

The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 69, OCTOBER 2021

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See inside...



Legion Centenary Mass – St Eugene’s



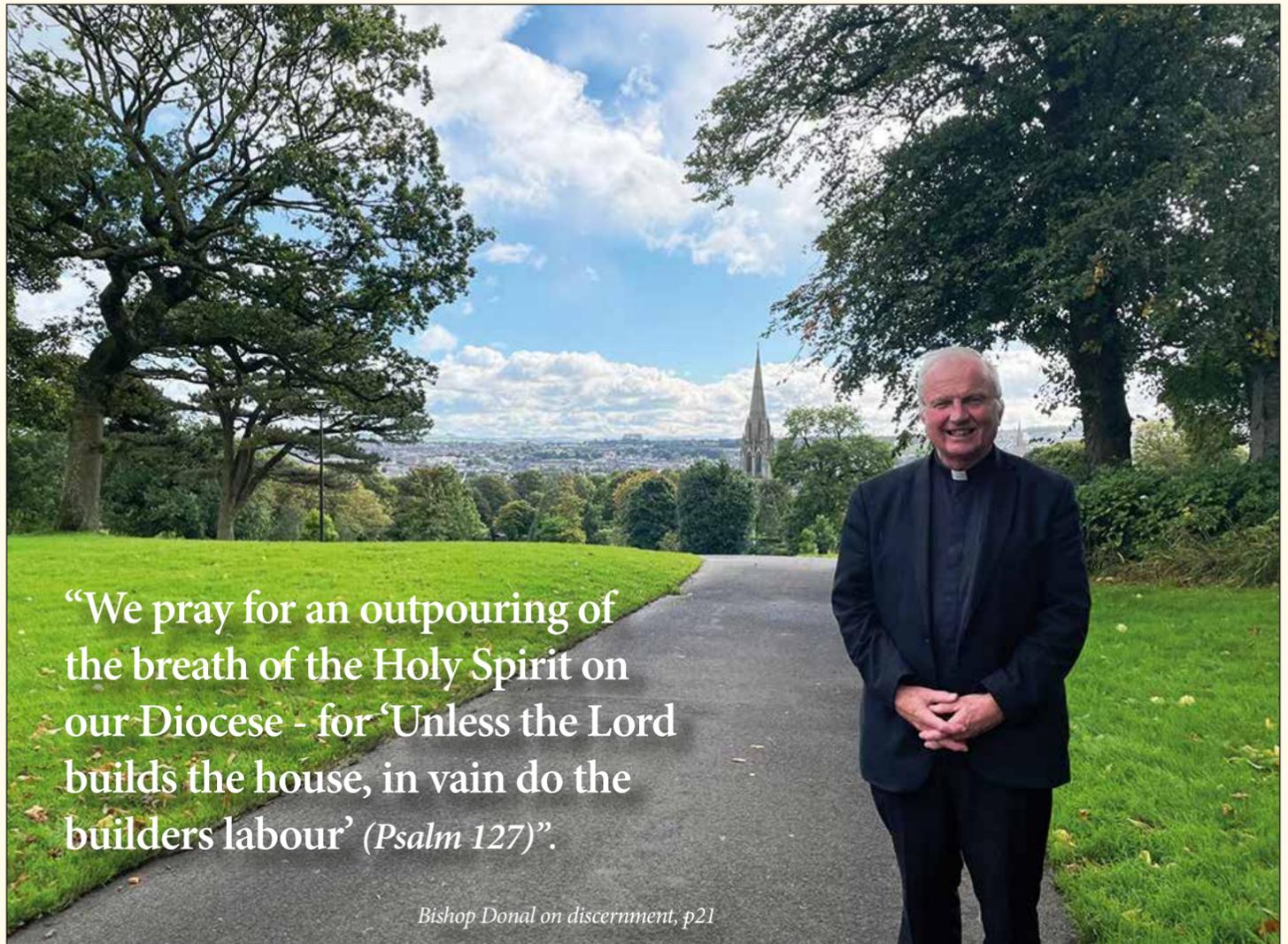
Mercy celebration – Thornhill College



Excellence Award – Lavey



St Pio House Blessing – Galliagh



“We pray for an outpouring of the breath of the Holy Spirit on our Diocese - for ‘Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do the builders labour’ (Psalm 127)”.

Bishop Donal on discernment, p21



St Therese Triduum – Termonbacca



£5,000 Haircut – Newtownstewart

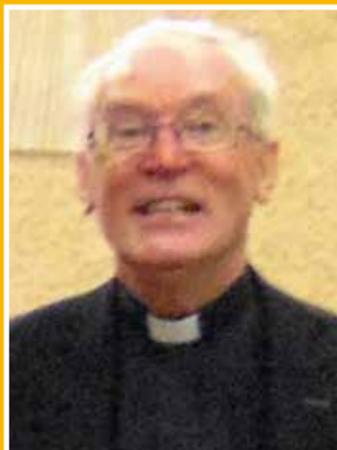


Rosary Gift – St Columba’s Kilrea

People in focus



Dr James McGrory – PP Ardmore



Fr David O’Kane – PP Claudy



Fr Neil Farren – PP Coleraine



Luca & Seanan Zaltron – Muff



Sr Marie Wylie RIP

Also featuring: Youth writers section, Youth ministry news, St Columbanus Award, Clonmany First Holy Communion, Carnhill celebrates Season of Creation, ‘Called & Sent’ feature, Time of prayer for inspired synodal journey, Discover your vocation, Matt Talbot Society, Irish Page, Children’s Catechism Club, Quiz...and much more...

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Reflecting on the Pope's prayer intention for October - "We pray that every baptized person may be engaged in evangelization, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel" - Bishop Donal writes...

Mission is not an option but an obligation for believers



Bishop Donal

THE theme for October's Mission Month is 'We Cannot Remain Silent - we cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard' (Acts 4:20). These are words from the apostles, Peter and John. The two disciples were hauled before the Jewish authorities and told not to speak of Jesus. This was their clear response.

In that spirit, Pope Francis asks us to pray for two elements in how Christians evangelise.

Firstly, he is explicit that handing on the faith is not a specialist job for some but a duty for all baptised Christians. The early church knew that they could not be silent about what St John would later describe as "what we have heard, and we have seen with our eyes, that we have watched and touched with our hands" (1 Jn 1:1).

Nobody who has really experienced Jesus could stay silent about the difference that His love makes. That is why our faith is never mainly about the content of dogmas and teachings. As Pope Benedict wrote "Being a Christian is not the result of an ethical choice or a lofty idea, but an encounter with

an event, a person which gives light to the world. If we let our

life a new horizon and decisive direction" (Deus Caritas Est 1). St John goes on to say that he is not just handing on the knowledge of Jesus so that others can know God's healing mercy. He wants to build community among those who believe in Jesus. He tells his listeners that he is writing "so that you too may be in union with us, as we are in union with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ" (1 Jn 1:3).

Mission is thus not an option but an obligation for believers. There is such an emphasis on this, as we have to rediscover Christ's mission to make disciples of all nations. And that mission begins at home. Any renewal in the Irish Church will have to start with a rediscovery of our identity as a missionary church, bringing Good News to those who are harassed and dejected, like sheep without a shepherd. (Cf Matthew 9:36).

Secondly, Pope Francis' intention points out that we evangelise others, not just by actively handing on the faith - but also by the witness of our way of life. Jesus talks about us being salt to the earth and

light to the world. If we let our light shine, people will give glory to our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). Amazing people can inspire. Bad example causes scandal.

Great saints have not always preached about Jesus, but the witness of their lives has always drawn followers. That applies to the founders of monasteries and those who chose to live a simple life of prayer.

It was clear in those who dedicated themselves to the care or education of the needy - St Francis and Clare, St John of God, Catherine McAuley and Edmund Rice, St Damien of the lepers and St John Bosco, Frank Duff and the early Legionaries of Mary. If a picture speaks a thousand words, a saintly lifestyle proclaims God's love and mercy loud and clear.

Thus, Pope Francis asks us not merely to pray that some other people will take on the role of missionaries. He asks that the Holy Spirit will fill all of us believers to share the Good News by our words, actions and life-style.

What a difference that would make to our country!

Columba celebrations continue with October talk

CELEBRATIONS of the 1500th anniversary of St Columba's birth continue in Derry, with former St Columba's College pupil, Dr Stephen Kelly delivering a talk this month entitled 'Calves and Kindles: St Columba and the History of the Book'.

The talk will take place in the Cathedral Hall, on Infirmery Road, on Friday, October 22, at 8.15 pm, and is part of a year-long series of events planned by St Columba's College to mark this special anniversary year of its patron.

"The celebrations will entail the celebrating of Columba in his totality; from Columba the scholar to Columba the seafarer to Columba the warrior, to name but a few,"

said a spokesperson for the College.

Dr Kelly, of the School of Arts, English & Languages at Queen's University, is interested in medieval studies, contemporary literary and cultural theory and philosophical hermeneutics, and is the author of the upcoming 'Imagining History in Medieval Britain'.

In his talk, he will examine such questions as 'Can it be true that St Columba left Ireland over a book?'; 'Why was the act of copying St Finian's Psalter such an affront?'; 'What was a Psalter anyway, and how did it come to represent such a powerful instrument of cultural prestige and political authority?'

Dr Kelly's talk will situate the Cathach of St Columba within the context of late classical and medieval 'book culture'. It will argue that the book is the most significant technological innovation in Western culture, while also suggesting that the book and its metaphors continue, even in a digital age, to shape profoundly our understanding of memory, history - and ourselves.

The event is open to everyone and is free, however, those wishing to attend are asked to confirm their attendance by emailing columba1500@stcolumbcollege.org. Tea and refreshments will be provided after the talk.



St Columba statue at St Columba's College, Derry

 **The NET**

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

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

editorthenet15@gmail.com
or ring/text 07809292852

Thornhill College Year 14 Mercy Ambassadors, Ava McGinn, Rachel Wallace, Molly Duffy and Riya Chugh report on...

Mercy Day celebrations and legacy of Catherine McAuley



THROUGHOUT the school year, Thornhill College promotes mercy through a plethora of opportunities, ranging from Pope John Paul Award and 'The Hands' Hamper Appeal, to our recent contribution to the International Mercy Conference.

Collectively, these components have strengthened our mercy values; as inspired by Matthew's Gospel and the Corporal Works of Mercy: "Whatsoever you do for the least of my people, that you do for me."

Recently, we were chosen to participate in the Mercy Girl Effect Global Leadership Conference, which is an international Mercy conference with representatives from pupils in the USA and schools in Ireland. We felt most privileged and honoured to be chosen to attend and converse with students our age on mercy concerns.

As part of this international conference, Cathy Johnson highlighted the importance of intertwining our personality with our duty as Mercy Ambassadors of Thornhill College. As we share the characteristic of empathy, we saw the need to raise awareness for the 'Women at the Well', inspired by Sr Deidre Mullan's presentation on the 'Mercy Girl Effect' Project.

We further brought this into action through an array of fundraisers, such as our 'Tea and Chat' mornings, which allowed us to actively discuss our plans to incorporate mercy into our futures as young leaders, confidently fulfilling the legacy of Catherine McAuley, "to fit young women for earth without unfitting them for heaven." This is what we strive to do as Mercy Ambassadors in Thornhill College.

Our school is rooted in

the mercy values of service, promotion of self-esteem and the pursuit of excellence for all the young women who make up the student body. On Mercy Day this year, we marked the beginning of this journey for Year 8 through a tree planting ceremony, which symbolised how mercy will foster good relationships during this time. Mercy, like the tree, will grow and develop through kind words, thoughts and deeds - these are the roots of all our relationships.

In honour of Catherine McAuley's 'a comfortable cup of tea', both the Middle and Senior School students were given a cup of tea and a bun in their form groups. This period of bonding was very much welcomed and time was given to catching up with their friends and making new ones. Catherine McAuley said that sharing a cup of tea was

a means to bring about healing, counselling, and a positive way to warm your spirit.

Inspired by our fellow Mercy Ambassadors in America, we decided to collect for the 'Loose Change Appeal' for our global Mercy Sisters. We were truly amazed and overwhelmed by the support of our school community, who raised £600. We know that Sr Deidre Mullan will put this very generous contribution to good use for the 'Women at the Well'

campaign.

To us, and our school community, Mercy has been to live out the key values of compassion, kindness and acceptance. A huge component of this is forgiveness of ourselves and others, and recognising when we are at fault. Behind our mistakes, there is an educational purpose from which we can learn. Thus fulfilling Pope Francis' vision, "A little bit of mercy makes the world less cold and more just".

We are truly privileged to lead our school community this year to promote our unique and important Mercy Ethos, which underpins all that we do in Thornhill College.

The life legacy of Catherine has taught us that "the tender Mercy of God has given us one another", and our acknowledgement of the needs our worldwide family has meant that this same spirit of love, and justice, guides us in our role as Mercy Ambassadors this year.



Youth projects sought for St Columbanus Award

THE Knights of St Columbanus, Omagh, CK14, are seeking entries for the annual St Columbanus Award.

The Award was established in 2018 to mark the centenary of the Knights, with the aim of encouraging young people in the practice of their Catholic Faith.

The value of the Award is up to £1,000, through which the Knights seek to give some financial support to new projects.

In the first two years of the award, they were delighted to award support to four

outstanding projects and are looking forward to hearing about other worthy projects to fund.

Applications are welcome from those under 25 years of age, school groups from second level schools and colleges, parish groups and youth clubs within the area of the Omagh Council.

Activities or projects must encourage and inspire young people in the practice of their Catholic faith; develop leadership skills to encourage young people to become more involved in their local

community; reflect the ethos and spirit of St Columbanus; and applications must be verified by a teacher from the school or a priest within the applicant's parish.

Application forms are available online from - www.knightsofstcolumbanusomagh.co.uk. The closing date is November 20, 2021. Shortlisted applications may be invited to deliver a presentation on their project, and projects are expected to be completed within a 12-month period.

THE KNIGHTS OF ST. COLUMBANUS

EMAIL: INFO@KNIGHTSOFTCOLUMBANUSOMAGH.CO.UK

WEB: WWW.KNIGHTSOFTCOLUMBANUSOMAGH.CO.UK

TWITTER: @KNIGHTSOFTCOLI



St Columbanus Award 2021

Applications are invited for the St Columbanus Award sponsored by The Knights of St Columbanus (Omagh).

The Columbanus Award will be launched in September 2021

Applications are welcome from individuals under 25 years of age, School Groups from second level Schools and Colleges, Parish groups and Youth Clubs within the area of the Omagh Council, which are listed below. Applicants must be involved in an activity or project that meets the following criteria.

- That encourages and inspires young people in the practice of their Catholic faith.
- That develops leadership skills to encourage young people to become more involved in their local community.
- The project must reflect the ethos and spirit of St Columbanus
- The application must be verified by a Teacher from your school or a Priest within your Parish

A printable version of the application form is also available to download and complete.

Completed printed application forms can be returned to:

Drumragh Parish Office
Pastoral Centre
48 Brook Street, Omagh
Postcode BT78 5HD.
Please address the application FAO St Columbanus Award.

Application forms are available online from www.knightsofstcolumbanusomagh.co.uk

The closing date for receipt of completed applications is **20th November 2021**

Shortlisted applications may be invited to deliver a presentation on their project.

Projects are expected to be completed within a 12 month period.

Please Note: Applications from established groups that have access to other funding sources will not be considered.

PARISHES INCLUDED WITHIN THE AREA OF OMAGH COUNCIL

Drumragh, Cappagh, Termonmaguire, Dromore, Langfield, Ardstraw West and Castlederg, Ardstraw East, Badoney Upper, Badoney Lower, Greencastle, Beragh/Sixmilecross, Fintona, Errigal Ciaran, Eskra, Ederney, Clogher

RESTORE ALL THINGS IN CHRIST

New St Pio House a blessing on Franciscan mission to let Jesus be seen in our day - Bishop Donal



Noting that St Francis had died in his early 40s at the beginning of October, nearly 800 years ago, "having nothing to leave behind except the example of his love of God", the Bishop said: "In his relatively short life, he had founded the Franciscans when he was in his mid-twenties and married what he described to his friends as 'a fairer bride than any of you have seen', the one he called 'Lady Poverty'.

"But his legacy of simple faith has touched millions of believers and many non-believers through the centuries. He would be delighted that we celebrate his feast today with the dedication of the St Pio Centre".

ST Pio House, the exciting new initiative developed from the former parish hall in Galliagh by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, has been officially opened and blessed by Bishop Donal.

The special occasion was celebrated on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, October 4, with Mass in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, during which Bishop Donal and the Derry friars were joined by Fr Michael Kmiotek, the Order's Regional Servant, and some of their Franciscan brothers from the Limerick community and Sisters from their community in Drogheda.

framework for this project rather than just an ecological or economic one. Christ's followers are more than just do-gooders, jumping into the latest populist bandwagon. And St Francis has lessons to teach us".

Paying tribute to the ministry of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, he said: "We are blessed to have the Franciscan charism here with us in the Friars of the Renewal. You very visibly witness to the shallowness of globalised superficiality. That is not a denial of the good things of this life but a liberation from depending on things, that copy-wanting that so plagues the lives of many.

"Your freedom is a witness to the existence of God and makes both you and Christ accessible to those who feel most left out and hurt by our culture. There are so many who are plagued by loneliness and a sense of hopelessness. You are a witness to what Jesus says to them in today's Gospel. You are called to walk with them so that they can let the love and mercy of God sink deep down into their hurting hearts. You reveal the simplicity of God that we often try to complicate. Padre Pio was a witness to that healing of God - and this wonderful centre will be a blessing on your Franciscan



mission to let Jesus be seen in our day".

"At the church of San Damiano, St Francis heard the call from Jesus to rebuild his church. He first of all thought that this applied merely to a building," remarked Bishop Donal, adding: "We have rebuilt this hall - but the great work done has no value unless it contributes to rebuilding the Church in the diocese and country.

"St Francis tells us that this rebuilding will happen by people who take the Gospel seriously and seek to discern God's way forward. In his day, that meant not taking the learned and the clever seriously and listening to the little ones.

"A prayerful church will be renewed by the grace of God - especially when we start by having a heart for those whom the strong do not hear. By doing little things

well, this community will create unexpected spaces where God can work his miracles in our day.

"Pray, hope and be happy. That is the perennial message of the Gospel that Francis, Clare and St Pio took seriously. It is a message for every generation".

Following Mass, Bishop Donal blessed the new St Pio House, where those who gathered for the occasion were welcomed by the friars to have a look around the new facilities and enjoy a cuppa in the new St Pio Cafe.

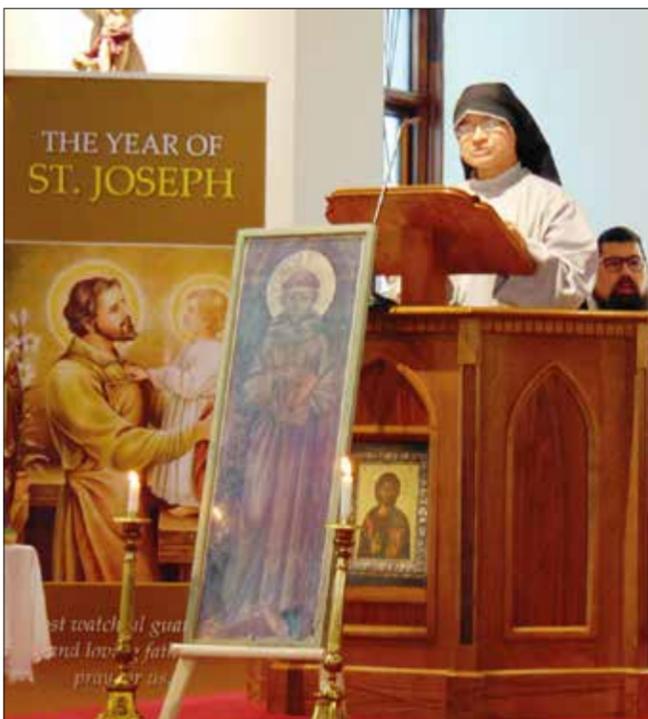
Fr Francesco Gavazzi, the local CFR Servant, thanked the Bishop for all his support for their ministry, saying that his experience since arriving to take over the role of local servant, was that Bishop Donal, like St Francis, always made himself available.

Fr Isaac, who took over the St Pio

House project from Fr Columba Jordan, expressed grateful thanks to all involved, especially those who worked so hard to raise funds and those who had given so generously, Carnhill Resource Centre, the architect and contractor, and their landlord, Fr Michael McCaughey, Three Patrons parish priest.

Describing Fr Michael as "a real friend" to the friars, Fr Isaac added: "It was his idea to offer us the hall, which we are leasing from Three Patrons. He has a great devotion to St Pio, and the beautiful statue of the Saint that you see when you walk into the Centre is a gift from Fr Michael.

Speaking at the official opening of St Pio House, Fr Michael thanked God for the new centre and paid tribute to Fr Columba Jordan, who had got the project off the ground.



Friars hoping to build community through interactions at new centre

THE Franciscan Friars of the Renewal have great hopes for the development of their ministry in Galliagh with the opening of St Pio House and its little cafe, which offers a space for people to meet and chat.

The cafe is open two days a week for three hours, which is on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11.30 am until 2.30 pm, and Fr Isaac described it as “a place for our neighbours to have a cup of tea/coffee and connect with each other and get a feel for the place”.

He added: “The idea is to build community but, with care still needed in regard to Covid-19, we will be going slow for now, which also gives us time to continue to discern the needs of the people and to respond with related ministries”.

Currently, the popular ‘Living Disciples’ night of prayer and teaching takes place on Tuesday nights in the centre, at 7.30 pm, with a couple of other smaller prayer groups also meeting there during the week, and a youth programme is being put together by the lead tenant of the centre, Youth Initiatives Derry.

“Youth Initiatives is an excellent cross community group,” explained Fr Isaac, adding: “They do youth ministry and consistently reach a part of the population that we don’t”.

Youth Initiatives has its headquarters in Belfast and branches all over Northern Ireland, with the Derry branch opening six years ago under the guidance of Johnny Ewan, who made the initial connection with the Franciscan Friars.

Currently, the Derry branch has amongst its staff two members who first got involved in youth ministry through their connection with the Friars in their home area of Galliagh; Rachel McLaughlin and Aoife O’Hagan, who now lives within the Parish of Creggan.

Chatting to ‘The Net’ about her youth ministry experience and her role with Youth Initiatives, Rachel explained that she had originally worked as a hair stylist but had felt drawn to get involved in youth ministry when she became aware of a desire to try and help support young people in the community.

“I have always lived in Galliagh,” said the 36-year-old: “It’s so different from when I was growing up. There are a lot more people living here now and it is not as safe

walking the streets. We didn’t have the support services young people have now, and which are greatly needed, especially with the add-on effect of Covid on our youth. That is what spurred me to take on this role; I wanted to take action and give back to my community”.

Commenting on the very positive impact of having the Franciscan Friars ministering in the area, Rachel highlighted the fact that six young people had gone on to spend time on youth mission with Net Ministries, having been first introduced to this youth ministry through the friars.

“The Friars involve Net Ministries in their parish and school ministry and without this I don’t think we would be seeing the fruits we have been,” said Rachel, adding: “Nearly every year, we have a young person from Galliagh going off to mission with Net Ministries. It started with Seanan Cregan and her brother, Dylan, then me, then Aoife O’Hagan, followed by Kevin Moore, and now Lauren Campbell – all of us were blessed with the influence of the friars, for example, through attending their Bible Study Group or Healing Nights, and went on to spend time on mission with Net Ministries.”

“The friars have made a huge difference in this community, and not just faith wise, as people can go to them even if they are not into their faith. The friars provide support on so many levels and do great work in St Brigid’s. I loved going into the school with them to meet the young people and I think that connection can make a huge difference”.

Youth Initiatives

Rachel recalled that she had first worked with Youth Initiatives as a volunteer before joining Net Ministries and spending a year on youth mission with them in Meath: “After that, I worked with the Friars for a year voluntarily. I ran a youth night with them, helped out with their school ministry in St Brigid’s and went on different pilgrimages to Medjugorje with them.”

“I also worked as sacristan in St Joseph’s Chapel, in Galliagh, for two years, which was a great privilege to be able to serve my community in this way. After my year volunteering with the Friars, I applied for a job with Youth

Initiatives and I have been with them now for about two-and-a-half years.

“My experience with Net Ministries gave me the tools that I needed to go out and do what I am doing now through Youth Initiatives. I would not have been able to come back and run a youth night for instance if I hadn’t had that experience, though there is great ongoing training within Youth Initiatives”.

One of the programmes Rachel is involved with in her role with Youth Initiatives, is Strive – an intensive youth work programme for young people aged 14-24 years, a Peace IV funded project, and this is currently up and running in St Pio House on Thursdays at 7 pm.

She explained: “There are three elements in the Strive programme – Citizenship, Personal Development, and Good Relations. We run this with other Strive groups across the north, joining up for cross border event days, so participants get to meet people from all over. All of our programmes are free and promote connection between all sides of the community.”

“We also enable our young people to progress into leadership roles themselves, as part of personal development, helping them to gain confidence in speaking to and in front of others.”

“At the minute, we are preparing a programme of different events for young people during the October break,” added Rachel, “There will be a Stay Awake night to raise money for charity, a Flash Mob Dance, and an opportunity to go horseback riding, and a few of the volunteers get to go to an event called ‘Fright Night’ at The Jungle”.

Youth Initiatives has also been running a Drop-in at St Pio House on Wednesdays, from 3.30-5 pm, for young people aged 14 years and upwards, and it is hoped to offer this facility daily.

“The Drop-ins are run by our volunteers and are great,” said Rachel, “as young people can come in after school, get a cup of tea and a toastie, and do their homework or play card games and relax.”

In the planning as well is a faith development night in St Pio House for young people aged 14 years and upwards, which will start in November, and a youth club for 10-14 year olds.



Celebrating Mass for start of new school year, Bishop Donal urged schools to...

Be the welcoming face and presence of Jesus throughout the year

THE beginning of the new academic year in schools across the Diocese was marked with the celebration of Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral by Bishop Donal, with school communities joining in online.

The Bishop expressed a hope that the ceremony would help to not only encourage the young people, but also help them and staff members to face whatever challenges come down the line.

The large banner featuring the various school mottos was spread out on the altar steps, adding a splash of colour to the occasion, and to celebrate the Season of Creation, the Pope John Paul II Award students in St Mary's College, Derry, created a beautiful tree, on which hung leaves representing each school in the Diocese by name.

During his homily, Bishop Donal acknowledged that any primary or national school pupil listening in would probably be thinking that he is "a very old person".

"I was a teenager a long time ago," he added, "I remember the 60s as carefree and the thinking that science would solve our problems. It was a very positive time.

"Every generation faces a different set of circumstances. Covid has caused huge stress for everyone; adults and

young people. In particular, young people feel robbed of opportunities to do the things that they really want to.

"Climate change is another concern, and I have read that young couples are less willing to bring children into the world, as they don't know what the future holds for them".

Commenting on the context for education amidst all of this, Bishop Donal said: "I know young people need more than literacy, numeracy and qualifications. You are crying out for hope, community and courage to face the problems that are coming at us.

"Catholic education in the realities of the 2020s seeks to offer you a rounded education, with qualifications and skills to make the most of your talents and equip you for jobs, many of which are not even created yet.

"It also seeks to give you a way of looking at life, to face the unknown situations that you will live with, and create a healthy world for the next generation".

Going on to remark that people have "talked about Ecology as if it were a freestanding issue about the planet", he noted that a number of Popes had been very clear in talking about 'human ecology'.

"Pollution is a sign of sickness in how we organise the world,"

he said, "It is not just about the forests and the wildlife, but how we create a world that is safe and forgiving, welcoming and generous, loving and creative for human beings".

He continued: "Jesus offers us love and trust. He offers us grace to face difficult situations. He challenges us to be great people. He gives us the Good News and the Sacraments, and offers us a community of faith with whom we can journey".

Aware that many young people struggle for all sorts of reasons, Bishop Donal challenged schools "to be the welcoming face and presence of Jesus throughout the year".

"Our hope," he said, "is that schools will focus on this and see how it can be a reality, not just an 'ideal' which gets lost at times amidst the busyness of school life.

"And then we will have shown that there is no planet B because Christ has given us a Plan A; He just wants us to put it into practice! If you can do that in your school, you really will be letting your little light shine for all to see and admire!"

The beautiful singing and music throughout the ceremony ended very fittingly with the singing of "This Little of Mine, I'm gonna let it shine".



Clonmany First Holy Communion celebration



Excellence Award for stunning Lavey church renovation

THE magnificent work carried out on St Mary's Church in the Parish of Lavey has led to a Construction Employers' Federation Excellence Award for Woodvale Construction Company, Omagh.

The 2021 Restoration Award, sponsored by Sika, was awarded to the company for its impressive attention to detail in restoring the almost 150-year-old Church with time-honoured traditional skills and craftsmanship.

Such is the standard of work that the judges agreed it was difficult to tell the new from the old in the completed building.

And the parish priest, Fr Eamon Graham, along with the local community, is in total agreement.

So, it was great delight that Fr Eamon went along to a special reception in the Silver Birch Hotel, in Omagh, accompanied by members of the Parish Building Committee, to celebrate the occasion.

During the reception, Desmond Scott and Robert Ewing, managing director of Woodvale, presented Fr Eamon with the Construction Excellence Award.



The St Mary's Lavey team



Cappagh focus on 'The Bible and the Virgin Mary'

THE Cappagh Parish, in Omagh, is running a 12-week reflection and study on 'The Bible and the Virgin Mary', starting this month.

Presented by the parish priest, Fr Kevin McElhennon, the programme aims to increase awareness of the important role of Mary in our Catholic faith and in our lives.

It will also lead to a greater understanding of Church teachings on Mary's role and how

they are connected to Scripture.

A choice of morning or evening sessions is available, and they will run on Wednesdays, from 8-9 pm, and Thursdays, from 11 am-12.30 pm, in Cappagh Parish Hall, in Killyclogher, beginning on October 20 and 21.

Registration is required to secure a place and can be done through contacting the Cappagh Parish Office. The contact number is 028 82243375 and email is info@cappaghparish.com.



Our Lady of Perpetual Help Novena at Long Tower

FORMER BBC political correspondent and nun, Martina Purdy will be one of the guest speakers at the 2021 annual Novena, which begins on Sunday, October 24 at 6 pm.

Running for nine Sundays in the lead up to Christmas, the Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help will have the theme of 'The Sacred Gifts of Hope and Joy in a Time of Darkness.'

Newly appointed Adm of St Columba's Church, Long Tower, Fr Paddy Baker will be the speaker on the first night of the Novena, on October 24.

Fr Paddy, who is a native of the parish, said: "I'm delighted to be one of the speakers at the annual Novena in my home parish of St Columba's Long Tower. I would encourage as many people as possible to come along, or watch online, as we come together as a community in preparation for

Christmas.

"Each night will comprise of the Rosary, Novena prayer and petitions, followed by a talk given by various guest speakers and ceremony of healing, with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

"I'd like to thank all of our guests who have volunteered their time to be with us and we look forward to a happy and successful Novena, after what has been a challenging year for everyone."

Joining Fr Paddy will be former nun, Martina Purdy who will speak be the guest speaker on November 7. Martina, who previously worked for the BBC, spent five years with the Sisters of the Adoration community training as a nun. She is now a lay member of St Patrick's Catholic Church, Downpatrick, and has taken up a marketing role with the St Patrick Heritage Centre in



Martina Purdy.

Downpatrick.

Other speakers include Fr Michael McGoldrick on October 31 (the Novena on this date will be at 3 pm), Myra Gormley, Bunrana Parish Pastoral Co-ordinator, on November 14, Kieran Griffiths, Director of the Playhouse, on November 21, Martina Davidson, Head of RE at St Cecilia's, on November 28, Fr Brendan McManus, a Jesuit priest, on December 5, and Fr Michael Donnelly on December 12.

The Novena will conclude with a Carol Service on December 19.

Carnhill celebrates Season of Creation

ST Brigid's Church, Carnhill, had a beautiful harvest display to celebrate the Season of Creation. The display was created by Bridín Martin, who wrote the following reflection to accompany it...

Taste and see that the Lord is good

If you do not see beauty look again. Indeed, the daily banquet in this most precious season of creation spills into our autumn living.

The sweet earth heaves in glorious splendour as she humbly displays her rainbow feast.

Who will marvel at her touch The wheat and the corn, deep red berry and sister plum.

Apple, orange, pear all give glory. Potatoes, peppers, pumpkin all delight in exuberance. Pineapple pays homage whilst lemon and lime in playful colour fall from the Creator's hand in splendid symmetry.

How much He cares to nourish us with intense colour.

Abundance pours forth from His majesty to sustain us.

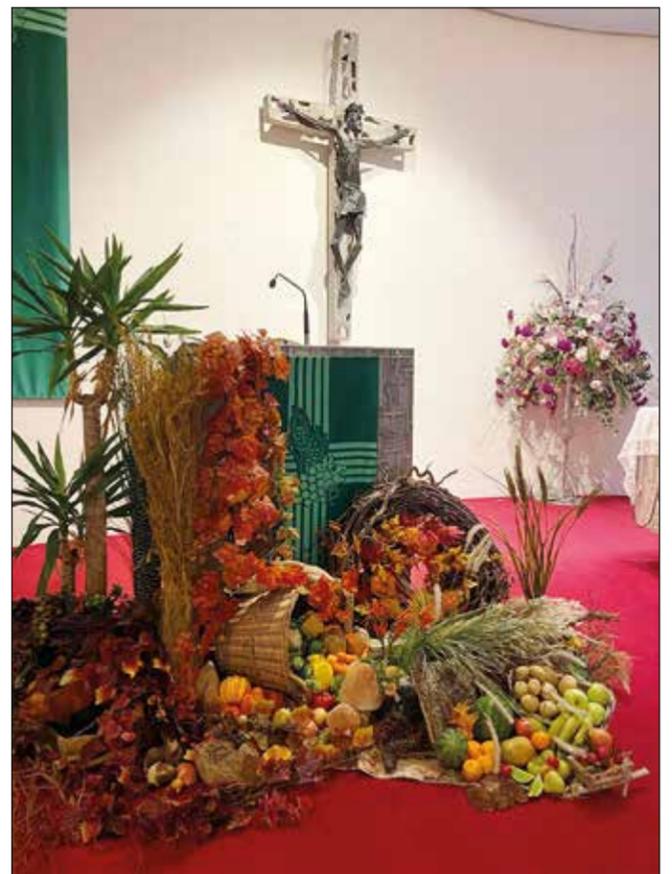
Only one who loves completely invites us to His table of surprise and sweetness and scent.

Holy treads these autumn days. Listen now.

As Mother Earth adorns her fragile garden.

Let us fall silent before it all.

Amen.



The £5,000 haircut!

by Fr Roland Colhoun

I was one of the many people who needed a haircut after the Covid lock-down. Since March 2020, the hairdressers and barbers were closed and opened intermittently. I got my hair cut in August 2020 and somehow didn't find an opportunity to get it cut again for another 12 months!

The comical remarks of parishioners finally got the better of me and I decided it could be turned to the parish's advantage. In mid-August, I posted a head-and-shoulders photo plus the following notice on the parish Facebook page...

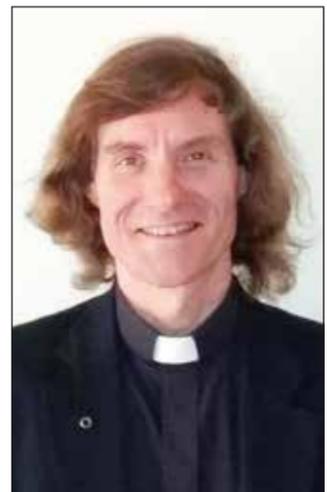
"Does the Newtown priest need a haircut? Some say a definite yes, but opinions vary. Yesterday a woman said, 'Don't get it cut. Jesus wore His hair like that!' Sponsorship for the proposed haircut is invited and the proceeds will all go towards installing the new windows in our parish church, St Eugene's at Glenock. Every snip of the scissors calls for a £1 donation! Thank you in advance!"

There was an immediate reaction from parishioners and friends. Some said "cut" and others said "don't cut". One fellow quipped that at a pound a snip, the parish would yield millions! In any case, a local hairdresser undertook the hefty assignment free of charge and the donations began to flow.

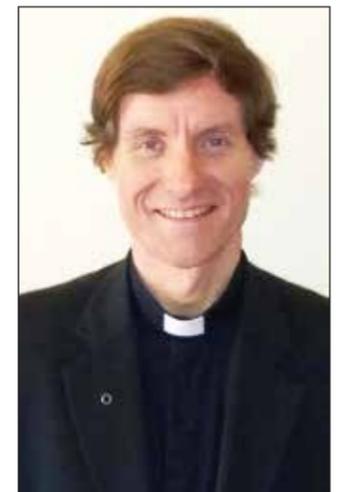
The donations reached an

astonishing £5,134. This will all go towards installing the new gothic windows in our church, St Eugene's, Glenock (1785).

Sincere thanks are due to all who contributed. As benefactors, they will be included in the regular prayers and Masses of our parish. Thanks a lock!



Hair cut needed...Fr Roland Colhoun with his flowing locks.



Fr Roland with his sponsored haircut complete.

THIS month, we welcome new youth writer, Bronagh Doherty, who attends St Colm's High School, in Draperstown, in the parish of Ballinascreen.

Bronagh will be representing the Co Derry Deanery, and in her first contribution reports on climate change and world hunger, and her school's Harvest Mass celebration.

Zara also writes about the environment and justice for all, reflecting on the message of St Francis which, she highlights, is a very important one for our world today and into the future, while Peter shares some thoughts about the youth-led World Food Forum that aims to tackle world hunger.

Hollie reports all the way from her new place of study, St Patrick's, Maynooth, writing about Pope Francis' opening of the Church's synodal journey and her response to it in setting up a synodal group for her peers to play their part.

Gemma shares a lovely piece of digital artwork to accompany her reflection on how she uses her talents, especially her artwork.



Hollie Frystal, Co Tyrone Deanery.



Bronagh Doherty, Co Derry Deanery



Peter Grant, Inishowen Deanery.



Gemma Gallagher, Derry City Deanery



John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery.



Zara Schindwein, Derry City Deanery.

Food for our future by Peter Grant

AT the beginning of the month, Pope Francis gave recognition to the young people participating in the World Food Forum, for their continuing work to ensure everyone has a great life to live, just as God wanted.

The World Food Forum is a world youth organisation that aims to tackle world hunger and find new ways to solve this global problem. The group has grabbed international attention from world leaders and religious leaders, such as Pope Francis.

The Pope invited many young people to join the virtual online World Food Forum, which ran from October 1-5, to spread the message of sharing food to others who can't access food in different parts of the world, in poor countries. He mentioned that the young people must be heard by leaders across the world if we want to end the global hunger crisis and to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals which these leaders all agreed on.

This action of Pope Francis of gathering the youth and leaders across the world relates to one of the miracles Jesus performed in the feeding of the 5,000. With only five loaves of bread and

two fish, Jesus gave thanks for them and had them distributed amongst the 5,000, and they were grateful for the food they received. We can recreate this miracle Jesus performed over 2,000 years ago, but it's much easier to access food these days and we take it for granted most of the time. However, in other parts of the world there are far more than 5,000 people who can't afford or access food, especially children and young people in developing countries, and we must change that for their future.

The way Jesus communicated with the poor was through table fellowship and we must follow up on His teachings, by connecting with the poor across the world through table fellowship between the youth and all world leaders coming together to end world hunger.

We should also keep the suffering poor in our thoughts and prayers, as "God is able to do more than you ever imagine. Keep trusting God. Your miracle will surely come true" (Lailah Gifty Akita, from Ghana, founder of Smart Youth Volunteers Foundation).



Year 11 St Colm's Draperstown, in Holy Rosary Chapel for the celebration of their annual Harvest Mass.

If love could feed the world, no one would go hungry by Bronagh Doherty

"ENOUGH food for every man, woman and child in the world" and still almost "700 million people who are hungry" (World Food Forum, October 21). This is a sobering statistic, and one that should not exist in a world where we are taught to give to those less fortunate than ourselves.

An organisation which helps strive for a world where no child goes to school hungry, and no adult is denied food, is the 'World Food Forum' powered by Global Youth. They are a youth-led community who strive for 'zero-hunger' and ran an annual event on October 1-5, 2021, to gather awareness and support for their campaign.

Climate change has undeniably worsened the situation. According to NY Times, in 2018 ten per cent of the world's population was undernourished, and I believe that several factors could have risen that figure much higher. If this figure continues to rise exponentially, by 2030 there will be more than 840 million people who will go to bed on an empty stomach (World Vision, October 2020).

Climate change leads to increasing temperatures and natural disasters, like tsunamis

and earthquakes. All these disasters are inevitable and cause great disaster to families, homes, and do no favour to the ever-growing situation of global hunger. A petition has been released for young people to sign and the Pope will have these signatures presented to the COP26 Climate Change Conference in Glasgow, in November. These small steps will make a huge difference in reducing climate change and having a knock-on effect on world hunger.

The Covid-19 pandemic has not dampened our efforts, if anything it has given us time to reflect on the situation around us, but it did not help the food shortages. Due to social distancing and self-isolating, workers are in extreme scarcity and this has a domino effect on factories and food production. This has increased the price of food but wages haven't increased, which, coupled with unemployment, does not make it easy for some families to buy food for their children.

The cries of starving child, the eyes of a ravenous parent worried about their famished family, is a sight no one wants to witness but, sadly, it is the harsh reality



St Colm's High School, Draperstown, was awarded its latest Green Flag back in June for its Eco work in the community.

for many people. If love could feed the world, no one would go hungry, and many charities are reaching out to help those malnourished. Hunger is not acceptable. It is a basic human right to have adequate standard of living, which includes access to food.

The World Food Forum strives for a 'zero hunger' world and urges the youth of dioceses to engage in campaigns and identify solutions to the situation.

Pope Francis' message is, "Let us be remembered for our resolve to be hopeful in the face of despair and to stand united in the mission to ensure that no one is left without the means to lead a

dignified life".

In the school which I attend, St Colm's High, in Draperstown, we had a Harvest Mass this month, during which we celebrated the new harvest of the year, namely the food and the farmers which bring it from farm to fork. Some countries would love to celebrate their harvest but, year-on-year, there is a failing harvest, which is failing humanity. Join us this month in prayer to celebrate our harvest and pray for those with less harvest than us, that God will feed them and that they can be nourished in faith until their supply is restored.

If love could feed the world, no one would go hungry.



The altar display for the St Colm's School, Draperstown, Harvest Mass in Holy Rosary Church.



Gifts presented during the St Colm's School, Draperstown, Harvest Mass.

What I feel I give to God by Gemma Gallagher

WHEN I talk about what I'm doing for God, I automatically think of what I do daily that helps others and also about my talents.

God gives us lots of gifts, such as, family, friends, the time to worship and also an education, and so it is only right that we should give back to Him in appreciating these gifts.

These days, people can struggle and that is when we turn to God;

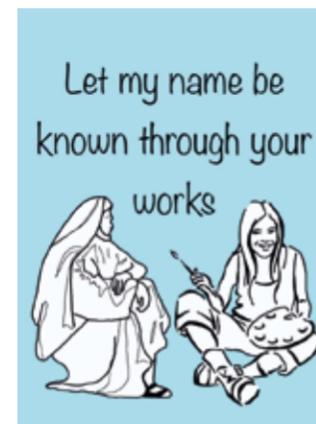
that is when we find that we need Him most.

In a deeper sense of giving to God, when I pray, I feel that I am giving Him all of my feelings and thoughts. This experience means a lot to me because it gives me a sense of peace and enables me to focus on my well-being.

With regards to my talents, I do a lot of art which relaxes me, especially when I am working on

a religious piece of art. I find that I am filled with peace and great joy in using this particular talent that God has given me. It is my way of giving something back, of showing Him love through the person He has created me to be.

Every one of us has been given something by God, and it is how we use these, our strengths as well as our weaknesses, that make us who we are.



Reflecting on Pope Francis opening the 2021-2023 Synod, Hollie Frystal writes about her response in setting up a synodal group at her new place of study...

Students of St Patrick's Maynooth 'walk together'

COINCIDING with October, the month of mission, Pope Francis welcomes the opening of the 2021-2023 Synod on 'Synodality: Communion, Mission and Participation'.

In preparation towards the summit of the 2023 Synod, the Church will focus on the theme and host various conversations and listening exercises with people from all over the globe, in particular, such preparation will support Ireland in embarking on our 'Synodal Pathway', leading to the first ever Irish National Synod in the next five years.

Firstly, what is 'Synodality'? The term 'Synodality' is not a word, but a concept, which means to 'walk together'. Similarly, the word 'Synod' comes from the Greek word 'Synodia', found in Luke's Gospel, translating as a 'Community on journey'.

The idea of 'walking together' as a Church community involves young and old, men and women, priest and parishioner, etc. The Holy Father is aiming to knock down a 'Clerical Church' and, in turn, rebuild a 'Synodal' one. A Church that is humble and co-responsible. In other words, a community that will

move forward with a new vision responding to the mission of today, a sense of self-worth, compassion, humility and inclusiveness.

To put the 'Concept of Synodality' into context, the Church usually describes the idea of 'walking together' using the excellent example of the disciples' encounter of the risen Lord on the road to Emmaus. The disciples show a great example of dialogue, listening, encounter and discernment; which we hope to apply to our 'journey' in discerning God's Will.

In addition, there is an element of Theology, as there are many questions to be asked and topics to be studied. However, as we approach this academically, we also have the opportunity and responsibility to live out theology pastorally. We ought to strike a balance, which the Church has focused on. St Francis of Assisi said: "Preach always sometimes use words", and St James highlights that "faith and good works" must go hand in hand. Therefore, action is required and speaks volumes.

The purpose of this article is to celebrate the beginning



of an exciting and interesting journey for our Church. I have arranged to set up a 'Synodal Group' in St Patrick's, Maynooth, for students across South and North Campuses but, of course, it is open to all. The plan is to help create space, accompanied with the Holy Spirit, for fruitful conversations on various topics.

Space to let ourselves be guided by the Holy Spirit, to listen to one another, encounter and discern where God is calling His Church to be, and how to respond to the mission of today.

It will not be an easy journey, but we must not concern ourselves with getting from A to B, but to enjoy the journey in between,

because it is there that it will be most enriching.

I hope to have the 'Synodal Group' set up by the end of October. Anyone who would like to participate or ask any questions can email me at: Hollie.Frystal.2022@spcmail.ie.

Your presence will be much appreciated and valued. The

greater the participation, the better. The programme will run between six to eight weeks via Zoom, for one hour per week. Also, keep an eye out on our social media pages for more detail and updates. I hope to hear from you soon. Thank you.

Understanding and Respect - The key to environmental justice for all *by Zara Schlindwein*

IN some ways, St Francis of Assisi could be viewed as the original Earth Day advocate. Not only did he care for the poor and sick, but he preached enthusiastically about the rights of animals, and wanted all creatures on Earth, including humans, to be treated as equals under God.

Growing up, Francis enjoyed a very extravagant life. He became the leader of a crowd of young people who spent their nights in wild parties and became enveloped by the attraction of self-righteousness and greed.

He craved nobility and found war to be the perfect opportunity to earn that. While he was there, he was chained in a harsh, dark dungeon, for a year. Strangely, the experience didn't seem to change his perspective on life. Then he had a dream in which God highlighted the wrongdoings in his life and told him to return home. And so, he listened to this message.

One day, while riding through the countryside, Francis, who

loved beauty and hated deformity, came face to face with a leper. Repelled by the appearance and the smell of the leper, Francis nevertheless jumped down from his horse and kissed the leper's hand. When his kiss of peace was returned, he was filled with joy. As he rode off, he turned around for a last wave and saw that the leper had disappeared. He always looked upon it as a test from God... that he had passed. This clarified his desire to become a friar. Francis' changed ideologies are now the basis of all environmental pleas.

Francis never wanted to be part of a religious order. His companions came from all walks of life; from fields and towns, nobility and common people. His attitudes towards life as a balanced and beautiful biosphere were reflected in his actions. Much has been written about Francis' love of nature, but his relationship was deeper than that. He really felt that the sparrow was as much his

brother as the Pope.

A famous story involves a wolf that had been eating human beings. Francis intervened when the town wanted to kill the wolf and convinced it to never kill again. The wolf then became a pet of the townspeople, who made sure that it always had plenty to eat. The wolf only resorted to killing villagers as it had no choice.

This resembles the marginalised people in society, who act differently because of certain circumstances beyond their control, whilst others don't take the time to understand why. Francis' actions here reflect his compassionate level of understanding for all creatures. Unlike others at the time, Francis had an ability to empathise with every creature on earth, without judgement.

Gradually, St Francis realised that he was truly a brother to the sun, moon, stars, fire and water, and to the whole cosmos. Expressing his attitudes

through a simple and peaceful lifestyle, he models an ecological consciousness, a spiritual and mystical vision of all creatures as brother and sister, having one source in God the Creator of all.

Francis made this discovery through prayer and a simple, but sincere, interaction with other people and with nature.

His final years were filled with suffering as well as humiliation. Whilst praying to share in Christ's passion, he had a vision and received the stigmata; the marks of the nails and wounds that Christ suffered, in his own body. This highlighted his devotion to his faith and his rightful place as a Saint.

Today, with all our modern comforts and conveniences, we tend to be alienated from the earth and from ourselves. By celebrating the Season of Creation within the Church, we have become more accustomed to the importance of environmental equality.

St Francis once said: "God

requires that we assist the animals when they need our help. Each being (human or creature) has the same right of protection."

So, no matter whether it is the most influential person in the world, a humble calf in the field, a lonely shark that roams the ocean, or a minute sapling that just seeks to grow, we all have a right to share

God's world.

As the trees exhale oxygen for our benefit, we demolish them in return. We need to listen to the message of St Francis, always. We have been blessed with a beautiful world, let's not destroy it anymore.

As we look to the future, let's treat every day as Earth Day, just like St Francis did.





The call to be “witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel”

WITH Pope Francis calling for prayer this month that “every baptised person may be...witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel”, which also was the theme of the recent Long Tower retreat, ‘Called & Sent’, during which Fr Pat Collins urged people to live out their God-given role to spread the Good News to others in their everyday lives, a number of people from across the diocese have shared their thoughts on this call to evangelisation.

We can be God’s living Church

by Search Youth Group

BEING God’s witness is something that we feel so important in Search. We model our practises on St Don Bosco and his method of bringing God to young people through joy and laughter.

The unique experience on our Search Weekend begins with the being ‘called’ and hearing the Word of the Lord, and ends with how we can put our faith into action.

Our ‘Mol an Oige’ summer schemes are a perfect example of this. Our volunteers give weeks of their summer to inspire and care for hundreds of young children in our community, where everyday has a different faith message.

Our weekly meetings, whilst packed with creative youth work from a range of excellent youth workers with years of experience, always have time for reflection and prayer. We practise making time to listen to God and share in prayer, so that we can continue to grow in our faith.

As young people, we feel that it is important to be authentic in our faith journey. We know that we are only human and don’t always live



than to live a life of faith. It is in this humility that God can use us. We believe that God does not ‘choose the qualified’, but ‘qualifies the chosen.’

We have learned that we can be God’s living church and that there is no better way to live our lives

than to live a life of faith.

With the mental health crisis in our community, we feel that God’s message has never been more needed. We want every young person to know that they are loved and that they matter, and we will continue to share this message

with all young people through the works that we do.

We continue to pray that God gives us the courage to stand in the gaps for Him, for we know that whilst it is not always easy, it is always worth it.

We are called to be so in love with Christ that we can’t stop telling, giving, forgiving and loving by Aoife O’Neill



Aoife O'Neill - Retreat facilitator at the Carmelite Retreat House, Termonbacca, Derry.

‘CALLED and Sent’ was the theme of the recent Long Tower retreat. During the three nights and the talks by Fr Pat Collins, we were given much food for thought. Fr Pat reminded us that through our baptism, we are called.

It fascinates me to think that we are ‘called’ - that I am called by God. Does God really call me? This retreat has reminded us all - Yes, God calls us by name, and we belong to Him. He loves us, created us, and is constantly refining us. He knows our names and uses them when He speaks to us. Throughout Sacred Scripture, God calls His children by name because He knows their names. He sees us and knows us. The fact that He calls us by name shows the Father’s care, concern, love, and

affection for us.

In a very famous painting we see ‘The Calling of Saint Matthew’ by Caravaggio. As Jesus points to himself, as if to say “Who? Me? Are you for real?” I can be a bit like that at times, and question whether I could be really called to anything. What possibly do I have to offer? In all the chaos and busyness of the world, it can be hard for us to hear God whispering our name. When we spend time with Him in prayer, reading and reflecting on His Word - His love letter to us - we begin to hear Him more easily, more clearly.

I can sometimes forget that I have a great responsibility to share the Good News. It can be easy to talk about the Good News in

comfortable Church settings, but I can forget to tell it to the people who need to hear it the most. I can make all sorts of excuses - it’s too hard, it’s awkward and uncomfortable. I tell myself that sharing the Good News is best left to the professionals.

However, I need reminded, I may not be a priest or religious but I am called to that same kind of witness. I am called to holiness. I am all called to be a missionary. Now this doesn’t mean I need to leave kin and country to share the Gospel. God calls me to work, first for the salvation of my own soul, and second to be a witness to the souls God has placed around me - my family, my friends and the people I meet in my everyday life.

We are called to be so in love with Christ that we can’t stop telling, giving, forgiving, and loving. This can sometimes feel overwhelming and intimidating because I am so far from being holy, but Jesus knows that. We can feel like we need to be perfect before we can do anything for Christ. This is not the truth. Christ doesn’t call the qualified, He qualifies the called. He doesn’t expect me to be perfect. However, He does expect me to try to live a life of heroic virtue in my little corner of the world.

The Saints are great examples we can follow in living lives flavoured by the Gospel. When we think of the Saints, sometimes we picture grand gestures of faith

or legendary acts of martyrdom, and this can make them feel out of our league. We seem to forget that for most of them, sainthood came from the day-in and day-out living of the Faith consistently. The habits of holiness they built - each small act of virtue, each choice for the good - made them ready when it came to the big things. That was their road to sainthood. They all had faults to overcome, crosses to carry, and evil times in their histories. However, they continued to walk the narrow road with their eyes focused on Our Lord.

Sometimes, I overlook the part I am called to play in the building up of God’s Kingdom. I need to be constantly reminded of the words of St Teresa of Avila: “Christ has no body now but yours. No hands, no feet on earth but yours. Yours are the eyes through which he looks compassion on this world. Yours are the feet with which He walks to do good. Yours are the hands through which He blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are His body. Christ has no body now on earth but yours.”

This month we join with the Pope, who is calling for prayer that “every baptised person may be...witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel”. We pray for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church that our hearts may be set alight with love for God.

It is our mission to live our lives as Jesus wants us to

by Bernadette O’Mianain



Bernadette O’Mianain, St Cecilia’s College, Derry

EACH and every one of us was chosen to be born at this very moment in time. Each of us has a piece of Jesus in our very core - how amazing is this to know and to be witness to.

“In the darkest days, when I feel inadequate, unloved and

unworthy, I remember whose daughter I am and I straighten my crown.” I am God’s daughter.

There are six billion people in the world - but there is no other person exactly like you. Each one of us has a unique life journey. Each of us has been created by God and we are children of God.

In the Bible, God tells us: “I made you in my own image and likeness, and when I made you I saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:27); “You are a work of art” (Ephesians 2:10).

God created each of us for a reason. He has a plan for our lives and a mission. Each of us is important and we will change the world. He only asks us to trust him.

If we truly trust that God is within us, then we must try and share His good Word with others in our lives. It is our mission to be role models to the younger generation and to live our lives as Jesus wants us to.

To follow Jesus, we must love God and love our neighbour.

Knowing we are 'called and sent' allows us to see life as beautiful and full of purpose

by Brenda Deery



Brenda Deery, Faughanvale Parish

WHEN we know, as baptised Catholics, that we are 'called and sent', it allows us to see our life as beautiful and full of purpose. In October, the month of the Holy Rosary, we ponder on the first Joyful Mystery where Our Lady heard God's call through the Archangel Gabriel because she was disciplined in prayer and interior silence.

Mary recognised her calling as she was familiar with God's Words and prophecies as narrated in the Old Testament. Her study of scripture and her prayer life had opened her ears and heart to hear the 'whispers' of God. She heard the call, was full of grace and led by God's Holy Spirit; she immediately went off to visit her cousin Elizabeth. Mary heard

her calling and the Holy Spirit inspired her sending. Mary continues to share in the works of God in our world today.

In our noisy world, we hear lots of calls but not all are from God. We need to be able to discern God's call and this comes from a prayerful life, steeped in God's Words, His sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist.

God's call is powerful and we recognise it if we are in a 'relationship' with him. God calls us to avail of, and share, His Love, mercy and works. His call is for us to 'carry His torch' and touch others with His Light.

To know we are called, and to go about our everyday duties serving God to the best of our ability, constitutes a life of purpose

and meaning. Amidst the many challenges we face, 'grace' is at work and we are assisting in the building of the Kingdom of God.

The main duty we have is to ensure we are working continually on our own personal holiness, as the 'lamp' without oil is ineffective. The rewards of assisting with the building of God's Kingdom are many, including long life (Psalm 91:16), healing of the body and soul (1 Peter 2:24), peace of heart (Philippians 4:6-7), comfort in affliction (Psalm 119:50).

We truly witness in our world today, at least as related by our media, a world which is very dark. However, our calling as disciples, when acted upon, promises joy, as Ezra states: "The joy of the Lord is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).

When we read many of the stories of the saints, we witness their joy even in very difficult circumstances. This is beautifully portrayed in the film 'All or Nothing', relating the story of Sr Clare Crockett, which is available to view on-line. We constantly see her smiling face even though the daily duties are often monotonous and challenging.

'Called and Sent' we all are; it may be down the street or into our work place, or among our family, friends or foreign lands. Wherever it is, if we have a sincere heart, steeped in God's Word and striving for holiness, the Holy Spirit will most certainly be at work through us.

Our world is truly in need

of many of God's graces and blessings to conquer the evil we are witnessing. There is no place for boredom, idleness, emptiness and hatred. Amidst the chaos we are all experiencing the inner peace of knowing God is present, and the conviction of our mission as Christians fills us with hope, joy and energy.

With God's grace and our humble efforts, we will hopefully continue to sow the seeds of God's graces through our actions, our love and our mercy, aware that the dawn of justice has arrived and God's Kingdom will come.

Let us strive through Mary to ascend to Christ who, through her, descended to us. Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, pray for us.

Is there a more powerful call than to live as a witness of the Gospel, in which true happiness can be found?

by Nathan Thiruvengadam



Nathan Thiruvengadam, Three Patrons parishioner and English teacher at St Columb's College

often blatantly, exposed to as we are bombarded with demands to upgrade, upskill and update. But what is the endgame of this type of 'improvement'? What are we being compelled to improve from and what is the zenith we are seeking to reach? Phones evolve, cars become outdated and clothes are relegated to phases of being 'in' or 'out' of style.

The 'call' Fr Pat Collins challenges us, as Catholics, to be receptive to, is one of far more substance and yet one that may not always appear tangible on first glance. Fr Collins, as well as Pope Francis, sets forth the challenge to young people and all baptised, as custodians of the Catholic faith, to spread the Good News in their everyday lives.

I always found it funny that a shred of a phrase can be engrained in your mind, while everything else about the moment can fade into the ether. I remember a homily in which the priest asserted that living a Catholic life should not need to be articulated but should be evident from the joy and jubilation with which we live our lives.

In a world in which transient and ephemeral, yet ultimately empty, tokens are held as being happiness incarnate; is there a more powerful, yet worthwhile and fulfilling, call than to live one's life as a witness of the Gospel, in which true happiness can be found?

And, despite the pulls and projections of what is important, our young people are still loosely

living by the tenets of the Catholic faith, even if this may not be consciously. Our young people are driven by kindness and bound by compassion. However, how do we imbue them with Gospel values that challenge them to be witnesses of the Gospel 'to the ends of the earth'?

Our young people are thirsting for meaning in their lives and this helps explain why so many - and this is not restricted to young people alone - throw themselves with such fervour and voracity into causes that promise a prognosis of meaning and value. Indeed, what is the zeal with which young people embrace alleged social justice causes than a devout adherence only comparable to religiosity? Is not the passion with which young people immerse themselves in activism, rightly or wrongly, akin to religious devotion?

If this be the case, how do we ensure young people, who are the lifeblood of our Church, live their lives as witnesses to the Gospel and Good News?

Looking at the Gospels, one of the most powerful examples of 'calling' is when Jesus challenges James, John, Peter and Andrew to give up their comfortable - in the sense of their being familiar and 'safe' - lives and follow Him. Indeed, Jesus puts forth the challenge: "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me."

In a world that salivates at the thought of self-gratification and self-indulgence, Jesus' challenge

to 'deny' oneself is unique. And, in being unique, His challenge leads to a unique consequence; rather than the empty gratification garnered through the selfish egoism prevalent in our world, we are offered a life of meaning, beauty and fulfilment.

It is through every day, seemingly mundane actions of how we treat those around us that we can make our first forays into accepting Jesus' challenge. As mentioned above, young people are already well on their way to this through the compassion that they expound. Young people love a challenge and we have the greatest challenge to offer.

However, not only do we, as a species, love a challenge but we, equally, love to go against the grain and enact some small form of rebellion. What bigger rebellion is there to offer our young people than the teachings of Jesus: to answer hostility with kindness, to diffuse resentment with forgiveness and to live life in the service of others rather than oneself?

If we speak to young people as equals and uncompromisingly, yet politely, challenge, rather than pander to them, we may well find "God {...} in the bits and pieces of everyday" (Patrick Kavanagh), in the way they treat others, treat themselves and proudly profess their faith, and thereby be "witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel" (Pope Francis

Christianity is about us reaching out to others and to God

by Edel O'Connor



Edel O'Connor, Coleraine, RE Teacher Scoil Mhuire Buncrana.

They left everything and followed Him (Luke 5:11)

DURING this Harvest time and the season of thanksgiving, may we take a moment to reflect and give thanks for the call to be a disciple. May we leave behind and let go of whatever keeps us from the Lord, and follow Him.

As the days of light get shorter, there is an invitation to an unhurried pace in the circle of life. All of creation needs some time to pause and renew its energy and inspiration. In the deep peace of the quiet earth, there is an opportunity for each of us to hear that calling from the Holy Spirit.

Inspiration is to be 'in Spirit'. We trust in the process, patiently waiting for the inner guidance of the Holy Spirit. In many ways, we are similar to the damp log in a fireplace, the spark of God is awaiting to be released within us.

Our faith calls us to have an extroverted gaze with an introverted awareness. We need to bring the liturgy of the world to the liturgy of the Word, and bring the Gospel to the world around us.

Pope Francis reminds us that every baptised person can bring alive the spirit of the Gospel. We

are given food for thought so that we can nourish others.

Christ came to tell us about who we are, not just who He is. The parable of the rich man and the story of Zacchaeus remind us to challenge ourselves and to question who we are. Faith is something not only to be understood but, more importantly, it is to have the courage to live out our faith.

In my role as RE teacher, I see the Pope John Paul II Awards as a wonderful opportunity for students to spread the good news to those around them; home, school and parish communities working together. Christianity is about us reaching out to others and to God. The Awards help the young adults to realise faith is to be found and lived out in the bits and pieces of everyday life.

As we begin to see the bare branches on the trees, it reminds me of the vulnerability of our faith. I have such admiration for the young people in our Diocese who are faced with many obstacles in secular society. Yet, they still have the courage to embody their faith. I often remind my students that Jesus was willing to let others see His own vulnerability as He called on Peter, James and John to "watch with" Him during the hours of struggle (Mt 26:38). What powerful guidance and inspiration can that scripture story offer us in our own lives?

At the bottom of those bare branches, the soil is being tilled and the spring bulbs are planted. Despite our vulnerabilities, we surrender ourselves in trust to our life giving God.

We pray that, during this Autumn, we take the time to discern how best we can follow our God, to awaken our faith and be true witnesses of the Gospel.

As St Irenaeus stated, the glory of God is people fully alive. May we let go of all that we need to and follow Him.

We go to God together and are called to support each other on the journey of faith

by Sr Margaret McConalogue



Sr Margaret McConalogue, Mercy Sister, Culmore

ONE of my happiest childhood memories is of our Sunday family visits to my Granny.

Dinner over and the dishes washed, we were off - hail, rain or snow - my parents in the front of the car and the four of us children packed in the back!

Granny was an avid reader, well informed about her faith from all the religious magazines to which she subscribed, and read from cover to cover! Her witness to the faith was by practice rather than preaching! For us, we were at our second home! We never failed to leave her house without bags of fruit from the orchard - delicious apples, pears, plums - whatever was in season that we chose to gather in the course of the afternoon!

For me, however, the eldest daughter of her eldest daughter, she had some special little books of the lives of the saints, which

she gifted one at a time at the end of our visit, over a period of time. I've never found their likes since! Small in size, with large print on strong cardboard paper with glossy pages, they were beautifully illustrated, and perfect for my age. I was so proud to be able to read them. Each new book enamoured me. On one side of each page was the story of the saint's life and on the opposite was a beautiful, glossy illustration of that life in strong vibrant colours, depicting that saint's traditional dress, culture and symbol.

The series covered many lives, from across the centuries and the five continents, young and old, male and female. One common denominator among them all was their sense of being called by God and their personal response - in varying circumstances, even at the cost of martyrdom sometimes, and often at a very young age. It was all so amazing, yet very personal to each individual saint. Holiness seemed a very individual thing then.

Years later, after many twists and turns, I received my own call to a life as a Sister of Mercy, just as Vatican II was coming to a close. As a novice, I had the opportunity to study the emerging documents regarding different models of church in our modern world. One such document was actually called, 'The Church in the modern world', another 'Lumen Gentium', another 'The Constitution on the Liturgy' and so many others. What is striking for all to see in these documents is the emphasis

on community; that we go to God together and are called to support each other on the journey of faith.

The Eucharist, which is the source and summit of our faith-life together as Christians, is not just about me as an individual praying to save my soul or to get to heaven when I die, but rather the gathered assembly of a praying people, giving praise and thanksgiving to God our Father, through Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. It is a communal act of a people who have an individual prayer life with God. Private prayer is essential, of course, to nourish our relationship with God, to know and discern God's ongoing call in our lives, and it is the basis of our worship together.

Compassion is the true mark of discipleship of Christ. "Love one another as I have loved you", are Jesus' parting words to His followers. "Compassion is the love that recognizes and goes forth to identify with the preciousness of all that is lost and broken within ourselves and others", writes Joyce Rupp. God, in Christ, is revealed as a compassionate love that recognizes us as precious in our frailty. We do not deserve or earn God's compassion by good deeds! God lavishes abundantly God's compassion on us, if we but seek him. This is what Jesus reveals to us in the story of 'The Prodigal Son' (Luke 15:11-32).

We have all been there, and made our mistakes! The son (or daughter!) goes off against his father's wishes and squanders

his share of his father's money. When the money runs out, he realizes how foolish he has been and returns home. As he makes his journey home, ashamed and remorseful, he is not prepared for the moment when he first looks up to see his father running towards him, with open arms. The father embraces the son as preciousness - almost too precious to bear. The son is at once overcome, undone, and restored to wholeness in a flurry of embraces received and given. The two of them stand on the open road, each laughing and crying at once: the father showering compassion and love in utter abundance, the son 'in bits' but immensely relieved and grateful. This is compassion given and gratefully received. This is, indeed, our call!

This story is told very deliberately by Jesus to illustrate God's extravagant love and compassion for each one of us. Can we be the same for others? "Love one another... As I have loved you, so you must do the same"! We are the prodigal sons and daughters, beloved and precious in our vulnerability, to a loving God and Father, who does not measure us according to our weaknesses. Can we really believe that the gift of our vulnerability enhances our giving and receiving? Having received God's compassion and forgiveness, can we bring this same gift to others? This, indeed, is being 'Called and Sent' in our world today: to bring compassion, healing and wholeness to those around us, far and near... and to

our planet.

Our Common Home

And not just to humanity! We are called also to extend this same compassion to our 'common home'. In his 2016 World Day of Prayer for Creation, Pope Francis designated the eighth Work of Mercy as "care for our common home".

As a spiritual work of Mercy, care for our common home calls for a grateful contemplation of God's created world, and to discover in each part of it, from the tiniest organism to the greatest, a reflection of God's beauty and communication with us. Everything is interrelated and deserving of our respect.

Care for our common home requires "simple, daily gestures which break the logic of violence, exploitation and selfishness" and "makes itself felt in every action that seeks to build a better world". Pope Francis insists, of course, that to be truly ecologically committed we must also be committed to justice for the poor. We need to hear the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor together (Laudato Si, 49). As we have witnessed so much in recent times, it is the world's poorest people who are most victimized by climate change.

Some thoughts!

- At this unprecedented moment we are called to keep our hearts open, and attuned to the "cry of the earth and the cry of the poor" because decisions made today will

have consequences for the future of all.

- We are called to unite ourselves with, and pray for, the UN Climate Change Conference (COP 26), which meets in Glasgow, November 21, to consider tangible systematic changes.

- Paradoxically, in the midst of this global storm, we are being invited to root ourselves in our particular places and in our daily spiritual practices of gratitude, childhood wonder, and heart-centred connections that provide ongoing connection with the earth and with all peoples.

- While collective action is necessary for systemic change, we must also find gentle, personal ways to sustain our inner fires to build the just, loving and healthy world that God desires.

- Contemplation, Compassion, Community and Concern for the poor, are some of the pillars of our Christian calling today. We are sent to be co-creators and healers of God's beautiful creation, to work for justice and to live simply so that others may simply live. Laudato Si!

- While we know that all creation has inherent dignity and value, it is also true that God created the world for YOU, in particular, to delight in. Take a moment to breathe deeply, pause and ponder that!

- Take a moment now! All this was made for you. How might this thought break open your heart and permeate your relationship with places and people where you are?

If we wear our faith well people will say I like what they have and want it

by Rory McGilligan



Rory McGilligan, Dungiven.

DID you know the famous author J R Tolkien, who wrote 'The Lord of the Rings' book was a devout Roman Catholic? In fact, Tolkien described 'Lord of the Rings' as a "fundamental religious Catholic work", rich in Christian symbolism. So many Catholic faith themes, such as Mercy, Resurrection, The Eucharist, Salvation, Repentance, Self-Sacrifice, Free Will, Justice

and Fellowship are contained within his books.

Isn't it ironic that these books are popular throughout the world with Young and Old, Christian and Non-Christian, believer and non-believer? It would make you think that there is something deep within the human person needing/craving Christ's word and love to be present in their lives.

Before Tolkien penned 'Lord of the Rings', he wrote a book in 1937 called 'The Hobbit' for his children. This book was to become the prelude to 'The Lord of the Rings' books. It is considered a high fantasy book, set in a place called 'Middle Earth' and its main character is a hobbit known as Bilbo Baggins. A lot of us can associate ourselves or someone we know with Bilbo. This character is a quiet, unassuming, respectable fellow from a good family, but who never ventures any further than his own pantry. Do you recognise anyone? Then, out of nowhere, Bilbo is tasked with going on an

adventure of a life time, but not of his choosing, where he will meet many challenges but grow in stature and become a force for good for which he was created for.

Should we also be a source for good, or will we be like our old friend Bilbo before his adventure? Although we may be nice people, are we content to potter between our Living Room and Pantry?

At the recent Long Tower Retreat, Fr Pat Collins preached on the theme 'Called and Sent', urging people to live their God-given roles to spread the Good News. It could be the beginning of an amazing adventure, where we may grow in stature and find our true purpose in life. Fr Pat encourages us that it is time that we all put our "shoulder to the wheel", but in what manner and how? We are asked to be gentle but opportunistic.

An off-the-cuff remark by someone in your company may be all that is needed to help develop a conversation about faith. We are encouraged to talk

about the positives of our faith, about Church led organisations that help us in growing closer to God. Maybe the person that we are talking to is looking for some way to reconnect with God, and maybe a simple "sure come along and see" is the beginning for that person to start their journey back to God.

These conversations may demand us to be courageous and step outside our comfort zone. However, like Bilbo, maybe we are created for far more than what we are currently doing. Tolkien's close friend, the author CS Lewis, was also a man of profound Christian principles. Although a non-Catholic, his thinking and beliefs were the same as Tolkiens. He once confessed to Tolkien if only he had not been born in Northern Ireland he would have converted to Catholicism.

In his books, 'The Chronicles of Narnia', Lewis also used Christian themes. His most famous book, 'The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe', covers the theme of

the Resurrection, were the God head (Aslan) in the book, lets himself be killed for his people, only to rise again from the dead. In the first of 'The Chronicles of Narnia', 'The Magician's Nephew', Lewis describes Aslan as being strong powerful and brave. Should we also espouse to these principals as we start out on our journey in helping spread the Good News in a manner which is not intrusive or aggressive?

I suppose the biggest challenge for us all, is how do we live our Catholic faith? The days of being a Sunday morning Catholic are at a close and that is good. Our faith must be like a cloak with multi jobs; it provides shelter from external elements and keeps us warm, and even alive, but also it is how other people see us.

If we wear our faith well, we will be a people of hope, forgiveness, prayer, charity, encouragement, empathy and, of course, love for God, others and self. We want others who don't wear the cloak of faith to say, I like what they have

and I want that.

I suppose it is what St Francis of Assisi said, "Preach the Gospel at all times and when necessary use words".

The Long Tower retreat had been organised by the late Fr Aidan Mullan. I remember on many occasions, when he was parish priest of Dungiven, we would have discussed within meetings with him what else we could do in bringing people back to God. Fr Aidan cared deeply for the sick and terminally ill. He brought Jesus to those people through the Blessed Sacrament. Many looked forward to his visit and many souls went to their eternal rest in a state of peace, knowing that our Redeemer would be waiting for them on the other side with a welcome home embrace.

Fr Aidan was a vehicle of God's Love, now it's our turn to be that vehicle. Let us start the journey with an open heart, remembering these words, "We are a people set apart".

Evangelisation has been on my heart for quite a while now

by Rhonda McColgan



Rhonda McColgan, Iskaheen and Upper Merville.

I hear that Fr Pat Collins was in Derry's St Columba's Church, Long Tower, recently. By all accounts, I believe that there was a 'stirring up' in people's hearts following the retreat. I hear that Fr Pat's message was one of Evangelisation. This coincides with the Pope's recent request for prayers that every baptised Christian maybe witnesses of the Gospel.

Unfortunately, I missed the retreat but Evangelisation has been very much on my heart for quite awhile now. I often ask God the How? When? What? and Where? But when I heard that Fr Pat emphasised the importance of spreading the Gospel in our everyday lives, it felt like a 'light bulb' moment.

I'm not one of the Apostles that can drop my family and head off to every corner of the world. But I do have this corner of the world where God has placed me.

As a baptised Catholic Christian from a baby, I know that I have always had the Holy Spirit dwell inside me. He dwells in all baptised Christians. So why are some people 'stirred up' and others not? Well, from my experience, some people are just given the grace and that is fantastic news. But most people don't receive this awakening as in a 'Saul' to 'Paul' conversion.

What I have come to notice is that evangelisation seems most effective and powerful when it comes from those who understand their own brokenness from past hurt or, perhaps, regret from their own past sins and failures. When this leads to a crying out and turning to God,

it is in that darkness of their desperation that they find and encounter Our God of love and mercy.

St Faustina said Our Lord told her that our sins are like a drop of water in an ocean of mercy. All we have to do is give them to Him. We have a most loving Father and creator. Unfortunately, a lot of us have never been told the truth of the Gospel and even believe that God is a tyrant. So this encounter with love and mercy itself changes our hearts and, in response to that love, we naturally want to tell everyone. It is like a child telling their friends how great their Daddy is.

This reminds me of the story, in John 4:4-26, of the Samaritan woman who encounters Jesus at the well. We are told that the woman came to the well at noon to get water. This would have been during the height of the intense heat of the midday sun. She knew that if she went at that time she wouldn't meet anyone. This is a woman that knew shame; the shame of having had five husbands and now living with a man that was not her husband.

It was known that the Jews didn't get along with the Samaritans because they were living in the land that had belonged to the Jews. I heard recently during a Bible study that after Israel was taken over, the King of Assyria brought in people from five kingdoms into Samaria. These were from Babylon, Cuthah, Avva, Hammath and Sepharvaim, thus replacing the exiled Israelites. When Jesus tells the woman at the well that He knows that she has had five husbands, he is also

referring to the five kingdoms brought into Samaria. So when Jesus calls this woman to faith, it is clear that He is inviting all people of the area. This is one of many amazing examples in the Bible that highlights how the New Testament is a fulfilment of the old.

Another example that makes reference to how Jesus calls all of us into covenant with Him is in the book of Acts 10:45. Peter had been preaching when the Holy Spirit came upon all who listened to the word. "Why, God gives and pours out His Spirit on foreigners too!"

This kind of gained knowledge from Bible Study is definitely a way of getting 'stirred up' in my own heart. The more I learn about Jesus, the more I want to know and yearn for Him.

I wonder what that full conversation was like between Jesus and the Samaritan woman. Jesus came to meet her in her shame, her brokenness, and He poured out His mercy on her. Her response as she encountered this overwhelming love and acceptance was to run and tell everybody. (John 4:29) - "Come and see the man who told me everything I did, could this not be the Christ?" So they left the town and went to meet Him. We are told then, in verses 39-42, that many Samaritans believed in Him because of the woman and went to find Him. Many more believed because of His own words.

Similarly, when we seek and encounter this God of love and mercy, our response should be to tell everybody. Jesus then does the rest. He is the one that waters and nourishes that seed with the true and living water.

Finally, Mother Teresa of Calcutta knew how to encounter Jesus. She explained that, by standing at the foot of the cross, allow yourself to enter into that scene at Calvary and, with deep meditation, you will be transformed by God's love and mercy. In her meditation, Mother Teresa felt that when Jesus said from the Cross, "I thirst", that He was in fact thirsting for souls. She would ask the question, "Will you quench His thirst?"

My life really changed once I started to enter into this kind of meditative reflection on Bible verses. If you're reading this and haven't already tried it, I urge you to take the plunge. You won't regret it. In fact, it will leave you thirsting for more!

Baptism marks the beginning of our calling to be a Christian missionary

by Oliver Barrett



Oliver Barrett, Leckpatrick.

THE New Testament recounts the calling and sending of the first disciples. St Peter is asked three times by Jesus, "Do you love me?" (Jn 21:15). He is given a direct command from Jesus to "Follow me" (Jn 21: 19). St Peter's vocation included both loving and following the Lord.

In the Acts of the Apostles, we read the first account of the conversion of Saul (Acts 9:1-31). It is a conversion account and not a vocation account, as there is no commission in the narrative. After his encounter with the 'dazzling light', Saul, the greatest persecutor of the Church, becomes Paul, a persecuted Christian confessor. Paul's missionary journeys are proof something extraordinary happened on the road to Damascus, as Jewish identity is closely connected to the Temple in Jerusalem and a strict Pharisee would not have travelled by sea to Cyprus to preach the Gospel message to the Gentiles.

Both St Peter and St Paul were martyred for their love of Christianity. According to tradition, St Peter was crucified upside down because he did not feel worthy enough to be put to death in the same way Christ was crucified. St Paul was beheaded

on the left bank of the Tiber, three miles from Rome. The place where he was martyred was renamed 'Tre Fontane' - Three Fountains. Legend has it that three fountains sprang fourth where his head bounced three times.

There is one similar element in the calling and sending of St Peter and St Paul. In each account, there is an encounter with the Lord. Both could say 'We have found the Messiah' (Jn 1: 41).

An encounter with God does not have to be dramatic and involve a direct command or a conversion experience. It can often be more subtle and take place over a longer period of time, as in the life of St Francis Xavier, who was born in Navarre, in Spain, in 1502. At University in Paris, he roomed with St Ignatius of Loyola. Both men were very different. St Ignatius was a lame, little man, who spent time with the poor and preferred to give than to receive. St Francis was a tall, handsome, athlete, who spent many hours drinking and singing in the local taverns.

St Francis Xavier often wondered how a person heard God's call. Deep in his heart, he knew if God called him, he would respond. The friendship and example of St Ignatius of Loyola persuaded St Francis Xavier to give up his ambitions

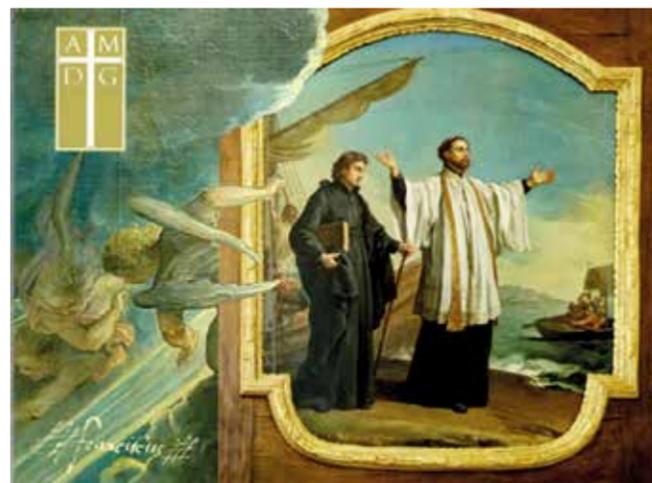
and to follow Jesus. Both men co-founded the Jesuits in 1537.

St Francis' missionary work would take him by sea to Goa, in India, Mozambique and, eventually, to Japan. He is an example of someone who is called and sent through the example and influence of another Christian. He responded to God's call after experiencing the catching force and sympathetic influence of St Ignatius of Loyola.

The Saints have lived exemplary and heroic lives, and for this reason they are role models for the faithful. The communion of saints is not exclusionary, as we are all called to be citizens of heaven. Through our baptism, a sacrament of initiation, each of us can share in the life of the Church and be a part of the community (Evangelii Gaudium 47).

Baptism is our first encounter with the love of God and marks the beginning of our calling to be a Christian missionary. The distance we will travel to proclaim the Gospel will depend on the extent we have encountered the love of God in Christ. At the end of each Eucharist, we are sent to give witness to Christ's love in every person we encounter.

As St Augustine stated centuries ago, "We come to know God by love: to go to God, a person needs but to love".



Our mission begins 50 cm from us

by Sebastiano Pellizza

EVERY authentic vocational call in the Bible has a particularity: the disciple never asks to follow Jesus or God but They are the ones who call and ask to be followed; and the first reaction of the one is who called is to feel inadequate, little, not capable...but God has chosen them.

And God has called us through baptism, even if humanly we are not worthy. We, too, feel inadequate, full of fears, but it is through our incapacities and weaknesses that the Lord calls us

and tells us: "You are not alone, you are my beloved and I'm with you through the many brothers and sisters you have beside you".

But then how to announce the Gospel? Pope Francis reminds us to proclaim the Gospel with actions and, if necessary, with words.

Our mission begins 50 centimetres from us, in other words, with our neighbour, trying first of all to live the Word of God so as to make it visible to others through our small actions.



Sebastiano Pellizza, former Derry Youth Community member from Italy who is currently in the Episcopal Seminary of Vicenza.

Called and Sent...Yes, but to do what?

by Noel Bradley

FATHER Pat Collins gave a talk in the Long Tower Parish on the theme 'Called and Sent' recently. He urged people to live out their God-given role to spread the Good News to others in their everyday lives. Many of those listening felt 'awakened' and wanted to act on this. Are they wondering now 'what are we to do?' It seems a fair question. It reminds me of St Peter's speech to the crowd in Jerusalem and "Hearing this, the crowd were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the Apostles, 'What must we do, brothers?' He told them to repent and be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ...and save yourselves from this perverse generation" (Acts 2: 37-40).

The people who were listening to Fr Pat, we can presume, have been baptised, have repented and are trying in some way to save themselves from our own perverse generation. So it all seems a bit short on detail for people of today. Fr Pat urges them to "live out their God-given role to spread the Good News to others in their everyday

lives". At the end of Mass, we are often told the same thing, "Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord". The emphasis is on spreading the Good News.

When I think of it, I notice that I have never in my life heard anyone actually going out and doing that. How often have you heard people even discussing the readings or homily? Once an evangelical stopped me and asked me "on a scale of 1-10, where was my relationship with Christ?" I said about eight. He was surprised and we had a good chat about faith. This type of encounter is quite unusual.

Anyway, do people in our parishes and families not know the Good News already? That Jesus died for us and is 'risen' from the dead, and that we share His Spirit, that we are to love everyone, especially the poor, that we are to practice forgiveness and compassion, that we are to live by faith, hope and love etc. There is so much emphasis on news that there is a danger that we might overlook the fact that the salvation which

comes to us from Jesus is a new way of life, as well as a new power or energy to do good.

Furthermore, if we only think in terms of news, we may fail to highlight the transformative effects on our personal lives and our interpersonal relationships, and on the structures of the world in which we live.

Communicating the Message

I once met an evangelical Christian on the bus from Dublin to Derry. He was just back from China, having 'smuggled' in a case load of Bibles. I admired his commitment and courage. But is it enough to get a copy of the New Testament into every person's hands?

You get the same tendency in Catholic documents when they refer to the Gospel as something to be 'proclaimed', as if Christianity is a 'message', and that is what it essentially is. You can check this in the decree of Vatican II, on missionary activity (Ad Gentes, 6). It says that where there is no possibility of preaching the Gospel directly, missionaries ought at least

to bear witness to the love and kindness of Christ; in this way they will prepare a way for the Lord and in some way make Him present.

This implies that bearing witness is only a second best - a preliminary approach which is to be used in preparation for the fully authentic way to make Christ present, namely, by preaching the good news.

A decade later, a better approach was offered in 'Evangelization in the Modern World', in stating that both words and witness are of fundamental importance. The words require the witness in order to give them credibility, while the witness requires the words in order to reveal explicitly its true meaning. (See 'Mission in Today's World', p. 84-85, by Donal Dorr). Besides words, there has to be witness and a life lived out in a community of believers, who are trying to live their lives as followers of Jesus. As Jesus said, "By their fruits, you shall know them" (Mt 7: 20).

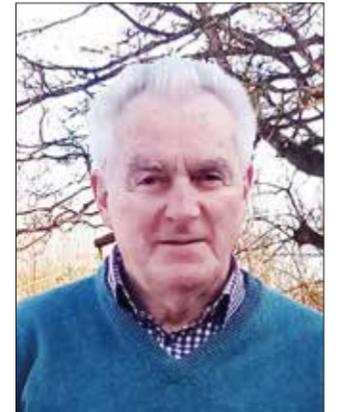
The Pope's prayer for witnesses

It is interesting to note that Pope Francis, in his prayer for this month, calls for prayers that "every baptised person may be witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel". The conclusion to all this, is to say that it is not sufficient to list out certain truths. "Talk is cheap," as they say. The truths are important, of course, but they are only one aspect of Christianity. We have also to witness to Christian values. Of the significant people that have shaped us, it is not what they said that we remember but the values that they embodied and lived out.

I think that people who are 'awakened' to do something, often imagine that they will find some expert to spell out for them what exactly they ought to do. If someone did try to give a list, it could be very long indeed and, in the end, there would be a need to prioritise for each unique person and situation.

I would suggest that in our situation, in the Derry Diocese, what might take priority for us

at this time might be: witness of life, strengthening basic ecclesial communities, commitment to



Noel Bradley, Buncrana

saving the planet, and dialogue with people of different religions and none.

When it comes to making choices within these different pathways, it is up to each one of us and our following of the inspirations that the Holy Spirit will give each of us, to guide us in our lives. And that is a whole new ball game!

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Live our lives in such a way that we demonstrate discipleship

by Sonya Darcy



Sonya Darcy, Head of Chaplaincy at Omagh Christian Brothers School.

"Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15).

JESUS appeared to the eleven and commissioned them with this small but powerful task. It is one of the most important passages, as it was Jesus' last instructions to His disciples.

He had also rebuked them for their lack of faith and their stubborn refusal to believe those who had seen Him after He had risen. But now they had a new task, one which was immense. Now, they were to go into all the world and invite every single person to share in the joy of the Gospel without exception.

Matthew also records this great commission. It is clear from both accounts that this was a command, therefore, it is not a take it or leave it request, but an absolute must.

Fast forward to 2021, and the command is still relevant for us disciples of Jesus today. The Great commission may have been the

end of the Gospels, but it was also the beginning of a call to action; one that extends to the very end of time, as Jesus told us in Matthew 28:20, "I am with you to the end of the world".

Many still take up this command and travel on missionary trips, or take up their calling in the form of vocation and bring the Word of God to those across the nations. However, it is not just for the priests and the bishops to proclaim the Gospel at Mass, but it is a command for us all to bring the joy and good news to everyone.

We can't all leave our lives like the first followers of Jesus, but, put simply, it means to live our lives in such a way that we demonstrate discipleship.

As a daughter, a sister, a wife, a mother to three and a teacher, my life is very ordinary and, perhaps, mundane by comparison to the apostles and those who make huge sacrifices. Yet, St Paul, in his teaching on the Body of Christ, talks about the importance of the whole Church. Every individual has a unique part to play, and no one is better than another. Each one is needed to work together in order to fulfil the Great Commission.

History is full of great saints who lived ordinary lives and yet allowed God to transform them, so that their lives left a lasting impact on many: St Veronica, who was so moved by the vision of Christ that she offered him her handkerchief; St Joseph, the father of Jesus, who quietly supported the will of God in supporting Mary and Jesus in the best way that he could; and

Mary, the Mother of God, who is the model of simple faith and obedience. Each of these saints' lives illustrate that, "Holiness consists simply in doing God's Will and being just what God wants us to be" (St Therese of Lisieux).

Pope Francis' prayer intention this month is calling for prayer so that "every baptised person may be witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel."

We can answer this call and fulfil the Great Commission quietly and obediently by doing the little things in our lives each day with love. For many will find that our lives are made up of the little things, the everyday little acts of love.

A favourite quote of mine, from St Francis Xavier, is to "Be great in the little things." It may be a simple smile to a stranger, a word of kindness, or our daily chores to keep our house tidy for our families. It may be extending the hand of help to a neighbour, donating food items to the local food bank, or giving up our time to help those less fortunate.

Sometimes it is difficult and tiring to constantly live out our Gospel values in our daily interactions, and sometimes we may fail, but it is important to pick ourselves up and start again. Our everyday small sacrifices, done quietly with love and intent for God, allow a personal transformation, but also allow us to be witnesses to the love of God.

In the words of St Catherine of Sienna, "Be who God meant you to be and you will set the whole world on fire."

Remembering Sr Marie Wylie



The late Sr Marie Wylie

ON August 26, 2021, Sister Marie Wylie passed away into the fullness of eternity, where she would be wrapped in the mercy and love of God in whom she so faithfully trusted. That we are "spiritual beings on a human journey" was truly exemplified by the life, the dedication and the commitment of this beautiful and most upright person.

Born of parents, Hugh and Elizabeth Wylie, on September 18, 1938, and baptized the next day into the Catholic faith as a member of the parish community of Drumragh, Omagh, Anne Marie Wylie commenced a life-long commitment to the ways of faith.

While she had been educated at Loreto College in Omagh, she entered Religious Life in Strabane at the age of 19 and was professed Sister Mary Pius, in the Congregation of Sisters of Mercy. When some reforms to apostolic religious life emerged post Vatican II, with a renewed focus on the vocation of all the baptized, Sister Pius chose to revert to one of her baptismal names and became known as Sister Marie.

In Sister Marie's early years, she was one of several sisters who taught in Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana (1964 - 1972) and then in Mt Carmel Grammar School, Strabane (1972 - 1984). English

Language, English Literature and History were her subjects and those who were her students testified to her 'firm but always fair' approach. She also had the occasional foray into drama and her production of 'The Sound of Music' was the pinnacle of these extra-curricular endeavours.

Sister Marie became principal of Our Lady of Mercy Secondary School in Strabane in 1984. A few years later she retired from full-time teaching and gave her services once more to Scoil Mhuire, Buncrana where she did invaluable work in both Home-School Liaison and RE Department Chaplaincy Support.

Alongside her teaching roles, Sister Marie generously served the Congregation by working with young women who were in the initial stages of discerning their sense of God's call to them. For 11 years, from 1977, she was the Sister responsible for postulants, novices and temporary professed sisters.

During this very fruitful time, Sister Marie was also a member of a most vibrant Vocations Council that enthusiastically embraced the new directions of Vatican II. Ordained and non-ordained worked collaboratively to promote opportunities for young adults to explore a sense of belonging in Church and to discover their place in it. This work came naturally to her for, beyond the theology and spirituality that she had studied, Sister Marie was a person who lived a life of dedication to prayer and had a profound awareness of the significance of her Christian baptism.

After her 'school' days were over, Sister Marie found a new avenue for education. First, with Sisters Anna Doherty and Margaret Mary Devlin (RIP), and then, for almost two decades, with Sister Perpetua McNulty, Sister Marie developed

Thornhill Ministries as a training and support resource for Ignatian Spirituality, Prayer Guidance and Parish Ministry.

Many of those in the Diocese of Derry who are sacristans, Ministers of the Word and Ministers of Holy Communion were recipients of training from Sisters Marie and Perpetua. Sister Marie was particularly proud of the nurturing of lay leadership that saw one of the Guides progress through the ranks, to the point where that person was able to take on the

mantle of working in the Ministries in the provision of training and on-going formation for the cohort of Prayer Guides in promoting the Ignatian method of praying scripture.

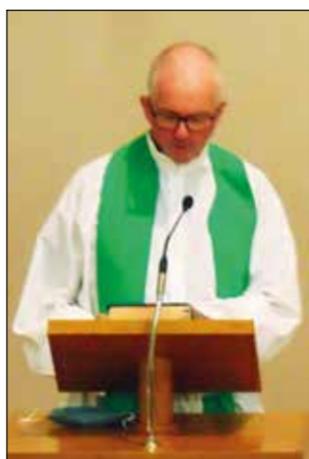
Even in her last years of life, Sister Marie continued to support many people through Spiritual Direction and Prayer Guidance. She never lost her capacity to engage meaningfully with others; always offering a safe and attentive ear, always promising prayerful intercession for their needs, always sensitive to the action of God's Spirit guiding and gracing and forever faithful.

Sister Marie was very dear to her family: her sister, Betty; her brother, Terry; and the wider Wylie circle. She was predeceased by her parents Hugh and Elizabeth, her brother, Hugh and her beloved nephew, Paul. The affection and love shown to Sister Marie by her family was a wonderful testimony to the bonds of familial love.

Moreover, she leaves a vacuum in the lives of the Sisters at Strabane Convent, the Sisters in the Northern Province, the Prayer Guides who benefitted from her wisdom and example, and the members of that first Vocations Council who became her life-long friends.

Installing the new parish priests for Coleraine and Ardmore, Bishop Donal encouraged...

Priests and parishioners to help each other in discerning God's desire for the Church



THE clerical changes this year involved parish priests, Fr Neil Farren and Dr James McGrory in a parish swap; with Fr Neil returning to the parish of Coleraine, which includes Dunboe, Macosquin and Aghadowey, and Fr James moving closer to his home city by becoming the new parish priest of Ardmore.

Celebrating the Mass during which Fr Neil was formally installed as Coleraine PP, in St John's Church on September 22, Bishop Donal commented on the fitting theme of the Mass Gospel reading about sending missionaries out.

Noting that Fr Neil had spent 11 years in the Coleraine Parish 22 years ago, the Bishop remarked that there have been many changes in that time, including the challenges to be faced.

Referring to the Gospel passage, in which Jesus was sending out His apostles, he said: "They were sent out to do a job, not to make themselves famous or popular.

They were sent to be like the One who sent them; to preach by what they say and do".

He told the parishioners: "Your new parish priest has the job of building a church community that wants to go out, not merely to defend itself. Being defensive means hiding and being full of fear. Do not be afraid – that is a common phrase in the Gospels. A frightened, inward looking Church is going nowhere.

"We have no idea what the future looks like and the good news is that we don't have to know. It's not our Church. The Church is led by the Holy Spirit. This whole talk about a synodal pathway is not about planning or plotting, but about listening to one another and being open to the Holy Spirit, to see what God wants for the Church in this parish and Diocese at this time.

"It is a challenging path, but it is God's way. Help Fr Neil and Fr Gerard, you will need each other as we try to move forward. Our mission is to be open to prayerfully discern the way forward. It is a challenging time for everyone in the whole Church, but that is where we are called to be.

"I commend Fr Neil to you and you to him. And I commend all of us to the Holy Spirit that, together, we might be guided into the ways of peace".

When the congregation responded with a hearty applause as Bishop Donal handed Fr Neil the key to St John's Church, the Bishop commented on the

warmth of the welcome for the return of the Buncrana native to the Bann-side Parish.

In response, Fr Neil remarked that, just like the people of his previous parish of Ardmore, the Coleraine parishioners were "a warm and welcoming people".

Expressing his appreciation to all who attended or joined the ceremony online, Fr Neil added: "I hope to work well with you in the years I will be here".

Indeed, the warmth of the people of Ardmore also shone through in their welcome for Dr James McGrory as their new parish priest, when he was formally installed by Bishop Donal at the vigil Mass of October 2, in St Mary's Church.

Fr McGrory expressed his delight to be back in the Derry area after 35 or so years, and thanked Bishop Donal for his "exceptional pastoral care". Paying tribute to the great sounding Folk Group, he said that he looked forward to working with them for many years to come.

In his homily, Bishop Donal commented on how the Bible includes many references to the church as family under the fatherhood of God, and related this to the emphasis on synodality "at the heart of building a family of faith, most especially in a fragmenting society".

"Being, listening and praying together," he said, "is an expression of our radical equality before God. Making room for the talents and uncomfortable wisdom of all is not merely an option but

an obligation as we celebrate our prophetic unity in the Body of Christ. And that applies in its own way to the relationship between the parish community and its clergy.

"It has echoes of a spousal relationship of love. It is a call to care for each other. The priest has to love his people and treat them with dignity as brothers and sisters, whether they are his friends or not. That means sacrificing himself so that they know the love and mercy of God. Parish communities thrive when they know that the priest loves them, respects their uniqueness and history and walks with them. The priest needs to know that he is not merely a supplier of services as required, but a fellow pilgrim, a fellow disciple who needs support and who can benefit from being challenged in love".

He continued: "Jesus challenges us to let grace make us into light for the world and salt for the earth. A parish that thinks it is enough to be merely an efficient administrative unit needs to hear today's readings. If we do not model Christ's dream for a renewed world, then we have nothing of God to offer, no matter how many prayers we say or how fine our buildings are. Synodality is a call to build a mature parish family through grace, and thus witness to healing through complementing one another.

"Jesus seeks to remake the world by calling us all to a change of heart – and not merely by bringing in new laws. We unite round the

Lord at Mass to be nourished with this vision and to be strengthened by the Eucharist. The Mass contains a recognition of sin and a need for forgiveness, the Word of God and a celebration of our unity in the Body of Christ. We share in the Body of Christ which Jesus gives out of love for us. He asks us to learn from, give thanks for, and model a graced way of being human. In a community that cherishes faithfulness, life-long commitments will be cherished".



70th birthday celebrations for Fr David O’Kane



Fr. David O’Kane

THE 70th birthday of Claudy parish priest, Fr David O’Kane was a welcome opportunity for parishioners from the Claudy and Craighane areas to show their appreciation for his ministry amongst them.

A special birthday Mass was celebrated in St Patrick’s Church, Claudy, with Fr David’s long time friend, Fr Paddy Baker the main celebrant, and it was attended by some of the Ballinascreen native’s siblings.

Recalling their first meeting in the seminary back in 1982, when he went to St Kieran’s, in Kilkenny, Fr Paddy quickly pointed out: “David was there before me. I just want to say that I’m not 70!”

Paying tribute to his aging friend, he commented on how Fr David was “blessed with a tremendous sense of humour”, adding: “In this post-pandemic world, which has made us very solemn, I think we need to learn to laugh again.

“For a priest to have a sense of humour really is the spice of life, better than any medication or alcohol to lift us.”

Commenting on another notable quality, Fr Paddy remarked that all who came Fr David’s way were treated the same: “He treats everybody with the same dignity.”

“I know Fr David is very happy here in the Claudy parish,” he remarked, adding: “You are very blessed to have a wonderful priest in Fr David.”

The youth of the parish were to the fore during the celebration, with pupils from St Patrick’s & St Brigid’s College and St Colmcille’s PS taking part in the readings, prayer of the faithful, offertory procession, music, and making the presentation of gifts on behalf of the parishioners, which included Manchester United pyjamas, a set of celebratory glasses, coat and hat, as well as a monetary gift and birthday cake.

The big occasion was celebrated again a few days later in St Joseph’s Church, Craighane, when the congregation stayed on after Sunday morning Mass to give Fr David a round of applause as he was presented with another monetary gift.

Expressing words of appreciation on behalf of the people of Craighane, the Minister of the Word for the Mass in St Joseph’s, Jane Dunton remarked on how Fr David surprised everyone “the way he was able to fly up and down the stairs of the sanctuary” despite his years.

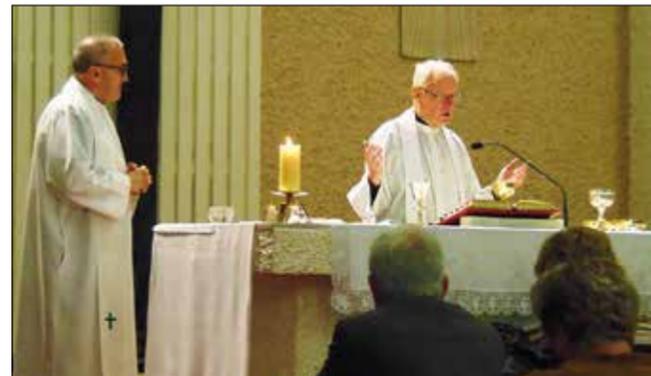
Jane went on to thank him for his “gentle demeanour and always being there, and not just going through the motions”, and assured him that he was a valued pastor.

Thanking everyone for their kindness and generosity, Fr David remarked that turning 70 had sneaked up on him: “You still think you are a young fella, but in some ways your body is maybe telling you that you are not as young as you had been.”

Noting that he was now 12 years in the parish and approaching 37 years of priesthood, Fr David remarked: “They have all been great years. I am well supported here in the parish and I am very grateful for that. I hope to spend many more years here”.



Fr Paddy Baker celebrated the 70th Birthday Mass for Fr O’Kane.



Fr David with (left) Mena Crossan, sacristan of St Joseph’s Church, Craighane, and Jane Dunton, Minister of the Word.



Eangach

Ár nDúchas

Os comhair na Naomhshacraiminte

A Thiarna mo bheatha,
tráth a shiúl tú ár mbóthair,
is gur chas tú ar dhaoine a bhí ar strae
agus i ngleic le coimhlintí,
d'ardaigh an bheocht
is an spleodar a bhí ionatsa
a gcroíthe le haoibhneas.
Bhí do bheogacht tógalach,
agus in ann daoine a spreagadh.
Ón nóiméad dar gineadh thú
líon an Spiorad Naomh,
Tiarna agus Bronntóir na Beatha,
do chroí iomlán.

Agus tú aiséirithe ó mharbh,
bé an Spiorad Naomh
an chéad bhronntanas a thug tú dúinn.
“Glacáigí ionaibh an Spiorad Naomh”,
a dúirt tú le d’
agus le hosna d’análaigh tú orthu
Anáil Naofa na Beatha.

Ag an Eocairist,
leanann do Spiorad
ag roinnt na beatha sin ar an domhan.
Tá mé anseo
le go dtugadh do Spiorad
fionnuaradh dom,
chun go mbeidh
gach a bhfuil marbh ionam
ina bheatha arís;
gach a bhfuil feosaí mar fhéar glas úr;
gach a bhfuil ina pheaca ionam
nite glan asam.

(Buíochas le Redemptorist Communications.)

Stephen Roche, Rothaí



Ciste Giro d'Italia

Ar an 6ú Meán Fómhair 1987 bhuaigh Stephen Roche craobhchomórtas an domhain sa rotháocht. Bhí an Giro d'Italia buaite aige cheana féin sa bhliain chéanna (Bealtaine/Meitheamh), agus an Tour de France chomh maith (Mí Iúil). Eisean an t-aon Éireannach a bhuaigh an Giro d'Italia, an t-aon Éireannach a bhuaigh an Tour de France, agus an dara duine ar domhan a bhuaigh an Giro d'Italia, an Tour de France, agus Craobh an Domhain sa bhliain chéanna (an Beilgeach cáiliúil Eddy Merckx an duine eile). Tharla sin uilig an bhliain chéanna inár bhris abhainn na Móirne fríd an seanbhalla gur fhág sé bun bhaile an tSraitha Bháin faoi na tuilte uisce.

Scileanna

Rugadh agus tógadh Stephen Roche i nDún Droma, ar imeall bhunchnoic shléibhte Bhaile Átha

Cliath agus Chill Mhantáin. Ba nós leis dul ag rotháocht sna sléibhte agus é ag fás aníos, rud a d'fhág ina 'ghrimpeur' ábalta é agus a d'ullmhaigh é do na rásaí a bhí roimhe mar rothaí proifisiúnta i sléibhte na hIodáile, na Fraince, agus na Spáinne. Bhí éifeacht ar leith ann sa triail ama fosta, rud a chinntigh a bhua sa Ghíro d'Italia agus os cionn ceithre nóiméad le spárail aige. Agus bhí sé go hiomlán gan eagla agus é ag rotháocht le fána síos na sléibhte ar luas na gaoithe, rud a thug buntáiste dó sa dianchoimhlint a bhí aige in éadan Pedro Delgado sa Tour de France.

Bunscoil Ghrianlocha

Tháinig an Giro d'Italia go hÉirinn in 2014. Mar chuid den phoiblíocht, bhí comórtas ealaíne ann do bhunscoileanna Thuaisceart Éireann. Bhuaigh cailín as Bunscoil Ghrianlocha i gContae Dhoire an duais don phictiúr ab fhearr, agus tháinig Stephen Roche chun na scoile leis an duais a bhronnadh. Bhí lá mór sa scoil, agus thug Stephen spreagadh iontach do na daltaí: chuir sé fuinneamh úr sa 'Cycling Proficiency Scheme'!

Cuairt ar Lourdes

Ins na 1990í bhí grúpa as Deoise Dhoire i Lourdes ar Oilithreach. Tharla go raibh Stephen Roche i Lourdes ag an am chéanna. Casadh Stephen Roche ar oilithrigh Dhoire. Bhí cuid de na daoine ina suí i gcathaoireacha rothaí, agus shiúl Stephen trasna caol díreach chucu.

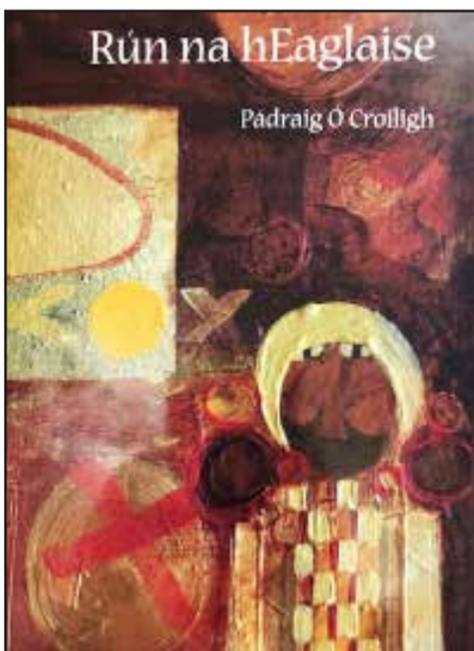


Tour de France 1987



Bhí comhrá pléisiúrtha acu leis, agus ansin labhair sé ar mhodh dáiríre leo. Dúirt sé: “Ní neamhchosúil bhur rothaí le rothaí mo rothairse. Deir daoine go nglacann sé

dúthracht agus crógacht le páirt a ghlacadh sa Tour de France, ach sibhse na daoine a bhfuil crógacht agus dianseasmhacht ionaibh. Molaim bhur misneach.”



An Pósadh

Nuair atá lánúin óg ag cur tús lena saol mar lánúin bíonn an dá cheiliúradh ann, an pósadh agus an bhainis. Bíonn an pósadh i dteach an phobail, agus bíonn an bhainis in ostán. Bíonn ceiliúradh na sacraiminte san eaglais, agus bia agus deoch ag an bhainis. Nach aisteach gur bainis a luaitear sa Bhíobla i saol Íosa Críost, agus nach luaitear mórán an pósadh? Rud eile atá aisteach, go gcoinníonn daoine cuimhne ar an bhainis úd a bhí i gCána ar mhaithe leis an scéal faoi mhéadú an fhíona, agus nach mbaineann siad meabhair ar bith as i dtaobh na beatha pósta. Ag an am

chéanna is minic a chluineann tú scéal Chána á léamh mar shoiscéal ag an phósadh. Sin é an fáth go ndearna mé cuid mhaith mhór machnaimh ar an scéal sin, agus ar an bhrí a d'fhéadfadh a bheith leis.

Feictear dom gurb é atá ann ná pósadh mar a chonacthas do Íosa é. Mar sin is féidir go bhfuil ciall le baint as i dtaobh an phósta mar shacraimint, agus i dtaobh an phósta taobh istigh de bheatha na hEaglaise. Is fiú sracfhéachaint a thabhairt ar an scéal sin arís leis an chuid sin a scrúdú. Bhí Íosa agus Muire agus na deisceabail i láthair

le chéile. D'fhéadfá a mheabhúr gur ag tagairt don Eaglais a bhí siad, agus gur taobh istigh den Eaglais nó i bhfianaise na hEaglaise a bhí sé seo uile le tarlú. Agus tharla sé ar an tríú lá. Thiocfadh leat a mheabhúr go bhfuil leath-thagairt ansin don aiséirí, a bhí le tarlú ar an tríú lá. Sula dtosaíonn an scéal ar chor ar bith tá cuid mhór ráite faoin Eaglais agus fá shuíomh an phósta áirithe seo.

Tharla ganntanas, agus thiontaigh Muire chuig Íosa, á rá leis nach raibh fion ar bith fágtha acu. Ní raibh acu ach uisce, agus leanann

an scéal faoi fhíon a dhéanamh den uisce. Ag deireadh an scéil sin deir Soiscéal Eoin linn:

Rinne Íosa sin i gCána i nGaililí, an chéad chomhartha dá chomharthaí, agus nocht sé a ghlóir; agus chreid a dheisceabail ann. (Eoin 2:11)

(Buíochas le Foilseacháin Ábhair Spioradálta)

Celebrating a Mass of thanksgiving for the Legion of Mary in its Centenary Year, Bishop Donal said...

We pray for a renewal of our Church by bottling what Frank Duff, Edel Quinn and Alfie Lamb brought to Ireland, Africa and Latin America

LEGIONARIES from across the Derry Diocese gathered in St Eugene's Cathedral, on September 21, to join Bishop Donal and their spiritual director, Fr Thomas Canning for the celebration of Mass to mark the Centenary of the Legion of Mary.

Reflecting on the Ireland that Frank Duff would have experienced as a teenager, a decade before he founded the Legion on September 7, 1921, Bishop Donal noted that it had been a time of much change.

"Nobody in 1911 could have imagined that the following decade would include a horrific World War that killed 40 million people, an Easter Rising in 1916, the Spanish Flu that would kill perhaps another 40 million people, and the planned political division of Ireland," he remarked, noting: "But that was the world in which Frank Duff was a teenager. And that terrible decade did not crush his generous heart but inspired him to grapple with the immensity of Ireland's problem, one person at a time. It is that working of God's Holy Spirit that we celebrate this year."

"The founder of the Legion is often remembered for what he

and his followers did," continued Bishop Donal, "They reached out to many who were crushed by the multi-clawed grip of poverty, addiction, prostitution. The Legion was away ahead of its time in being a predominantly female lay apostolate which began by visiting female cancer patients in hospital.

"It developed many other outreaches and, in its care for women with unwanted pregnancies, it went far beyond the harshness that appears to have characterised some state and other organisations. That is why it has spread throughout the world"

He added: "But its strength goes deeper than the visible valuable work that the Legion has undertaken. But we see its roots in a pamphlet published by the 17-year-old Frank Duff in 1916. Its title was 'Can We Be Saints?'"

"The language may be couched in the vocabulary of the day - but its opening sentences are strong. The young Duff wrote: 'In the heart of every right-thinking Catholic, God has implanted the desire to become a Saint. Yet few make a serious attempt to realise the ambition.'

"That was what has always

driven members of the Legion. That combination of care for the marginalised and a deep sense of prayer is a sign of Church at its best. Deep piety without outreach or activism without spirituality are both deficient for those who would strive to take the Gospel seriously. The Legion has inspired many to become engaged in the corporal works of mercy and not merely in humanitarian aid."

Struck by the fact the Legion had been founded at a time of huge crisis, Bishop Donal remarked: "Difficult times bring out the best in people. We know from our own 'Troubles' in Northern Ireland that terrible loss has been accompanied by huge heroism from unlikely heroes.

"Some people imagine that force is the best way to fight evil. But Jesus taught his followers that love and generosity were the real antidotes to widespread pain and despair. Souls are saved one at a time by the love of God. The Legion may have used military terms but it was an army of mercy."

Mercy

"The early Legionaries," he continued, "knew that hurting hearts needed not to hear harsh condemnation but to feel

compassionate divine mercy. It takes a life of deep prayer to approach crises with love and with trust that nothing done in love is wasted. That is why the Legion has always shown how radical activism and an active prayer life are inseparable and not competing options"

Noting that the spirituality of the Legion was "not narrow but rich", Bishop Donal said: "Frank Duff was ahead of his time in his emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, was the beloved daughter of the Father and the one who bore Christ through the Holy Spirit. He wanted the Legion to be like Mary in bearing Christ to the world through the Holy Spirit, whatever the challenges and difficulties. That spirituality was and is healthy as it removes the temptation to separate Mary from the role that

she has in the Gospels.

"Veneration of Mary is based on her part in the mission of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Mary is the first disciple who accepts the divine call to carry Jesus. Her acceptance of God's will is the action of a generous, mature heart, and should never be portrayed as a sign of weakness. I know from my own experience of doing Peregrinatio in England that offering Christ to the world can be an experience laced with both surprise and disappointment. Mary knew that from Nazareth to Calvary. She remains the model of the missionary disciple, led by the Spirit."

Describing the Legion as "a powerful movement that has the core characteristics of renewal in every generation", which was founded by "impatient, idealistic, young lay people at a time of crisis", Bishop Donal added: "It has

a spirituality that has a central role for the Holy Spirit and promotes a healthy veneration of Mary. And it was directed at serving those who were on the fringes and who needed love and not merely reprimand."

Giving thanks for "the century of work that has been done around the world because of a few generous young hearts in Dublin", he concluded: "We pray for a renewal of our Church in these challenging times by bottling what Frank Duff, Edel Quinn and Alfie Lamb brought to Ireland, Africa and Latin America.

"Our society is crying out for generous young people who will take Mary as a model and go where others are afraid to tread. That is what Jesus asks of every new generation so that divine mercy can reach the ends of the earth and every corner of this island"

Down memory lane with Legion of Mary

STRABANE Legionary, Margaret Harte has been taking a trip down memory lane in this Centenary year for the Legion of Mary, and came upon two photographs that had been taken at the Legion of Mary Congress

that was held in Thornhill College in the early 60s.

She recalls that Frank Duff attended and spoke at the Congress, and has recognised some faces in the photographs from places beyond the Diocese,

so feels that it may have been open to other areas to attend.

Margaret would love to hear from anyone who can help to identify the people in the photographs. She can be contacted on 028 71 883159.



Legion of Mary chaplain in the Derry Diocese, Fr Thomas Canning.



With the call to mission lingering in their hearts, a former Derry Youth Community member and her Italian husband are preparing to launch...

Carnhill time of prayer and Adoration for an inspired synodal journey



Luca and Seanan Zaltron with their young son.

FORMER Derry Youth Community member, Seanan Cregan and her husband, Luca Zaltron, are looking forward to playing their part in the Synodal process that has been launched by Pope Francis for the Catholic Church worldwide this month, when they launch a monthly holy hour in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit amongst the parishioners there as they journey in faith with their curate, Fr Gerard Mongan.

Now living just outside Derry with Luca and their two-year-old son, 26-year-old Seanan's connection with Fr Gerard goes back to her Thornhill College days, when he was the school chaplain there.

It has been a family tradition to worship in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, down through the years, and it has played a special role in nourishing Seanan in the faith that she and Luca give thanks for every day.

Seanan's love of sharing and encouraging others to grow in the Catholic faith is what drew her to spend time ministering with the Derry Youth Community, and it was during this period in her life that she first met her future husband. Along with

leaving the DYC, Seanan had spent two years on the staff of Net Ministries Ireland and brought her experience of this mission work to the Malta ministry. This included doing street missions as part of an evangelisation project that involved a copy of the Turin Shroud, which had touched the original shroud of Christ.

Founded by Elena Vaccaretti and her husband, Luciano Baron, the Abraham Community celebrated its 30th anniversary back in 2019, which included a private audience with Pope Francis in Rome. And amongst its members are other former members of the Derry Youth Community, Sebastiano Pellizzari, Emmanuele Bicego, and Micaela Dani.

Born near Venice, Luca first experienced the Abraham Community when he was 14 years old, at a time when he was beginning to ask questions about the Catholic faith and becoming disengaged with it.

Joy

"Seeing so many people of all ages, from babies to elderly, at the prayer gatherings and their joy in celebrating their faith impressed me so much that I just kept coming back," recalled Luca.

He added: "I then got involved as a missionary while studying at university. I first came to Ireland in 2012, when I was 18, which was before I had met Seanan.

"I was with a group invited over to do mission work by Bishop Donal, who has had a long relationship with the Abraham Community. He was Auxiliary Bishop in the Diocese of Down & Connor at that time. We visited different parts of the country and did some mission work, such as retreats, in parishes".

Looking back on this now, the 27-year-old can see the Hand of God in his meeting and marrying Seanan, with them now settled into family life within the Derry Diocese since 2019.

"Having both been on a

missionary journey helped us to understand the call that God had for us," reflected Luca, adding: "Pope Francis said in 'Evangelii Gaudium', 'All of us are asked to obey His call to go forth from our own comfort zone in order to reach all the peripheries in need of the light of the Gospel'" (20).

Recalling her first impression of the Community when she attended its annual conference, Seanan said: "I saw it as a lot of people and families that made up a big family. I see the community as one in which people have found a home".

A private association of the faithful that is recognised by the Holy See, the Abraham Community has spread to other countries, such as Spain and Switzerland, and provides a service to the Church and its dioceses.

A warm welcome is extended to whoever would like to come along for the time of prayer and Eucharistic Adoration following the 6 pm Mass in St Brigid's

Church, Carnhill, on Saturday, October 30, when Bishop Donal will be present to give his support.

Sharing his thoughts on the Abraham Community with 'The Net', Bishop Donal remarked: "The Church has been blessed in every generation with groupings of lay faithful who feel called to be missionaries in their own time. The Society of St Vincent de Paul was set up by a young student and the Legion of Mary was another lay movement. Some of these initiatives stayed as parts of the lay apostolate - while others eventually became religious congregations. And some movements have lay, consecrated and ordained members.

"I came to know the Abraham Community from the North of Italy about 10 years ago. They are a group of passionate laity, led by a married couple and supported by a priest. They focus on prayer to the Holy Spirit, Eucharistic Adoration and actively sharing the Gospel, especially with young people.

"A few years ago, they had felt a call to offer a presence in Derry. But God had other plans! Now, through the strange ways of Divine providence, a former member of our Derry Youth Community, Seanan Cregan married a member of the Abramo Community, Luca Zaltron. And she brought him back to live in her native diocese of Derry.

"They have been discerning how to minister here, and have felt called to begin a regular prayer meeting to ask that the Holy Spirit will guide the Diocese in its discernment of God's will for us.

"I am delighted at this new shoot of prayer and witness in the Diocese. God is always leading his people, and that generally happens through passionate young people. I really hope that this can be the beginning of yet another great work of God here as we seek to bring divine mercy and healing to the people of our day".

For further information on the Abraham Community, check out its website at www.youhope.it

Derry Choir Festival 'Reawakening Voices'

THE Derry International Choir Festival's 'Reawakening Voices' Community Programme, gets underway on Saturday, October 23, with a Community Forum via Zoom, starting at 10 am.

Later in the day, at 4.30 pm, is the 'Let's Just Sing' event in the Foyle Arena, and at 9 pm is the ceremony of Hymns of Remembrance & Hope in St Eugene's Cathedral.

There will also be various Choral Trails from October 20-24.



One Hour With God

MONTHLY EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

Interceding for the National Synodal Pathway

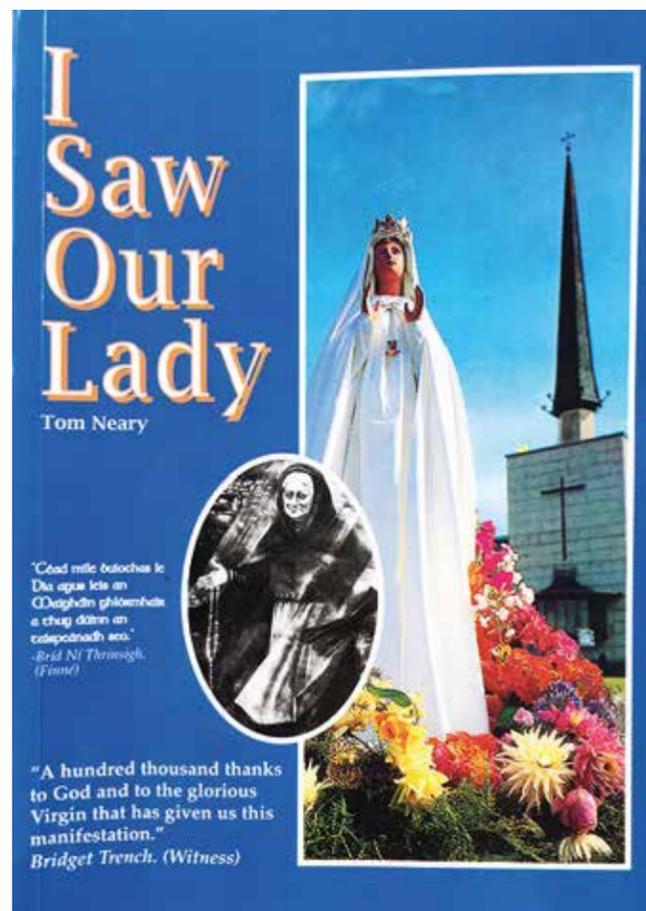
Saturday 30th October
6pm Mass and Holy Hour

with Bishop Donal McKeown

ST. BRIGID'S CHURCH CARNHILL
Three Patrons Parish, Derry
abrahamcommunityie@gmail.com
youhope.it

In this year of St Joseph, the Guardian of the Church, as we respond to Pope Francis' synodal call and set out together on a journey of faith to discern, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, how the mission of the Church is to evolve in our time, may we become more fully aware of the message of the Apparition at Knock...

The call to silent Adoration



SINCE the National Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration was invited to help train and set up a committee to oversee the promotion of weekly Adoration in the Derry Diocese some 11 years ago, the number of parishes involved had grown to over 30 before Covid-19 struck in 2020 and health and safety regulations led to a pause in the Apostolate's work.

Many parishes blessed with regular times of Adoration continued to offer these quiet periods of private prayer when churches were re-opened, with social distancing and sanitising measures in place, and it greatly helped to bring a sense of peace to those who were able to attend.

There is widespread acknowledgement amongst regular and casual Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament of how this special time with Jesus not only helps to ease their worries, and restore the deep inner peace that enables them to entrust themselves and their loved ones to the tender care of Jesus, but also enlightens them regarding solutions to their problems. There is a silent exchange between the Adorer and Jesus, as His gaze meets theirs and draws them close so that heart may speak to heart.

The Apostolate hopes to be able to return soon to the promotion of Eucharistic Adoration in parishes across the Diocese, which will be welcome with the launch of the

first phase of a synodal process in dioceses by the Irish Bishops, during which clergy and laity are invited to discern together what God wants from the Church in Ireland at this time.

The five-year journey towards a National Synod in Ireland, in 2026, is in response to Pope Francis' call for all Catholics to walk together as the "pilgrim and missionary people of God," and its launch coincides with the opening of the three-year Universal Synod process by the Holy Father on October 9, in preparation for the Assembly of the Synod of Bishops in Rome in October 2023, entitled 'For a synodal Church: communion, participation and mission'.

Pope Francis has emphasised the importance of prayer and listening for the Holy Spirit speaking through each person as the first step in the discernment process, and what better personal preparation for this than time spent quietly before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, praying and listening for the guidance of the Holy Trinity.

The motto of the Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration is 'To Jesus through Mary' and one of the highlights in its calendar, prior to the emergence of Covid-19, has been its day of pilgrimage to Knock Shrine, which was elevated by the Church to an International Sanctuary of Special Eucharistic and Marian Devotion, on March 19 this year, the Feast of St Joseph.

Adorers of the Blessed Sacrament from parishes around the island, including many from the Derry Diocese, faithfully gather on this day to pray and adore together on the ground made holy by the silent apparition on August 21, 1879, when Our Lady, St Joseph, St John the Evangelist and adoring angels appeared alongside the Lamb of God, an altar and a cross.

The response of those who witnessed this two-hour apparition on the gable wall of the Church of St John the Baptist, in the humble, rural setting of Knock village, in Co Mayo, in a time of great famine in the country, was to pray as they gazed upon the heavenly scene.

It was a natural response for a people whose lives were steeped in prayer, no matter what their suffering. Their faith taught them that they were children of God, and so they placed their trust in the Father and in the intercession of their Heavenly Mother.

A must-read to understand more fully the story of Knock is a book entitled 'I Saw Our Lady' (ISBN 0-9515807-1-X), written by Tom Neary, who served as Chief Steward of The Knock Shrine Society for several years.

Poverty

While for many, the story of the Co Mayo Shrine begins with the apparition witnessed by 15 people, young and old, in the pouring rain around eight o'clock on an August evening, Tom Neary's book enlightens the reader that the story actually began long before that...with the great poverty of the natives of the West of Ireland during a time of famine across the country, when, amongst other happenings, crops failed, employment was hard to find, especially for day labourers, and tenants were evicted for non-payment of rent.

Newspaper articles from the time, included in the book, report on the destitute lives of a people in "dire need of a helping hand". The reader is brought "face to face with the misery, poverty, and hopelessness of the people of the West of Ireland", who were very much in need of "some hope to cling to" at that time.

One journalist, who was shown around the area by a priest, wrote: "It is unique...to approach the homes of small tenant farmers each surrounded by its ten, or fifteen or twenty acres, with geese and poultry in the yard, and other tokens of well-doing, and then to find on entering that the people, short of killing their egg-layers,

do not know where to look for the next meal."

Reporting on another visit, he wrote: "One hut lies off the road, and has to be reached by stepping over a half-ruined wall into a tiny enclosure reeking with rotting straw and manure, gathering there apparently to be sold if luck should bring a buyer.

"...we enter the hut to find the usual man, woman and children upon the earthen floor...The sharp but kindly questions of the priest brought out a now familiar story – no work, no store beyond the little heap of potatoes, and no hope...Yet there is nothing save patient resignation in the look and manner of the father and mother..."

The first page of the book lists The Beatitudes, with the author explaining in Chapter 1: "All in this unique story unfolds in the translucent light of the 'Beatitudes'. Read them well for therein you will find the reasons why Knock has been honoured with a visit from the Mother of Our Lord", and by the end of Chapter 2 those reasons become very clear...Mary, the Mother of God, had come from Heaven "to console and strengthen her children".

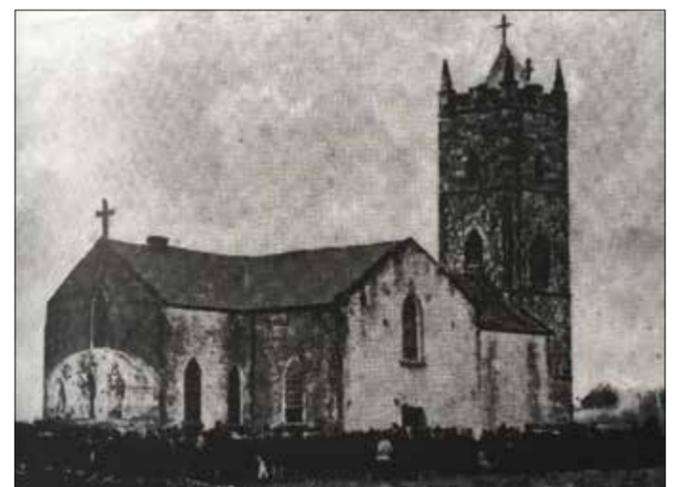
The inclusion of comments in the book by a journalist reporting on the multitudes of people visiting Knock and the many miracles happening there, some six months after the Apparition, shows a very natural relationship between Our Lady and "her children": "The children of faith see nothing wonderful at all in these manifestations. They see nothing incongruous in the fact that they have occurred. The spiritual world is to them like a land with which they are familiar from the knowledge which their holy faith supplies".

A common theme in the reports of journalists writing about the scenes at Knock, and of poor pilgrims walking for miles along rough roads to pray for favours on the holy ground there, is the deep faith of those who gather to pray either inside the thronged church or outside, kneeling in the mud, no matter the weather.

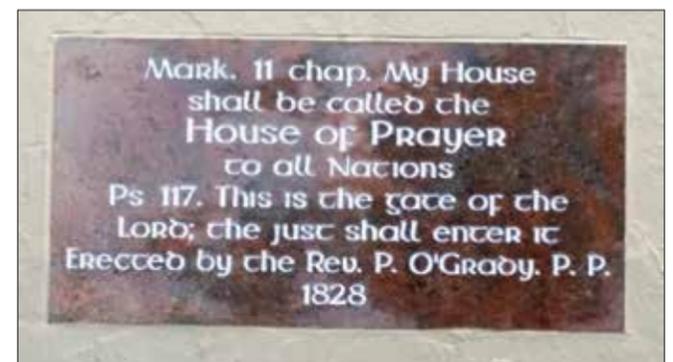
This brings to mind the wording on the keystone on the west wall of this Church that was erected by Rev P O'Grady, PP, and dedicated in 1830, almost 50 years prior to the Apparition – "My house shall be called the house of prayer to all nations" (Mark 11:17).

One reporter wrote: "Hundreds of pilgrims are on the spot, praying in a manner such as I have never before witnessed..."

Our Lady of Knock, Queen of Ireland,
you gave hope to your people in a time of distress
and comforted them in sorrow.
You have inspired countless pilgrims to pray
with confidence to your divine Son,
remembering His promise,
"Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find".
Help me to remember that we are all
pilgrims on the road to Heaven.
Fill me with love and concern for my brothers and sisters
in Christ, especially those who live with me.
Comfort me when I am sick, lonely or depressed.
Teach me how to take part ever more reverently
in the Holy Mass. Give me a greater love of Jesus
in the Blessed Sacrament.
Pray for me now and at the end of my death. Amen



The Church of the Apparition, Knock, in 1879



The keystone on the west wall of the Church of St John the Baptist, in Knock.

The Beatitudes

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on My account.

Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in Heaven.

(Matthew 5:1-12)

Neither the thickening clouds... nor the wind...nor the impassable condition of the ground beneath their feet, has the least effect in checking the extreme ardour of their devotion”.

Another, writing about cures he personally witnessed there, reported: “The period following the apparition is something similar to the period when Jesus walked the earth, working miracles.

Bounteous

“At Knock, the cry of the sick is not less constant than it was in His time. Any day of the week is as a day in Galilee...The response of the good Lord appears to me to be more than bounteous, for

many are they that are being made clean, that are taking up their beds and walking, that are seeing, that are hearing, that are speaking, that are being healed, that are lame no more”.

There is also a newspaper article by a reporter who noted that “cures of bodily ailments are not for all”, adding: “God does not so will these things. May it not be that a better thing is done for some of those humble and faithful pilgrims? May it not be that their spiritual wounds and bruises are healed, and their souls fitted for a place where there is neither sickness nor sorrow...?”

In the closing chapter of ‘I Saw Our Lady’, the author writes: “The vision of Knock is a consolation

in hungry times but it is also a pointer to a deeper and more lasting hunger in mankind, a hunger which can only be satisfied by a spiritual food, namely, the Blessed Eucharist, the Bread of Life”.

There is a message in the story of Knock for every generation about the importance of prayer and trust in God, as is the case with regards to all of Our Lady’s apparitions in the world, such as at Lourdes, Fatima and Medjugorje.

Just as Heaven intervened and Our Lady accompanied Her Son, the Lamb of God, in the apparition at Knock to comfort and encourage not only the suffering people of the West of Ireland at that time, but all

who heard of the miraculous happenings there, that blessing on Knock and Ireland continues today, and so the graces and miracles that flowed at the time of and following the Apparition are still offered to us today – we just have to be open to believing and receiving them.

There are many who still faithfully go on pilgrimage to the Co Mayo Shrine, however, with the spread of Eucharistic Adoration to many churches around Ireland, those graces are just as available to the faithful who spend time in front of the Blessed Sacrament in their local church. The scene of the Knock Apparition is there on every altar – along with the Lamb of

God in the Blessed Host in the monstrance, Our Blessed Mother Mary, St Joseph and St John the Evangelist, and a host of angels and saints, are surely present too.

In this special year dedicated to St Joseph, Patron of the Universal Church, and with Pope Francis’ call for us to be the evangelisers that we have been baptised to be, as we set out on our synodal journey to discern God’s plan for His Church, could there be a better time to respond more fully to the silent but strong message conveyed through the Heavenly Apparition at Knock over 140 years ago...to gather in our churches for silent Adoration of the Lamb of God and receive the many blessings that will flow

not just for ourselves and our families, but for our parishes and Diocese, our country and world.

And, with October being the month of the Rosary, we are reminded of this powerful prayer and the motherly care of Our Lady for us, as is highlighted in Chapter 2 of Tom Neary’s book on Knock: “The Mother of God does not turn away from her dearly loved sons and daughters in their hour of need. No, rather does she come to help, because she is such a good and caring mother. She wishes to share their sufferings, their crosses, their miseries, just as she did for all mankind on Calvary.”

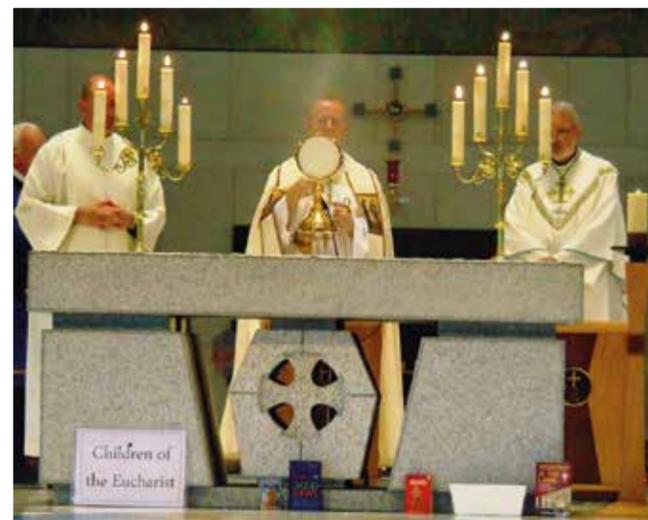
Mary O’Donnell



Some of the Derry pilgrims who joined the Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine in 2019.



Some Children of the Eucharist during Adoration in Knock with COTE national co-ordinator, Antoinette Moynihan, in September 2019.



Archbishop Eamon Martin leading Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in Knock Basilica during the annual Eucharistic Adoration Pilgrimage to the Shrine in 2019

Discerning the path ahead

by Bishop Donal

DISCERNING the way forward has always been a challenge for the Church. Every generation has had to seek where the Lord was leading. That has applied to the universal Church – and to the local Church.

In Ireland, discernment was needed to decide how to be Church during the Penal times and after Catholic Emancipation, after the division of Ireland and during the Troubles.

We are now facing another critical time as we ask how we can evangelise this generation – and build what the Preface for the Feast of Christ the King describes as “an eternal and universal kingdom: a kingdom of truth and life; a kingdom of holiness and grace; a kingdom of justice, love, and peace”.

Here, in the Diocese, we have a number of parallel discussions in the context of re-opening after Covid and dealing with the realities of today. We have to See the reality, Judge what the God-driven way forward is – and then Act.

These current discussions are taking place as follows...

1. Council of Priests.

This body of clergy has three work streams: a, Laity - Preparing for Leadership; b, Diocesan Planning for the Future; c, Care of Clergy.

2. Diocesan Pastoral Council.

This has undertaken bespoke training on Discernment in the tradition of St Ignatius of Loyola, and members have been looking at support for Parish Pastoral Councils, especially in the context of prayerful discernment.

3. Synodal Working Party.

This group of six people is examining the Vatican material sent to every diocese in the world, and preparing a format tailored for use in each of our parishes.

And what does this have to do with discerning the path ahead? Facing the future and being synodal are not two separate issues. We have to seek where the Holy Spirit is leading us in a changed world – and we are called to do that discernment process together.

The hoped for fruits of the synodal process are not just a greater clarity about how we can be a Church on mission in modern Ireland, and specifically in this Diocese. The fruits should also include a greater sense of being a community of disciples, discerning together – and thus becoming more like salt to the earth and light to the world.

The timeline I envisage is as follows:

- Late October – material provided to parishes after consultation with the relevant bodies;



- November – local conversations with all age-groups about the response to the Vatican’s questions;
 - January – a diocesan or deanery meeting(s) to hear from around the diocese;
 - February – the compilation of the Diocesan response;
 - March/April – transmission to Maynooth for compilation of one Irish national submission;
 - May-June - a review of how the November process worked, to inform how we develop a wider national conversation in the context of the Irish Synodal Pathway 2021-2026.
- These are exciting times. We

hope that this whole process can be accompanied by a Diocesan wide campaign of prayer for guidance. We pray for an outpouring of the breath of the Holy Spirit on our Diocese - for “Unless the Lord builds the house, in vain do the builders labour” (Psalm 127).

In Christ’s Church, there are many gifts. There is space for everyone in the conversations and in the prayer. And, unless we undertake this process to discern God’s way forward, we will labour in vain.

If we begin with an openness to the Holy Spirit, great things are possible in our day as well.

“Let us allow Jesus the Living Bread to heal us...”

– Pope Francis

“How different is Christ, who presents Himself with love alone, from all the powerful and winning messiahs worshipped by the world! Jesus unsettles us; He is not satisfied with declarations of faith, but asks us to purify our religiosity before His Cross, before the Eucharist. We do well to spend time in adoration before the Eucharist in order to contemplate God’s weakness. Let us make time for adoration.

Let us allow Jesus the Living Bread to heal us of our self-absorption, open our hearts to self-giving, liberate us from our rigidity and self-concern, free us from the paralyzing slavery of defending our image, and inspire us to follow Him wherever He would lead us.” (Pope Francis – 52nd International Eucharistic Congress in Budapest, September 2021)



“Let our Adoration never cease”

– Pope John Paul II

“The Church and the world have a great need for Eucharistic worship. Jesus awaits us in this Sacrament of Love. Let us not refuse the time to go to meet Him in Adoration, in contemplation

full of faith, and open to making amends for the serious offences and crimes of the world. Let our Adoration never cease”. (Pope John Paul II in his Apostolic Exhortation ‘Dominicae Cenae’)

The Rosary – a powerful prayer to say for our families, our country and world

by Mary McMEnamin



missionaries who prayed the Rosary in the house faithfully every day.

These men were missionaries to the Japanese people. They were non-military, but because Germany and Japan were allies during World War II, they were permitted to live and minister within Japan during the war. Not only did they all survive with relatively minor injuries, but they all lived well past that awful day with no radiation sickness, no loss of hearing or any other visible long term effects.

They were interviewed and examined numerous times by scientists and health care workers about their remarkable experience, and they say they believe that they survived because they were living the message of Fatima. They lived and prayed the Rosary daily in their home.

The second miracle attributed to the Rosary is related to the Battle of Lapento, on October 7, 1571. At the end of the crusades, Catholic naval forces in the battle with Muslim forces were at a decided disadvantage in number and resources.

Knowing the odds for victory were poor, St Pope Pius V requested all of Europe to pray the Rosary. While performing his duties in the Vatican, miles away from the battle, the good Pope is said to have suddenly stood up at the moment of victory, gone over to a window and exclaimed "the Christian fleet is victorious", while shedding tears of gratitude to God.

Through the power of the Rosary, the Catholic forces

soundly defeated the Muslims Turks. Admiral Andrea Doria, commanding the Catholic forces, carried a small image of Our Lady of Guadalupe into battle. This image is now venerated in the Church of San Stefano, in Aveto Italy.

The third is concerning Catholic Austria undergoing the tyrannical rule of communist Russia for three years after World War 2.

A Franciscan priest, named Fr Petrus, remembered the story of how Christians in the 16th Century had defeated the Turks at the Battle of Lapento through the Rosary, despite being greatly outnumbered.

Fr Petrus launched a Rosary Crusade and 70,000 people pledged to say the Rosary daily for the intention of Austria becoming free from Russian rule. Austria was valuable to the Soviets because of its strategic location and rich resources.

On May 13, 1955, the anniversary of the first apparition of Our Lady of Fatima, the atheistic Russian regime, in a completely unprecedented move, signed an agreement to leave Austria. Not one person was killed and not even one shot was fired.

Today, historians and military strategists still cannot explain how or why the Russians pulled out of Austria. Those devoted to the Rosary of our Holy Mother know exactly the reason.

These stories illustrate the power of the Rosary. Let us pray the Rosary for our families, for our country and our world.

Rosary gift for St Columba's Kilrea children

CHILDREN in the two primary four classes of St Columba's Primary School, Kilrea, got a wonderful surprise when their parish priest visited to present each of them with beautiful

Rosary beads.

The P4 pupils will be preparing for their First Confession and First Holy Communion, and when they were unable to attend Mass due to poor weather conditions,

Fr John Cargan came to the school and presented them with a beautiful set of rosary beads to mark the beginning of October - the month of the Rosary.



Annual procession of prayer



The annual procession of prayer from St Eugene's Cathedral to St Columba's Church, Long Tower took place on October 1, the Feast of St Therese.

Good turnout at Derry Rosaries

FOR the annual Coastal Rosary, which now includes gatherings at Grottos to pray, Fr Sean O'Donnell led prayer at the Immaculate Conception Grotto, in the Waterside.

Almost 70 people turned out to join Fr Sean in praying the outdoor Rosary for Faith & Life in Ireland.

There was also a good turnout by men to gather to publicly

pray together, on the street in Guildhall Square, Derry, a Rosary of reparation, repentance and conversion on October 2.



A number of men in the Diocese responded to the call to gather in Derry to pray the Rosary for life.



Fr Sean O'Donnell led the Rosary for Faith and Life at the Immaculate Conception Grotto in the Waterside.



Praying the Rosary for Faith and Life at the Immaculate Conception Grotto as part of the Coastal and Grotto Rosaries prayed around the country.

Seven Sisters Apostolate praying for Derry priests

THE Seven Sisters Apostolate, which began in America 11 years ago with a lady who felt “a nudge to pray more frequently and intentionally” for her priest, now has at least three groups in Ireland and two of them are in the Derry Diocese, within the Three Patrons Parish.

Seanán Zaltron, who lives in the Muff area, is one of the ‘seven sisters’ involved with the group in Carnhill, which was started by her mother two years ago and is made up from family members and friends. The other group is in Galliagh.

Explaining what is involved in the Apostolate, which is described as “a call to strengthen the Church by ensuring that a Holy Hour is prayed each day of

the week for the sole intention of a specific priest or bishop”, Seanán said: “Each of the seven women take a holy hour covering each day of the week, which is ideally spent in the chapel and even better if during Eucharistic Adoration.

“During their hour of prayer, they intercede for their parish priest – meaning that the parish priest benefits from the prayers offered during a holy hour every day of the week, every week of the year by these seven women”.

“There is nothing too structured about it,” added Seanán, pointing out that there is a booklet covering how the Apostolate first started and suggested prayers.

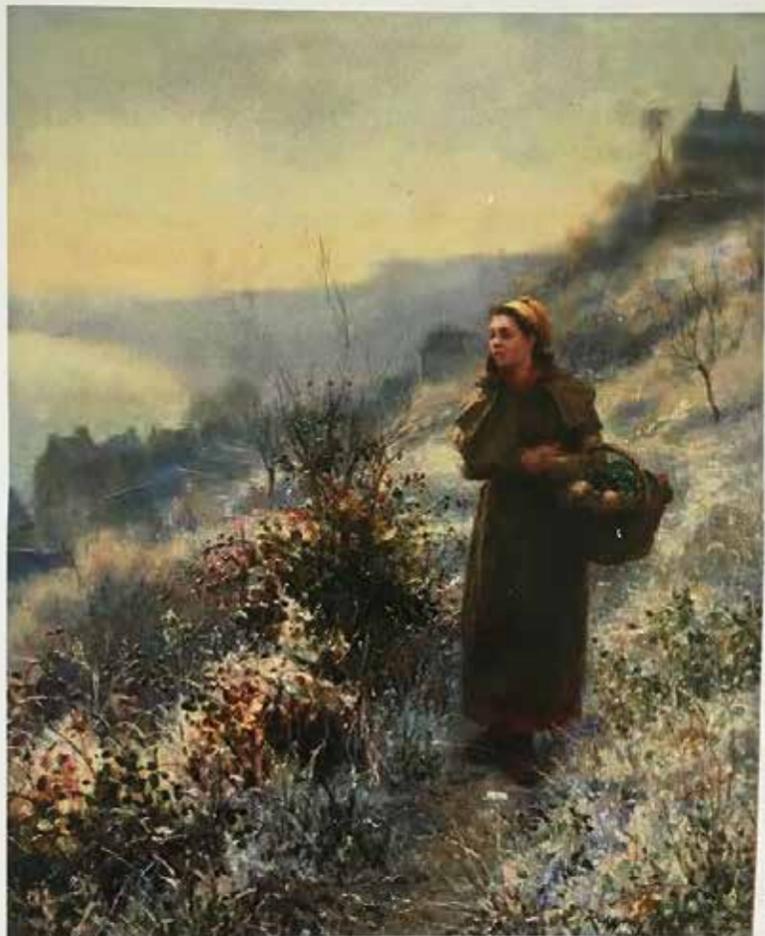
She continued: “It is going really well in America, where there

is now also the Seven Brothers Apostolate, who do fasting for priests every day, while the Sisters do the praying”.

If more than seven women desire to pray in this manner, a core group of seven is designated and the others may substitute or provide additional hours or prayer. The commitment of one hour per week of prayer is asked for a period of one year, but can continue beyond that.

Anyone who sets up a group is asked to register via email with the Seven Sisters Coordinator. For further information and contact details visit the Apostolate’s website at www.sevensistersapostolate.org.

Seven Sisters Apostolate



Seeking a quietness in the day, in the midst of your usual routines, you steal away to pray for your beloved Pastor - unbeknownst by most - effecting eternal affairs.

May God richly reward you - now and later - for your fidelity and sacrifices.

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight.... Heb 4:13a

World Mission Sunday

WORLD Mission Sunday takes place on October 24 and this year’s message is “We Cannot Remain Silent – we cannot but speak about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:20).

For almost 200 years now, funding to support mission dioceses and overseas missionaries, who deliver projects mostly across Africa, Asia and Latin America, has been

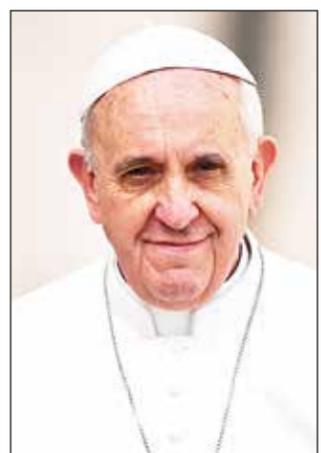
co-ordinated and collected by the Pontifical Mission Societies (PMS), on behalf of the Pope.

The Irish branch of the PMS was better known as World Missions Ireland, but is now being rebranded as Missio Ireland.

On World Mission, Sunday collections will take place at Masses across the Derry Diocese, as well as throughout the Universal Church so that

Catholics may give what they can to help support struggling dioceses in the developing world.

As well as promoting the work of missionaries in poor and remote communities, the funds raised from World Mission Sunday will help build vital infrastructure, including churches, medical clinics, nurseries and schools.



Pope’s monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during October for:

Missionary Disciples : We pray that every baptised person may be engaged in evangelisation, available to the mission, by being witnesses of a life that has the flavour of the Gospel.

Prayer for Priests

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

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

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

Bless, in a special way,
Your servant

Father....

Send your Spirit upon him so that he may always walk in the path of faith, hope and love, in the footsteps of Christ, the eternal priest, who offered Himself on the cross for the life of the world. Amen.

Remember in prayer:

Fr Colum Clerkin (Oct 1st)
Fr Roland Colhoun (2nd)
Fr Michael Collins (3rd)

Fr Oliver Crilly (4th)
Fr Patrick Crilly (5th)
Fr Brendan Crowley (6th)
All priests (7th)
All priests (8th)
All priests (9th)
Msgr Brendan Devlin (10th)
Fr James Devine (11th)
Fr Peter Devlin (12th)
Fr Fintan Diggin (13th)
Fr Brendan Doherty (14th)
All priests (15th)
All priests (16th)
Fr John Doherty (17th)
All priests (18th)
Fr Michael Doherty (19th)
Fr Patrick Doherty (20th)
Mgr Andrew Dolan (21st)
Fr Brian Donnelly (22nd)
Msgr Joseph Donnelly (23rd)
Fr Liam Donnelly (24th)
All priests (25th)
Fr John Downey (26th)
All priests (27th)
All priests (28th)
Fr Jack Farrell (29th)
All priests (30th)
Fr John Farren (31st)

St Therese of Lisieux teaches the meaning of Christian suffering

by Fr Stephen Quinn OCD

I want in this article to concentrate on the final 16 months of Therese's life. For years, she had been struggling with the implications of her vocation and what it was that God had asked of her behind the high walls of Carmel. And, in her reflections, she had come to some clarity about that vocation. She believed that she could offer herself as a sacrifice to God's merciful love; she would confidently cling to the heavenly Father's love for her, and not allow one little sacrifice to escape so that she could become love herself.

In the Carmel, she wanted to be love in the heart of the Church, the love by which that Church loved its Lord. To Him, who had given His life for her, she would try to give hers in return, as totally as she could. For love is nothing less than to give all and to give oneself. Love for love.

It is easy to be bowled over by grand words and the fine sentiments that we find in Therese. There is a real danger that the words could remain just that, words. Words must be tried in the fires of experience before they can have any substance. At the very time she discovered her vocation to love, God chose that moment of discovery to coincide with that very vocation being tempered in the fires of real life. One Easter, her life in the Carmel was tossed around by the dual forces of terminal disease and spiritual crisis.

From 1894, Therese had begun to show that the austerities of the rule of the monastery were starting to take a physical toll on her body. She suffered continuous sore throats and a persistent cough. These were signs that bigger trouble was looming, but none of them were ever picked up. On Holy Thursday 1896, she had barely got to bed when she felt "something like a stream" come bubbling up to her mouth. The next morning, she discovered that the stream had been blood. It was the harbinger of tuberculosis, the 19th century's cancer. The disease galloped through populations and was a sentence of death. The tuberculosis slowly overwhelmed her system, unpicking her grip on life.

The symptoms of this ravaging disease started to multiply. Therese suffered terrible fevers that made her body literally burn like fire, she perspired at a ferocious rate, her body became dehydrated, and she was constantly thirsty. The disease then proceeded to work itself into her other organs, her stomach and intestines, and she became incapable of eating much of anything without vomiting. The

pain of this advancing disease can be best understood after an instant with the doctor, who insisted on her forcing herself to drink some milk. Therese had reached such a pathetic state that she could only describe it as "poison". Because of this inability to endure even the smallest morsels, her body lost all its mass and she became emaciated.

Maybe, the most negative aspect of the disease was that it had corrupted one lung and was working its way into the bottom half of the other. Every breath became a struggle. She would go through fits of coughing that made it impossible to breathe, her sister Celine, commented that it was atrocious to watch her struggle to catch her breath and never be quite sure that it would always happen.

Tuberculosis opened the possibility for another unlooked-for imitation of her Lord; just as He died upon the cross of asphyxia, so was she slowly suffocating. She, herself, said of her sickness that it was "enough to make one go out of one's mind". While she lay on her sick bed, she made an amazing admission to what was running through her spirit. She asked her sister not to leave any of the poisonous medicines around her bed. She openly confessed, "if I had not had any faith, I would have committed suicide without an instant's hesitation."

Dark night

At the same time as her physical organism was being ravaged by this terrible disease, Therese was hit by a second terrible wave of what is commonly known as the dark night of the soul. She tells us that before the dark night, she enjoyed such a lively faith that the thought of Heaven made up all her happiness. She was so convinced of the power of the faith that she was unable to believe that there could actually be living people who could live without the knowledge of God. She believed that they could not be telling the truth, or that they were speaking in opposition to their own consciences.

A few days after that experience of the blood, her soul was invaded by the thickest darkness. Therese found it difficult to translate into words the experience that she was enduring. When she did try to describe it, she likened it to being forced to travel along a dark tunnel that showed absolutely no light. On another occasion she came up with the metaphor of being covered by a "thick fog"; the mists of this fog were so dense that they blotted out the sun entirely.

One can only imagine her disorientation and confusion

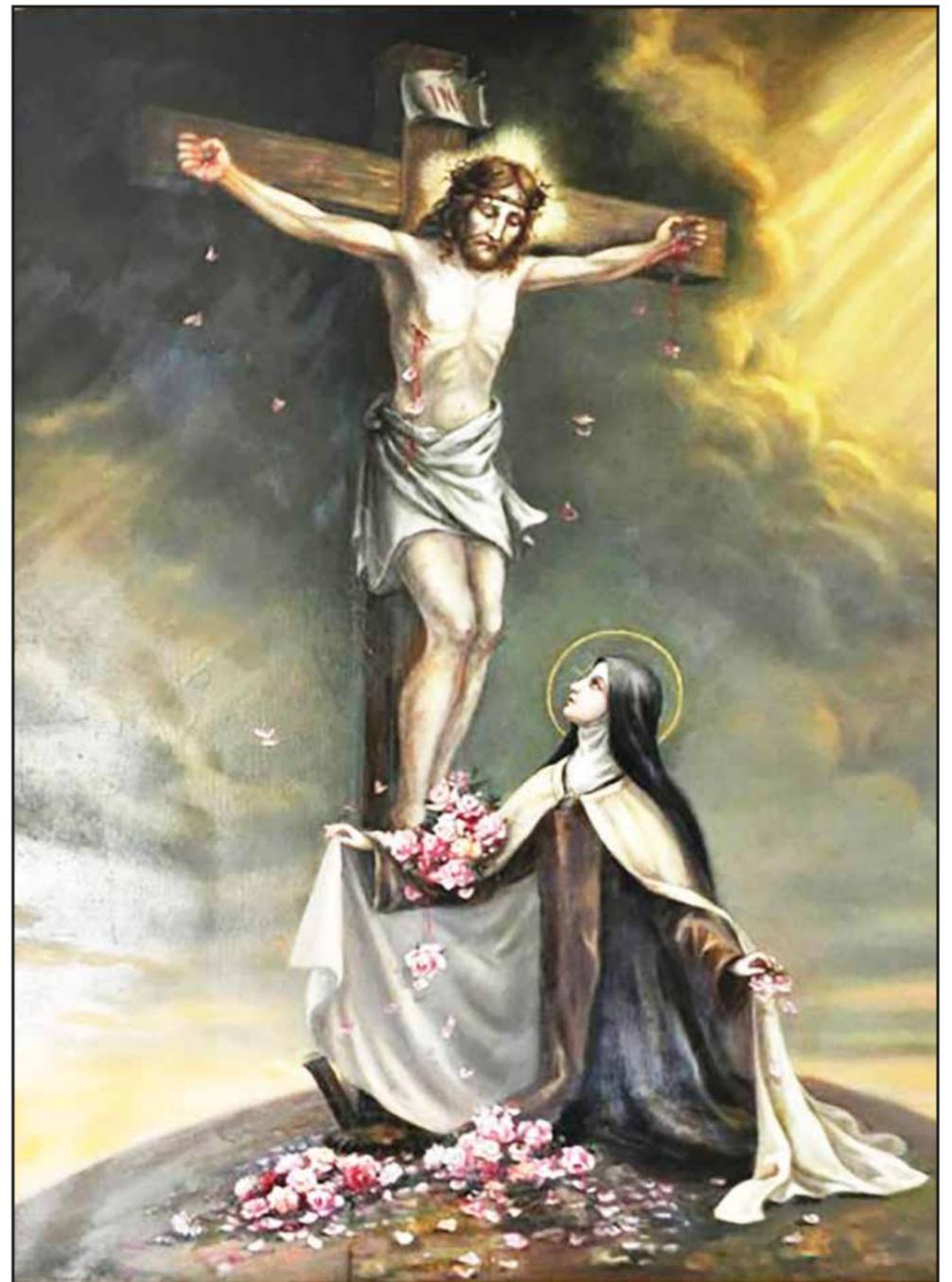
at all the lights that she used to live by and rejoice in suddenly being doused. The darkness only seemed to intensify. The darkness appeared to have voices that started to entice and deride her. These horrible voices suggested that all her great desires, her little way, her whole spiritual life were all delusions. They seemed to say to her, "you are dreaming about the light, about a country fragrant with perfumes, you are dreaming of the eternal possession of the creator, death will not give you what you hope for, only deeper night: the night of nothingness."

Nothingness threatened to swallow up everything. She had consecrated herself to love Jesus as her unique bridegroom, but He had retreated behind this thick fog, leaving nothing for her to hold on to. He left her no note of when the dark clouds would break or give her even a hint of when He would return. Without Him, the very thought of Heaven disgusted her and left her empty. All that time she felt the ache of His absence and all her desires went unrequited. In some ways, this dark night of the soul was worse and more trying than any illness, even one as awful as Tuberculosis.

There is a temptation in the faith to put the saints on such a high pedestal, to create such a distance between them and us, that they seem to be hardly human at all, and that they can have nothing in common with "real people." But here, in the struggles of human life, we find that both Therese and all the saints are flesh and blood, that the very same fragility and weakness pumps around her every bit as much as us. Therese knew real life! Therese suffered! Therese has real sympathy with how helpless we can often be!

The whole gamut of our own experiences is scrunched in those problems that came into Therese's life. There is debilitating disease, the stress of fighting with illness, growing symptoms of a real problem, excruciating pain, a terminal diagnosis, and the throws of death. Mingled with and cemented into that illness are anxiety, fear, depression, confusion, darkness, identity crisis, and even temptation to suicide.

This article is not written to draw attention to the agony of the end of her life, nor does it rejoice in her pain. No! Rather it looks to her to walk ahead of us on the course of life. At some point, one or both of these forces will come knocking, whether we want them to or not. When they do come, we receive one of them as if God has forgotten us somehow, we get a



second and He is punishing us, we get a third and He has abandoned us or worse, maybe He does not exist after all.

Witness

Believe me, there is no blame in what I say. Being a priest, I see at close quarters what some people have to go through. People carry crushing weights at times in their lives. No one except the one going through it really knows what it is like. Anybody who says they do is a fool. We do not rejoice in Therese's pain; absolutely not, we rejoice in the witness that she bears to us despite the deconstruction of her body and the darkness of soul.

Therese gives witness that illness and doubt are not the last word on anyone's life. In the midst of her troubles, she spoke loudly and clearly, "I assure you, the chalice is filled to the brim...But God is not going to abandon me, I'm sure...He has never abandoned me."

We put so much store in sensation and feeling. When we are feeling good, all is right with the world. When we are feeling bad, nothing is right. When we feel nothing, we assume God has gone, departed, left us on our own. Therese knew that there was a deeper wisdom to the world, that sin had twisted this world out of the firm grip of God. The profoundest symptom of this twisting is human suffering.

Yet, it was precisely that place of suffering and death that God used to remedy the situation. Christ suffered the physical agony of the cross's torture. He endured all the lights of Heaven to be switched out as He hung on the cross. He had cried out in a loud voice, "My God why have you forsaken me?" On that cross, He gave everything away until there was nothing left to give. What, on first appearances, just seemed empty violence, suffering and death was the way God the Son loved the World. He suffered everything with us and for us. There was no place too low or too much that He wasn't prepared to go. Feeling has nothing to do with it. Feeling can't sense what are the true depths of matters. Faith alone recognises the depths of what is going on in Jesus.

His love alone could turn day into night, and transform a struggling and broken body and make it like His own in glory. Without any of the poetry, Therese realised that in her darkness God was closer to her than when all was seemingly well. Without her seeing and feeling His presence, He came right up beside her and took her weight from her. On His shoulders, He carried her tuberculosis. He hung from the cross of her darkness. He had gone nowhere; He had always been with her. In the depths, He

came up closer to her than ever before, she just was not able to distinguish that presence.

In recognition of this, as she was dying, Therese made two extraordinarily important gestures. At about three o'clock on the last afternoon of her life, Therese, with one last effort, forced herself up on her bed. She said not a word, but extended her two arms, forming the Sign of the Cross. A gesture that said it all really, a gesture of identification that all she had been through could not steal her heart from her. There, in a place of darkness and gloom, she was with the one she loved. In that place, she loved Him more than she had ever in her whole life.

And just to emphasise her point, a few moments before death she made the last words that she spoke on this Earth about love. She said, "My God I love you". A last testament to us that all we have is love, love is all that matters, love is not about feeling much but giving much to the one that we love.

Love was her last word. Do we get that Word? That the gamut of dark and difficult experiences do not have the last word, if we do not let them. We can carry them behind Jesus, we can know that He is closer to us in them than at any other stage in our lives, and we can love Him no matter what.

Therese reminds those who want to bypass the Church that it is only in the Church that we can truly love God - *Bishop Philip Boyce ocd*



THE Carmelite Fathers in Inna Retreat Centre, Termonbacca, were delighted to welcome people to the monastery for this year's Little Flower Triduum, as they begin to open up their in-person ministry more and more, and there was a special welcome, too, for the guest speaker, fellow Carmelite, Bishop Philip Boyce ocd.

Focusing on the life and writings of St Therese of Lisieux, whose Feast Day is October 1, the theme of this year's Triduum of prayer was 'I will spend my Heaven doing good on earth'.

Born in Alencon, France, on January 2, 1873, Therese was the last of nine children born to Sts Louis and Zelig Martin, and one of five nuns in the family.

From a very early age, Therese had wanted to give herself to God. She struggled with her own stubbornness and suffered a lot because of her sensitive and scrupulous nature.

Entering the Carmelite Convent in Lisieux aged 15, she spent the next nine years of her life there, living the life of a Carmelite nun with great simplicity and humility.

On her faith journey, she

discovered what she called her 'Little Way', which was one of trust and total surrender to God's Merciful Love. At the end of her life, she realised that her mission was about to begin with her spending her Heaven doing good on earth.

Therese died on September 30, 1897, aged 24, and was canonised and proclaimed a Doctor of the Church in 1997. Her autobiography, 'Story of a Soul', has sold millions of copies and has been translated into over 50 languages.

Bishop Boyce told those taking part in the Triduum: "Little Therese is so near to us all because her message is so steeped in the Gospel, in the words of Jesus. They are life-giving if we take them to heart. It's these words that little Therese took to heart and by living them she became a great saint.

"The words of Christ are relevant and up-to-date at all times and in every century. In different centuries, we have different people who lived the very same Gospel that we have, and by living these words of Christ and His apostles they became saints."

Remarking that St Therese had "opened up an avenue of love, mercy and hope for the people of her time and for all time", Bishop Boyce added: "Her mission was to love Jesus and to make Him loved. A legion of little of souls have followed her example in loving Jesus and entered the consecrated life."

He went on to say: "Each saint is an echo of the heart of God for the generation in which they live. This is the case for St Therese. Heart speaks to heart, and the message of St Therese struck a chord in the hearts of countless souls, drawing them to the simplicity that is proclaimed by Jesus in the Gospel."

"Therese reminds those who want to bypass the Church that it is only in the Church that we can truly love God. The Church is His Mystical Body," said Bishop Boyce, adding: "The more we truly love Jesus, the more we shall love and honour the Church."

"The lives of the saints, who are the great lovers of God, and their writings, have a message for all of us; a message that will last for all time."

"St Therese," he noted, "tells

us how she finally found her vocation in the Church. She had been looking for it for some time, until she looked at all the different types of saints. In some ways, she found herself in all of them, as they were all lovers of God. She wanted to be like them all."

He quoted Therese saying that she understood "that the Church had a heart that was burning with love", that it was love that had made the martyrs shed their blood, and so she cried out, "at last, I have found my vocation... my vocation is love. I have found my place in the Church. In the heart of the Church, my Mother, I shall be love".

Remarking that the Little Flower had, undoubtedly, been inspired by the Holy Spirit, Bishop Boyce added: "It placed her in the real world. It made her life very dear to God and very fruitful for the Church."

Saying that the high ideal that Christ puts before us in the Gospel is to love, he concluded: "It is open to all of us; to love as St Therese would like us to and then she will surely listen to our requests and shower many roses upon us."



The relationship between wounds and sin

by Kathleen Cullivan

“Search me God and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Psalm 139: 23-24).

IN looking at the relationship of wounds to sin there are several ways to examine this. It can be done academically, by reading and quoting other people's thoughts and works on this. Also, the Old and New Testament gives us different insights into it. While I will include some of this, I believe I learned most from the many people who allowed me to enter into their sin and their wounds. It is here, I believe, that I saw the many faces of God and our unique relationship with Him.

It is a difficult subject because it belongs in a very unique way to each individual soul. I also learned the way wounds and sins can separate us from God. This very personal, individual relationship each of us has with God renders it a subject not easily tied down; and which I feel is impossible to do any real justice to. All I can hope to do is touch on it in this article.

To this end, I would like to quote Meister Eckhart, whom, I believe, describes beautifully how difficult it is to bring God down to our understanding when he said: “They do wrong who take God in a particular way. They take the way rather than God. He is infinitely beyond language. He is the God beyond words”.

“ Every one of us, to varying degrees, have been wounded. We came into a wounded world with wounded people. A world which is full of brokenness and sin. We were born with a very open heart.

”

Old Testament

I used to think that the first sin was committed by Adam and Eve. I think we all know it goes back further, to the Angels themselves. When Satan looked at himself and saw his beauty, pride took him over and he wanted the adoration that was given to God. He wanted to be God. All he had been given by God wasn't enough. He wanted to overturn all that God had done. He was prepared to rebel against God in order to do this.

We all carry some of these traits within ourselves. Pride

leads us to pursue things our way; to believe that we know better, where we often feel that our way is the right way. We know that this act of rebellion against God occurred before the beginning of human history. This was the first sin against God and it happened before the existence of the human race. When Satan tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, he wanted to destroy all that God had created. Pride had become resentment and bitterness.

Adam and Eve succumbed to his temptation to do the one thing God had asked them not to do. I like to believe that by requesting Adam and Eve to obey Him that God was not setting up some kind of test for them, but rather trying to protect us from the harm that the devil had already done. By our first parents going against God's wishes, the consequences were the opening of our eyes to good and evil.

By not adhering to God's wishes, we lost our innocence and our peace. We inherited the difficulty of division within ourselves. This was pain and hurt for God and the beginning of pain and hurt for the human race. Those of us who are parents will know how it feels when a child rebels against what is best for them. What Adam and Eve had done could not be turned back. They now had knowledge which changed their very soul. Here was the first sin and wound intertwined and the beginning of the blame game. So vast and unbearable was this first sin and wound that nobody took responsibility. Adam and Eve ran away. Eve blamed Satan and Adam blamed Eve. Small wonder we were thrown out. How well we know this scenario, like when we make a wrong choice and need the humility to own it, or else pride will take over and rush us to disown it rather than face it.

Here was the beginning of our own struggles and our separation from God. The choice to run away or face our problems. To blame rather than take responsibility. To make excuses and avoid the truth. To be responsible for our own judgements and actions. Every one of us, to varying degrees, have been wounded. We came into a wounded world with wounded people. A world which is full of brokenness and sin. We were born with a very open heart. Nobody can look into the eyes of a small child without seeing the love which God created in us. It will not be long until we experience that brokenness and the anguish it will create within us.

Family

We are born into a family and we are all affected by each other in that family. Our different personalities and the complex interweave of relationships that exist in any family setting creates natural difficulties. People live together in a family. Each family has its own feeling. We talk about ‘Our Joe’ or ‘Our Tommy’. There is a sense of connection. This may break down at times in arguments or differences but, overall, we recognise ourselves as a family. Each one of us affects other members of the family. Any problems coming into the family can affect us all. We live in union and togetherness.

Wounds can also come from parents and this may not always be from big traumas. Sometimes it can come from the ordinariness of living. Parents being busy with small children and all the responsibilities that come with family life. Each child often jostling for their own relationship with their parents. Parents can go through worrying times, even times of depression. Often they are taken up by their own problems and needs and are unable to give adequate attention to caring for the child. A child is sensitive and vulnerable and absorbs all this. Even a small baby will cry at the sound of raised voices. The child will feel fear and react to it. We all know how tightly a child will hold a parent when scared. Physical presence and touch is healing.

There is a beginning awareness

“ Some of us are subject to more emotional hardship and distress than others. Some are overloaded at an early age. We learn to short circuit our emotions by repression and avoidance.

”

of negative emotions. We also begin to feel hurt, anger, anxiety, at an early age, and, as we grow, possibly a loss of confidence or feelings of insecurity. These wounds can remain in the memory of the child, producing difficulties in the future. Every child at some time will feel let down by their parents. Even the most marvellous parents can never fulfil every hope and need in a child.

While there is great beauty in every human being, there is also fear and fragility. Each parent plays a role that can't be fulfilled

by anyone else. Children look to their fathers to lay down the rules and to enforce them. They also look to them to provide a feeling of security, both physical and emotional. How many of us have said to our children, your father will hear about this or that. A mother plays a different but huge role in a child's life; caring for them, teaching them, loving them and so much more.

Again, how many of us have found it difficult to stand over a decision we make because of our emotions getting in the way. A father and mother complement each other and both play a different role. The way a child develops is largely attributed to the role that their parents' play in their life. Early life experiences can mould us. Attitudes towards oneself and others are learned in the family. Where this relationship between child and parent is broken through absence, non communication or struggling for recognition, through neglect or loss, we are often left not at peace with ourselves or one another. As children belong to a world of feeling and cannot yet work with the intellect, they are like sponges absorbing everything that goes on around them.

The home

Some seem to have more to contend with than others. Many have suffered physical and sexual violence within their home. Possibly from another family member who is trusted and loved. This can leave confusion, distortion of what truth is, and broken trust. All these wounds can play out and lead to low confidence and self esteem, competitiveness, inequality, bitterness and even violence.

Often, we try to fill the emptiness inside through alcohol, drugs, relationships, or other distractions, all of which keeps breaking down and leaves us on an endless search, as we don't recognise that the problem is within ourselves. It may be many years before we are able to find ourselves again. We try to find external answers to address all this inner turmoil. Sometimes leaving home can seem like the answer, determined to make a different life, only to carry the problems with us and into new relationships.

Questions I often hear are: “Who am I?” “How did I get to this point?” “This was not my family”. When we are able to get to the point of asking very searching questions like these, we are acknowledging that something is wrong. We may feel a lot of fear at this time, but awareness is the beginning of any change. We cannot change what we cannot see.

Woundedness and sin

This woundedness often leads to sin. And sin is often the smoke pointing to the fire of woundedness. Sin is often the symptom of deeper heart issues



Kathleen Cullivan

felt during childhood, which lie in confusion or a buried memory within us. It creates emotional scar tissue, which we then live out in a destructive way in our lives. I remember a family in which one of the sons, at a young age, was

“ Often, we are disappointed with our own actions or we may justify them with anger or taking others down. This is the pain of Adam and Eve, but with more of a sense of responsibility.

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jailed for stealing a motorbike. He also battered the man he stole it from. He said he had not intended to hurt him, but when he started hitting the man he couldn't stop. He described himself as taken over by anger. As a child, he had sought and yearned for his father's attention. His father was always busy with his own life and this was left for the mother to fulfill. Disappointment, hurt and apathy filled the son's heart, finally coming out of him in a way so destructive to himself and others.

Some of us are subject to more

emotional hardship and distress than others. Some are overloaded at an early age. We learn to short circuit our emotions by repression and avoidance. This deprives us of the vital knowledge that living and voicing our feelings can give us. We are too afraid of being destroyed by them. Often, we unknowingly participate in sin through not being able to access the wounds that have slipped into memory, which may seem distant or a long time ago, and we don't recognise how it plays out in our life today. We all see this in people and often ask how they can make the same mistake over and over, or, why is he or she so harsh.

Often, we struggle to understand the difference between the pain of sin and the pain of woundedness. We might think of our woundedness as sinfulness. Our woundedness is not the result of our sin. It's the effects of others' sins against us. The wound of our own sin comes in the form of conflict within our own character. This is where we go against our own principles, standards or morals. We see this very much in substance and psychological addiction. When the cry from the heart becomes “I don't know who I am anymore”.

Often, we are disappointed with our own actions or we may justify them with anger or taking others down. This is the pain of Adam and Eve, but with more of a sense of responsibility. To totally blame wounds would be to avoid responsibility. Equally so, not to put my own behaviour in the

continued from page 26

context of wounds would lead to unbearable shame and relapse into the same sins again and again. I would begin to believe that this is who I am.

The past

We can't change the past, but we are responsible for how we remember the past. If I remain in anger and bitterness, I will always feel a victim to it. Being willing to see past hurts in my own present behaviour and taking responsibility for my behaviour creates an understanding of myself and brings back lost confidence. This is what will shape our future and recovery from those wounds and sins which are creating an obstacle to experiencing God's blessings in our life.

This willingness to become more open helps us see more clearly the steps I will need to take. I will need to level with or be honest with myself. I will need to confront myself, and take the myths and excuses away. I will need to move away from projecting how I feel inwardly onto others. I will need to speak my own truth. No longer will I feel a need to look at others' faults. As awareness of my own builds, so does understanding of others. Sometimes, we will need to allow others to be honest with us. This willingness will also bring that much longed for peace.

God has created us in the image of Himself. As original sin is in our DNA, so is crucifixion and resurrection. Crucifixion comes before resurrection. We cannot leapfrog over the wounds and sins to spirituality. We must go through them. But resurrection from our sins and wounds is promised.

“

The image which strikes me forcibly, and is maybe the only way in which we can both know and recover from our wounds and sins, is when God changed the whole trajectory and His Son came into the world.

”

Often I see people try to pray over the issues. While all forms of prayer are good; in this instance God wants to heal, and the deepest form of prayer is the cry of the heart - Lord, I can take no more...I acknowledge myself in my present state.

The image which strikes me forcibly, and is maybe the only way in which we can both know and recover from our wounds and sins, is when God changed the whole trajectory and His Son came into the world. Moving us on from the Old Testament, and bringing us to

a place where Christ would throw all the assumed knowledge that existed into confusion and show us a different way. He would ask us to love each other and to trust in Him. So, to recover from both our wounds and our sins, this peace is promised, but only comes through seeking forgiveness and complete trust in God.

In some ways, sin and wounds became intertwined. The image of Christ on the cross asking for forgiveness for all the evil around him can melt the most hardened heart. But He didn't stop there. He also said, "...for they know not what they do". Here, Christ seemed to acknowledge our woundedness and inability to see ourselves. If we can see how our own wounds play out in our life and how they cause us to hurt others, then we also must see how wounds play out in the lives of those around us. Only in this way can we understand the forgiveness which Christ asks for. Not just forgiveness for ourselves, but forgiveness for others. Both wounds and sins act as a block both in my relationships with others and with God.

I would like to finish with a quote from Mark 10:42-45 - "Jesus called the disciples to his side and said, 'You know that those considered to be rulers among the Gentiles lord it over their subjects, and their great ones make their authority over them felt. But this must not be the way with you. Instead, whoever wishes to become great among you must be the slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many'."

I often think of the grace needed to live this out. Could I achieve it in a lifetime? I think we all know that righteousness builds walls between ourselves and others. There is something gracious about taking responsibility. Listening is a true gift. So often the art of listening becomes 'when will it be my turn to speak'.

Some questions we could ask ourselves are - What do I need to do to find peace with my own wounds and sins? Do I recognise these issues in myself? Do I see how I act them out?

It's not always easy to get to the truth in ourselves. If the answer is, I don't know, then think about what that is like. This will open you up to yourself. We need to start where we are, always remembering it is not a finished journey for any of us.

I will finish with the Serenity Prayer...God grant me the serenity to accept what I can't change, courage to change what I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Always remember that the Holy Spirit will come into the openness we create in our heart through our efforts to be honest.

(Kathleen lives in Carnhill, within the Three Patrons Parish, and works as a well-experienced Addiction and Family Therapist within a residential setting.)

Monthly Matt Talbot Society prayer in St Eugene's

ON the first Monday of each month, there is a special time of prayer in St Eugene's Cathedral for those battling addiction and their families, with the Matt Talbot Prayer Society.

An alcoholic by age 13, the Dublin-born unskilled labourer, Matt Talbot was 28 years old when he took the pledge for three months in 1884, and then for six months, before taking it for life. Revered by many Catholics for his piety, charity and mortification of the flesh, he has been declared Venerable and is considered a patron of those struggling with alcoholism. The time of prayer includes the celebration of Mass and the following is the homily delivered by Fr Paul Farren at this month's gathering...

"You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself". Jesus told the man, "You have answered right, do this and life is yours".

Perhaps, our interpretation of life being ours doesn't really fit in with the requirements that were written down: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself'. Perhaps, how we interpret life being 'Ours' means that it's not possible to love God and our neighbour. Perhaps, it's not that we don't want to but it's simply the fact that there is

no capacity, there is no room to Love God and our Neighbour because our interpretation of Life being ours is just that, it's ours and therefore, that is what comes first.

We are the centre of our lives and everything revolves around us. The reality of this is that it actually takes life away from us; it shrinks the world we live in. When we are the central theme of our lives we are living in a very small world. It's amazing that with the growth in technology and the news streams that are available to us every minute of every day, and our ability to know what our neighbour is doing down the street and on the other side of the world, that our worlds are shrinking rather than growing. The protection and interests of self seem to be growing.

We can hear this and think that it's so true. We can recognise that this is happening all around us, but it's really difficult to acknowledge that this is actually happening to ourselves. We seem to have the ability to pick out this shrinking world in others. It's almost impossible to see it in ourselves. The reason is because it's so subtle in how it grows.

There is also a connection to when we are babies. When we

are babies, the world does revolve around us, the only thing that we think about is ourselves. We focus on what makes us happy. Enough to eat and drink, enough sleep and physical comfort. There is no requirement to understand the needs of others. There is no requirement to care for others. It is only when, or rather if, we mature that the needs of others are recognised. It's only when we mature that we can learn to be grateful for the people in our lives. It's only through maturity that we can learn to be grateful for the gift of our lives and the world that we live in. It's only with maturity that we can come to be truly grateful for everything that God has given us.

Gratitude

I read a quote by an old monk, who said: "The root of joy is gratefulness. It is not joy that makes us grateful; it is gratitude that makes us joyful". Very often, as teenagers, we don't have the maturity to be grateful to appreciate all that life has given us.

Our parents can be the best example of all, because it's often the case that the teenage child becomes embarrassed with their parents and they can even go on to resent them, even though the parents have given all they have to give to ensure the child has the best possible start in life. Then as that teenager matures and has some life experience themselves and,

perhaps, even become parents themselves, they then recognise just how wonderful and generous their parents are.

Tonight, we are gathered to pray for those that are suffering from addiction. Addictions can develop at any stage in life and everyone needs to be alert. However, there is a particular vulnerability when we are in our adolescence and teenage years. When we are in that period of moving from baby to adult. When we should be maturing and becoming grateful for all that God has given us in our lives.

Alcohol, drugs, pornography and gambling all delay, and can even prevent, children from maturing. It's interesting because the use of them makes a child feel mature but it's having the opposite effect. These things are like what the forbidden fruit was like in the Garden of Eden. They seem attractive, but when they are consumed and experienced they not only create an unsatisfiable desire, but they actually stop the very journey of maturity. They prevent the plan of life that God has for you.

Addiction can overwhelm not only those addicted but also those that love and care for them. Addiction can devastate entire families. The anchor in the sea of addiction is Jesus. Jesus can give us something to hold on to, it's the Cross of the crucifixion. Jesus suffers with those suffering from addiction, He suffers with the families of those suffering, but He also offers a path to freedom. Jesus heals, He leads to freedom. Jesus died for our freedom, for us to have life and have it to the full.

As he said in today's Gospel, "Do this and life is yours", the key for us from this Gospel today is to understand that it is only as living like the Good Samaritan is it possible to live in the size of the world that God wants us to live in. It is only by our focus being on God and our neighbour that we can truly live life to the full.

St Francis recognised that the material things of this world also blocked the journey to a mature relationship with God. In what the world would see as his crazy love of God, he even discarded the very clothes he was wearing, and the brown habit that we are familiar with today were the clothes of a beggar. We are all beggars with our hands out to God, seeking His Grace in our lives.

Lord help me to recognise everything in my life that is blocking my maturing in my relationship with you.

Matt Talbot intercede for us.

The first Monday prayer with the Matt Talbot Society in the Cathedral starts at 7.30 pm.

You can find the Mass at www.steugenesathedral.com and live on Facebook also. To enroll a name in the Society visit www.matttalbot-prayersociety.com.



Encounters with the Living Word *by Fr John McLaughlin ssc*

“ON a certain occasion, a relative came to visit Nasruddin, bringing him a goose as a gift. Nasruddin cooked the bird and shared it with his guest. In no time, another friend arrived and others after them, all alleging they were friends of the friend of the relative who had brought the goose. So, each had to be served as they sat down to be waited upon. Finally Nasruddin could take no more. He put a large spoon with warm water in front of the latest arrival. ‘What is this?’ the man demanded. ‘That,’ said Nasruddin, ‘is the soup of the soup of the goose that my relative brought me.’ Sometimes one hears of people who become followers of disciples of disciples of a man who had a personal experience of God. It is absolutely impossible to send a kiss through a messenger.” (Anthony de Mello)

Some years back, my friend, Sr Veronica Maguire made me a presentation for my 75th birthday. We had known each other for many years, participated in a Charismatic prayer group and often prayed on Sunday nights in preparation as a Core Group. So, we share a love of the Word of God and interest in the Mission of the Church. Veronica’s gift was an Icon, where St John is pointing to the bible. Veronica had prayed and fasted, as people do when they ‘cut’ an Icon, so that, as in all Icons, there are many levels of meaning. Fr Tom Casey remarked that an Icon is like a door and a window into the mystery indicated. (Ref - Mary in Other Traditions)

On a certain day in the Parish of St Mark’s, in Tallaght, I was assigned to lead the funeral of a young female teenager, who had simply died in her sleep. The Church in that young parish was full with young classmates and friends. I knew, as Fr Paddy Battelle the PP did, that this was a real challenge to our celebration. The night before, I took out a little booklet called ‘Bad things happen to Good People’, by the Jewish Rabbi Kushner, in a meditation on the Book of Job. I tried to take on, in the light of that, some of the questions that might be going through the minds and hearts of the young congregation, and I prayed through the questions and comments put to Job by his friends in his misfortune. Somehow, it seemed to give me peace and light as I stood before those sorrowing young girls and boys.

There is a distinction that I have had to remind myself of right through a long pastoral life: that between ‘Kairos’ and ‘Kronos’; God’s Time and our ordinary chronological passing of the hours and the days. This is well exemplified in the celebration of Advent in an increasingly secular world. And I know that many

parishes have incorporated it into their pastoral programmes.

A great friend of mine in Arklow, May Lynch, became eloquent about her pastor Fr Colm Gallagher because of just this initiative in November of every year; reading the texts from Isaiah for those four weeks put her firmly back in the ‘Kairos’ moments, and ‘saved her Christmas’, as she remarked. Martin Luther King, in his great sermons from the Exodus moments, was laying out that ‘Kairos’ moment for a whole generation, as many of his people came to realize. The great Brazilian scripture commentator, Carlos Mesters, was prophetic in his exposition of the ‘Suffering Servant Songs’ of Isaiah in his book, the ‘Suffering of the Servant of God’. His modern parable of the ‘House of the People of God’ is a lovely tale of how a People come once more to open and relish the long neglected Book of the Word. And, on the line of the ‘Lectio Divina’ approach, he proposed the three stages of ‘Pre-text’, ‘Text’ and ‘Con-text’. I know that some of his booklets are available in English, as well as Spanish and Portuguese.

One of the core texts of the New Testament is that of the ‘Sermon on the Mount’ and the ‘Beatitudes’. In the Eucharist preparation for families and children in Latin America and Chile, this text is presented in parchment-triptych form to all the families in the first year of their programme, with suitable comment from the person presiding over the liturgical ceremony. The Chilean priest-writer, Miguel Ortega included it as the principal text in his Letter to the Political Person!

Visiting the Holy Land, I recall the night with the sisters in the hotel at the Mountain of the Beatitudes. Some of us had gut problems and were wary of moving around, after an experience in a Jerusalem hostel, so we needed some curing and safe feeding. This was the background to our moment contemplating the mosaics on the ground outside the Basilica. They show the Beatitudes in three moments: the Old Testament equivalent, like the miracle of Elijah; the historical moments; and saints, like St Vincent de Paul, in whom were realized one or other of those Beatitudes. In a later moment, in a Seminar with a group of priests from all the Chilean Dioceses, the Columbian Oratorian priest and scripture scholar, Fidel Oñoro, made the whole ‘Sermon on the Mountain’ come alive for us. We felt that Jesus, the New Moses, was challenging us to bring this programme into play in our own lives. It was, indeed, a motivation for some of those priests, as in a later session with the Fiscal General, a respected Catholic

layman, to speak about the problem with the drug industry in all our areas, he offered to directly help priests who dared not make representations at local level, for fear of identification.

Inspiring

During my Maynooth days, many of us felt blessed by the arrival of a young Dominican professor of Sacred Scripture, Wilfred Harrington. His teaching of the Parables was enlightened and inspiring to us. And it was a novelty then to be encouraged to read other Bibles, like the Jerusalem Bible and the non-Catholic texts and authors, such as W H Dodd. He gave lively classes and was to write many books on the Bible, accessible to all. Many years later, my classmate from the Diocese of Elphin, Fr Tony Conroy, having lived and ministered for many years in Brazil, took a bus in Dublin towards Tallaght and the Dominican Priory. He felt the desire to personally thank Fr Wilfred for the treasures he had opened to him, and which proved of such value in his mission in the ‘favelas’ of San Paolo. They both continue to minister, thank God!

My own love affair with the Bible was, of course, also enriched by the same man and stood to me in a parallel ministry in Latin America. But more than that, I have to say that the principal source of daily inspiration came from the Office of the Church, which is savoured by very many lay Catholics today, like that group that I accompanied with Fr Tom Hanley, in Alto Auspicio, in Iquique in northern Chile. We had been reflecting and praying over the very recent social and national upheaval, and talking on a guiding letter from the Bishops, previous to sharing in public what the group was feeling about all the revolution. I remarked to Fr Tom afterwards that there was a real honesty and depth of prayer in that little and mixed group. He went on to corroborate that as he told me that, at least, five in the meeting said the Divine Office. It’s a huge lived-experience for all of us. I sometimes find it hard not to post a whole reflection or commentary on my Facebook of the day!

Testing myself, as I often do, on what are my texts of the moment, I often come back to Psalm 137 and the sentence, “I thank you Lord, for all your kindness and love, which excel all I ever knew of you. On the day I called you answered; you increased the strength of my soul.”

In the ‘Steps of St Paul’ was the title of a trip with Michael Walsh way back in the 70s to Turkey. He was a great and inspiring Catholic leader and, in places like Ephesus, he ascended the ancient galleries of Roman times and declaimed

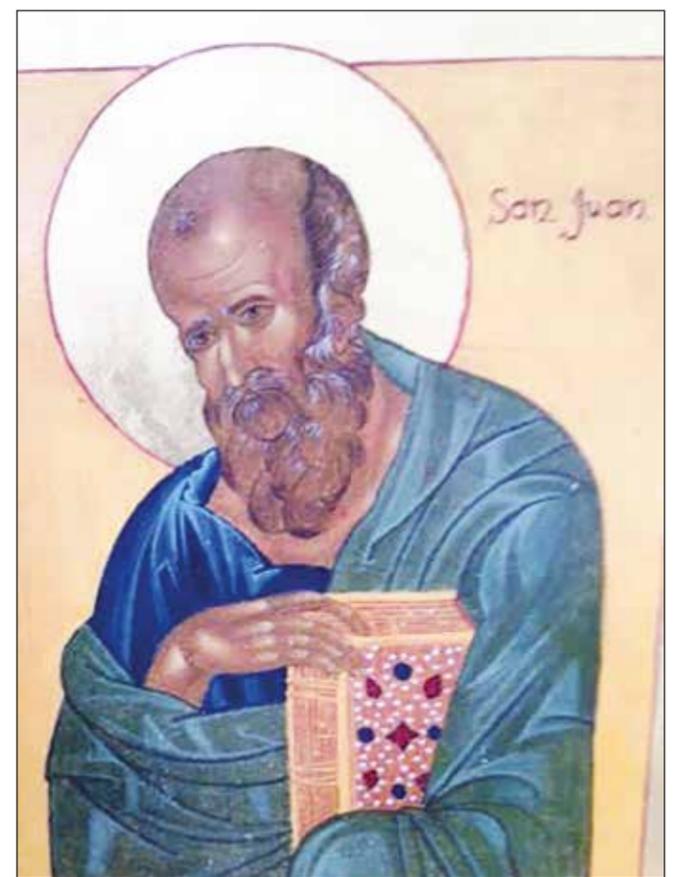
from Paul. When the text comes up in the Liturgy of Acts 20:17, where Paul bids farewell in Miletus to the Elders of Ephesus, whom he has summoned to meet him, I can see in my memory that morning in situ, where Michael Walsh was standing on a rock, there on the strand, declaiming with great feeling that moving text. Have a look at it some time!

In a parish in Santiago, I was helping in the formation of a group of adults who were preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation. In reality, I was only an acolyte to the then parish priest, Fr Carlos Muller, a very special French-German missionary, former prisoner of war, and expert on Church Music and Liturgy etc. He it was that led the group through the Missionary Journeys of St Paul with maps and passionate exhortations. I only had to distribute the material for this great and wise expounder of the Bible. Later on still, during the Church’s ‘Pauline Year’, under Pope Benedict, it was a joy to follow his exposition of the same themes and to learn that really it is a misnomer to speak of the ‘Conversion of St Paul’, who was never a pagan!

In these days, I am enjoying the book by fellow-Columban, Fr Tom O Reilly, recently published as ‘The Acts of the Apostles, a reading for Mission today’. I’m biased, of course, but it is really inspiring and accessible to anyone interested, and with all the references you might desire in every chapter!

During my years back in Merville, one of the unforeseen pleasures has been the Scripture Ecumenical Study Group through the winter months. Mostly focusing on the Old Testament books, such as Exodus, I and II Kings, Joshua and Genesis, there have been great insights coming from our common re-reading of these texts, with the late and great Fr Paddy Mc Goldrick being appreciated by Church of Ireland Pastor, Rev Suzanne Cousins, and Methodist leader, Rev Alison Gallagher, who has just left the area for new ministry in Killarney. With the others in the group, they each brought a wealth of insight and passion, and modern referrals to the conversations. I am grateful for the opportunity to share that great passion of mine!

As we ended the Sunday readings from the Gospel of St John Chapter 6 (August 22), there were good comments made on that choice or challenge facing the disciples, as to following or abandoning Jesus in the face of this mystery of giving us His Body and Blood. Bishop Barron, for instance, did not draw back on the reality that faces us all in the light of the Eucharistic Promise, while the Spanish Biblicist, Jose Antonio Pagola commented



with a phrase from a French theologian, Jean Onimus: “Why should you be the private property of preachers, doctors and other erudite authorities, You who have spoken simple things, so directly, words that continue to be words of life for all mankind”.

And Pagola goes on, “If many Christians who have been going away from the Church in these years had known directly the Gospels, they would have felt once again that expressed one day by Peter, ‘Lord, to whom are we to go? You have the words of life eternal. We believe’.”

Legion of Mary

The Legion of Mary has been celebrating its Centenary and Bishops across Ireland are joining with their local Presidium celebrations of this. In Dublin, where The Legion was founded and left many marks, Archbishop Dermot Farrell gave a challenging - even prophetic - address to the Concilium there, and Scripture looms large in it: “As anyone who is pastorally engaged knows, we live in a rapidly changing world, and in a pastoral and ecclesial situation that changes before our eyes. We cannot evangelize the past; we can only bring the Good News of Christ to our today and our tomorrow. This is the perennial mission of the Church. As long ago as 1943, in his encyclical, ‘Divino Afflante Spiritu’, Pope Pius XII put it like this: ‘Let bishops favour and support those pious associations whose aim it is to distribute copies of the Scriptures, especially of the Gospels, among the faithful, and to procure by every means that in Christian families the Scriptures be read with piety and devotion’ - (§26). His call that the Word - to which Mary responded - be

made available to all the Church still rings out today. It was taken up by the Second Vatican Council in Dei Verbum, and by Pope Benedict XVI in Verbum Domini. If the Legion wants to continue to evangelize in this new time, might it not embrace this call which is so much at the heart of the Church’s mission? It can be done by promoting Scripture study groups, by praying with Scripture, by Lectio Divina, and in so many other ways. Perhaps it is here that Legionaries from Milan, or from across South American, have so much to offer. What a wonderful return that would be for the work of Alfie Lambe: ‘They go out, they go out full of tears carrying seed for the sowing; they come back, they come back, full of song carrying their sheaves’, as it says in the Psalm (126:6). As Pope Pius suggested, might you give families a copy of one of the Gospels and support people in reading and praying the word.”

Therein lies the choice offered in the opening story of the ‘Soup of the Goose’ and drinking from the fountain of the Word at first hand, getting our personal experience of the Lord!

Finally, for me, in his pastoral document ‘Verbum Domini’, Pope Benedict gave an exhaustive analysis and comment on the Synod of Bishops meeting on the Word of God. Reading it at the time in Spanish, I noted two points: on the necessity of Silence before the Word and its meaning, and the place of Joy in its celebration. Verbum Domini 66. “The synodal assembly enabled us to experience all that Saint John speaks of: the proclamation of the word creates communion and brings about joy. This is a profound joy which has its origin in the very heart of the Trinitarian life and

Columba at sea *by Vera McFadden*



The Hebrides, Scotland.

MOST likely St. Columba and the other monks went fishing now and again in their river and the lough, probably pulling in near the present-day Hogg's Folly, a place which gave a gradual ascent to the Monastery.

Perhaps, the most written about sea journey undertaken by St Columba was when he emigrated to Iona. When they heard that he was leaving, many people came to spend some time with him before he left. Twelve other monks went with him. Their boat was made by a frame covered with hide. Traditionally, they left from the shore below Termonbacca. Perhaps that is why it is called Iona.

The people gathered along the east and west banks of the river and walked for several miles, as monks sailed down the river and lough. He came ashore at a few places. When I was a student at Thornhill College, one day our class was brought down to the shore. There, we saw an Iron Age fort and near it there was a rock with footprints on it. They are said to be those of Columba, who came ashore here to look back at

continued from page 28

which is communicated to us in the Son. This joy is an ineffable gift which the world cannot give. Celebrations can be organized, but not joy. (The Spanish text uses the word *fiesta...solamente Dios da la alegría*). According to the Scripture, joy is the fruit of the Holy Spirit (cf. Gal 5:22) who enables us to enter into the word and enables the divine word to enter into us and to bear fruit for eternal life. By proclaiming God's word in the power of the Holy Spirit, we also wish to share the source of true joy, not a superficial and fleeting joy, but the joy born of the awareness that the Lord Jesus alone has words of everlasting life (cf. Jn 6:68).

The word and silence

"In their interventions, a good number of Synod Fathers insisted on the importance of silence in relation to the word of God and its reception in the lives of the faithful. The word, in fact, can only be spoken and heard in silence, outward and inward. Ours is not an age which fosters recollection; at times one has the impression that people are afraid

his beloved Derry. Perhaps he did land here to say goodbye to the people who lived at the Fort.

It is said that he came ashore near Moville for a drink from a spring well which he blessed. There is a shelter around that well now and the clear water flows constantly. This is a traditional story, but the well water certainly seems to occasionally heal. I witnessed this once. My friend received a deep cut in one of her fingers when she was releasing the clip on the dog's lead. We went for a walk along the shore path and stopped at the holy well. She bathed the finger in the water and said a prayer. We continued our walk. On the way back, she said to me, "Look!" Her finger was completely healed and there was not even a trace of a scar.

Columba came ashore once more before he left Lough Foyle. This time he left the boat at Portkill. He may have wanted another drink from a spring well. Here, he left the shore to climb to the top of the steep bank and take a last look towards his beloved Derry. There is now a yearly pilgrimage where he did this. It begins with the Rosary. Once, I

of detaching themselves, even for a moment, from the mass media. For this reason, it is necessary nowadays that the People of God be educated in the value of silence. Rediscovering the centrality of God's word in the life of the Church also means rediscovering a sense of recollection and inner repose. The great patristic tradition teaches us that the mysteries of Christ all involve silence. Only in silence can the word of God find a home in us, as it did in Mary, woman of the word and, inseparably, woman of silence. Our liturgies must facilitate this attitude of authentic listening: *Verbo crescente, verba deficient.*[233]

"The importance of all this is particularly evident in the Liturgy of the Word, 'which should be celebrated in a way that favors meditation'. Silence, when called for, should be considered 'a part of the celebration'. Hence I encourage Pastors to foster moments of recollection whereby, with the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the word of God can find a welcome in our hearts."

joined in, but I was unable to do the second part – climbing down the slope to the shore.

When St Columba had climbed down again, they left the Foyle. They probably had no preconceived destination, as they travelled in an easterly direction past the North coast of Ireland.

Then they came to the island of Iona, landing on a steep shore that later would be known as the port of the coracle. It is now a much-visited place and pilgrims gather pebbles and have them blessed as precious souvenirs.

Because he and his fellow monks had settled on a small island, they were to make many voyages for a variety of reasons – to evangelise, to visit their other foundations, to fish, to provide for their fragile needs when a supply was lacking on Iona, etc.

The weather was not always good. One of the most loved stories in St Adamnan's 'Life of Columba' is about a rough voyage.

St Columba and some of his monks were at sea when a heavy storm arose. The waves were high, the sea was rough, and the wind blew loud and strong. The little curragh tossed about, and the monks were terrified. They begged Columba to pray for them. He had an instinct that one of Canice's prayers would help, and he told the others, "Canice would pray, if he knew".

At that moment, Canice was working in the kitchen at the Irish Monastery of Aghaboe. He suddenly was aware that they were in need of prayer and ran to the church to intercede. As he went, one of his sandals loosened and dropped to the floor. He ignored this.

The Holy Spirit allowed Columba to see Canice's movements, and he said, "Thank you, Canice, for running to pray with only one shoe" as the storm stopped.

St Adamnan wrote of several other storms which Columba endured and how they were stopped by prayer. The waters around those islands were often rough.

When I was on Iona, I wanted to go to the Post of the Curragh, but the sister in charge of the Pilgrim Centre told me that I would not be able to walk on the moor because of my injured foot. The only way I could go was by boat. I knew that

was not preferable because there was a very choppy part along the coast of the island.

Strange sights

Of course, there were many times when there were calm journeys. Columba loved the island of Hinba and visited it often. His mother, Ethna stayed there when she came from Ireland for a while, and he had many supernatural experiences there, such as the time he went there for a short retreat and the other monks on Iona saw strange sights over Hinba at night. When Columba returned, he told them that he had heard music of a kind never heard before and had been given great insight into passages of Scripture. The word Hinba is no longer used and many people believe that the present name of the island is Jura.

Columba brought Christianity to the nearby islands, and little churches were built there. I remember a television programme, called "Archaeology Alive", in which three young ladies told how they had found a high near circular mound on the island of Mull, and they wondered what it was. The archaeologists found an early Christian church and there was a skull under the altar. They said that it would have been the skull of the saint who had built the church. All holy men in those days were called saints, but this one would certainly have been one of Columba's followers.

Whenever we visited Iona, I always found the journey from Oban, on the mainland, to Mull very easy, but the short journey from Mull to Iona was choppy. Of course, that was because the boat from Oban was a large one.

Columba travelled to the mainland to evangelise. Kintyre was one of the first places to which he voyaged and began teaching the Word of God. Gradually, he converted the people of Alba.

One time he arrived in the Inverness area. He may have journeyed by boat along the western and northern shores of Scotland, or have travelled both by sea and land. He was very aware of the great antagonism between the Picts and the Scots,

though they were related tribes.

He decided that since he was so near Bruce's stronghold, he would go there to evangelise also. He went with some of his fellow monks. The story is told that when they arrived, the gate was shut, so Columba and his friends began to chant the Psalms. By the power of the Holy Spirit, their voices were magnified and extremely loud. The gates were opened and the leader of the Picts finally gave his permission for the Word of God to be preached to his subjects. This brought peace and stability to the northern Irish Scots and the Picts. So, Columba's missionary journeys were very worthwhile indeed.

He also sailed to the Hebrides and founded churches on these islands. Having brought Christianity to Scotland, he went to some places in northern England and evangelised there. Several centuries later, monks from his Order would bring Christianity to the kingdom of Bernicia, in north-east England.

Perhaps Columba's strangest voyage was when he came to Ireland for the Council of Drumceatt, which was held near Limavady at the site now known as Daisy Hill. He had been invited there by the chieftains and he firmly felt that he should go.

However, he had a dilemma. He had promised never to look at or step on Irish soil again. Some believe that he had made this promise to punish himself for the Battle of Culdrevny. Personally, I do not believe that he was in

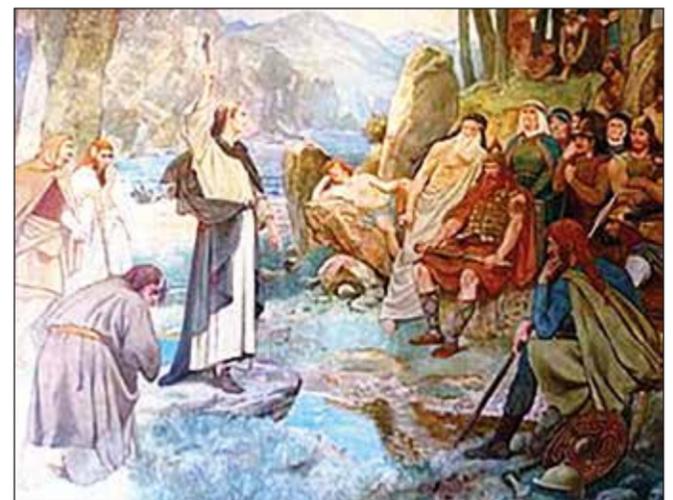
any way responsible for that battle. I think that he had made this promise to make a sacrifice to God, by letting go of his own country that he loved so well.

He was needed at the Council and, so, he went. Several other boats may also have shared his journey. He was blindfolded and, according to one version of the story, he had sods from Scotland attached to his feet so that he would not be walking on Irish soil. Another version tells that he was carried in the boat to the convention.

They voyaged to the West, passing north of County Antrim, and probably came ashore at Magilligan, or somewhere near that. Perhaps he even went as far as Derry, though that would have been quite traumatic. Of course, they must have felt strange being back in Lough Foyle, from which they had left Ireland so many years before.

The blindfold does not stop Columba's intercession being successful. The bards were allowed to continue on the condition that they improved their manners, and the other matters were sorted out successfully. Columba was disappointed in one matter – that he had not been able to secure the release of young prince Scanlan, who would be still restrained in prison.

And then – another journey from Ireland – back out of Lough Foyle and past the North Antrim coast, back to Iona. Several teams of voyagers have set out in boats to travel to Iona.



St Columba converting the Picts.



Port-na-Curragh, Iona.

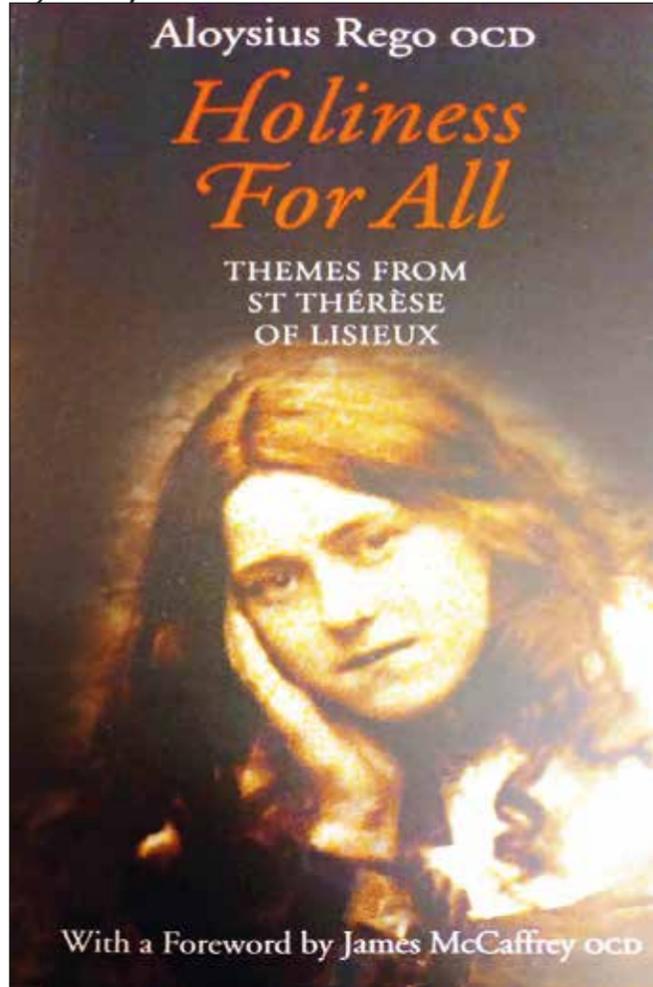
Port-na-Curragh, Iona

6 June 1905

Valentines Series 790

Blessed Brunch and Books

by Aoife O'Neill



THERE is no denying the fact that having community within the Church is crucial to the building and advancement of every Catholic's faith.

Some of us have been blessed with amazing communities already, contained within our neighbourhoods, parishes, and schools. Some of us have to dig a

little deeper to find community, and then some of us have searched high and low only to come up empty-handed.

'Blessed is She' is a sisterhood that desires two things: prayer and community. The 'Blessed Is She' group meets weekly on Sunday nights, at 8 pm, in Termonbacca.

This month, 'Blessed Is She, Derry' is launching a new, once monthly, get-together to be known as 'Blessed Brunch and Books'.

A 'Blessed Brunch' is a gathering of women ready to seek a deeper relationship with Christ through community. These brunches are really beautiful moments in time, where women get to enjoy the presence of each other and really get to know one another.

Blessed Brunches give women the opportunity to meet their sisters in Christ face-to-face, while strengthening the friendships that have already begun. For those of us who feel a little more isolated when it comes to community, Blessed Brunches are a great way to meet like-minded women in your area!

The brunch will be followed by a spiritual book club discussion. It will kick off on Saturday, October 23, at 12 noon and will finish at 2 pm.

If you would like to join us, either in our weekly meetings or our monthly get-together, we would be delighted to meet you. To sign up, or if you have any questions, please get in touch via termonbaccaderry@gmail.com.

Christianity – failed...or not tried? by Fr Johnny Doherty, CSsR

SOMEONE has said that it's not so much that Christianity has failed as that it was never tried. There is a lot of truth in that statement. We are forever reducing Christianity to religious rituals that we can fulfil with relative ease and to laws that we can try to keep, with perhaps greater difficulty. But Christianity is a whole way of life of following Jesus, being formed by His Word, trusting in faith that the way He points out will lead to full life. The Sunday Liturgy in October opens up some of the primary implications of that way.

Values of life

Our values are generally seen in what we are aiming for in life and what we give our time to. The values of Christ are often different from the ones we settle for because He gives us something different to aim for. His desire for all of us is full life.

- Personal fulfilment is the aim for many people today and it is a good aim to have. But when it becomes the objective of life it can become very selfish. Jesus gives us as the aim for life to fulfil one another. That cannot be done unless we have the inner freedom to make love our way of life.

- Independence is what most people are looking for in life, both as individuals and as

communities. Again, this is a good longing but it is not the ultimate. Jesus gives us, as His way, a call to love and to live a life of interdependence and of unity. We cannot live like that unless we have moved through to the point of independence. Love has to be a free surrender to one another.

- Privacy is a very important value of our world and it is a real good that is denied to so many people, because of housing and other social problems. When privacy becomes the aim of life it deteriorates into an imprisonment where there is so much loneliness. Sharing what we have is the way of the Lord. It is only in that way that we can stay free.

- Equality is being sought today as never before, especially the equality of women and men. This is a very good, essential development in human history. But even that is not the most important objective in the way of Christ. Giving way to one another is His way. Making the other number one is how He wants us to be. This is especially true in the relationship of marriage. But it runs through all our relationships.

- To be yourself is what our society holds up as the aim of life. Jesus teaches us His way: that of forgetting yourself, emptying yourself. But, of course, you can only do that when you know

yourself and can accept yourself as good.

Christ's Way Week by Week in October

Week 1 (3rd – 9th):

The Family of God

Jesus said to the Pharisees, when talking to them about marriage and divorce: "They are no longer two therefore, but one body". A phenomenon and one of the very sad features of our world today, is the number of marriages that break down. And we should have the greatest reverence for and compassion towards those people who are in this situation.

However, the challenge for us is to keep faith in marriage, and to reverence the institution of marriage as a vitally important part of God's plan for our humanity and as one of the sacraments of the Church.

Marriage is under all kinds of pressure. It needs to also have all kinds of support from all of us, whether we are married or not, so that every couple will be encouraged to aim for and work towards the best possible marriage and not settle for mediocrity in their love.

Week 2 (10th – 16th):

Christian Values

The rich young man said to Jesus: "Good Master, what must I

do to inherit eternal life?" Many people today live as if everything can be bought, even God's favour. We might think of this not just in terms of buying with money but with duty, with doing what we have to and then God somehow is in our debt.

The way of Jesus is that eternal life can only be accomplished through love – first of all God's love for us, which is freely given, and then our love for God and for one another. This way of love means giving up a lot of selfishness and self-preoccupation, just as the rich young man in the Gospel had to give up his riches before he could even begin to see what following Jesus was about.

The guarantee though is that it is more than worth all our effort, as this way of love brings happiness in this life and eternal happiness with God.

Week 3: (17th – 23rd):

Christian Ambition

Jesus said to His disciples: "Anyone who wants to be great among you must be the servant of all". We often think that people are being fully accepted by us when we treat them like one of the family. And it is a lovely way to be. But the opposite is also very important to practice, namely, that we would treat one another in our families the way we treat

those who are visiting us.

In this situation, we take great care to be ready for them, we get all the best implements out for them, and we prepare good food for them. And, when they are gone, we sometimes are relieved but more often than not we talk about the good things that we can see in them.

This is also true within a parish community. We should take great care of one another, the way we would if there was a group of very special visitors coming to celebrate with us. That is how Christ wants us to be together.

Week 4: (24th – 30th):

Christian Hope

Jesus asked: "What do you want me to do for you?" This question, asked in the Gospel of a blind man, is addressed to each one of us by Jesus. The man who was born blind had no hesitation in asking for his sight to be given him. That was the single most important thing for him in his life.

We should ask ourselves what our single most important need and desire is for our own lives. In what ways are we blind and need our sight restored?

Maybe it is in relation to what our real priorities are. Or maybe it is in our close relationships of marriage and family life, where

we can easily fail to see the hurt or distress or loneliness of one another. Or we may be blind to our responsibility to care for those around us in our parish or wider community who are in need.

This week is a call to look into our hearts and open ourselves up to the power of Christ to heal us and set us free.

Conclusion

Each Sunday is an opportunity for us as followers of Christ to make a fresh start in our love for God and for one another. It is a gentle but a very powerful pattern for living life. We can make the most of it by being formed by the Word of God and being nourished by Christ's Body and Blood and supported by the community of faith around us.

Have a happy and fruitful October.



Fr Johnny Doherty

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

Hello children. Welcome to the month of October. This month is dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, because October 7 is the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. The Rosary is a beautiful prayer which tells us the story of Jesus' life in four parts: The Joyful Mysteries, the Sorrowful Mysteries, the Luminous Mysteries and the Glorious Mysteries. Every time we pray the Rosary we should focus on Jesus' life and remember a special intention that we want to pray for.

Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary

October 7 is the Feast of Our Lady of the Rosary. This feast was introduced by Pope St Pius V (1504-1572) to honour Mary for the Christian victory over the Turks at Lepanto on October 7, 1571.

During the 16th century, Pope St Pius V was having trouble with the Ottoman Turks who were a danger to Christianity. Pope Pius and all Christians had prayed the Rosary for the victory of the Christians in battle. The Christians defeated the Turks in a magnificent victory, and it was believed that their success came about through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin.

Pope Pius V then dedicated this day as a Feast of Thanksgiving to Our Lady of Victory. The name of the Feast was changed in later years by Pope Gregory XIII to our Lady of the Rosary (CCC 971).

The story of the Feast of our Lady of the Rosary is very important as it shows us that when we are in trouble, discouraged or lonely, we also can turn to Mary, who prays to her Son for us and with us (CCC 975). Mary the Mother of God never ceases to intercede for us in Heaven and, therefore, she is addressed in the Church under the titles of Advocate, Helper, Benefactress and Mediatrix (CCC 969). Every time Mary appeared on earth, she encouraged us to pray the Rosary.



Saints of the Month

October 1: Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus (the Little Flower)

October 4: Saint Francis of Assisi

October 15: Saint Teresa of Avila

October 18: Saint Luke



Guardian Angel

"See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven". (Matthew 10:18)

"Angels are servants and messengers of God" (CCC 329). Angels are signs of God's care and love and they remind us of how God knows each one of us. God loves us so much that He gave each one of us our own Guardian angel as "a protector and shepherd" (CCC 336) to watch over us. We celebrate the Feast of the



Guardian Angels on October 2. We honour our Guardian Angels on this day.

Saint Simon and Saint Jude

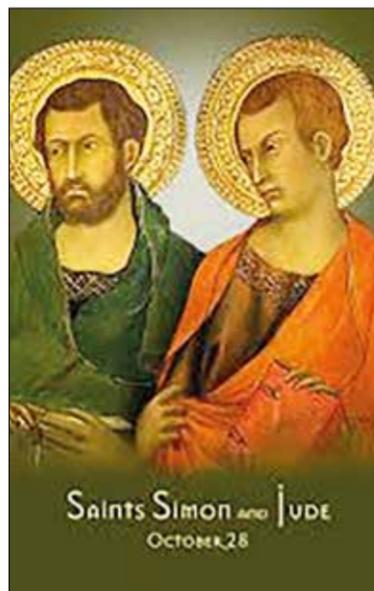
The Church celebrates the Feast of the Apostles, Sts Simon and Jude on October 28. Their names occur together in the Canon of the Mass and they are honoured in one Feast.



The two apostles may be paired together because they both preached the Gospel in Mesopotamia and Persia, where it is said that they had both been sent. However, we know very little about them beyond that they are called Apostles in the New Testament.

Traditionally, it is believed that St Jude, also known as Thaddaeus, is the author of the short Epistle of Jude which forms part of the New Testament. This Epistle speaks of the mission to Persia with another apostle, Simon, who apparently was his cousin.

Simon, who was known as the Zealot or the Canaanite because he belonged to a strict Jewish sect, is especially venerated in the East and is featured in many legends. One story narrates that in the mission to Persia with Jude, the two apostles were slaughtered by pagan priests. It is believed that Simon was sawn in two and Jude was clubbed to his death. St Simon is often depicted in art holding a saw, the instrument



of his martyrdom, while St Jude is holding a club or a ship.

A traditional custom for this Feast day was that Christians began to prepare food called 'soul cakes' for the Feast of All Souls. In some areas, people would beg for ingredients to make these cakes on this day.

During the Middle Ages, on the night before All Saints Day, or Halloween, children called 'soulers' would go about town, singing and praying for the souls of the dead. They would stop at homes and beg for a 'soul cake' and promise, in return, to pray for the household's deceased members to be released from Purgatory. If homeowners did not give out cakes, it was believed their home would be cursed. This tradition is thought to be the origin of trick or treat at Halloween. Saint Simon and Saint Jude, pray for us

October 31 – All Hallows' Eve

October 31 is always a day that children and big people look forward to. They love to dress up and enjoy the fun of Halloween. So, what is Halloween?

'All Hallows Eve' is where the word Halloween comes from. Hallowed means 'holy'. For example, we say 'Hallowed be thy name' at the start of the Our Father. A hallowed person is a saint.

October 31 is called All Hallows Eve because it is the eve of All Saints Day (November 1). The night before November 1 became known as All Hallowe'en, which was short for 'evening before All Hallows Day'. It was then shortened to what we know as Halloween.

The Mass which is celebrated by the Church on November 1 was called 'All Hallow Mass'. This meant the Mass of all hallowed, saintly people. November 1 was called All



Hallows Day, now All Saints Day.

Halloween traditions of dressing up with costumes and masks, and carving faces into turnips to make lanterns, are rooted in Celtic customs. The ancient Celts divided the year into two parts – summer and winter. October 31 was always seen as the last day of summer, 'Samhain' in Irish. And on this night, when the seasons changed, it was believed that the curtain separating the living and dead was very thin. Therefore, spirits could rise up and roam the earth on that night. The Celts thought that if they dressed like the spirits and carried eerie lanterns, they would fool the wandering spirits into thinking that they were spirits too, so they would come to no harm.

In celebrating Halloween this year, let's remind ourselves of its true and good meaning, the eve of All Saints Day. And we pray that someday we also will be saints in heaven.



Quiz Time with Lawrence

- In terms of temperature, which is the hottest planet in the solar system?
- How many time zones are there in India?
- What anniversary is celebrated after 15 years of marriage?
- The 1997 comedy movie 'Bean' saw Rowan Atkinson sent to the US to look after what famous painting?
- What is the capital city of Colombia?
- Portugal is home to Europe's longest bridge. What is it called?
- In tennis, which is the only 'Grand Slam' tournament to be played on clay?
- Which artist was renowned for painting melting clocks?
- Who played Michael Scott in the TV documentary, the US Office?
- Which is the third largest country in South America behind Brazil in Argentina, in both population and land mass?
- Which pop music icon has an autobiography entitled 'Me'?
- In football, who were the last team to win the Champions League three years in a row?
- The opening line of George Orwell's '1984' refers to the clock striking what number?
- In which English county is the town of Luton?
- Who played Fr Noel Furlong in Fr Ted?
- Which river famously flows from Colorado into the Gulf of Mexico?
- How many times was Alex Higgins World Snooker Champion?
- Singer Adele had her breakthrough UK hit in 2011 with what song?
- In which US state is Mount Rushmore located?
- In Formula 1, for which team does Lando Norris drive?
- What is cynophobia a fear of?
- What is the most expensive location on a UK Monopoly board?
- Who played Dr Who for four years between 2005 and 2009?
- Dublin's Aviva Stadium replaced which former sporting landmark?
- What is Joe Biden's middle name?

Quiz Answers: 1, Venus. 2, One. 3, Crystal. 4, 'Whistler's Mother'. 5, Bogotá. 6, Vasco da Gama. 7, The French Open. 8, Salvador Dali. 9, Steve Carell. 10, Peru. 11, Elton John. 12, Real Madrid. 13, Thirteen. 14, Bedfordshire. 15, Graham Norton. 16, The Rio Grande. 17, Two. 18, Someone Like You. 19, South Dakota. 20, McLaren. 21, Dogs. 22, Mayfair. 23, David Tennant. 24, Lansdowne Road. 25, Robinette.

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

Let Your Light Shine!

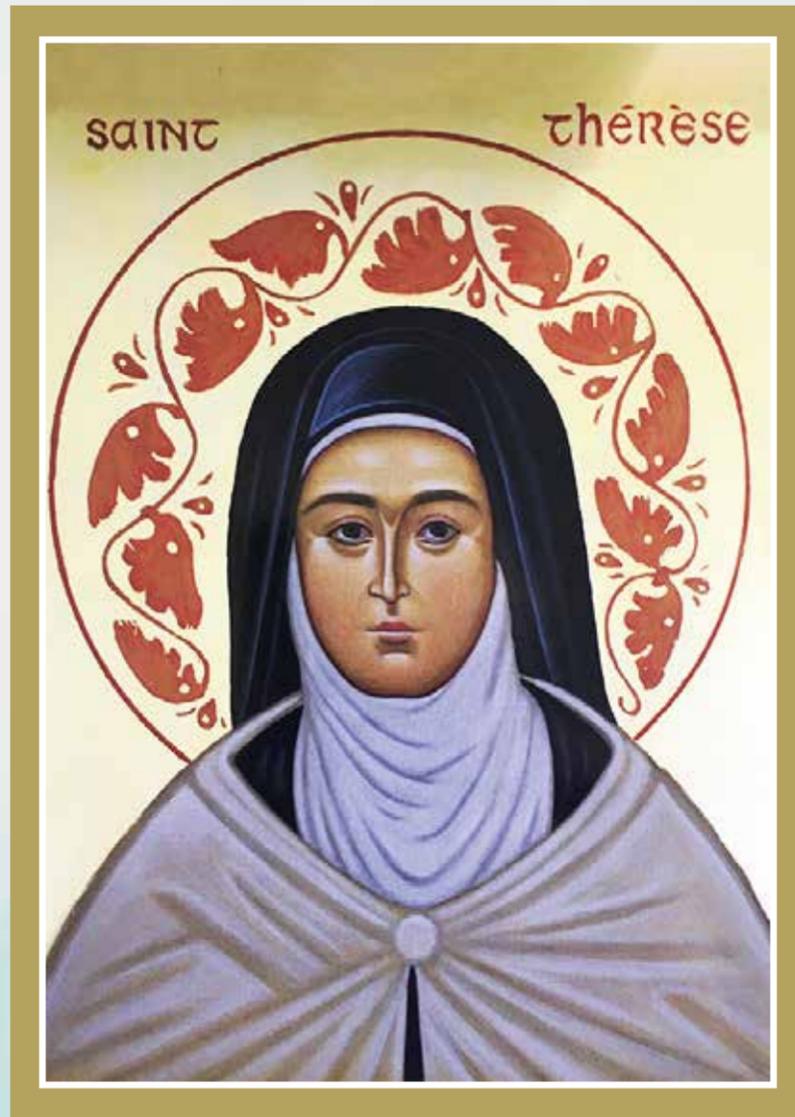
Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnyloop, Drumquin, Dunamansha, Dungsiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,

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



Prayer to St Therese of the Child Jesus

O Little Therese of the Child Jesus
During your short life on earth
You became a shining example of Christian virtue,
Of love strong as death and of whole-hearted
Abandonment to God.



Teach me your Little Way of trust and surrender.
Fill my heart with a true love of God, our loving Father,
So that, like you, I may walk with faith
Along the road of confidence and love.



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