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the church on Mondays after 10.30 am – 6.30 pm (Benediction at 6.30 pm if priest available).
Confessions: Second and fourth Saturdays at 11.30 am in St Mary's; for First Fridays – after Mass Thursday & Friday mornings (if no funeral) and after First Friday evening Mass.
Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, 11.30 am.

Moville

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.
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



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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. If there is a fifth Sunday in the month, the 11.30 am Mass is celebrated in St Pius X Church.

Sion Mills

Bible Study: A Bible Study group meets on Wednesday evenings, from 7-8 pm, in the parish room next to Sion Mills Church. This group shares on the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday.
Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Fridays, from 10.30 am – 6.30 pm (ending with Benediction if priest available). The Blessed Sacrament can also be adored in the Adoration Room in St Theresa's anytime while the Church is open.
Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary meets in the Green Room, behind the church, each Monday evening at 7.30 pm. This is open not only to members of the Legion but to anyone interested in joining. Anyone can come along to the start of the meeting for the Rosary.
Confessions: First, third and fifth Saturdays at 10.30 am in St Theresa's.
Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil; 9.30 am.

Steelstown & Culmore

Lectio Divina: Lectio Divina is a way of praying the Scriptures together and takes place every Wednesday after 10 am Mass, in the Parish Conference Room. All welcome.
Adoration: Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6.50 pm.
Stations of the Cross: Come along to reflect on the Way of the Cross on Fridays at 7.30 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 9 am, 11 am, and 12:15 pm.

Strabane (Camus)

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 8.30 am Mass until 5.30 pm.
Stations of Cross: Stations of the Cross are recited publicly each Friday after 10 am Mass in Immaculate Conception Church.
Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every day, from 10.30 am-1 pm, in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), which is situated at the back of the Church.
Prayer Group: The Contemplative Prayer Group meets on Mondays at 8 pm in the Prayer Room in the Parochial House. All welcome. Entry by Parish Priest's front door.
Society of St Joseph: The St John Vianney branch of the Society of St Joseph (the three combined Strabane parishes) meets on the first Tuesday of the month, excluding January, July and August, with Rosary in the church after 10 am Mass and continues in St Patrick's Hall. More people are encouraged to join in this prayer for new students to join the priesthood. The Society assists Irish and overseas student. Please contact Margaret Harte on 028 71 883159.
Padre Pio Mass: The Padre Pio Mass takes place in the Church on the first Wednesday of the month at 7 pm, with Rosary beforehand at 6.40 pm.
Grotto Rosary: The Rosary is recited at the Grotto on the last Sunday of each month. Everyone is welcome.
Weekend Mass Times: 4.30 pm Vigil, 11 am Sunday.

Templemore – St Eugene's

Untier of Knots Novena: The Novena to Our Lady, Untier of Knots continues in the Cathedral on Thursdays, after the 7.30 pm Mass, concluding on November 26. All are welcome to join in prayer and reflection during this special time of grace.
Advent Pilgrimage: There will be a Parish Advent Pilgrimage on Thursday, December 3. The day will start with Morning Prayer in the IOSAS Centre followed by refreshments, then on to St Michael's Church, Urris, Clonmany, for the celebration of Mass, and lunch in the Ballyliffin Hotel. Price £40 includes transport, morning tea and lunch. The bus will leave the Cathedral at 9.15 am and returns at around 5.30 pm. For more information, or to book a place, call into the Parish Office, or call 71262894, or email cathedral@derrydiocese.org. This is a pre booking only event.
Eucharistic Adoration: Every Sunday, there is Eucharistic Adoration from 3-6 pm and every Tuesday from 10.30 am until 7.20 pm.
Matt Talbott Mass: The Matt Talbot, Freedom from addiction Mass takes place on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm in St Eugene's Cathedral.
St Dymphna Mass: The St Dympna 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

Annual Healing Novena: The annual Solemn Healing Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, for the nine Sundays before Christmas, will run until December 20, starting at 6 pm. Celebrating the Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi, this year's theme is 'Make me a channel of your peace'.
'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 from1950'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.
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays after 10 am Mass until 7 pm.
Holy Hour: There is Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday, from after the 7.30 pm Mass until 9 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 10 am & 12 noon.
Síopa 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

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, aged 13-18, to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room, Carnhill, on Saturdays from 11.30 am until 12.30 pm, and will resume on September 26. For more information contact 07523223204.
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

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

Waterside & Strathfoyle

Lectio Divina: Reflect on the Scriptures with Lectio Divina in the side chapel in St Columb's Church, Chapel Road, on Thursday nights, starting at 8.15 pm – after evening Mass.
Eucharistic Adoration: There is Eucharistic Adoration in St Oliver Plunkett Church, Strathfoyle, on Mondays from 11.30 am – 12.30 pm, and Wednesdays from 6.30-8.30 pm; in Immaculate Conception Church on Thursdays, 1-6 pm; and in St Columb's Church on Fridays, 1-6 pm.
Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Vocations Society of St Joseph in the parish has nine members, and meets monthly in the Parish Hall after 10 am Mass on Wednesdays. They pray for Vocations to the Priesthood and for priests and religious life, and support seminarians. The Rosary is prayed every Thursday at 9.30 am for priests.
Confessions: St Columb's – Saturday after 10 am Mass, Monday–Friday 7-7.25 pm, before evening Mass; Immaculate Conception - Saturdays 5.30-5.55 pm, before Vigil Mass; St Oliver Plunkett - Saturdays 5.30-5.55 pm, before the Vigil Mass.
Weekend Mass Times: St Columb's, Saturdays, 10 am and 7 pm Vigil, Sundays, 10 am, 12.30 pm, 6 pm; Immaculate Conception, Saturdays, 6 pm Vigil, Sundays, 10.15 am & 12.15 pm; St Oliver Plunkett, Saturdays, 6 pm Vigil and 11.15 am; St Mary's Oratory, Sundays, 9.15 am.



Parish *Post-its*

...*other* Diary *Dates*

First Saturdays Conference: A First Saturdays Conference will take place at Knock Shrine on Saturday, November 28. The day will begin at 10 am with Eucharistic Adoration & Confession in the Reconciliation Chapel, followed by a Parish Testimony by Geraldine O'Donnell at 11.15 am, a talk by Fr Patrick Cahill at 11.30 am, and one by Fr Jaimie Twohig at 12.15 pm, in St John's Centre. After lunch, there will be a talk at 1.45 pm by Fr Leon Pereira OP (Online) and Fr Marius O'Reilly in St John's Centre. The Rosary will be prayed at 2.30 pm in the Basilica, led by Fr Mark Quinn & The Children's Rosary. This will be followed by the celebration of Mass at 3 pm by Fr James Devine. There will be a 15-minute Meditation with Fr Philip Kemmy in the Basilica at 3.45 pm, and the day will come to a close with a Eucharistic Healing Service with Fr John Keane at 4 pm.

Knock All-Night Vigil: A bus will leave Carndonagh at 4 pm on Monday, December 7, travelling through Moville, for an all-night vigil in Knock to celebrate the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. The bus will return after the 4 am Mass in Knock on the Tuesday. Cost is €60. Contact Siobhan 0860658753 or Betty 0863496143 for details.

WYD Seoul 2027: World Youth Day will take place in Seoul, Korea, in the summer of 2027, when thousands of young people will gather in pilgrimage with Pope Leo XIV.

God Club: God Club is an opportunity for teenagers, aged 13-18, to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room, Carnhill, on Saturdays from 11.30 am until 12.30 pm. For more information contact 07523223204.

Sr Clare Prayer: 'From St Columba to Sister Clare'- Evening of Prayer in St Columba's Church, Long Tower on the first Thursday of each month, at 7 pm for Rosary (Confessions available), then 7. 30pm Mass, followed by mini vigil to midnight for healing and intercession. At this Mass, we will pray for the cause of Sr Clare in the Monastic site where St Columba knelt and prayed. Everyone is welcome to attend.

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

Anam Óg: This faith-based youth group, for those aged 8-14 years, meets on Sundays in Termonbacca, Derry, to explore the faith through fun and friendship, from 6-7.15 pm. We are always open to new members or anyone who wants to give it a try. If anyone wishes to sign their child up, you can do so at this link: https://forms.gle/RFFF9kffzE5yBtq8A

St Therese Prayer Hour: This year, it is 100 years since St Therese of Lisieux was declared a Saint. In order to mark this wonderful occasion, the Carmelites at Termonbacca Retreat Centre, in Derry, have built a new chapel which holds a first-class relic of St Therese. There is 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, Buncrana, on the first Sunday of every month at 3 pm, and at Benone Strand on the third Sunday of every month, at 3 pm.

Men's Rosary: The Men's Rosary takes place on the first Saturday of every month 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.

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

Matt Talbot Society: The Matt Talbot Society Mass, praying for those suffering from addiction, is offered for those enrolled on the first Monday of every month in St Eugene's Cathedral, at 7.30 pm.

DDS Daily Masses *2025-2026*

St Eugene's
17 Jan, 9 Mar, 29 Apr,
19 Jun, 9 Aug, 29 Sep, 19 Nov

St Columba's
18 Jan, 10 Mar, 30 Apr
20 Jun, 10 Aug, 30 Sep, 20 Nov

The Three Patrons
19 Jan, 11 Mar, 1 May,
21 Jun, 11 Aug, 1 Oct, 21 Nov

St Mary's, Creggan
30 Nov 2025, 20 Jan, 12 Mar, 2 May, 22 Jun, 12 Aug, 2 Oct, 22 Nov

Our Lady of Lourdes
1 Dec 2025, 21 Jan, 13 Mar, 3 May, 23 Jun, 13 Aug, 3 Oct, 23 Nov

Holy Family
2 Dec, 2025, 22 Jan, 14 Mar, 4 May, 24 Jun, 14 Aug, 4 Oct, 24 Nov

Culmore
3 Dec 2025, 23 Jan, 15 Mar, 5 May, 25 Jun, 15 Aug, 5 Oct, 25 Nov

Glendermott
4 Dec 2025, 24 Jan, 16 Mar, 6 May, 26 Jun, 16 Aug, 6 Oct, 26 Nov

Donagheady
5 Dec 2025, 25 Jan, 17 Mar, 7 May, 27 Jun, 17 Aug, 7 Oct, 27 Nov

Leckpatrick
6 Dec 2025, 26 Jan, 18 Mar, 8 May, 28 Jun, 18 Aug, 8 Oct, 28 Nov

Ardmore
7 Dec 2025, 27 Jan, 19 Mar, 9 May, 29 Jun, 19 Aug, 9 Oct

Strathfoyle
8 Dec 2025, 28 Jan, 20 Mar, 10 May, 30 Jun, 20 Aug, 10 Oct

Camus
9 Dec 2025, 29 Jan, 21 Mar, 11 May, 1 Jul, 21 Aug, 11 Oct

Urney & Castlefin
10 Dec 2025, 30 Jan, 22 Mar, 12 May, 2 Jul, 22 Aug, 12 Oct

Mourne
11 Dec 2025, 31 Jan, 23 Mar, 13 May, 3 Jul, 23 Aug, 13 Oct

Donaghmore
12 Dec 2025, 1 Feb, 24 Mar, 14 May, 4 Jul, 24 Aug, 14 Oct

Termonamongan
13 Dec 2025, 2 Feb, 25 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jul, 25 Aug, 15 Oct,

Langfield
14 Dec 2025, 3 Feb, 26 Mar, 16 May, 6 Jul, 26 Aug, 16 Oct,

Sion Mills
15 Dec 2025, 4 Feb, 27 Mar, 17 May, 7 Jul, 27 Aug, 17 Oct,

Ardstraw East
16 Dec 2025, 5 Feb, 28 Mar, 18 May, 8 Jul, 28 Aug, 18 Oct,

Ardstraw W & C'derg
17 Dec 2025, 6 Feb, 29 Mar, 19 May, 9 Jul, 29 Aug, 19 Oct

Clonleigh
18 Dec 2025, 7 Feb, 30 Mar, 20 May, 10 Jul, 30 Aug, 20 Oct

Drumragh
19 Dec 2025, 8 Feb, 31 Mar,
21 May, 11 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Oct

Cappagh
20 Dec 2025, 9 Feb, 1 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jul, 1 Sep, 22 Oct

Greencastle
21 Dec 2025, 10 Feb, 23 May,
13 Jul, 2 Sep, 23 Oct

Badoney Lower
22 Dec 2025, 11 Feb, 24 May,
14 Jul, 3 Sep, 24 Oct

Badoney Upper
23 Dec 2025, 12 Feb, 25 May,
15 Jul, 4 Sep, 25 Oct

Maghera
24 Dec 2025, 13 Feb, 5 Apr, 26 May, 16 Jul, 5 Sep, 26 Oct

Desertmartin
25 Dec 2025, 14 Feb, 6 Apr, 27 May, 17 Jul ,6 Sep, 27 Oct

Faughanvale
26 Dec 2025, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 28 May, 18 Jul, 7 Sep, 28 Oct

Claudy
27 Dec 2025, 16 Feb, 8 Apr, 29 May 19 Jul, 8 Sep, 29 Oct

Banagher
28 Dec 2025, 17 Feb, 9 Apr, 30 May 20 Jul, 9 Sep, 30 Oct

Ballinascreen
29 Dec 2025, 18 Feb 10 Apr, 31 May 21 Jul, 10 Sep, 31 Oct

Dungiven
30 Dec 2025, 19 Feb, 11 Apr, 1 Jun, 22 Jul, 11 Sep, 1 Nov

Limavady
31 Dec 2025, 20 Feb, 12 Apr, 2 Jun, 23 Jul, 12 Sep, 2 Nov

Magilligan
1 Jan, 21 Feb, 13 Apr, 3 Jun,
24 Jul, 13 Sep, 3 Nov

Coleraine
2 Jan, 22 Feb, 14 Apr, 4 Jun,
25 Jul, 14 Sep, 4 Nov

Garvagh
3 Jan, 23 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Jun,
26 Jul, 15 Sep, 5 Nov

Kilrea
4 Jan, 24 Feb, 16 Apr, 6 Jun,
27 Jul, 16 Sep, 6 Nov

Greenlough
5 Jan, 25 Feb, 17 Apr, 7 Jun,
28 Jul, 17 Sep, 7 Nov

Bellaghy
6 Jan, 26 Feb, 18 Apr, 8 Jun,
29 Jul, 18 Sep, 8 Nov

Lavey
7 Jan, 27 Feb, 19 Apr, 9 Jun,
30 Jul, 19 Sep, 9 Nov

Moville
8 Jan, 28 Feb, 20 Apr, 10 Jun,
31 Jul, 20 Sep, 10 Nov

Granaghan
9 Jan, 1 Mar, 21 Apr, 11 Jun,
1 Aug, 21 Sep, 11 Nov

Buncrana
10 Jan, 2 Mar, 22 Apr, 12 Jun,
2 Aug, 22 Sep, 12 Nov

Fahan
11 Jan, 3 Mar, 23 Apr, 13 Jun,
3 Aug, 23 Sep, 13 Nov

Clonmany
12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Apr, 14 Jun,
4 Aug, 24 Sep, 14 Nov

Carndonagh
13 Jan, 5 Mar, 25 Apr, 15 Jun,
5 Aug, 25 Sep, 15 Nov

Malin
14 Jan, 6 Mar, 26 Apr, 16 Jun,
6 Aug, 26 Sep, 16 Nov

Iskaheen
15 Jan, 7 Mar, 27 Apr, 17 Jun,
7 Aug, 27 Sep, 17 Nov

Culdaff
16 Jan, 8 Mar, 28 Apr
18 Jun, 8 Aug, 28 Sep, 18 Nov

1ST FRIDAY MASS FOR LIVING MEMBERS 2025 / 2026

Magilligan
12/5/25

Granaghan
1/2/26

Termonamongan
2/6/26

Ardstraw West /Castlederg
3/6/26

Cappagh
4/10/26

Donagheady
5/1/26

Donaghmore
6/5/26

Langfield
7/3/26

Badoney Lower
8/7/26

Greencastle
9/4/26

Leckpatrick
10/2/26

Clonleigh
11/6/26

Diocesan *Diary*

Young Adult Community: The Diocesan Youth Ministry Team are setting up a Young Adult Community for those aged 18-35 years old. Meet ups will take place in Claudy Pastoral Centre, as a central location in the Diocese, on Tuesdays at 7.30 pm. Social and faith events will be included in activities, which are open to discussion with the group.

Accord Derry: Marriage Preparation Workshops will take place on November 20/21. These courses are now online for booking at www.accordni.com. Please note that Accord Derry will not be facilitating courses during October or December.

Forty Hours - November

Sun 8 Nov	St Mary's, Melmount	Mourne
Sun 8 Nov	Our Lady of Lourdes	Steelstown
Sun 15 Nov	Sacred Heart Church	Omagh
Sun 15 Nov	St Patrick's	Ardstraw West & Castlederg
Sun 22 Nov	Holy Family Church	Ballymagroarty
Sun 22 Nov	St Mary's, Sessiaghoneill	Donaghmore

Life is changed…not ended

Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR



Fr. Johnny Doherty CSsR

ALMOST every Sunday after Mass, I visit Milltown Cemetery in Belfast. We Redemptorists have a large plot there, where many of our priests and brothers are buried. I walk around the plot and pray for each one of them, as I thank God for each one and ask God to grant each eternal rest. I then visit some other graves of people that I knew and loved in the years that I have spent here. I always find it a very peaceful time and a time that settles my own mind and heart.

What I experience

The first thing that always impresses me is the large number of people who are there visiting the graves of their loved ones every Sunday. For some of them, their loss is obviously very recent as they tend to the graves with great gentleness, and spend time praying or mourning. Many are visiting the graves of parents or family members who have died over the years. But they tend the graves with a lot of affection and care. And some of the graves are of people who no longer have anyone to visit them because they are gone for such a long time.

As I drive and walk around the cemetery, I pray for all of the people buried there because they speak to me about the many generations of Catholics who lived in this area and who passed on the faith to us, and to the people to whom I now minister in Clonard. These are all very real people, who lived a faithful life and who died, and who we now believe live on, not just in the memory of loved ones, but in the faith memory of the Community of the Church.

What I learn

Milltown cemetery is situated between a very busy shopping centre at the top and the beginning of the M1 at the bottom. I always think that this is very appropriate. I have often heard it said that shopping centres have now become the modern cathedrals! Certainly, on Sunday mornings the shopping centre at the top of Milltown is humming with people. The car parks are full. Trolleys are flying around. There is a sense of frantic activity, almost as if this is the last chance that people have of getting what they want! There is very little sense of joy and gladness. People look bored but preoccupied.

At the other end of the cemetery, the M1 Motorway is characterised by speed and rush, as if everyone cannot wait to get to wherever they are going. You can see the destination signs on the motorway, both pointing towards Dublin and also back into Belfast and to the North. I often try to imagine what is in people's minds as they travel on their various journeys, and what their destination will mean to them when they arrive.

What I believe

Between these two places of such movement and activity is the cemetery. If you only see it as a place that speaks of death, then it has no place there. But for us, the cemetery speaks of life, calling us into full life here and now. It is a place of serenity and peace. It is a place of memories, a place of affection, and a place of sorrow as well as happiness.

I am always glad on a Sunday morning to be able to drive out the gate of Milltown and go back to Clonard for my dinner. But, I am also very glad every Sunday to have had the joy of the time spent with this part of my faith community and of my life as a human person.

November

Each year, we, as Catholics, are invited to dedicate the month of November to consciously remembering our loved ones who have died. On November 1, we celebrate the Feast of All Saints as we honour all those who have entered into the full life of Heaven with Christ. This is not just the canonised saints, but rather the saints that each of us knows in our own families and lives.

Then on November 2, we celebrate the Feast of Holy Souls. Here, we think especially of all those who are still on their journey towards the heavenly kingdom and we pray for them on that journey. Between these two Feasts, we include all our loved ones who have died as we set out to renew our love for them and our faith in Christ each day of this special month.

A renewal of faith

For us, as Catholics, and also for most other Christian Churches, there is what is called the Liturgical Year. This runs from the First Sunday in Advent, usually around the beginning of December, until the Feast of Christ the King towards the end of November. During the course of this year, we renew our faith in the main truths of our faith, and we renew our commitment to live our faith with gladness and joy.

Thus we have: The Incarnation of Christ – Christmas, prepared for by Advent; The Passion and death of Christ – prepared for by Lent; Pentecost – prepared for by the Easter Season, culminating in the Ascension of Christ into Heaven and followed up by the wonderful feasts of the Holy Trinity, the true God of Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the Body and Blood of Christ (Corpus Christi) – the new and eternal sacrifice on which the Church is built. The Church – the Communion of Saints – the new life of Christ as it is seen in the life of the Church, the people of God, here on earth and beyond.

During the year, we celebrate various aspects of our faith like: the special place of Mary, the Mother of Christ and our Mother; special saints like the Apostles; St Joseph; the patron saints of various countries and particular situations of life; the Angels and Archangels, etc.

The Creed

Every Sunday throughout the year, as part of our Eucharist, we renew our faith through saying together either the Nicene Creed or the Apostles Creed. Part of that faith that we profess is: "I believe in the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting."

This, the final part of the Creed, is the particular part that we highlight during this month of November in order to renew our faith in the truth of eternal life. In order to do this, we have to work our way through the great mystery of human life and death.

November in the parish

Many parishes have the commendable practice of preparing for November by asking the parishioners to write a list of the names of their loved ones who have died, and leave that list to be included in the celebration of all the Masses of the month. These lists are then referred to, and all the people are prayed for, each time Mass is celebrated.

Many parishes also have a special Prayer Service, or celebration of the Mass, to remember and pray for all those who have died in the previous year. The families of those who are being remembered can take an active part in this lovely occasion, and find comfort and consolation in the faith community.

Here, in Clonard, where I live and work, even though we are not a parish, we dedicate each year a special shrine to honour all our loved ones who have died. Many people bring photographs, memoriam cards, and other items of remembering. These are organised into a display for the full month. It is always a beautiful picture of loved ones who have gone ahead.

Parishes could also encourage people to visit the cemetery each week of the month. Many people probably do so already. This is an opportunity to encourage this devotion.

November in the home

It is suggested that each family should draw up a list of their own loved ones, family and friends, to be kept on display in their home for the month of November. Set up a little shrine in the home where this list can be seen and used. Each day of the month, take two or three people in the list and spend some time talking about them and praying for them. This becomes easier if you have memoriam cards and/or photographs of the people to display on this shrine.

It is a good opportunity to involve children and/or grandchildren, and to pass on to them the memories of those who have gone before them, so that they can come to know themselves more clearly.

November in the heart

Like everything else in the practice of our faith, remembering and praying for those who have died is also for the purpose of growing in love and joy and peace in our own hearts. They lift us out of the small world of our anxieties and worries, and draw us into the wonderful world of God's love and power, and care.

As we remember them and pray for them, we need to let our hearts grow in wonder. Like the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, our hearts can burn within us as Christ speaks to us on our road of life through those we have loved and been loved by.

The Mass in honour of the dead reminds us about them: Life is changed, not ended. As they continue on their journey into the mystery of God's life and love, we accompany them with our prayers and our love. We also allow them to accompany us on our journey of life and of faith, by letting them pray for us and inspire us to live ever more fully in Christ and for Christ.

Conclusion:

This month of November is given to us, individually, as families and as faith communities, so that by the end of it we can say more confidently: "I believe in the Communion of Saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and life everlasting." At the end of it we will celebrate more consciously the Feast of Christ the King, and be ready then to begin a new year in our following of Christ on the First Sunday of Advent.

Afternoon of fellowship to celebrate ministry of Bishop Donal *by Joan Doherty*



A few weeks ago, it was with much anticipation and joy that the Most Reverend Michael Router was welcomed to his new role as Bishop of Derry. His Installation Mass was well attended and Christians of other mainstream denominations within the city had the opportunity to bring greetings to him.

Of course, the moment Bishop Router was installed, the episcopal ministry of Bishop McKeown really did come to a conclusion, and that was a moment that the representatives from the Inner-City Churches - an interdenominational group within the city - did not wish to let pass.

Some months ago, and in anticipation of the moment, a small sub-group was established from the churches and worked alongside The Right Reverend Andrew Forster, Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry & Raphoe, and Cllr Grace Uí Niallais, the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council, to organise a fitting event to celebrate the good relationships and witness brought to the city over many years by Bishop Donal.

The event took place in the Guildhall, kindly gifted by the Mayor, with a wide cross section of the Christian Community largely gathered from the inner-city churches. Food and fellowship were enjoyed by all, and there were tributes paid to Bishop Donal by church leaders and laity.

The evening was rounded up most appropriately with musical entertainment organised for the gathering by Mr Nicky Morton, Director of Music at St Columb's Cathedral & Director of St Columb's School of Music, which involved a range of local talent, including a contribution from the Hive Choir (Hive Cancer Support is a charity based in the North West).

As a city generally, and the inner-city churches particularly, we thank Bishop McKeown for his wisdom and guidance over the years. We know that whilst he may not be Bishop of Derry anymore, he is certainly a friend of Derry.

(Joan is the High Sheriff of the Co Borough)







Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. C3 welcomes you to the month of November. Winter has arrived, so the days are shorter and the nights are longer. Traditionally, this month is dedicated to the Holy Souls in Purgatory. Although November can be dark and cold, we still have many special days to celebrate. We begin November with a splendid feast – All Saints Day!



All Saints' Day

The Feast of All Saints is celebrated on November 1. On this day, we go to Mass to honour all the saints and martyrs, known and unknown, who have died and are now with God in Heaven.

Saints are people who have loved God very much and who have dedicated their lives to living God's will. The Lord calls us all to be saints, to be holy people (CCC 2013). We give thanks to God for the saints and all their good deeds. They are an example for us to live by each day. We, too, can live like the saints and one day join God in Heaven.



Saints of the Month

Nov 3: St Martin de Porres
Nov 11: St Martin of Tours
Nov 17: St Elizabeth of Hungary
Nov 30: St Andrew the Apostle

All Souls' Day

The Feast of the Holy Souls is November 2. We call to mind all those people who have passed from this life to the next. The Holy Souls are the people who have died in the state of God's grace and friendship. These souls are assured of reaching Heaven and eternal salvation. All the same, the Holy Souls remain in Purgatory after their death because they need to be purified of their sins. With this purification, they achieve the holiness needed for entering Heaven (CCC 1030). The word 'purgatory' was originally a Latin adjective meaning 'clean'. This gives us the English word 'purge', with the same meaning.

Purgatory is more than a place. It is a process in which we are made holy and pure so we can live with God forever in Heaven (CCC 1054). The Holy Souls are not separated from God while in Purgatory, but are surrounded by God's love and mercy. We can help to purify the Holy Souls by praying for them. We pray at their graves, but the Mass is the greatest prayer for the dead. By making small sacrifices, we can make an offering to God to ease the suffering of the Holy Souls (CCC 1032).

Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.



Presentation of Mary in the Temple (CCC 721)

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. It was in the little village of Fatima, in Portugal, that Our Lady appeared.

On September 13, 1917, Our Lady appeared for the fifth time to the children and, on this occasion, She promised that when She would return in October, a miracle would happen so that all would believe.

Tens of thousands of people gathered on October 13 to await the miracle which the children of Fatima had foretold through messages they had received from Our Lady. It had been raining heavily the night before, so the ground was very wet, but thousands of pilgrims still journeyed toward the Cova where Our Lady had appeared. The three faithful children made their way through many people who did not believe what they had spoken of, even since the first apparition on May 13.

Our Lady appeared to the children as she had promised. She told them that She was the Lady of the Rosary and asked that everyone would continue to say the Rosary every day. She implored people to change their lives and stop offending God, and She asked that a chapel would be built there in her honour.

By now, the rain had stopped but the sky was still dark and grey covered the sun. Our Lady turned the palms of Her hands toward the dark sky and the sun burst through the clouds. Everyone turned their eyes to the sky to witness what has become known as the 'Miracle of the Sun'. The people were able to gaze at the sun without damaging their eyes. The sun whirled and danced in the sky, turning everything that it touched a different colour. It spun wildly like a burning wheel and seemed to detach itself from the sky and fall towards the earth.

The gathered people were terrified at the sight of the sun falling to the earth, and they fell to their knees and cried out to God, asking to be pardoned for their sins. When the miracle ceased, with the sun returning to its place, the people realised that the danger had passed, and they erupted with great shouts of joy, giving praise and thanksgiving to Our Lady.

Feast of Christ The King

Every year, on the last Sunday before Advent, we honour Christ the King (CCC 559). This Feast was instituted by Pope Pius XI in 1925. At that time, the world was increasingly telling Christians to be completely loyal to the government in power, and to forget about God and his existence. Consequently, Pope Pius XI established this Feast to remind Catholics and the world that Jesus Christ is Lord of the Universe.

This wonderful Feast Day not only marks the end of the liturgical year for our Church (CCC 1168), but it is also a day on which we celebrate Christ's royalty and His reign over all of creation.



The Season of Advent

'Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight His paths' (Matthew 3:3).

The beginning of our Church year is marked with the season of Advent. The first Sunday of Advent this year is on November 29. The word 'Advent' comes from the Latin word, 'adventus', which means 'arrival' or 'coming'. It begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent is a season of preparation for Christmas. It is a time of reflection and hope as we keep in mind both 'advents' of Christ, the first in Bethlehem and the second at the end of time.

The Advent Wreath

The use of the Advent wreath, with the five candles, has been a tradition for hundreds of years. The wreath is a symbol of the four weeks in which we prepare for the birth of Jesus, with a candle being lit each week, three purple candles and one rose candle. The green branches remind us of the new life we have in Jesus, the circle signifies the eternity of God's love for us (with no beginning or end) and the candles represent hope and light which Jesus brings into a dark world. The fifth candle is lit on Christmas Day, as a symbol of Christ, born as the light of the world.



Word Puzzle

Use the words in the word-bank to fill in the blank spaces to read about Christ the King.

Jesus _____ is a good King who loves His people so much. He is the _____ witness, the firstborn of the ____ and ruler of the kings of the _____. Jesus died so that we would be _____ from our ____ and be able to go to _____.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord (Psalm 118:26)

Word Bank

Christ, faithful, sins, dead, freed, Heaven, Earth

Answers: Jesus **Christ** is a good king who loves His people so much. He is the **faithful** witness, the firstborn of the **dead** and ruler of the kings of the **Earth**. Jesus died so that we would be freed from our **sins** and be able to go to **Heaven**.

Quiz Time *with Lawrence*

1. What is the English translation of the Latin phrase 'Carpe Diem'?
2. What is the U.S state capital of Ohio?
3. 'Blood on the Dancefloor' was the last ever UK Number 1 single for what iconic singer?
4. Who played the TV sitcom character, Dr Frasier Crane?
5. 'Sn' is the chemical symbol for what everyday use metal?
6. In which city is the 2028 Olympic Games to be held?
7. In DIY, what everyday substance is made using the resinous sap of the pine tree?
8. What is the prime substance that makes up human fingernails and toenails?
9. What two TV comedians have combined to produce the BBC's 'Gone Fishing' series?
10. What type of French bread gets its texture and colour due to a very high ratio of butter to flour?
11. What is the capital city of the Faroe Islands?
12. What was the name of Dick Dastardly's dog in the 'Wacky Races'?
13. In the classic card game 'Whist', how many cards are dealt to each of the four players?
14. Which Scottish football team plays their home games at Fir Park?
15. Who played the role of the former US President in Steven Spielberg's movie 'Lincoln'?
16. What unit of measurement is used to assess the height of a horse?
17. In what Irish county would you find the town of Maynooth?
18. In what Charlotte Brontë novel does the character 'Helen Burns' appear?
19. What is the total value of numbered cards (not 'face' cards or Aces) in a regular deck of cards?
20. Denmark shares a mainland border with only one other country. Which one is it?
21. Praline is produced by combining nuts and what other precise ingredient?
22. How many players make up a Rugby League team?
23. In which city would you find Europe's largest Catholic Cathedral - the Cathedral of St Mary?
24. Who presents the TV game show 'Tipping Point'?
25. What unit of UK currency entered general circulation in 1998?

Quiz Answers: *1, Seize the Day; 2, Columbus; 3, Michael Jackson; 4, Kelsey Grammer; 5, Tin; 6, Los Angeles; 7, Turpentine; 8, Keratin; 9, Bob Mortimer and Paul Whitehouse; 10, Brioche; 11, Torshavn; 12, Mutley; 13, Thirteen; 14, Motherwell; 15, Daniel Day-Lewis; 16, Hands; 17, Kildare; 18, Jane Eyre; 19, 216; 20, Germany; 21, Carmelised sugar; 22, Thirteen; 23, Seville, Spain; 24, Ben Shephard; 25, £2 coin.*

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

Let Your Light Shine!

Organised by the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother

FOR AGES 7-13

GIRL'S GET TOGETHER

SAT NOVEMBER 21ST





CRAFTS



BAKING



GAMES



1:30-6:45PM

(5:30 PICK UP FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT COME TO MAS WITH US)



LEARN ABOUT FAITH



PRAYER

Parochial House
Crossroads,
Killygordon,
Co. Donegal

Suggested Donation E2

For more information and to register contact:
derryshm@homeofthemother.com
085 8763564

Moville, Newtownstewart, Omagh, Plumbridge, Sion Mills, Steelestown, Strabane, Swatragh, Templemore - Long Tower and St Eugene's, Three Patrons, Waterside

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culdaff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnyloop, Drumquin, Dunamanagh, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,

Greenlough, Iskaheen, Killyclogher, Killygordon, Kilrea, Lavey, Leckpatrick, Lifford, Limavady, Maghera, Magilligan, Malin, Melmount,