

The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 80, OCTOBER 2022
PRICE - £1.50
/€2.00

See inside...



Search Youth Weekend – Termonbacca



Anam Og Family Day – Ards



200th Anniversary of St Joseph's Church – Craighane



School October Rosary – St Brigid's Carnhill



“This is a difficult and exciting time for the Irish Church... It calls for people of prayer and courage” – Bishop Donal (see pages 10-11).

Ballinascreen Parish Choir provided the music ministry in Knock Basilica during Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage.



Servant Sisters Open Day – Crossroads, Killygordon



Pet Blessing – Long Tower



Getting to Know You' Day – Steelstown

People in focus



Fr Joe Gormley – Ballymagroarty



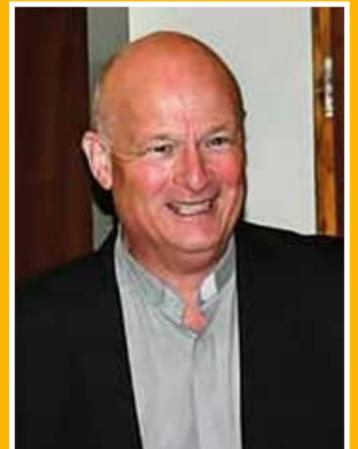
Fr Daniel McFaul – Creggan



Fr Pat O'Hagan – Bellaghy, Greenlough & Lavey



Fr Eddie Gallagher – Moville



Fr Brendan Crowley – Errigal (Ballerin & Glenullin)

Also featuring: Young writers share thoughts; Derry Diocese preparing for World Youth Day; Children's Catechism Club; Safeguarding Sunday; Children's Rosary founder meets Derry connections at World Meeting of Families in Rome; Men's Rosary in Derry & Clonmany; Bike Blessing at Burt; Season of Creation Sunflower displays; St Therese Triduum at Termonbacca; Burt Auction; Ardstraw parishioners and friends on one-day Lough Derg retreat; Rest quietly on heart of Jesus reflections from across the Diocese; Quiz...and much more...

Contents

Parish deliveries

Copies of 'The Net' will be available in parishes again in the coming months

"Do not even the Pagans do that?" - Reflection by Mark McConnellogue.....	p2
Diary Dates.....	p2
Young people discover how to 'Let Go. Let God.' during Search youth weekend.....	p3
Anam Og enjoy special family day out by Aoife O'Neill.....	p3
Celebrating 200 years of worship in St Joseph's Church, Craighane.....	p4-5
Safeguarding Sunday shines light on efforts to make parish communities safe.....	p6-7
Children's Rosary founder delighted to meet Derry connections at WMOF in Rome.....	p7
Men's Rosary in Derry & Clonmany.....	p7
November Online Grandparents' Café.....	p7
Young writers share thoughts on... *Pope Francis call to not waste food *Pope John Paul II Award *Sports for all.....	p8-9
Great response to St Brigid's College community Rosary. WYD pilgrimage will be important stage in Irish Church renewal - Bishop Donal.....	p9
Diocesan Knock Pilgrimage.....	p10
Crossroads Mass to welcome Servant Sisters.....	p11
Special blessing for Long Tower parishioners' canine friendsp11	
My heart was sad leaving Creggan, but I knew God wanted me in Ballymagroarty - Fr Joe Gormley induction.....	p12
Serving Creggan as parish priest a heart-felt joy for Fr Daniel McFaul.....	p13
Fr Pat O'Hagan open to setting hearts on fire in Bellaghy, Greenlough & Lavey.....	p14-15
Steelstown Parish 'Getting to know you' event a great success.....	p15
Season of Creation Sunflower displays by Patricia McCormack.....	p15
Moving from one Greencastle to another, Fr Eddie Gallagher exchanges crook for net to catch more fish for the Lord.....	p16
Termonbacca Triduum for the Dead.....	p17
Burt auction raises much needed funds.....	p17
Ardstraw Parish and friends enjoy Lough Derg one-day retreat.....	p17
Volunteering for Irish Pilgrimage Trust Lourdes 2023.....	p17
Blessing of the Bikes.....	p17
Parish Pastoral Councils Day of Prayer & Reflection.....	p17
Fr Brendan Crowley highlights happy landing in Errigal as he celebrates 30 years of priesthood.....	p18-19
Fr Crowley by Joe Wade.....	p19
St Therese and suffering, trust and mercy - Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd.....	p20-21
Rest quietly on the heart of Jesus - Reflections from across the Diocese.....	p22-27
Connecting-up by Fr John McLaughlin ssc.....	p27
Saints we celebrate during October by Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd.....	p28-29
Rejoice! by Vera McFadden.....	p29
Prayer for Priests.....	p29
Pope's Prayer Intention.....	p29
"Lord, increase our Faith" by Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR.....	p30
Casting A Long Shadow - New book charting the People's History of Long Tower Church by Ivor Doherty.....	p30
'The Letter' - New Laudato Si Film by Patricia McCormack.....	p30
Children's Catechism Club - C3 by Veronica Harley.....	p31
Quiz Time with Lawrence.....	p31
Humble and Kind is Joseph the Man by Pat Deeny.....	p32

A reflection on Pope Francis' prayer intention for October...

A Church Open to Everyone: We pray for the Church; ever faithful to, and courageous in preaching the Gospel, may the Church be a community of solidarity, fraternity and welcome, always living in an atmosphere of synodality.

"Do not even Pagans do that?" by Mark McConnellogue



Mark McConnellogue, Head of Religious Studies at St Columb's College, Derry.

G K Chesterton once opined that, "the world is too much with us". He suggested that we humans can only take so much reality. There is no question about it, those who try to live the Gospel in the modern world are up against it. This pursuit is not for the faint hearted or those weak at the knees. And yet the world is not all bad. Remember, God so loved the world that He gave His only Son. This world is worth redeeming and so we must face into the task with a lot of gentle courage. We are wholly dependent on the grace and love of God to guide our efforts.

Perhaps what Chesterton meant was that we need to spend some time retreating from the world. In order to get the right perspective, we must be still, be silent and be in solitude for a period of time each day. This is not to advocate a life of quietism where we are totally inactive.

No, each of us must embrace both Martha and Mary. It is all about balance. We are called to walk the dusty road of life - to live in this world but not to be of it. To take time to sit at the feet of the Master and to listen!

We have all become experts in talking about the importance of listening. Therein lays the contradiction. There are too many well-worn clichés about the art of listening. But are we actually any good at it? Are we really good listeners? Can we listen to God and our neighbour with the ear of our heart? It is this deep listening that is at the heart of Synodality. We need to set aside our own preconceptions and listen to others as if for the very first time. Really give them the time, the space and the concentration to say whatever it is that their hearts desire to share with us.

In short, if there is no real listening, there is no Synodality! This type of listening demands courage because many of us are profoundly uncomfortable with silence. We rush to fill the silence with small-talk and gibberish. We insert our own narrow preconceptions and prejudices where there should be an open heart. O that today you would listen to His voice, harden not your hearts as at Meribah.

It is only by really listening that we can learn to be universal as Church. Only then can all the birds of the air come and perch on the

branches of the Church and take shelter there. The Church has a universal mission - it is open to everyone. We are the Church and we all share co-responsibility for this mission of listening. No-one is excluded; elitist attitudes are banished and we can create a true community, a true family, when we reach out in love to all God's children without exception.

What is the point in only embracing those whom we love and find agreeable or acceptable in the Church - do not even pagans do that? What defines a Christian more than anything is the love we show to each other and especially to those who may be perceived as 'enemies' - the thief, the terrorist, the drug pusher, the drug addict, the alcoholic, the abuser, the prostitute, the gambler, the adulterer, the liar, the murderer, homosexuals, the divorced, the unlovable, the rejected, the unacceptable, the lost, the least, the last.

Living the Gospel is not easy. It requires much integrity, a congruence between our public and private lives. We are reminded daily of the stark reality that we all have feet of clay. We all have a shadow self and yet this earthenware jar is exactly what God chooses to do His good work upon the face of the earth.

To build up the Kingdom of God, we need to trust that God's will may be done through our all too human

and imperfect selves. It is this self-knowledge that enables and empowers us to reach out to others whose lives may be in a mess. Our national apostle, St Patrick, reminds us in his Confession that he was like a stone lying in the deep mud, and yet He who is mighty came and not only lifted him up but placed him at the very top of the wall.

So a truly Synodal Church is one where there is a place at the table for everyone and where we make a concentrated effort to listen to everyone's story

with an open mind and heart and in a spirit of mutual love. It is this sense of the faithful that will profoundly shape the future direction of our Church. The Holy Spirit speaks most definitively through the meek and the lowly and the outsider - those who are docile to His promptings. The question is - are we listening to them?

(Mark McConnellogue is Head of Religious Studies at St Columb's College, Derry)

Prayer for Extraordinary Month of Mission

Heavenly Father, when your only begotten Son Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He commissioned His followers to 'go and make disciples of all nations', and you remind us that, through our Baptism, we are made sharers in the mission of the Church. Empower us by the gifts of the Holy Spirit to be courageous and zealous in bearing witness to the Gospel, so that the mission entrusted to the Church, which is still very far from completion, may find new and efficacious expressions that bring life and light to the world. Help us make it possible for all peoples to experience the saving love and mercy of Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, One God, forever and ever, Amen.

Diary Dates

Creggan 40 Hours

St Mary's Parish in Creggan are dedicating 40 Hours of Adoration in the Divine Mercy Chapel, within St Mary's Church, from 1 pm on Sunday, October 23, until 7 pm on Monday, October 24. The 40 Hours will come to a close with a Holy Hour from 6-7 pm on the Monday.

Banagher Parish Mission

Following on the success of last year's Mission, the Banagher Parish is having another one from October 22-28, when Fr Damian Polly OP, Fr Patrick Desmond OP, and Fr Conor McDonough OP, will spend the week there.

The packed schedule includes early morning Mass and evening talks with Rosary and Benediction, in each of

the three Parish Churches, in Altinure, Feeny and Foreglen, school visits, a youth talk, Rosary walk, housebound visitation, and meet and greet sessions.

Long Tower Novena

The Long Tower Annual Solemn Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, for the nine Sundays before Christmas, begins on Sunday, October 23, at 6 pm.

The theme for the first night is 'What do I believe? Exploring our Faith', and the guest speaker will be Deacon Michael McCaul. Everyone welcome.

Pio Centre - Galliagh

A showing of the Fatima movie will take place in St Pio Centre, Galliagh, on Friday, October 21, at 7.30 pm. All welcome.

Ballinascreen Halloween

Coffee Morning

Ballinascreen Parish Coffee Morning and Cake Sale will take place in St Colm's GAC next Saturday, October 29, from 10 am - 1 pm.

Everyone is welcome to come along to enjoy a cuppa and buy some delicious treats! There will be a great variety of home bakes on sale, thanks to the many parishioners who have offered to bake for this parish community event.

A Raffle will also be held, with wonderful prizes to be won. All prizes have been donated by local businesses, while other businesses have contributed towards sponsoring this event.

Reading with the Carmelites

The Carmelite Fathers at Termonbacca hold a monthly session of 'Reading with the Carmelite Saints', to explore learning friendship with Christ through the example of the Carmelite Saints. The next

gathering will take place on Thursday, October 6, at 7.30 pm.

Three Patrons

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

On Thursdays, there is a Holy Hour for the Unborn & Expectant Mothers in Our Lady's Chapel, within St Joseph's Church building, Galliagh, starting at 7 pm.

Vocations Holy Hour

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

Children's Rosary

Children's Rosary continues in St Patrick's Church, Claudy on the first Saturday of each

month, at 2 pm. All are welcome.

Sr Clare Rosary

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

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

 **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



Young people discover how to 'Let Go. Let God' during Search youth weekend

THE Derry Search Youth Group has held a very successful weekend welcoming new members for the first time since the Covid lockdowns.

In another first, the residential weekend was held in the Carmelite Retreat Centre, at Termonbacca, just up the road from the Search premises at Iona Business Park, for the first time in 14 years.

Delighted to be back in Termonbacca for the weekends, Search leader, Clare Wilkinson said: "It was like coming home", and she thanked the Carmelite community for making them so welcome.

The theme of the weekend was 'God's Plan' and before it was over the young people had given it the name, 'Let Go. Let God'.

Commenting on this, Clare said: "The name 'Let Go. Let God' stemmed from a lot of the young

people learning over the weekend to let go of stuff that they were holding on to, such as hurts, pain, anxiety and worries.

"They learnt that by letting God take care of God's Plan, life could be more positive and they were left feeling loved".

She added: "One of the young fellas on the weekend shared that he hadn't known he was loved, and how much God loved him until then. It was something he hadn't heard before".

"Search weekends," remarked Clare, "are the planting of seeds of faith".

Search is open to young people aged 14-18 years of age, and there were 14 young people on the weekend, with Clare noting another first, that there were more boys than girls in that number.

Thanking everyone who had helped to make the weekend possible, including the group of

almost 30 volunteers, Clare said that they hoped to hold the next Search weekend in either March or April.

Following up on the weekend, the new members of Search will get the chance to meet up again every weekend at the Sunday Night Club in the Search premises at Iona Business Park, Southway, from 7-9 pm.

"The Sunday Night Club is open to all young people within the 14-18 year age-group, and we are hoping to see the young people who attended the Club before Covid return, as well as our new members," said Clare, hopeful of building the numbers back to the 50-60 young people who regularly attended pre-Covid, and of getting a new programme up and running for 13-year-olds.

She explained: "The Sunday Club is a night of youth faith ministry, and includes an activity,

a couple of games, and ends with a time of prayer".

For further information, Clare can be contacted via the Search email, derrysearchyouthgroup@gmail.com or via the Derry Search Facebook page.



Anam Og enjoy special family day out

by Aoife O'Neill



THE young people from Anam Og enjoyed a family day out with Fr Stephen Quinn ocd on Sunday, September 11, when he celebrated Mass at the outdoor Mass Rock at Doon Well, in Termon.

During Mass, the readings and prayers were led by the young people. Fr Stephen explained the history of the Mass Rock during penal days when the practice of faith was outlawed, and people risked their life to gather and celebrate the Sacrament.

Following this, we all travelled to Ards Friary to enjoy a family picnic. As the rain started to fall, our plans looked set to fail, however the Friars at Ards kindly came to the rescue and provided us with a room. The young people enjoyed delicious food and many games.

To top off an excellent day, Fr Alphonsus came to speak to the young people about the Padre Pio mitt. The children were in awe as he told tales of his life and his work with young footballers and their trip to Disney World.

He shared some advice that his mother gave him as a young boy and said that it helps him every

day, and that was "It's good to be good and it's bad to be bad."

Fr Alphonsus gave the young people a special blessing with the mitt of Padre Pio and also gathered the mothers to give a mother's blessing. He told them about the children of Fatima and how Our Lady wants to be a mother to them all.

Encouraging them all to pray and keep close to Our Lady, he gifted them all with their own Rosary beads and bracelets. A very special end to a lovely day, which wouldn't have come about if it had not rained.

We are looking forward to another year of journeying with the young people and growing in faith and friendship. We would love to invite any young person who would like to come along and join us to do so. We meet in Termonbacca on the first and third Sunday of every month from 6-7.15 pm.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Aoife on 028 71 262512 or email termonbaccaderry@gmail.com.



Celebrating 200 years of worship in St Joseph's Church, Craighane, congregation joined choir in singing with "hearts beat high with joy"...

Faith of Our Fathers... We will be true to thee till death!



Bishop Donal with Fr David O'Kane, PP Claudy, and former Craighane curates, Fr Michael McCaughey (left) and Fr Charlie Logue (right).

THE celebration of the 200th anniversary of St Joseph's Church, Craighane, in the Parish of Cumber Upper & Learmount (Claudy), on Sunday, October 2, began with a procession of young people bringing forward items symbolising the Catholic faith passed down the generations.

These included the oils used in the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Anointing of the Sick and Ordination; a copy of the Book of the Readings used at Mass; a copy of the old Catechism of the Catholic Church that many had used at school to learn about their faith; a pair of Rosary beads belonging to the late Fr Patrick John McGuigan, who had served the people of Craighane faithfully up to his death on September 26, 2006, with the Rosary being a very important prayer in the homes of the area and in the Church as a whole; the paten used at Mass to raise up the Eucharist during the Offertory, representing the dedication of parishioners to the celebration of Mass; and a wedding photograph, representing the many couples who were married in St Joseph's Church over the years.

To mark the special occasion, Bishop Donal McKeown was the main celebrant of the Mass, and he and parish priest, Fr David O'Kane were joined by former Craighane curates, Fr Charlie Logue, now ministering in Malin, and Fr Michael McCaughey, PP Three Patrons, Derry.

The ceremony was wonderfully enhanced by the singing of the combined choirs of St Joseph's Craighane, and St Patrick's Claudy, which included past and present members. The singing of old favourites, such as 'Faith of Our Fathers' for the opening and 'How Great Thou Art' as the recessional hymn, were greatly appreciated by the large congregation of current and former parishioners who filled this beautiful country church

building to reminisce and give thanks to God.

While the congregation was waiting for the ceremony to begin, a recording was played of a special hymn to St Joseph, entitled 'Humble and Kind is Joseph the Man', which had been written by Craighane native, Pat Deeny, of Ballyrory, who was a member of the 200th Anniversary Choir.

The 'Deeny' name has a long association with St Joseph's Craighane, with Pat's great, great grandfather, Michael Deeny & Sons the main stonemasons who built the chapel as the cruciform structure seen today. Michael's son, John and wife, Maggie (nee Heaney) were one of many families in the area who sponsored one of the beautiful stain glass windows in the church building.

Very pleased with the response to the celebration, Fr David commended all involved in organising it and noted the very good turnout for what was "a lovely parish occasion".

He added: "There was a very prayerful atmosphere and Bishop Donal preached a good homily about the Church and the future of the faith".

The many young people in the special 200th Anniversary Choir and amongst the congregation reflected the continued strong practise of the faith that has been so important in the lives of parishioners down the generations since, and before, the building of St Joseph's Church in 1822, which replaced a nearby smaller, rectangular building, measuring about 25ft x 15ft, that had served both as church and school for its first six years.

An extension in the late 1800s saw the walls raised and nave and gallery added. Over the years, other enhancements were carried out, with the beautiful stained glass windows installed in the 1930s, which bear the names of the donors. The last major restorative

work was carried out in 1998, when Bishop Seamus Hegarty was the main celebrant in the Dedication of the New Altar and Solemn Re-Opening Ceremony on Sunday, November 29, 1998. For the 200th anniversary, St Joseph's was repainted inside and out and new altar carpet was laid.

Another parish name that has been a constant down the years in dedicated service to the Church is 'Crossan', with the sacristan for the last 54 years, Mena Crossan (nee Gormley) continuing a century old tradition in her late husband's family. Mrs Ellen Jane Crossan (nee Gormley) was sacristan from 1942 until 1968, and the sacristan prior to her had been Mrs Bridget Crossan (nee Cartin).

During the 200th Anniversary Mass, Mena was joined by former bell-ringer, Philip Bernard Crossan, in taking up the Offertory Gifts. Philip took over the duties of bell-ringer in the 1960s from his father, 'Big Philip', who had been the bell-ringer from the early 1920s. Philip Bernard rang the bell, which had been erected in the church grounds in 1911, for five minutes before Sunday Mass, Holy Day ceremonies and funerals, until it was automated in 1998, with his sons, Phelim and Pat standing in on occasions.

A history of St Joseph's Craighane is currently being compiled for a special 200th Anniversary Magazine, and snippets of the story, along with some old photographs, are on display in St Joseph's Hall, where they attracted much interest during the celebratory tea and entertainment after the Anniversary Mass.

Anyone who would like to share their special memories for inclusion in the magazine, including photographs etc, is asked to contact the Parish Office in Claudy - telephone 028 71 337727.



Fr David O'Kane, PP Claudy, and Mena Crossan, sacristan St Joseph's Church, Craighane.

Former bell-ringer, Philip Crossan, and sacristan, Mena Crossan, who carried up the Offertory Gifts during the 200th Anniversary Mass for St Joseph's Church, Craighane.



Bishop Donal with the combined choirs of St Joseph's Craighane and St Patrick's Claudy.



Telling those gathered in Craigbane for St Joseph's Church 200th Anniversary Mass that being a disciple of Jesus in every age is tough, Bishop Donal asked...

Are we still prepared to walk with Jesus, no matter where He leads, seeking healing and hope around the altar?

JOINING the people of Craigbane to celebrate two centuries of worship in St Joseph's Church, by remembering "the faith in Jesus that led local people to build a simple one-storied, rectangular building, with a clay floor, where people could gather to worship the God in whom they believed, despite a century of penal laws and discrimination", Bishop Donal noted that while we face new challenges today, the scripture readings still speak of "believing in God and keeping going".

Acknowledging that belief in God "is difficult in our modern secular culture", he stated: "It wasn't easy in 1822 either."

Reflecting on the Scripture readings of the day, he told those gathered: "There is a temptation for people in every generation to have a hazy belief that there is something beyond this world, and then tap into it through all sorts of vague beliefs about saints and angels, magic objects and passing fads. But Jesus draws us far beyond that sort of childish beliefs. He tells us to believe in the Father who loves us and expects great things from us."

"Jesus reveals that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And we hear about the Holy Spirit who lives in our bodies and who sends us out to be a blessing on the world. Thus, we can all make our own the prayer of the apostles, 'Increase our faith'."

"If our prayer never gets beyond side issues and does not bring us to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, then we are not walking with Jesus to Calvary and Resurrection. We are stuck with a God whom we have made in our own image and likeness. It was to bring us beyond that sort of vaguely Christianised paganism that Jesus came. People have gathered here in this church for 200 years to celebrate the Cross and the Resurrection".

He added: "The Gospels are full of stories where Jesus works

miracles. He breaks through the glass ceiling where we want to be in control. Jesus is not a sensible revelation of a small-minded God. As the apostles discovered on Pentecost Day, they were to go out from the upper room, unprepared and frightened, and simply tell people that Jesus had died and had risen. They were to leave the rest up to God working in the hearts of the listeners."

"There is always the temptation, and not just in at a time of change in church, to think that God should be trapped by our limited and transient cultural norms," continued Bishop Donal, remarking: "There is much discussion in society about sexuality and identity. It would be a betrayal of Jesus for us to think that, when it comes to church renewal, God was preoccupied only or primarily with the agenda items that our technocratic culture pushes before our eyes."

"Only prayerful people and parishes will be open to what the Lord wants of us. Only a church that recognises that Jesus Christ is Lord will be able to go beyond human ideas and tap into the outrageous divine imagination. A church imprisoned in the upper room of political correctness will never bring Good News to the public square. It was to celebrate the often politically incorrect Jesus that we gathered in Craigbane".

Highlighting how "Jesus talks about a spirit of service", the Bishop pointed out: "He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life. When we think of role models for young people, we often assume that these have to be famous and wealthy stars. But society works, not because of the rich and powerful but because of unknown, often underpaid people who do their work with little fuss. Those who are good neighbours, care for the sick and needy, parent children, volunteer in local communities - these all do much more useful jobs than

do many overpaid sports and entertainment stars.

"Jesus wants to free us from a cultural message that tells young people they are entitled to an easy life and that accepting responsibility is an unfair burden. Life is tough - and those who pretend it is not, are no friends of the human race. Jesus knew that, and took up His Cross. He challenges us to do and expect great things that bless the world".

He continued: "Being a disciple of Jesus in every age is tough... We ought never to be ashamed of witnessing to the Lord. Faith means relying on the power of God and not merely on our own limited wisdom. We gather each weekend around the altar to be strengthened for that difficult mission. We are nourished by the Word of God and receive the Body of Christ. And then we are sent out to announce the Gospel of the Lord or to glorify the Lord by your life."

"This is where the little mustard seed of our faith can grow and bear fruit. This is where we can allow the Lord to fan into the flame the gift that God has given us... People have been coming here since 1822 to remember the living and the dead, to celebrate life and love and to cry in anguish at the foot of the Cross. Are we still prepared to walk with Jesus, no matter where He leads, seeking healing and hope around the altar?"



Safeguarding Sunday shines light on efforts to make parish communities safe environments

THE challenge to live with integrity has been a challenge for every generation, Bishop Donal told those gathered in St Columb's Church, Waterside, for the annual Safeguarding Sunday Mass organised by the Derry Diocesan Safeguarding Committee.

During the ceremony, he invited prayer for healing "for all those who have suffered the pain of abuse", and prayer for "all those who work so diligently to safeguard our children and adults at risk in the Church".

In his homily, Bishop Donal spoke about how "the Bible begins with an emphasis on human beings made in God's image and likeness, but quickly acknowledges the capacity to give in to the temptation to obey your thirst, even though they have been warned not to".

Referring to the First Reading from Amos 8:4-7, he said: "The prophet Amos, like so many figures in the Old Testament, railed against those who used their power to exploit the poor. Having enough was never enough. We are all capable of making bad choices that may appear to benefit ourselves, but can do enormous damage to others".

He went on to highlight, from the Gospel Reading of Luke 16: 10-13, that "in the Gospel, Jesus calls His followers to act with integrity. He has just told a parable about someone who was both a fraudster and yet very cute in protecting his own interests. Now He challenges His followers to use their intelligence to work for truth and justice and not to use their gifts to be destructive".

"That message," he added, "is not welcome in a confused culture which wants to canonise the right to choose. And yet, at the same time, the news is full of people being pilloried and punished for what they choose to do in certain circumstances. No wonder many young people are confused as to what is right and how you can live a good life, rather than just chase the good life."

Going on to consider what Jesus might be saying about good and bad, right and wrong, Bishop Donal noted Jesus' more positive instruction in the New Testament, which he noted is "based on a much more positive command to love God and love your neighbour".

He continued: "That is a call,

not merely to keep laws but to the development of virtue, of a generous and loving heart. That means developing a way of life where we can be trusted in little things and big things. That is where the Sacrament of Reconciliation asks us to be vigilant about the small issues of life. If we are conscientious about them, we will be clearer about more major issues.

"Virtue begins with the recognition that our hearts are divided, pulling in different directions. Jesus invites us to be committed to making the right choices, whatever the cost. He gave an example of that in His own life, by resisting the temptations of the devil to be unfaithful to His mission. He reacted very strongly when Peter tried to tell Him that death on a Cross was a silly idea. Just doing what suits me doesn't necessarily make a course of action right".

Bishop Donal added: "In an age which exalts the value of freedom to choose in everything from biscuits to who I am, Jesus challenges us to ask whom we serve. In talking about wealth, He says that we have to choose between being a slave of God or a slave of money. The real choice is whether we freely choose to serve the cause of right or not. That involves a profound commitment.

"There are many other addictions to which people are enslaved – substances, anger, pornography, promiscuity, violence, selfishness and irresponsible behaviour. Lots of these are marketed with the lie they were merely harmless lifestyle choices which should never be criticised. Allegedly nobody should ever be made to feel guilty for making a choice. Jesus says that choices have to be made. Amos challenges those who are addicted to greed. As ever, Jesus does not mince His words".

Pointing out that our actions can influence, and be influenced by, others, Bishop Donal stated: "Living morally is never just about me. It involves discerning what effects my actions will have on others and what serves the Common Good. We know from our own times that individual rights are precious, but that an excessive emphasis on 'me' can damage others.

"Too many children at all stages of their lives have been affected by irresponsible and

self-centred behaviour by adults. The Common Good means protecting the weak against the strong. We also have the reality in church where the emphasis can be on personal preferences, no matter what effect those choices may have on others".

He continued: "Social stability is important so that people can get on with living their lives. Life is difficult. It is the responsibility of leaders to maximise supportive structures so that we can live our lives in peace. It is their task to serve the Common Good and to resist the temptation to be populist and to exploit divisions. Such self-serving abuse of power can never build a healthy society, no matter how much we change parties, laws or borders".

Review

The Mass preceded a week during which an independent review was carried out of Safeguarding practices in the Diocese on behalf of the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland, and the independent reviewers, David Douglas and Paul Morgan were amongst the congregation.

Announcing this at the end of his homily, Bishop Donal said: "It is already a very dangerous world out there for many young people. We want the church environment to be a safe place. But our church approach to protecting children can never be mainly a tick-box exercise.

"As church, we want to bring Good News to the lives of many. That will not be achieved by avoiding contact with the young. That mission of Christ's disciples will be promoted when we have hearts that want young people to thrive and adults who live virtuously and not just within the letter of the law.

"Christ wants young people to blossom. For that they need to see adults who model good and inspiring behaviour. Merely condemning the actions of some young people does not offer them healing or hope. We still have much to learn so that young people can be protected from others and from themselves, and so that those who would harm young people are challenged and held accountable.

"Jesus invites us to walk with Him, for He is the way, the truth and the life. He offers us nourishment in word and

sacrament to face the challenge of growing as disciples and as human beings. He wants us to have life to the full. We can have that only with Him and with others".

Fr David O'Kane, Vicar Forane for the Derry City Deanery, and Fr Sean O'Donnell, member of the Diocesan Safeguarding Committee, were concelebrants at the Mass, which was also attended by other Committee members and staff from the Diocesan Safeguarding office, as well as local Safeguarding representatives from a number of parishes in the Derry Diocese.

Briege O'Neill, the Diocesan Safeguarding Coordinator, said afterwards: "The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland has developed comprehensive safeguarding standards which are designed to support best practice in providing safe environments and child protection procedures. The Diocese of Derry, along with all church bodies, has committed to comply with these standards.

"Safeguarding Sunday is a chance to shine a light on what our Diocese is doing to make our parish communities and our places of worship safe environments. Whilst we can't and shouldn't ignore abuse that has happened within the Church, of which there has been plenty of media coverage, Safeguarding Sunday focuses upon the enormous strides the Catholic Church is making to support children and adults at risk".

Highlighting that protecting children and adults at risk was at the heart of the Church's message, Briege added: "We thank everyone who is doing this vital ongoing work and for taking part in this year's Safeguarding Sunday to raise awareness of the importance of safeguarding in their church and community.

"We also want to take this opportunity to thank and pray for those who have stepped up to coordinate safeguarding in our church, so we can protect children and adults at risk together.

We believe that safeguarding is an outworking of our faith in a loving and just God - the God who calls us to speak up on behalf of those who cannot speak for themselves and to defend the rights of the vulnerable (Proverbs 31:8)".



Safeguarding Prayer

Holy Spirit of God, we ask your blessing on everyone in our parish communities.

We pray a particular blessing on those whose ministry it is to ensure that the young and vulnerable are cared for and protected.

Help them and all of us to lead lives worthy of our Christian calling.

And may honesty and respect, integrity and justice be the hallmark of all our relationships.

We make this prayer in the name of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and our Brother.

Amen.



Children's Rosary founder delighted to meet Derry connections at WMOF in Rome



THE Children's Rosary prayer group movement has been spreading through Ireland with 15 new groups initiated since October 2021, and there are ongoing efforts to begin more, such as at the Shrine at Knock. The Children's Rosary in St Patrick's Church, in the Claudy Parish, in Co Derry, continues to on the First Saturday of each month at 2 pm. All are encouraged to join the children as they lead the prayers.

Recently the founder of the Children's Rosary, Blythe Kaufman, attended the World Meeting of Families in Rome, from June 22-26. She was a delegate representing the Children's Rosary at the Vatican Meeting.

During the event, she had the opportunity to meet Archbishop Eamon Martin and Fr Colm O'Doherty, PP Clonleigh.

Commenting on her experience, Blythe said: "The World Meeting of Families is a unique opportunity to meet families and clergy from around the world. With the recent pandemic, the format of

the meeting was a bit different, with more families participating in their local dioceses and smaller groups of representatives travelling to Rome from the more than 100 countries represented.

"As the size of the gathering did not exceed several thousand, most of the meeting was held within the Vatican, in the St Paul VI Hall".

She added: "During the opening at the Festival of Families, which Pope Francis attended, we had the blessing to meet the Primate of All Ireland who comes from Derry City, Archbishop Eamon Martin.

"Amidst the excitement and joy of the opening event, we had the opportunity to speak to the Archbishop about the mission of the Children's Rosary and the numerous new groups that have formed in Ireland.

"During a subsequent meeting with the Archbishop and Fr Colm O'Doherty, we spoke specifically about the Derry Diocese and Bishop Donal McKeown's plans to use the book 'Child

Consecration: To Jesus through Mary - Following in the Spirit of St Thérèse, the Little Flower on a diocesan level. Fr Colm O'Doherty was particularly excited to hear this was happening in Derry!"

Blythe also shared her experiences from the closing Mass in St Peter's Square, which the Holy Father attended and at which he provided the homily.

"The sentiment that kept welling in my heart," she recalled, "was an appreciation for the beauty of our Church. Not the physical structure but the living Church and the beauty of our liturgy, which is a tender gift from Our Lord.

"We travelled to Rome to represent all the children who meet faithfully in Children's Rosary prayer groups around the world. The response we received universally was one of support and joy to hear of such good news. So often, the news today is one that lowers spirits, yet the news we shared was positive.

"Ireland, indeed, has been a

shining light with so many new groups which have recently formed. During a private meeting with members of the Dicastery for the Laity, Family and Life, we provided a presentation of the international scope of the Children's Rosary and the fruits that we are seeing. Their response was one of excitement, and they requested that we help more children in Italy to participate.

"Going forward, the Dicastery plans to feature the Children's Rosary on a new digital platform to highlight this as a means to support families in raising their children in the faith."



Men's Rosary in Derry and Clonmany.



GRANDPARENTS' FAITH CAFÉ 

An online social and spiritual space for Grandparents

The Faith Café opens again on Tuesday
8 November 2022 online via Zoom at
7.30pm local time to the UK.
(Please check local times)

Our Special Guest for November is
Father Liam Lawton
multi platinum, Irish,
singer-songwriter
Theme: November Remembrance

Self-registration is open now on our
website and is free of charge.
ALL ARE WELCOME!



www.catholicgrandparentsassociation.org  

THESE days, some of the young writers are busy settling into their new university and Upper Sixth routines, and look forward to sharing their experiences in future editions.

In this month's edition, Peter, who is now studying at NUI, Galway, has been thinking of his home parish's Gaelic Club, Naomh Padraig, in Iskaheen, as he reflects on Pope Francis' comments to representatives of various sports during an international gathering in the Vatican, paying tribute to them for making all welcome and for the wider benefits of belonging to a sports club.

Bronagh, who is now in Upper Sixth at St Colm's College, in Draperstown, has finished her Pope John Paul II Award and writes about her experience in completing her parish and social hours, and the benefits of doing the Award.

Niamh shares some food for thought regarding Pope Francis' message on the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, when he called on Christians to be considerate of their surroundings and fellow human beings.

Having returned from a preparatory visit to Portugal regarding World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, Bishop Donal shares his hopes about leading a group of young people there from the Derry Diocese.

And, this being the Rosary month of October, the school community of St Brigid's College, Carnhill, in the Three Patrons Parish, have been involving pupils, staff and members of the community in leading the praying of the Rosary for various intentions.



Hollie Frystal,
Co Tyrone Deanery.



Bronagh Doherty,
Co Derry Deanery



Peter Grant,
Inishowen Deanery.



Jodie Kennedy,
Derry City Deanery.



Niamh O'Kane - Co
Derry Deanery



John Augustine
Joseph, Derry City
Deanery.



Zara Schlindwein,
Derry City Deanery.

Bronagh shares her experience of the Pope John Paul II Award... I feel proud to represent my faith and help spread the Word of God

AS Upper Sixths, we embark on the final year of our time in secondary school, drawing to a close many experiences and adventures of a lifetime. One of these is the Pope John Paul II Award scheme, created by Fr Paul Farren in his role as director of the Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre.

In Year 13, we begin the scheme by volunteering in our parishes and communities, undertaking a variety of tasks and responsibilities and, in Year 14, we are currently writing our reflections, having a look back on the opportunities it gave us and how it brought us closer to those in our parishes and ultimately, God.

We are looking forward to the Award Ceremony in the coming months as a celebration of our faith. As part of the Pope John Paul II Gold Award Scheme, you must complete 20 social hours and 20 parish volunteering hours.

For my parish hours, I read at Mass on several occasions, which was very rewarding but daunting at the start. It required me to have a lot of confidence to stand up in front of everyone to read. After a time, it got easier and I now see it as a very rewarding thing to do for my parish. I have received many compliments on how it is a "very refreshing thing to see young people involved in our Masses".

I also attended Synodal meetings in my parish, which was a lovely thing to do in order to mix with people in my community through faith. Monthly, I write for "The

NET" Catholic online newspaper, which helps me broaden my knowledge of our faith and the current news surrounding our faith, as a I research and prepare my articles. I have also met lots of new people through attending "The NET" meet ups in Derry, and I have met Bishop Donal doing this. I have written articles on St Vincent de Paul, Trocaire, Refugee crisis, peace and war, pilgrimages, new ordinations, poverty, and the 'Do This In Memory of Me' programme. This helps me liaise with people who are very knowledgeable in these fields and also helps my researching, citation and writing skills.

I have taken part in lots of school Masses, reading, singing or playing music in the orchestra. This enables me to mix with younger children in the school and come together in faith in Masses, such as the Harvest Mass, Carol Service, and St Colm's 60th Anniversary.

At the Parish Carol Service, Year 13 led the readings. I read a reflection called 'No room in the Inn'. I also read at the Lenten Masses during Lent in school, which were a lovely way to start the school day. I also read at Palm Sunday Mass along with Stefan; we read the Passion Story. It was important when reading this to take turns and read slowly, depicting the emotion of this day. This increased my confidence for further public speaking.

Mass

In addition, I was a steward



along with another student in school, assisting the teachers in walking the Year 8 pupils down to the Holy Rosary Chapel for the Harvest Mass, a Mass held in celebration of a new school year, new starts and celebrating our new first years. During this Mass, I also helped with crowd control, as this was during the Covid pandemic. So, we made sure that Communion time was organised row by row and that masks were worn. We also guided people into their socially distanced seats.

For my social hours, I volunteered to be a part of the STEPS committee and meet monthly with them. I really enjoy these meetings, as I get to meet new people and see what work is going on in our community behind the scenes.

I also did various display boards in school, which I enjoyed as I particularly like creative and practical aspects of work. I supervised Homework Club on a Tuesday evenings as well, to help look after the Year 8s and 9s and help them with their work if they were struggling with anything.

I volunteered too at the Covid Vaccine Clinic twice in Ballinascreen GAA Club, which was a good opportunity to mix with the community, offering doctors and nurses help with forms and organising queues, etc. I also helped at the flu jab clinic in December in Backrow Recreation Centre, which again helped me mix with professionals and the older population. I enjoyed these clinics, as I would like to be a doctor in the future.

At Christmas time, I helped with the Winter Wonderland on two occasions. This was a lovely experience as I got to see the children's faces light up when they saw the elves and Santa. We had to dress up and it was a lovely experience to get to do with your friends. I also helped at Year 8 Enterprise Week, serving buns and counting the sales they made. This was a nice activity to bond with the Year 8s, creating relationships in which they could have someone to look up to and turn to. They used this money to buy ice creams at the end of the year as a reward for their hard work and fantastic entrepreneurial skills.

The Pope John Paul II Award scheme got me involved in my parish and community, and meeting lots of new people and learning lots of skills. Through reading at Mass, we as a school, brought youth back to our Masses and many people commented on how refreshing it was to see young people giving up their time for their parishes.

Pope Francis said in 2016 that "voluntary workers were amongst the most precious thing the church has", and I am sure I am not alone when saying that I feel proud to represent my faith and get involved in spreading the Word of God and living through the example He created for us.

The Pope John Paul II Award encourages young people across Northern Ireland to live out the Word of God in a rewarding and innovative way.

Pope Francis on wasting food by Niamh

DURING the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, Pope Francis highlighted the importance of putting an end to inequalities that deny the poor of food, in the face of increasing numbers of hungry people across the globe.

In writing a piece for Vatican News, Fr Benedict Mayaki SJ commented on how the Pope calls upon everyone to reorient our lifestyles "in a conscious, responsible manner to ensure that no one is left behind and everyone receives food, both in quantity and quality".

The Holy Father said this in a message to the Director General of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Mr Qu Dongyu, on the International Day of Awareness of Food Loss and Waste, which was celebrated on September 29.

Pope Francis highlighted that it is "shameful and worrying" that many, many people do not

have the basic and fundamental right access to adequate food or the means to provide it for themselves, while food is thrown away or spoiled, with no resources to purchase it. This is especially concerning in Western countries, where throwing away food and invaluable resources is very common.

He stated: "The cry of the hungry, deprived in one way or another of their daily bread, must resound in the centres where decisions are made, and it cannot be silenced or stifled by other interests."

Pope Francis also referred to the latest data from the 2022 State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World report, which showed that the number of hungry people in the world had increased significantly in the last year, due to the multiple crises facing humanity.

The Pope then repeated his appeal to "gather in order to redistribute, not produce to



waste", stating that "to throw food away means to throw people away."

He went on to point at the added harmful effect of the increase in greenhouse gas emissions and, by extension, to climate change, caused by food waste or loss.

And he noted that the earth we exploit groans because of consumerist excesses and "begs us to stop mistreating and destroying it."

Pope Francis further urged

everyone to consider young people, and "to sharpen our eyes and enlarge our hearts, giving the best of ourselves to care for the common home that came from God's hands which we must safeguard, responding with good works to the evil we do to it."

Through this, it is evident that the Pope is calling on Christians to be considerate of their surroundings and fellow human beings in not being wasteful of food and resources.



Speaking about St Brigid's College Rosary initiative, Liturgy Coordinator, Shauna Fitzsimons told 'The Net'... The Rosary is a way of holding Mary's hand and letting Her walk you through difficult times



DURING the month of October, the school community of St Brigid's College, Carnhill, and members of the surrounding community have been coming together to take turns in leading the praying of a decade of the Rosary for various intentions.

Organised by the College's Liturgy Coordinator, Shauna Fitzsimons, and Head of RE, Shauna Sharkey, the Rosary initiative is a follow on from the very successful Rosary prayer initiated by the school during the month of May in the first Covid lockdown.

"During the lockdown we prayed a decade of the Rosary every day on our Facebook page," recalled Ms Fitzsimons: "It was a way of keeping the school and parish community together during that difficult time.

"We decided to do it again now, during the month of October, as a reminder of the importance and power of praying together for each

other's needs as a community of faith.

"We are all one community of faith praying for each other; we are all joined together through prayer. Each decade is offered for a particular intention or connected with whatever Feast Day it might be.

"We are trying to show the children the value of intercessory prayer; that they just shouldn't pray for themselves but use the power of prayer for the needs of others too".

She added: "Within the school, decades have been led by the Year 8s right up to senior pupils, and members of the community have also led decades. We have had a pupil and his mother and granny pray a decade together too, as well as Fr Columba Jordan, cfr, who prayed for the people of Creeslough, and Archbishop Eamon Martin, who prayed a decade for the intention of Catholic schools.

"Our newly appointed headboy, Micheal Doherty, and headgirl, Cerys Connolly have prayed a decade, as have the deputy headboys and headgirls, and our principal. Bishop Donal is to say a decade and Mr O Mianáin will lead the praying of the last decade on Monday, October 31".

Delighted with the response of the community, Ms Fitzsimons said: "We are getting messages saying that it is so good to see the young people praying. The praying is recorded and then put out on our Facebook page

between 4 pm and 6 pm, when people have returned from school and work, and some have reached 1,000 views".

As part of the prayer initiative, the Year 8s have been encouraged to take their Rosary beads into school as a lead in to class discussions about the importance and value of praying the Rosary in the home, etc.

"The Rosary," remarked Ms Fitzsimons, "is a way of holding on to Mary's hand and letting her walk you through difficult times".



Sports for all by Peter

DURING the month of September, Pope Francis met participants, managers and officials from the sporting world, attending an International Summit on sport in the Vatican.

The Pope praised them for their hard work and dedication in not only promoting physical and mental well-being for others, but also for their role in inviting and welcoming others into their clubs and communities, to support them and their families who are struggling and in need.

In my parish of Iskaheen & Upper Moville, the GAA has been a big part of my life not only for taking part and playing games, but also for making new friends on and off the pitch.

My local GAA club, Naomh Padraig, Uisce hAoan, was founded in 1989 and has grown dramatically in the last 30 years for all ages, and welcomes new members every year from even outside of my parish.

Yes, we may have never been

a successful club in senior level, but that is not what our club aims to achieve for the people. Many new members have joined this year, even from across the globe, who want to try new things and become involved in many charity events.

Clubs play a role in welcoming people and bringing them together, like what Jesus did to help and support others.

My club, and many others across the world, will help others and also bring joy and entertainment to many, and helping people to think of the positives and not the negatives.



Bishop Donal hopeful WYD pilgrimage will be important stage in Irish Church renewal

PLANS are progressing for World Youth Day 2023, with Bishop Donal and the Diocesan Youth Coordinator, Lizzie Rea amongst a group that travelled from Ireland to Portugal to meet with organising committees there.

Bishop Donal is chairman of the Irish Episcopal Commission for Worship, Pastoral Renewal and Faith Development, and is looking forward to accompanying youth from Ireland, particularly from the Derry Diocese, to WYD in Lisbon.

He told 'The Net': "World Youth Day was due to be celebrated in 2022, but, as with so much of our lives, Covid got in the way.

"But the huge Catholic youth festival, which attracts millions

of young people from all around the world, is now scheduled for the beginning of August 2023 in Lisbon, the capital of Portugal.

"And 'Mary arose and went with haste' (Lk 1:39) is the bible quote chosen by Pope Francis as the motto of this World Youth Day".

Commenting on the planning trip, Bishop Donal said: "In order to help Irish preparations for the week-long festival of faith, seven delegates from a number of Irish dioceses recently travelled to Lisbon to meet with local organising committees.

"We were also able to visit the beautiful city Porto, where some Irish groups hope to spend a number of days in parishes, before heading to Lisbon for the main events.

"Of course, no pilgrimage to Portugal would be complete without spending some time in Fatima".

He added: "Derry Diocese hopes to bring a substantial group of over 18s to celebrate the

universality of Christ's message, and to imitate Our Lady in responding immediately to the Angel Gabriel's message.

"I hope that this will be an important stage on the journey of renewal in the Irish church".



Leading Diocesan pilgrimage to Knock, Bishop Donal highlighted how it offers much of what is needed for renewal of Church in Ireland, adding...

This is a difficult and exciting time for the Irish Church...It calls for people of prayer and courage



THE Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock on the last Saturday of September was a great success, with four busloads of pilgrims arriving at the International Marian and Eucharistic Shrine in Co Mayo, from Derry City, Omagh and Draperstown.

The amazing Ballinascreen Parish Choir also made the journey to lead the singing during Mass in the Basilica for the close of the pilgrimage, which was led by Bishop Donal.

Bishop Donal was the main celebrant of the Mass and was joined on the altar by Fr Peter Madden, PP Ballinascreen and Desertmartin, Fr Patrick Lagan, CC Waterside, and Rev Michael McCaul, deacon.

During his homily, the Bishop spoke about challenges to be faced in coping with many circumstances beyond our control and about the synodal process not being about ourselves but “those who most need to hear about the love and mercy of God”.

He highlighted the need for the Church to give priority “to how we go out from ourselves and our safe inner circles – and being seen to be concerned for those who are falling behind, those who are oppressed by poverty or violence or despair”.

“Modern, bright, shiny Ireland has much to be proud of,” he remarked, adding: “But striking buildings and better transport links risk being little more than adult toys if we do not see the widespread addiction and homelessness, fragmenting communities and neglected children. Jesus had eyes for the little one, for the lost sheep, for the leper”.

He went on to point out that

Jesus did not just pay attention to the hurting, saying: “Like the prophets before him, He was critical of a system that favoured the strong and the healthy. Mary, on the other hand praised the God who pulled down the mighty from their thrones and raised up the lowly. Mary knew that she was one of the little ones.

“When church thinks that we have a right to walk the corridors of power with the rich, we have forgotten that Christ’s kingdom is not a kingdom of this world. The church will be renewed when we rediscover the passion that drove Edmund Ignatius Rice and Catherine McAuley out into the streets of Ireland. They were concerned about individuals in pain, not about ideological battles”.

Noting that if our synodal conversations are to be Spirit-inspired, they must be hope-filled, Bishop Donal said: “It is clear that we are coming to the end of one way of being church in Ireland. We have to be honest in admitting this. There is no grace in a theology that pretends we ought to wait and hope that the past will come round again. Nor is there salvation in a theology which suggests we ought to wait around while the current model dies and trust that resurrection will come from somewhere without too much work on our part.

Start building

“Renewal in church has always come from those who live with outrageous hope and start building. We can see that in our own diocese. Catholic Emancipation happened in 1829. Within a decade, plans were being made to build a Catholic cathedral

in Derry. Some will have mocked the idea. Despite the Famine, the building was started in 1849. They needed over 20 years of stop-start work to have it opened for worship in 1873. It took 20 more years for the stained-glass windows to be acquired and installed and a further decade before the tower and spire could be completed. It was 1936 – almost exactly a century after the initial planning began – that all the bills were paid, and the final dedication could take place”.

He continued: “People of faith built in hope. All of those who set the process in motion were long dead before it was completed. They were not building for their own glory. They will have faced obstacles, criticism and financial difficulties.

“Unless our synodal process is focussed on discerning where the Lord is leading us to be fit for purpose, we will simply be building a future with the stones of our own making rather than being led by the Holy Spirit. Discernment involves conversion for our false mental models and our limited imagination. The Holy Spirit wants to inspire us with a divine vision”.

Turning to the story of Knock, Bishop Donal noted: “Mary came to the little ones of Knock in 1879. A century later, Monsignor Horan had built the basilica and welcomed Pope John Paul II. And a few years later, the airport was completed. In recent years, the shrine welcomed Pope Francis and is now officially an International Eucharistic and

Marian Shrine. Knock welcomes people from all over the country and beyond. It offers much of what will be necessary for renewal in Ireland.

“This is a place of prayer. There is a huge outreach through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Here adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is fostered, for the truth in silence lies. Like Mary’s home in Nazareth, Knock is a place where hope and audacious dreams are encouraged. These are the seedbed where new growth will come.

“When we come here together, we do not seek to argue over what our ideas are for the future of the church. Here, Mary gathers us to see where God is already at work in the Irish church, especially among young people. Mary, the young woman, bore Christ close to her heart, even when she and others did not understand what God was doing in her life. She calls us through Knock to let Jesus be born close to our hearts”.

“This is a difficult and exciting time for the Irish Church,” concluded Bishop Donal, “It calls for people of prayer and courage. Saints never let themselves be driven by the shifting sands of popular ideas. As at the wedding feast of Cana, Mary tells us to do what Jesus tells us. There is no future for the church unless we come to the self-sacrificing Lamb of God to whom she points on the altar. We pray today that, like Mary, we will put our lives at God’s disposal and let Him use us for His glory”.



Crossroads Mass to welcome Servant Sisters

THE Home of the Mother Servant Sisters are to be welcomed into the Derry Diocese by Bishop Donal during the celebration of Mass in St Patrick's Church, Crossroads, Killygordon, on Sunday, November 13.

Four of the Sisters, three from America and one from Ireland, will take up residency in the newly refurbished Parochial House at Crossroads, within the Parish of Killygordon (Donaghmore).

There is great delight in the Diocese that Sisters from the late Sr Clare Crockett's Order are to set up ministry here, six years after her death during an earthquake in Ecuador on April 16, 2016.

Two of the Sisters, Sr Mary and Sr Ruby were present in the Parochial House for a very successful Open Day on Sunday, October 2, when there was a constant stream of visitors to meet them.



Fr Patsy Arkinson, PP Killygordon, with Home of the Mother Servant Sisters, Sr Ruth and Sr Mary at the Open Day in Crossroads Parochial House.



Special blessing for Long Tower parishioners' canine friends



Photographs by Ivor Doherty



My heart was sad leaving Creggan but I knew God wanted me in Ballymagroarty – Fr Joe Gormley

SAD to leave the Parish of Creggan that he loved serving in for the last eight years, Fr Joe Gormley has embraced the opportunity to minister as parish priest in Holy Family Parish, Ballymagroarty, as a gift from God, and the warm welcome of the parishioners there has helped him settle in.

Speaking to 'The Net' following his installation as Parish Priest by Bishop Donal, during evening Mass in Holy Family Chapel on Friday, September 2, Fr Joe said that he had found it "an enormous privilege to be with the people of Creggan for eight years".

He added: "They taught me an awful lot about how to be a priest and also from their faith and resilience. Creggan is an amazing community. It is a place where people have suffered a lot but their goodness and faith carried me every day I spent there.

"I was very blessed to have Fr Paul and Fr Daniel and Fr Gerry with me during my eight years,

and they were great friends; each inspired me in their own way.

"I dearly miss Creggan but I know that every gift from God does not belong to me but to God and, while I am sad at leaving, I know that God is providing for Creggan and will continue to provide for it in the way that He always does, through His graciousness and goodness.

"I ask people to pray for Fr Daniel, Fr Ignacy and Fr Gerry, and all who help in the parish and all the people of the parish, that they will be able to see their goodness and worth in the sight of God".

Commenting on his move to Holy Family Parish, six months after the passing of Fr Paddy, Fr Joe said: "When asked by Bishop McKeown to become PP Ballymagroarty, while my heart was sad at leaving Creggan, I knew that God wanted me to be in Ballymagroarty. I have been privileged over the last eight years to be helping out in Holy

Family from time to time and as administrator.

"The parish dearly loved Fr Paddy and the pain of his loss is still very real. I know Holy Family to be built on firm foundations of faith and involvement by parishioners, which has helped the parish through Fr Paddy's illness and death.

"I pray that I will value all the good work that has already been done by Fr Paddy and by the founding father of the parish, Fr Kieran O'Doherty, and the priests who have served here over the years".

Appreciating that the Holy Family parishioners have been so welcoming towards him, Fr Joe said: "I feel at home and am looking forward to working with Fr Kevin Mulhern, who will be assisting in the parish as well as being prison chaplain in Magilligan".

And highlighting his appreciation of people's prayers, he added: "I ask the people of

Creggan and Holy Family to pray that I put God's Will and not my own at the centre of all that I do, that I will have the humility to seek out God's forgiveness and mercy, and the forgiveness and mercy of others when I don't, and that I will enable God to bless the people I serve by being faithful to what I have been asked to do.

"Please pray that I pray and use the Sacrament of Confession for my on-going conversion".

Ordained 26 years ago, Fr Joe was born in Stockport, Manchester, into the family of the late John and Anne Gormley, but grew up in the Parish of Drumragh, in Omagh, with his siblings, Catherine, Joanne, John and the late Marian.

Afterward his induction as Ballymagroarty Parish Priest, Fr Joe and the Holy Family parishioners had a chance to meet over a cup of tea in the neighbouring Holy Family Primary School.



Serving Creggan as parish priest a heart-felt joy for Fr Daniel McFaul

AFTER serving as curate in the Creggan community for three years, Fr Daniel McFaul has expressed great joy at having been appointed as their Parish Priest, though conscious that he has "big shoes to fill" following in the footsteps of Fr Joe Gormley, who is now parish priest in Ballymagroarty.

At the end of his induction ceremony on Sunday, September 4, in St Mary's Church, Fr Daniel spoke of his first experience of ministering in Creggan nine years ago, when Bishop Donal had asked him to come there for a few months.

Recalling that he had agreed "with some apprehension", as it would be the first time he had lived and worked on his own, he told the congregation: "When I arrived on a damp Sunday evening in May, there was a bag of groceries sitting at the door anonymously gifted as a welcome.

"In those three or so months, and, indeed, for the past three years, the people of this parish

have afforded me kindness and support, and I thank you for that. You have made me very welcome here and I look forward with joy in my heart to serving you as your parish priest, and working together with Fr Ignacy and Fr Gerry".

Fr Daniel also thanked Bishop Donal for all his support and guidance over the last nine years, both in Creggan and Cappagh, and for the support that he has given to all his brother priests over the years.

"I wish also to thank you," he added, "for your leadership both spiritual and practical to all of us throughout the Covid pandemic."

He went on to thank Fr Gerry White for his friendship and support over the years, and his parents and family for their ongoing support and presence at the induction ceremony.

From the Parish of Iskaheen & Upper Merville, Fr Daniel's parents, Eileen and James McFaul attended the ceremony, as did his brother, Michael, with his wife,



Ann, and son James Michael, who read, and his sister, Donna-Marie. And he was delighted to have his Godparents, Ellen McFaul and Dinny Kelly present too.

Asking the parishioners to have patience with him, and to continue to pray for him, Fr Daniel said: "I am conscious of the great work that Fr Joe Gormley has done in our parish, and I know I have big shoes to fill. I wish him well in Holy Family

and thank him for his goodness and kindness to me".

Appreciating the warm welcome of the parishioners, Bishop Donal remarked: "It's not easy being a Christian or being a priest today, but Christ asks us to life our cross and follow Him. I ask for God's blessing on this great parish of Creggan".

Everyone was invited for tea and scones in the community room afterwards.



Fr Pat O'Hagan open to setting hearts on fire in Bellaghy, Greenlough and Lavey!



BEAUTIFUL sunflowers shone out amongst the floral displays that adorned the altar of St Mary's Church, Bellaghy, for the installation of the new parish priest, Fr Pat O'Hagan at the Saturday vigil Mass on September 3. It was a welcome sight for the former parish priest of Moville, for they were from the sunflower-filled Field of Hope that had been created by one of the parishioners there, Geraldine Mullan, who has been an inspiration to Fr Pat and many others in how to cope with the changes life brings.

In his homily during the Mass, Bishop Donal touched on the subject of change when he talked to the congregation about the new chapter their parish was beginning with a new parish priest: "With him, you face many challenges in how you hand on your radical faith to young people. Can I suggest that you do not begin with human ideas about how we might make Jesus and church more attractive.

"Discernment is a matter of prayerfully discerning where God is already at work, where God is drawing us with Jesus through Calvary to Resurrection. That will not be an easy road. But as our first reading says, 'the reasonings of mortals are unsure and our intentions unstable'. It is only prayerful hearts who will learn the wisdom that God offers us in Jesus".

Speaking at the end of the ceremony, Fr Pat shared how being appointed to Bellaghy

had been a dream of his for a long time, so much so that the additional role of administrator of the parishes of Greenlough and Lavey was readily accepted when put forward to him by Bishop Donal, with the knowledge that he would have the help of their former parish priest, Fr Eamon Graham, who continues to reside in Lavey as curate of all three parishes.

Ordained 38 years ago, the Co Tyrone reared priest told the congregation: "I come here via Coleraine, Buncrana, the parishes of Camus and Mourne in Strabane, and Moville, where I've spent the last almost 13 years as PP. It's been hard, and sad, to leave Moville behind, and the beautiful view across the Foyle that I had every morning as I opened my curtains and my front door, but I relish the challenge of this task which the bishop has offered me, and which I've accepted here tonight, publicly, in the presence of my family, friends, and new parishioners".

Noting that the 'amalgamation' of parishes was something that had become "a necessary evil" due to the shortage of priests, Fr Pat, who is the Diocesan Vocations Director, stated: "We need an increase in priestly vocations. We need to engage fully in the Year of Prayer for Vocations, which the diocese is currently celebrating. We need to pray fervently to the Lord of the Harvest to send labourers into His harvest".

Hopeful that prayers were

being answered, he added: "Last weekend, in the Retreat Centre at Drumalis, in Larne, we had eight men who are discerning how the Lord is calling them to serve Him in the Church and in the world. Please pray for them, and that there'll be many more like them who will present themselves for service as priests in this diocese.

"As well as priests to serve the Church, we need committed lay people who will volunteer their time and their energy to serve their brothers and sisters in Christ, working together to build up the Kingdom of God in this part of the world".

Friend

Reflecting on his time in Moville, Fr Pat said that while he arrived there as a stranger, he liked to think that he was leaving "as a friend to many, having celebrated Mass and the sacraments, and having preached the word of God in fidelity to the Church's teachings, and encouraging the people there to love their neighbour, to promote justice, peace and equality, and to work together to build up the Kingdom of God in that part of the world".

He added: "That's my aim as I begin my pastoral ministry in Bellaghy, Lavey and Greenlough. I am a stranger here to all but a very few".

Fr Pat went on to welcome those gathered to the parish Open Door Centre for refreshments afterwards, saying: "The 'Open Door'. I like that, and it's something I hope this parish will be for anyone who comes here to pray or worship with us, to spend any time at all among us - that they'll find a warm welcome here, no matter who they are, no matter the colour of their skin, no matter their first or only language, no matter whom they love, no matter their race or ethnic background, please let's make our parish community - our - a place where all are welcome".

Noting that he was coming among them at a very difficult time, Fr Pat remarked: "There's

political uncertainty and instability here in the Six Counties; people are struggling economically; society is facing all sorts of problems; our young people are being pulled this way and that by all sorts of trends and fashions; there's war raging in Europe, and in other parts of our world; there are too many people who are hungry and thirsty and dying of curable diseases, while there's so much waste and destruction of the planet going on around us; disrespect for the environment which Pope Francis is asking us to cherish and nurture, not just during the Season of Creation but always, and not just for ourselves, but for the generations coming after us.

"The Church has gone through her own upheavals over the past number of years but, thank God, there are still plenty of people who come to Mass and the Sacraments, who see value in the Church and in having faith, having a living relationship with Jesus Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Pope Francis is asking us to prepare for the Synod in Rome in October of next year. He wants us to 'walk together' as followers, disciples, and friends of Jesus, to make the Church everything the Lord needs it to be right now and well into the future.

"I'm delighted to be asked to walk along that path with the people of these three parishes, and I ask you to walk with me as we work together to build up the Kingdom of God here - to make where we are places of justice, love, mercy, peace, forgiveness, equality, fairness, and every kind of goodness".

"I know I'm not the first O'Hagan here," he continued. "A local historian told me just this morning that, in 1641 the O'Hagans and the O'Quinns came here and burned Bellaghy down! I'm not a pyromaniac but, if I can, I'd like to set your hearts on fire with the love of Jesus, and with a desire to serve Him in everything we say and do. Together! For His glory and for the good of His people".



Steelstown Parish 'Getting to know you' event a great success

Photographs by Patsy McCallion

STEELSTOWN Parish Pastoral Council is delighted with the great response to its 'Get to know us' event following Masses during the first weekend of October.

Various groups within the parish were encouraged to take part, setting up information tables about their group as a way of letting parishioners know what groups were present in the parish and what they did.

The tables were at the back of the Our Lady of Lourdes Church so that people could easily access them before and after Mass, and refreshments were provided by the Pastoral Council to give people an opportunity to chat together, with a special ice cream treat for the children.

Some of the groups represented

were the Parish Pastoral Council, Parish Eco Group, St Vincent de Paul, Our Lady of Lourdes Adoration Group, Ministers of the Word and the Eucharist, the Pope John Paul II Award Group, Culmore WI and Search, and there were Fair Trade items for sale.

Speaking to 'The Net' afterwards, Joanne Doherty of the Pastoral Council said: "The idea came about through wanting to provide an opportunity for parishioners to meet up, especially after Covid, so we thought it would be good to get the various parish groups together to let people know about them.

"So, it was an opportunity not only for the parishioners to meet

and chat with each other, but to promote the different groups operating in the parish, and it was a really lovely occasion which also celebrated the Season of Creation. "The Eco Group had made some of the scones, sandwiches and sweet treats, and one of our parishioners said to me afterwards that it was great having a coffee and meeting people".

Marian Gallen, chair of the Pastoral Council, was also delighted with the great engagement of parishioners: "It was really worthwhile organising. There was a great turnout and the feedback has encouraged us to consider doing something like this again as a way for people to socialise, rather than just going to Mass and leaving afterwards, and

maybe not seeing each other until the following weekend Mass.

"People really appreciated meeting each other and finding out about the different groups that are part of our parish life".



Season of Creation Sunflower displays

by Patricia McCormack

NUMEROUS parishes had bright, joyful displays of sunflowers to herald the beginning of the Season of Creation, Sept 1 to Oct 4.

These sunflowers were special as they were generously donated by Geraldine Mullan from her 'Field of Hope' at Quigley's Point.

Many thousands visited this

'cathedral' of sunflowers in late August, and many more were moved and inspired when they read of Geraldine's loving act of remembrance for her husband, John and children, Tomas and Amelia, who tragically drowned two years ago.

We thank Geraldine for sharing her sunflowers, symbols of love

and hope in the midst of grief and pain.

The Season of Creation is a time to celebrate the joy of Creation, to awaken to destructive lifestyles that destroy nature and impact the most vulnerable people, and to commit ourselves to care for our common home.

<https://seasonofcreation.org>



Moving from one Greencastle to another, Fr Eddie Gallagher exchanges crook for net to catch more fish for the Lord

LEAVING his role as Shepherd of the flock in the Sperrins, in Co Tyrone, to become a Fisherman of men and women on the Foyle, Fr Eddie Gallagher is looking forward to ministering to the parishioners of the very scenic Moville Lower, in Co Donegal.

Installed as parish priest there by Bishop Donal at evening Mass in St Mary's Church, Ballybrack, on Monday, September 5, Fr Eddie thanked all who had come along, including people from parishes he had previously served in, including Greencastle, Gortin and Limavady.

He was also delighted to have his mother, sisters and nephew amongst the congregation, remarking that plans were "already afoot for the family

to spend Christmas dinner" in Moville.

Thanking all involved in the ceremony, Fr Eddie went on to pay tribute to the previous Parish Priest, Fr Pat O'Hagan for his great assistance and advice, adding that he also intended to "call upon the wisdom" of Frs George McLaughlin, Jim McGonagle and Paul Duggan, who reside in the parish.

He added: "I move from Greencastle of the Sheep in the Sperrins to Greencastle of the Fish on the Foyle. I have changed from being Shepherd of the Flock to being Fisher of Women and Men. I also leave behind my previous title of High Priest of Derry, as Greencastle in Tyrone has the highest church above sea

level. Previously in Long Tower in Derry, I could be considered the Territorial Abbot of the Monastery of St Columba".

Pondering what title he could assume in Moville, he felt that 'Canon Regular of Glenagivney, should suffice, with Bishop Donal later suggesting Bishop of Ballybrack!

Looking forward to the time ahead amongst the people of Moville, Fr Eddie told them: "As the dust settles and I get settled in, I hope you will see more and more of me out and about. This is a parish of great beauty with the beaches and water, but I recall when I was on the mission in Belize, in Central America, visiting a parish in the south of the country in the Toledo district

and the Presbytery had a veranda overlooking the Caribbean Sea. Seminarians and deacons would come to work in the parish on placement and they would say, 'Wow, how lovely, what a view, so peaceful'. Then the Pastor would say, 'Yes it is, but the work is back there'.

"So yes, as I open the blinds in the morning and look out over the Foyle on a sunny day, I will remind myself of the Pastor's words that the work, ministry and people are all around me in Moville, Greencastle, Ballybrack, Stroove, the Glen and Ballinacrae, to name but a few places.

"May God bless and guide us all during these times of challenge and opportunity for the church and our parish".



Our Lady of the Bowed Head Triduum for the Dead

by Aoife O'Neill

NOVEMBER is a special time in the Church calendar, when, as Catholics, we remember the dead with particular devotion. We begin the month by celebrating All Saints and then All Souls. We pray for those who have gone before us; we love them, we remember them, we remember their legacy and we pray for them as they make their passage to Heaven through the process of purgation - that we call purgatory. We believe that our prayer on earth is effective in praying for those souls that are being purified of all their weakness and sin to enter into the wedding feast of Heaven.

The Carmelite Fathers at Termonbacca will hold a Triduum of Masses to pray for all those who have gone before us. The three Masses will take place on November, Wednesday 2, Thursday 3 and Friday 4, at 7.30 pm each evening, and we will

pray through the intercession of Our Lady of the Bowed Head.

We will also hold a day of prayer and reflection on Saturday, November 5, for those who have died.

The picture of Our Lady of the Bowed Head (Our Lady of Grace) is kept in the Church of the Viennese Carmel.

This is the image's moving story...

A picture of Our Lady of Grace was discovered at Rome, in about 1610, by the Venerable Dominic of Jesus and Mary (1559-1630). One evening, when Dominic was walking past an old house that was to be converted into a convent, an interior impulse attracted him to a heap of debris.

After closely examining the rubbish, his eyes fell upon this oil painting, which was torn and covered with dirt. Grieved at seeing a picture of the Heavenly Mother in such a miserable

condition, he took it to his cell and repaired it.

One night, while praying for a particular favour as he knelt before the holy image, he noticed that dust had settled upon it. While he was gently removing the dust, the face of Our Lady suddenly became animated. She smiled at Dominic and nodded her head in token of her gratitude.

Dominic feared that he was the victim of a diabolical illusion, but the Queen of Heaven dispelled his uneasiness with the following words: "Fear not, my son, for your request is granted. It will be accomplished and will be part of the recompense that you are to receive for the love that you bear to my Divine Son and myself."

When Our Lady invited Dominic to make another request of her, he asked for the release of one of his benefactors from Purgatory. The Holy Virgin promised to grant this request

if several Masses and good works were offered for the soul. Shortly afterward, the Blessed Mother appeared with the soul of the benefactor, who had been delivered from Purgatory.

The Blessed Mother promised Dominic: "All those who implore my protection, devoutly honouring this picture, will obtain their petition, and will receive many graces. Moreover, I shall hearken in a special manner to the prayers that shall be addressed to me for the relief of the souls in Purgatory".

Those attending can light a candle in memory of their loved one, which will burn during the three nights of Masses.

Anyone wishing to book to attend the day retreat can do so by contacting Aoife on 028 71262512 or email termonbaccaderry@gmail.com.

Parish Pastoral Councils Day of Prayer & Reflection

A Day of Prayer and Formation for Parish Pastoral Councils is being hosted at Termonbacca on Saturday, November 12, offering members an opportunity to reflect on their role.

The day will begin at 10 am and end with Mass at 4 pm, and will include time for group bonding, prayer and some talks, followed

by a time of reflection and discussion.

A light lunch will be provided and the suggested donation for the day is £5 per head.

For further information or booking contact Aoife on 028 71 262512 or email termonbaccaderry@gmail.com.

Burt auction raises much needed funds

by Kathleen Grant

THE Burt Auction raised €2,080 for Inch Presbyterian Church and €2,140 for Parish funds.

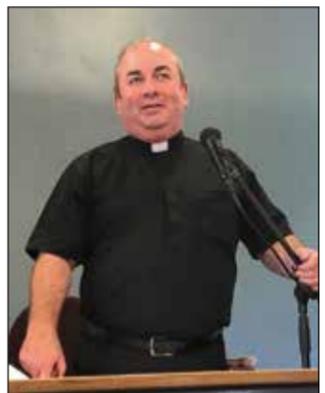
Thanks to Lily Elder for her hard work in putting it all together. Thanks also to all the willing helpers and those who did the driving.

We deeply appreciate all who donated, including items and food, and the ladies who made the tea.

Sincere thanks also to our auctioneer Gerald Deehan, to all who attended and for their bids to boost much needed funds.



A view of the auction.



Fr Francis Bradley PP Burt, Inch & Fahan and Bunrana, addresses the crowd to return thanks at St Mary's Hall.



Rev Jim Lamont with Ann Ramsey and Mary Milligan.



Gerald Deehan waiting on the bids from the floor.



Rev Craig Wilson with Lily Elder.

Fr Roland Colhoun and friends enjoy Lough Derg one-day retreat



Fr Roland Colhoun, CC Newtownstewart, Plumbridge, Gortin and Greencastle, Co Tyrone, with a group of parishioners and friends on the One-Day Lough Derg Retreat, in September.

Annual Blessing of the Bikes



Fr Gerry Sweeney carrying out the annual Blessing of the Bikes at Burt.

Fr Crowley highlights happy landing in Errigal as he celebrates 30 years of priesthood

PRIESTHOOD wasn't Fr Brendan Crowley's first choice when he was deciding what he would like to do in life. He had really wanted to be a commercial airline pilot, and it seems that God has had him use those skills in being the steady, guiding hands needed in parish life.

Back in June, the people of Ballerin and Glenullin in the rural parish of Errigal expressed their high esteem for their city-bred pastor by organising a big surprise parish celebration for the 30th anniversary of his ordination.

When he arrived in the Glenullin GAC Hall after celebrating the Saturday Vigil Mass in St Joseph's Church, he thought it was for a small gathering but got the surprise of his life when there was an explosion of applause as he stepped into the room packed not only with parishioners from both Glenullin and Ballerin, but also family members.

A number of parishioners from both sides of the parish had come together to plan the night of food and entertainment, which involved the young people in using their musical talents and some older parishioners with a love for drama, and joint MCs for the night, Gerard O'Kane, Glenullin, and Paul Mullan, Ballerin, added their own form of light entertainment with their banter.

A special poem about Fr Brendan was written by parishioner, Joe Wade and recited

by his two young sons, Eoghan and Fionn.

Expressing a warm welcome to all those who had travelled over from Ballerin for the occasion, Glenullin MC, Gerard O'Kane remarked: "Fr Crowley has managed something unique in getting Ballerin and Glenullin in the one room, and I think this is something that we should do more often".

Addressing Fr Brendan, Gerard added: "Everybody is very glad that you are with us. They all love you, even though they may not be as much in the chapel now because of Covid. We are so glad that you have spent 30 years in the priesthood and I think that needs another big round of applause".

A special cake was baked for the occasion and a presentation was made to Fr Brendan on behalf of the parish.

Deeply appreciative of all the thought and effort that had gone into organising the celebration, even to the extent of inviting his family, Fr Brendan remarked: "I was speaking to some of my family only a couple of days ago and not a word did they drop".

Expressing his happiness as parish priest of Errigal, he said: "When I was offered this parish in 2016, I had no bother taking it on board and I have no regrets. I love every minute of it and appreciate everything that people do in this parish".

Sharing some memories of his pathway to priesthood, Fr Brendan recalled travelling to



Maynooth on September 22, 1985, with his late parents, to join the first year intake of 72 others from all over Ireland, including three others from the Derry Diocese.

"I was unsure of what lay ahead," he said, "and even wondered at times if I would stay the course. My first interest was to be a commercial airline pilot. Within days of arriving in Maynooth, I noted that the engine noise of a Boeing 747 airplane was the Aer Lingus flight (Shamrock 105) from Dublin to Shannon, onwards to New York. If it left runway 28L, then it was heading in assent over Maynooth. If on time, then I would see it perched at the window in Loftus Hall while attending the 12 noon lecture - not sure what that lecture was about!"

"I was not to be an airline pilot as I had failed the requisite eye test, without correcting lenses (glasses). Hence, I thought I would give my second choice a

try - priesthood. To be honest, I didn't think I would stay the pace, as over the next seven years the initial intake number of 73 was now down to over 30".

He added: "On June 14, 1992, I was ordained in my native parish of St Eugene's Cathedral by Bishop Daly. I was the last diocesan priest he ordained in the city. Seven weeks later, my father died.

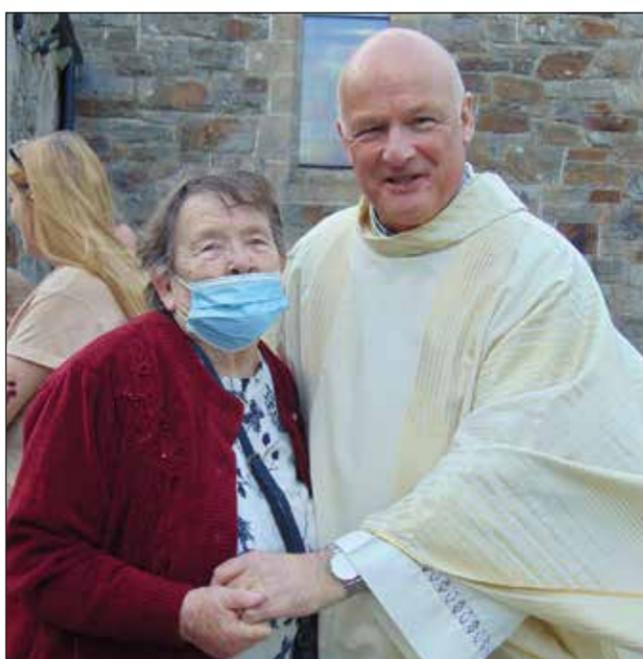
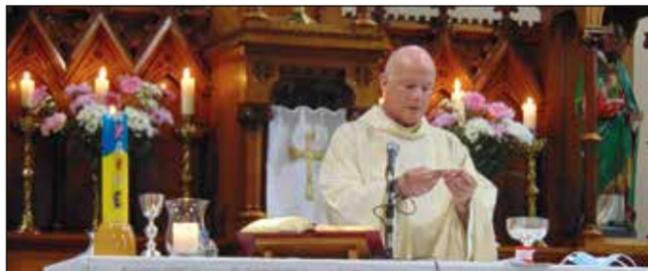
"I had received my appointment while going through St Joseph's gate in Lourdes, where my parents and myself attended the last Diocesan pilgrimage to be held in August. My first appointment was to St Mary's Creggan for seven years. Then, in 1999, I was appointed as hospital chaplain in Omagh, the year after the Omagh bomb. I was based in Cappagh Parish (Killyclogher). This was followed by nine years in Inishowen in two parishes, Malin and Burt/Inch/Fahan, and I am presently beginning my

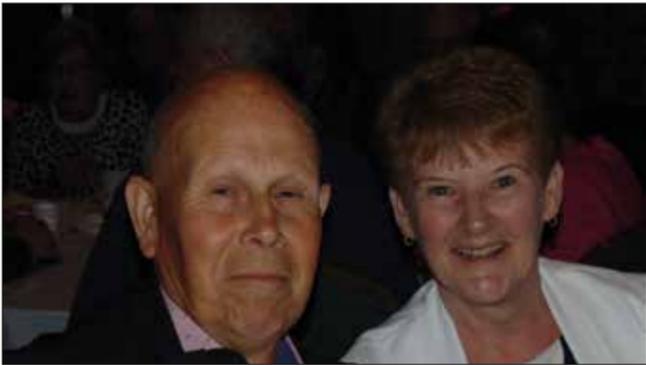


seventh year in Errigal Parish, having recently inherited the neighbouring parish of Kilrea & Desertohill.

"I still look to the skies every day, not necessarily for divine intervention, though occasionally that is required also, but often

wondering what might have been. Life presents whatever opportunities are for us. And I still follow Shamrock 105 most days now, at its changed departure time at 10.55 am. It now goes directly to JFK".





Father Crowley by Joe Wade

*Well folks I have a short story to tell you about a priest I know,
He's our own Father Crowley and he was ordained in Maynooth
30 years ago.
He was born and raised in Great James Street – a true Derry
City boy,
Now he's living in the county, can't be easy I hear you sigh.*

*But he's settled in rightly to the joys of country life,
Ah sure isn't it easier for him, not having a wife.
He's married to the priesthood, and he does a great job,
The sermons aren't too long, which suits all our mob.*

*Father started out as a baker before being called to Christ's side,
And as a priest or a baker, he was always his 'Mothers Pride'.
We're so lucky to have him with us, girls and boys,
I'd say if he had his way, he'd be off up in the skies.*

*You see, he's a mad man for aeroplanes and going on vacation,
So Mass would be cut short and there would be no time for a
station.
If Father was told there was a good spot to visit in some place
remote,
He'd love nothing better than being off on a plane or a boat.*

*Now some say the priesthood is the hardest profession,
Not being able to get married and having to listen to confession.
But Father Crowley is happy and a great man to have around,
And as a parish we're lucky to have someone so sound.*

*To guide us and lead us and to help us to pray,
And enjoying the craic with us each and every day.
So congratulations, Father and thanks for all you do,
Here's to the next 30 and God Bless you.*



St Therese Triduum with the Termonbacca Carmelites...

THE annual St Therese Triduum led by the Carmelite Fathers in the Iona Retreat Centre, Termonbacca, once again revealed the depth of love people of all ages have for The Little Flower.

Fr Michael McGoldrick was the main speaker this year, and gave talks about St Therese and suffering, and trust and mercy, as well as a talk about the Little Flower for children...



St Therese and Suffering

St Therese is such an attractive saint that it is easy to forget how much suffering shaped her life. The reality is that suffering entered her life early and if it were not for her attitude to it, suffering would have cast a very dark shadow over her life.

She was a sickly child, and her mother was not able to breastfeed her. Her mother, Zelig had to send her to a wet nurse. That was difficult for Zelig and Therese.

Zelig developed breast cancer when Therese was young and she had to watch her mother suffer. She died when Therese was just four and half. Therese felt lost, turned to her sister Pauline, and asked her to be mother to her. Pauline was particularly good to her. She would dress Therese and do her hair. She taught Therese her lessons, especially her catechism.

Therese was eventually sent to school. She found it a difficult experience. She wrote that for most children school was to be the happiest time of their life. For her, it was the worst time. She was picked on by other students, some of whom were jealous of her abilities. The only way she knew to manage it was to isolate.

Then to make things worse, Pauline decided to become a Carmelite nun. It was like losing her mother all over again. The suffering caused Therese to have a nervous breakdown. She went through a period of depression and began to hallucinate. It was a frightening time for her father and sisters to the point where they feared that she would die. They began a time of intense prayer to Our Lady of Victories, and Therese tells us that one day she had an experience of the statue of Our Lady of Victories in her bedroom smiling at her. She made an immediate recovery. However, she still had extreme sensitivity and scrupulosity.

She tells us of an incident when she was 13 that had a profound effect on her. It was Christmas and there was a custom in the family that the children left their shoes out near a fireplace for the parents to put surprise gifts in them. In 1886, her father was not feeling well. She overheard him

saying, "Thank God this is the last time I will have to do this." Her normal reaction would have been to break down in tears and cry, which would have made her father feel even worse. She decided that she would not cry or let her father know that she had heard what he said. Instead, she joked and laughed with him. She said that this cured her of her hypersensitivity.

After receiving communion on Christmas Day and during her thanksgiving, she felt "charity enter my soul." She was able to move away from excessive self-preoccupation and begin to become interested in the lives of other people. In fact, she understood that humility was a virtue whereby a person could centre on other people and recognize the gift that other people are in one's life.

When she was 15, Therese felt called to become a Carmelite nun. But because she was so young, she had to overcome a lot of opposition. The local bishop would not agree. Soon afterwards, her father, Louis had arranged to take herself and Celine on a trip to Paris and Rome. While she was in Rome, she met Pope Leo XV. His answer seemed dismissive: "If is God's will, you will enter." One of the priests on the trip was so taken by Therese that he suggested to the bishop that she be given permission to enter Carmel, and she soon entered the Lisieux Carmel.

Monastery

She said that she entered the monastery with her eyes wide open. She did not expect life to be easy. She was not very practical and was criticised by the older nuns for the way she swept the floor. Some of them resented another member of the Martin family entering. They felt that they would have too much power in the community. They let their feelings be known.

Another experience that might seem funny at first, was that of the sister near her in the chapel who had a way of rattling her false teeth during the time for silent prayer that got on Therese's nerves. It is easy to imagine how listening to something like that



day in, day out would soon get on your nerves. Most of us would not have the patience to stop ourselves saying or doing something. Therese resisted that temptation and accepted the discomfort out of her love for Jesus. Jesus had done so much for her that this was the least she could do in response.

When Therese was 22, she developed tuberculosis. She tried to hide it initially, but it soon became evident to other nuns that she was seriously ill. She spent over a year in the gradual erosion of her bodily life. Treatment was basic, and she suffered greatly. The illness finally claimed her life.

To add to her suffering, her father began to show signs of dementia. It was very painful for Therese to watch her father suffer so much and not to be able to do anything about it.

While the physical pain Therese suffered was great, she also experienced great inner darkness. She had severe temptations to doubt her faith, especially the existence of Heaven. She wrote: "While I do not have the joy of faith, I am trying to carry out its works at least. I believe that I have made more acts of faith in this past year than all through my whole life."

Towards the end, the pain was almost unbearable. She was in such pain that she spoke of nearly losing her mind (CG 22.8.97). She said to her sister, Agnes: "Watch carefully, Mother, when you have persons a prey to violent pains; do not leave near them any medicines that are poisonous. I assure you; it needs only a second when one suffers intensely to lose

one's reason. Then one could easily poison oneself."

Her sister, Mother Agnes, said to her a week before she died, "What a terrible sickness and how much you suffered!" She replied, "Yes! What a grace it is to have faith! If I had not any faith, I would have committed suicide without an instant's hesitation". (LastConv 22.9.6) Therese died peacefully at the age of 24 on September 30, 1897.

Therese never glorified suffering. She saw it for what it was: something evil. She believed that even suffering, however difficult, has a place in God's plan for our lives. She was convinced that our suffering, in union with the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, could help to transform the world.

Therese learned from Jesus' suffering and death on the cross. When He prayed in anguish in the Garden of Gethsemane the night before His crucifixion, He asked God to spare Him the violent death that He knew awaited Him. But then instead of His own wishes, He gave Himself over to whatever suffering was ahead because He knew He was not alone. He could rely upon God's love.

She, too, believed that despite all the feelings of absence, that God still loved her and was with her in her suffering; that she was never alone.

We really do not have a choice of whether or not we will suffer. Our choice is whether or not we will search for God within that suffering. In that, St Therese leads us by example.





St Therese and Trust and Mercy

DURING her years in the convent, Therese read the lives of the saints. She felt that she was not in their league at all. She could never see herself being able to do the great things they had done. Yet Jesus called all of us to be saints. She believed that God would not put the desire to be a saint in her heart unless He intended to fulfil it. The only way it could be fulfilled was if God carried her along the road of life; carried her to Himself.

She believed that He would have to show her a totally new way of being a saint, a way for ordinary people. And so she discovered the 'little way' as she called it, the way of trust and abandonment to God. It was a way of love: love expressed in the little events of daily life. Trust in God's mercy when we fail. Abandonment to God by accepting whatever comes our way in life, good and bad.

She did not have any blinding vision of this. God showed it to her gradually, beginning in her childhood. She was blessed to be born into the family she was. She would write that the parents God blessed her with were more worthy of heaven than earth.

Perhaps the most important gift her parents gave her was a sense of God as a loving father. At that time, France was suffering from the consequences of the Jansenist heresy, with its rigoristic views on the sacraments of penance and Holy Communion. Many people became very scrupulous. At the root of this was fear of God. Even though Therese experienced scruples for a while in her childhood, she escaped the worst of Jansenism. She had such an easy and loving relationship with her father, Louis, and she was able to translate that into her relationship with God her Father. Louis and Zélie taught her to see Jesus as a friend.

Through events in her life, Jesus prepared her gradually to discover that little way. I mentioned her surprise at seeing a lift for the first time, and how this would later become an image of prayer lifting one to God. Her experience when she was 13 led her to want to put Jesus first and not herself.

The little, white flower that her father gave her, when she asked his permission to enter Carmel,

became a symbol of her life. She would be a little, white flower in the garden of Jesus. She began her life story with the words: "Springtime story of a little white flower written by herself."

When she entered Carmel, she began to read the Gospel and New Testament letters. She would always keep a copy of the Gospel in her habit, near her heart, as a symbol of her desire to be conformed to the image of Jesus. On reading St Paul's image of the Church as the body of Christ, she reflected that a body needs a heart. She would become love at the heart of the church.

She soon discovered how demanding the Gospel could be when lived in religious life. In her 'Story of a Soul', she mentions several incidents that cost her dearly. One sister in the community took a dislike to her and took every opportunity to let her know that. But Therese's response was to react in love, to the point that the sister once asked her why Therese liked her so much!

She tells of a sister who used constantly splashed her with cold water when they were doing the washing together. The washing was done in a large open tub outdoors. Therese resisted the temptation to react and accepted the discomfort out of her love for Jesus. Jesus had done so much for her that this was the least she could do in response.

Transforms

She trusted that Jesus would not allow these things to happen her unless He wanted to help her to grow in love through them. She did not always succeed; at times she failed miserably. But she never got discouraged. In the words of her Oblation to Divine Love, she wrote: "If through weakness I sometimes fall, May your Divine Glance cleanse my soul immediately, consuming all my imperfections like fire that transforms everything into itself".

Jesus taught her to trust in His mercy. She realised that whatever good she would do would only be done with God's help. She has a lovely image to explain this. She said she realised that she was like a little infant at the bottom of a

stairs needing to get to the top. The only way she would get there was if her father came down and took her in his arms and lifted her up.

She saw herself facing God and the young sisters that she had been asked to train in Carmelite ways as people with 'empty hands'. She argued that it was better to go to God with empty hands because then He could fill them. She was very much at ease with her own limitations, her own imperfections, even with her own sins. This was not in any sense of complacency, but rather great trust in God's mercy.

That mercy had become visible in Jesus. God had, as it were, bent down to her in Jesus – He is the human face of God, the face of God's mercy. All the gospel stories about God's mercy confirmed her trust.

And so for her, there was no point in wasting time agonising over the past – what if I had not done that? She lived in the present, in trust that Jesus would make good any failure on her part.

Trust was also asked of her in her inner life. She says that when she tried to pray it was as if nothing was happening. Jesus did not seem to be there; He did not seem to be talking to her.

There was also another side to her trust. Therese was very strong-willed and determined to get her own way as a younger girl. God can turn human weakness into something strong when used for Him. In Therese, He turned that

stubbornness into a confidence that her prayers would always be answered

That same confidence led to her to promise that she would spend her heaven doing good on earth. She promised that she would send a shower of roses. So many favours have been granted through her intercession, that the rose has become forever associated with intercession by her.

The way that Therese offers us is a simple one: to have confidence in God's love and mercy and to live out every detail of our daily life as a response to that love. She called it her Little Way. The fact that it is simple does not mean that it is easy! Therese was all too well aware that, left to her own devices, she could not keep up the effort. But she trusted that God would be there for her and abandoned herself to whatever His love asked of her.

We all know from experience how hard it is to keep trying every day. I suspect that many of you live out in your own quiet way what St Therese was talking about. You live out the same vocation as she did – you are not preachers or teachers or missionaries, but like her, by your prayers and efforts to be faithful to God in the daily ups and downs of life, you are love at the heart of the church – as Therese saw her own life.

You would not consider yourselves saints, but God sees the goodness in your hearts. May St Therese continue to inspire you; may she continue to intercede for you and your loved ones.





Rest quietly on the heart of Jesus

THIS month began with the Feast Day of St Therese of Lisieux, on October 1, and to celebrate the legacy of this much-loved Saint, a number of people have shared their reflections on the following quotes of The Little Flower...

“Be quite sure that God will bless you and that the depths of your sufferings will be matched by the consolation reserved for you”.

And...

“It is such a folly to pass one’s time fretting, instead of resting quietly on the heart of Jesus.”

In accepting God’s Will I have found a way to live with a ‘restful heart’

by Berni Doody

IN her short life of 24 years, St Thérèse of Lisieux knew what it was to suffer loss and separation. Her suffering meant that she was not the carefree child you would expect, but matured at a young age as she tried to make sense of the pain in her life.

The death of her mother when she was just four years old was her first great loss, but then, having accepted her older sister as her second mother, to lose her when she decided to enter religious life when Therese was just nine years old, became too much for her to bear.

Therese suffered from great mental trauma, terrifying hallucinations and fits of fever and trembling for the next year. Only for casting her eye upon a statue of Mary was her mental health restored. This should bring comfort to anyone who has suffered mental health in life, to think that the innocent little St Therese endured the same suffering.

Looking at Therese’s short life gives some perspective on the small things we can fret and ruminate on in life. But it is easier said than done, to suddenly stop fretting and worrying when we



Berni Doody, Omagh.

live in our world.

As a young mother, I fretted and worried a lot. This fretting and worrying would be mingled with bursts of prayer and pleadings to God. In retrospect, I see now that it was not the fretting and worrying but only the prayers that could make the difference to the outcome. It is simply put in Therese’s words, “resting quietly on the heart of Jesus”.

I now know how futile it is to worry and that it only leads to untold misery in life. By putting my trust in God, and handing my worries to Him, releases me from them. ‘Not my will, but God’s will be done.’ In accepting this, I have found a way to live with a ‘restful heart’.

Therese reminds me that detachment is the answer

by Aoife O’Neill

IN my late 20s, following a Cursillo retreat, I returned to the practice of my faith after several years of not attending Mass and barely even praying. In the beginning, having faith seemed to come so easily. Prayer was a real joy and I thought that anything I prayed for would be granted. That once I said ‘yes’ to the Lord, to follow Him and leave behind my old ways, that it would be onwards and upwards from that point.

It didn’t take very long for reality to hit home, for the demands and anxieties of life to start weighing heavily again.

My problem, one that many of us can fall into, was that I had accepted a false gospel of prosperity where the Lord fixed every problem, and that life went smoothly. Anytime I experienced difficulty or hardship, I thought there must be something I wasn’t doing right, or that God somehow wasn’t hearing my prayer. I thought that I must try harder, pray harder, plead with God harder - there was some required formula that I was simply missing.

Through time, and with the help and guidance of others, I learned the truth: Christians have a unique call to share in the sufferings and death of Christ, to follow where He has led, namely the Cross. As Christians, our sufferings will have meaning, and even more than that, it will have power. Our crosses are overwhelmingly full of graces waiting to be dispensed.

Getting to know one of the greatest saints of our time, St Therese of Lisieux, has helped me

greatly in my own faith journey. St Therese became an extraordinary witness to the importance and sanctity of the ordinary. As a very ordinary person myself, St Therese’s ‘Little Way’ seemed to bring the prospect of Sainthood down to a more achievable level.

Reading about St Therese, who also had more than her own fair share of suffering, helped me see how absurd up my notion of a life without suffering for all Christ’s followers was. St Therese, who was such a loving, dedicated follower of Christ, suffered tremendously.

However, St Therese tells us: “Be quite sure that God will bless you and that the depths of your sufferings will be matched by the consolation reserved for you”. What a call of hope! I have found that keeping this truth in mind during times of suffering can help ease the burden. It helps to know that no pain will go unwasted, the Lord will use it all for good.

St Therese also reminds us, “It is such a folly to pass one’s time fretting, instead of resting quietly on the heart of Jesus.” Trying to let go of the tendency to worry has been a massive battle for me in my own faith journey. I often find myself clinging to fear and anxiety because it’s what is familiar. Learning to have total trust in God is much easier said than done. I am learning it comes down to one hard, simple thing: detachment.

It is good to desire good things: a nice home; enough food; fulfilling work; healthy relationships and so on. However, most of the things I worry and fret over are often about things of this world



Aoife O’Neill, retreat facilitator at the Iona Retreat Centre, Termonbacca.

only. My biggest desires are often around physical comforts and instant gratification, forgetting about my spiritual growth and the life here after.

God’s plan, on the other hand, always encompasses eternity. His most pressing desire is for me to spend forever with Him, in never-ending joy and comfort. His highest consideration is what will most help my eternal soul.

Yes, Therese reminds me that detachment is the answer: not from inherently good things, but from the desires and anxieties that leave so little room for Him to act. I need to be reminded to rest “quietly on the heart of Jesus”. Things that can help me try to do this are: trying to stop bringing my desires to prayer wrought with anxiety and control. Stop

obsessing on knowing the details, understanding the meaning, dictating the timing of the answer I’ve determined is best. I need to stop trying to tell God how to be God. Instead, I need to ask Him to purify my desires to align with His will. I must continually surrender my demand to know it all.

We can take great comfort from the truth that He is always answering our prayers. Right now, with His all-knowing wisdom, He’s working all things together for our good because everlasting joy awaits. That consolation that has been reserved for us that St Therese spoke of. And He is forever healing us, maybe not in the ways we expect, but in the soul-deep, eternal ways we need most.

Little Flower within the hour show thy power

by Oliver Barrett

WHEN asked to reflect on quotes from St Thérèse, a story I heard about the Saint sprung to mind.

St Thérèse was sitting in the refectory of her convent eating a big desert during Lent, when the Mother Superior walked in. The Mother Superior asked Thérèse what she thought she was doing, and reminded her that Lent is a time of prayer and fasting. St Thérèse quickly replied that she did not want to wait until she went to heaven to sample the gifts God has given us!

This story, like the story of St Francis of Assisi eating bacon during Advent, captures the beautiful childlike innocence of sainthood. The Saints are not paralysed with fear of God. They are motivated by the love of God. There is a lesson here for all of us. St Thérèse understood God to be like a loving Father.

“Be quite sure that God will bless you and that the depths of your sufferings will be matched

by the consolation reserved for you”.

St Thérèse had many health complications throughout her short life here on earth. What is remarkable is that she did not blame God for her suffering. She offered her suffering as a prayer to her heavenly Father. She truly imitated Christ on the Cross, patiently bearing her suffering.

A life of faith is marked with periods of consolation and desolation. St Thérèse said simply that the desolation we experience here on earth will be matched with consolation in heaven. St Ignatius of Loyola said that during times of desolation, we must continue to do the things we do in times of consolation, and then eventually the time of desolation will pass.

We learn much more about ourselves in times of desolation, including to appreciate the times of consolation. I have learned difficult times can often be a blessing in disguise. Even God

allowed Job’s faith to be tested, although promised not a hair on his head would be harmed.

“It is such a folly to pass one’s time fretting, instead of resting quietly on the heart of Jesus”.

This quote from St Thérèse reminds me of a beautiful moment at the Last Supper where St John is lying close to the breast of Jesus (Jn. 13:23-25). We spend many hours worrying about things that we can do nothing about. St Thérèse is inviting us to be like St John and to simply rest on the heart of Jesus.

From the age of 12-30, Jesus studied our humanity and knows us intimately. This message of hope is echoed by many of the Saints, eg, St Pio said “Pray, hope and don’t worry”.

It is also the subject of a prayer close to my heart...

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, The courage to change the things I can,



Oliver Barrett, Leckpatrick.

And the wisdom to know the difference.

Both St Thérèse and St Pio said that they could do more good in heaven than they could ever do on earth, and I recommend this as a prayer to St Thérèse of Lisieux in time of need: “Oh, little flower, within the hour, show thy power”.

Surrender with deep trust to experience loving arms of the Father

by Noel O'Sullivan

THE 'Little Way' of St Therese of Lisieux can lift your spirit when drowning in self-doubt.

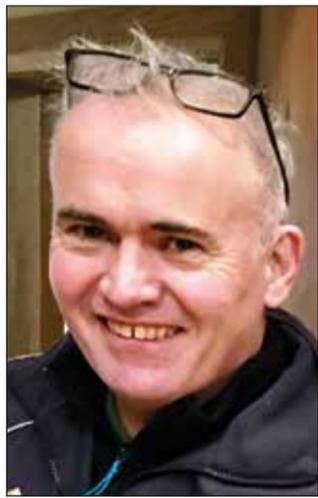
Whenever I struggle in my faith, it is usually because I have let my own failings, sins and shortcomings become greater in my mind than the mercy and love of God. I have lost all perspective of myself in the hands of a Father who loves me.

St Therese is a perfect reminder that every day, no matter our struggle, all we need do is simply turn to God and throw ourselves into His arms and ask for help, confident that He understands our failings and loves us as we are and towards who we will become.

The closest example of this deep love is when a restless or frightened little baby, when taken out of their comfort zone or put in a stressful situation, finds instant comfort and security in

the loving arms of their Father or Mother's arms.

This is the deep trust we have to surrender to the Lord to experience the loving arms of the loving Father.



Noel O'Sullivan, Bellaghy.

The Rosary...start today our little Way

by Rory McGilligan

A few years ago, I completed a course in counselling. There were many times within the course that we had to role play certain scenarios between counsellor and client, and it was important that we used new skills to support the client.

I remember that we were advised not to use platitudes with clients. Although platitudes sound nice and comforting, very often they are of no help at all to the client. The reason why I am giving you such an insight into my course is that we often use platitudes within our spiritual life, especially regarding our relationship with God.

We can say or pray to God with little thought or meaning, our intentions may be admirable but we should always be striving to grow in relationship with Christ, thus we must actively seek ways of forming an active healthy relationship with him.

On Saturday, October 1, we celebrated the Feast of St Therese of Lisieux with Mass in the local chapel. This beautiful Mass was very well attended. As we were walking out at the end of Mass,

the lady sitting in front of us gave my 10-year-old daughter and seven-year-old son a rose each. What a beautiful kind gesture, and it prompted my daughter to say, "next year we will bring our own roses". I think she wants to give some people roses next year at the end of Mass.

On the way home from Mass, the conversation got going about why so many had attended this particular Saturday Mass and why a lot of the ladies had bouquets of roses with them. I explained that St Therese is known as 'The little flower' and how she wanted to spend eternity showering roses/gifts for us souls on earth.

The children's questions got me thinking about why so many souls have such a devotion to St Therese? From the outside, how would any of us have much in common with a little, fragile French girl who became a nun and had a short life? How would this resonate with any of us in the twenty-first century? The Lord certainly does work in mysterious ways, for this little, fragile French girl is a powerhouse of faith and

Weakness and consolation in St Therese of Lisieux

by Noel Bradley

ST Therese offers us two very challenging statements for our reflection when she says: "Be quite sure that God will bless you and that the depths of your suffering will be matched by the consolation reserved for you", and, "It is such a folly to pass one's time fretting instead of quietly resting on the heart of Jesus".

On the first statement, I think immediately that many people don't feel 'quite sure' at all that their suffering will be matched by consolation. People have physical pain that seems to go on and on, or psychological pain like deep worry and anxiety that stresses them with no end in sight.

On the second statement, I feel like saying, "but people do fret and worry and they feel they can't help themselves". If I am being wheeled down the corridor for a serious operation, or I'm in an unhappy marriage, or going for an important examination, or doing my driving test, there is not much point in telling me not to worry.

I know it is 'a folly' to worry and fret, but I really cannot stop myself. It is all very well for St Therese to recommend 'resting quietly on the heart of Jesus'. It sounds lovely, but what does that mean and how do you do it? I presume 'heart of Jesus' here means the 'love of Jesus'. How do you rest in the love of Jesus?

I think if you read the whole of her autobiography, 'The Story of a Soul', you will get a better sense of the kind of spirituality she is offering. It has often been called her 'Little Way'. The gist of it is that if you come to God/Jesus/Love in your littleness or weakness, acknowledging not just notionally but really acknowledging all your weaknesses: worry, lack of trust and faith, resentments, judgements of people, lack of charity, lack of hope, helpless etc, then God will come to you with consolation. "If you humble yourself, you will be exalted".

In the two statements, you will notice a positioning of two opposites: there is suffering

matched by consolation and there is fretting or worrying matched by resting on the love of Jesus. How come?

"Abandonment is my only guide" she wrote. This meant that she was accepting of whatever came her way, living one day at a time, "Be it done unto me, according to your word."

God, was not intimidating for her. In fact, for her "he is a beggar for our love...and all we have to do is to take Jesus by the heart (his love)."

She came to realise that she no longer needed the assurance of her own virtue, because in one sense she came to see that it really makes no difference whether we are virtuous or not. God just loves us either way. He loves us 'madly' (a la folie). At the end of her life, she rejoices to find herself so imperfect. "I am, alas, nothing but weakness in person, I have, as you know, God, no virtues". In the end, she came to believe that genuine holiness is precisely a matter of enduring our own imperfections patiently". In her prayer she says to God, "To charm you, I want to remain small; in forgetting myself, I shall charm your heart".

For a long time she enjoyed a radiant faith. Then, at Easter 1896, she would write that God gave her what she took to be a very special grace; suddenly she lost all her enjoyment of faith. "He permitted my soul to be swamped by the thickest darkness, so that the thought of heaven which had been so sweet to me became nothing but a subject of battle and torment".

From then until her death, Therese lived in almost unmitigated darkness. In this darkness, she saw herself as identifying totally with unbelievers and sinners. In this experience of herself, she prayed "Have pity on us, Lord, for we are poor sinners".

The following quotations bring out clearly where and when her consolation came to her:

"I felt how weak and imperfect

I was and gratitude flooded my soul"; "...the more one advances, the more one sees the goal is still far off. And now I am simply resigned to see myself always imperfect and in this I find my joy"; "I am not disturbed at seeing myself weakness itself. On the contrary, it is in my weakness that I glory, and I expect each day to discover new imperfections in myself".

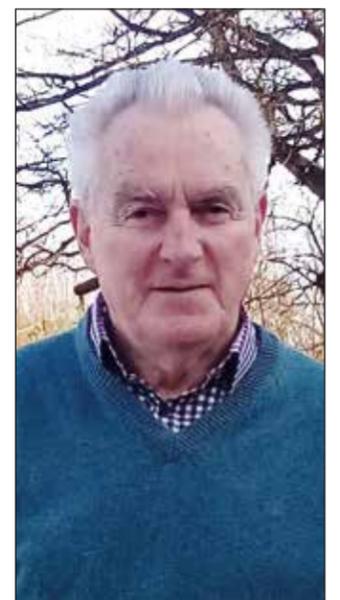
I note, especially, the remark recorded on her death bed: "Oh! How happy I am to see myself imperfect and to be in need of God's mercy so much, even at the moment of my death".

Parallels with St Ignatius of Loyola

St Ignatius wrote an important letter in 1545 to Francis Borgia, the Duke of Gandia, in Spain, in which he stated, in relation to consolations from our Lord, that "before there comes such grace and working of our Lord, we place obstacles, and after they come, we do the same...I for my part, am convinced that before and after I am all obstacles; and from this I feel greater happiness and spiritual joy in our Lord, for not being able to attribute to myself anything which appears good".

We place obstacles before a divine visitation of consolation comes and after it comes. The only antecedent disposition he would claim is a readiness to put roadblocks in the way of "what our Lord wants to work in his soul." It is a persistent disposition. He is a man who knows his own capacity for infidelity, the utter absence of readiness to trust in God. He knows the experience of the unbeliever and that generates trust. Trust comes out of despair and helplessness. The very consciousness of his habitual disposition to place obstacles yields great consolation or 'greater happiness and spiritual joy in our Lord', as he said to Francis Borgia. You may see the similarities here with St Therese's experience.

How can we practically avail



Noel Bradley, Buncrana.

of such wisdom for our life? It has often been recommended by spiritual writers that we do not only an examination of conscience (checking for sins in our lives) but an examination of our consciousness often during the day, or at least before we sleep.

It means that we deliberately notice and focus on our lack of faith or trust, or charity, noting how little I expect of God, how easy I find it to judge others or to speak ill of them or to resent them. When you look at all the evidence it is a humbling experience. It goes against the grain, of course, and all the emphasis on the need for self-esteem in our culture, but Ignatius promises that the outcome of such honesty about oneself will be 'happiness and spiritual joy.' If you humble yourself, you will be exalted.

Again, just like St Therese, we have the same principle: that radical honesty, entering fully into one's lack of faith and lack of love, is the condition and occasion of consolation, of knowing the saving power of God. Perhaps, such an approach it is not peculiar to St Ignatius or St Therese, but the common coin of authentic spirituality. Try it out for yourself.

Noelbradley1512@gmail.com

devotion, with an absolute love of God. When we look at it deeper, we see why that is.

St Therese so much wanted to be like the great saints, such as St Francis of Assisi, saints that while on earth would help move God's people to closer union with Him. After some time, she realised that this could not happen for many reasons; her poor health and young age to name just a few. So, how could she give great glory to God? After much prayer, she realised that by carrying out the small things in life (her daily prayer, work and relationships) with great love that this would give great glory to God.

This way of life became known as St Therese's 'Little Way', but

it is, in fact, very far from being little. I believe this is why people can connect with her. Most people we know, and probably ourselves included, wish we could do more. Maybe we see how a lot of people, even those within our own families, have left the faith, how unimportant God has become in people's lives, how children have been stopped by parents from getting to know God, and how society is first and foremost promoters of the self before everything else, including the unborn children in their mothers' wombs.

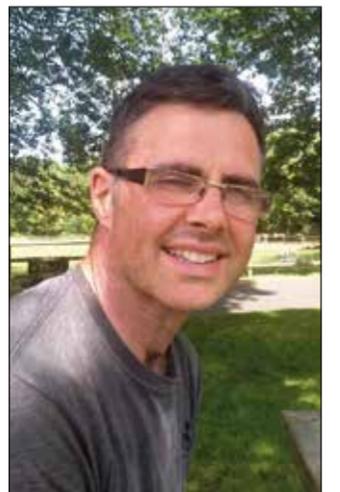
As a Catholic people, this way of living can frustrate us. This is where St Therese's Little Way is not a platitude but an active way of life

to help make us all live in God's grace. If we follow her example, if we have an active relationship with God by regularly attending Mass as well as confessions, going to Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, participating in our daily chores and tasks, with great love, we soon become vessels of God's love.

Our example of a life filled with joy and hope can hopefully be an example for those who currently only think about themselves, first to change the direction of their lives and then start their journey towards God.

Maybe in this month of October, you could start saying the Rosary at home; it could be the start of your little way,

helping, like St Therese, others home to God.



Rory McGilligan, Dungiven.

Surrendering ourselves to God, He gives us the grace to carry our daily crosses

by Rhonda McColgan

WE recently celebrated the feast day of St Therese of Lisieux on October 1. This year felt quite special and I had to think about why that was. Then it struck me, this little flower, through the grace of God, is sending Heavenly graces to re-awaken our faith and love for God.

It seems to be a time of great suffering in the world. For Christians today, it is hard not to become the victim of despair as we witness the rejection of the love and mercy that the Lord wants to lavish on each and every one of us.

With abortion becoming legalized, people suffering with their identity, so called political correctness, an increase in pagan spirituality and threats of nuclear war, to name but a few, it's no wonder that this year felt different. For we hear in scripture, "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more" (Romans 5:20).

The saints, like St Therese, must be shouting from the sidelines, urging us to turn back in this great time of mercy. St Therese, herself, told us in her autobiography, "I will spend my Heaven in doing good upon the earth". She goes on to say, "I will not be able to rest until the end of the world when the Angel has said: 'time is no more!' (Apoc 10:6) Then I shall rest and be able to rejoice, for the number of the elect will be complete" (The Story of a Soul).

So, if you are like me and have felt the weight of the world that we now live in, may we take comfort in the wisdom of St Therese's teachings. She tells us that, "It

is such a folly to pass ones time fretting instead of resting quietly on the heart of Jesus".

As St Therese was my Confirmation saint, I began to take an interest in her over the past few years, and her spirituality has greatly helped my understanding in a profound way. This image of resting on the heart of Jesus is simply akin to a baby resting in their Father's arms, listening to the soothing rhythm of a heartbeat that assures us that all will be well.

I appreciate that some may say, well that's ok when you have a fluffy life devoid of any kind of real suffering. Well let me tell you that for St Therese, life was far from fluffy and free from suffering.

At the age of three, Therese lost her mother to cancer and became emotionally very fragile and would cry constantly at the slightest upset. She became victim to Jansenism at that time; a heresy that portrayed God as a harsh judge that emphasized fear, has many rules and teaches that you must be perfect in order to approach Jesus. Therese developed an anxious scrupulosity and, by the age of 10, she suffered an extreme emotional breakdown. She eventually received a healing at the age of 14 and, at the same time, received the grace of a conversion. She entered the Carmelite Order at the age of 15 and died at the tender age of 24 from TB, after battling in severe pain.

St Therese's little way to sainthood gives great comfort to us little ones that look to the great

saints and feel that sainthood is far off. St Therese understood very well that we are all called to be saints. She set about, during her short life, to prove that there must be a way to sainthood for us little ones that aren't called to the great achievements such as that of the great saints that we have all heard of.

St Therese understood that if we are all called to be saints then God must have a way for us to achieve this, where He, himself, has placed us. She searched the scriptures until she found a way for her. At last, "Whoever is a little one, let him come to me" (Proverbs 9:4-6).

She referred to this quick and easy way to sainthood as the spiritual elevator. Fr Michael Gaitley in his book '33 days to Merciful Love', describes this elevator as God's mercy involving two things: Heart and arms. In seeing our sufferings, God is moved by compassion (heart) and alleviating our suffering through action (arms). So Jesus, seeing his little ones struggle to reach holiness, bends down and picks up these trusting souls from their lowliness and placing them on high.

In summary, St Therese offered all her daily struggles as a sacrifice to God. She knew she was too little to achieve great things but she would carry out her daily tasks with great love. She always placed herself last and bore her suffering with great dignity. She offered herself to merciful love that is based on the Lord's mercy, and far from the route of perfection through justice that Jansenism



Rhonda McColgan, Iskaheen and Upper Merville Parish.

offered, based upon fear.

St Therese has taught me to place all my trust in the Lord. In surrendering ourselves to God, He in turn gives us the grace to carry our daily crosses. St Therese contemplated this on her death bed. One night she was suffering so much she could not sleep but just prayed. When another sister asked her what she was saying to Jesus, she said, "Nothing, I just love Him" (Story of a Soul).

I have come to understand, through St Therese, that surrendering all my daily struggles and overcoming that desire to avoid the mundane is precisely the path to achieving holiness.

"But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness'. Therefore, I will boast all the more gladly about my weakness" (2 Cor 12:9).

It is with age that I see the mercy of the Lord and so can rest safe in His hands

by Sharon Gorman

IN a world that teaches things of the world, things that are unholy and not of God, there is no better example than that of St Therese. Spiritually precocious, she rose above all her limitations boldly seeking God. She reminds us to live and act with humility, love, but most of all, with childlike trust in the Father, and to do small things with great love.

What is the message of St Therese? It is simply, true love is love that hurts, yet brings us joy, which is why we pray to the Father and ask Him to give us the courage to love as He does, to live as He did, and to act with the spirit of the living God.

In my own life, I can finally see that the pain and hurt I went through over the years was not to harm me but to grow me, like a beautiful flower, and bring me closer to receiving the gift of His heart.

I can't say that it has been always easy, for it hasn't! There have been many times that I have felt lonely, not because I didn't have someone but more because I didn't fit in with the ways of this world.

My journey has been hard but very blessed also. Just like a good parent, He was always there holding my hand, leading the way, helping me make the right choices and guiding me on the path He laid out for me.

The Father takes great joy in His spiritual children, those who are



Sharon Gorman, Galliagh.

obedient to His Word, those who trust with absolute surrender. The Father wants us to surrender everything to Him, so that He can give us everything, and we can share our lives as one with Him.

The Father pines for us like a dry land longing for the rain. He wants to pour the living waters of the Holy Spirit into our souls, setting us free from all our sufferings and grief. He wants us to lay it all at His feet.

It is with age that I see the sweetness, the goodness, kindness, the mercy of the Lord, and why I can rest safe within His hands, His love, and why He deserves our 'yes'. Amen

Depth of our faith truly put to test and eventual reward truly earned in suffering by Martin Harran



Martin Harran, Urney & Castletfin.

I completed the first version of this reflection and sent it off to the editor just two days before the awful tragedy in Creeslough. The sudden loss of 10 lives, including a mother and her teenage son, and a father with his five-year-old daughter, has caused immediate

heartbreak and traumatic feelings, not just for the family and friends of the victims but also throughout Donegal and across the whole nation. It has also thrown renewed focus on the question we grapple with at times like this - "Why?"

There is nothing new in that question; pain and suffering are often quoted by non-believers as the strongest possible argument against the very existence of God - why would an all-loving God allow good people to suffer?

St Therese tells us that our eventual reward in Heaven will repay the suffering we have gone through on earth, but that can seem very remote for someone going through sudden, painful loss, like the people of Creeslough, or someone sharing in the suffering of a person in the final stages of a terminal illness.

Even in this life, however, we

can experience a faint glimmer of the reward being associated with pain and suffering. Every year, thousands of runners around the world take part in marathons. Any marathon runner will tell you about the sacrifice and pain involved in preparing for the marathon, let alone the pain suffered in the actual race, especially what they describe as 'hitting the wall' when their ability to continue becomes frail and the whole thing just seems futile. Only a small fraction of that multitude of runners have any hope of coming anywhere near the top finishers, so why do they do it? They do it purely for emotional self-satisfaction and pride in their achievement when they do complete the race.

Or think of the many mountaineers who claim difficult mountains fraught with danger and, once they have conquered

one difficult peak, they want to move on to an even more difficult or dangerous one. What reward do they get? Again, nothing except the satisfaction of overcoming difficult challenges.

These examples seem trite in comparison to things like the sheer agony of someone losing a child or other young person close to them, or someone undergoing the pain of chemotherapy for advanced cancer. One difference is that the athletes and mountaineers choose to endure suffering to achieve the rewards they desire, it is not imposed on them by someone else and they are free to opt out if it becomes too onerous. Another difference is that they are undergoing difficulties for immediate reward when they complete their task; it is difficult to think of any immediate reward whilst watching a loved one go through pain and suffering in the

final stages of a terminal illness, except perhaps to see them at rest and freed from that pain.

Nevertheless, the same underlying principle applies and if we stay true to our religious beliefs, our reward in heaven will far surpass any suffering we have gone through here on earth. We know this because Jesus told us so. Time and time again, He told us that He came for the poor and the suffering, not for the rich and those who have an easy life. He told us in the Sermon on the Mount that those who are hungry now will have their fill; that those who mourn now will laugh; that the poor will receive the kingdom of God.

But Jesus didn't just tell us that, He showed us by example. When Jesus was tempted in the desert by the devil, He was offered the option of swapping His powers for dominion over the whole

world and the rewards that would come with that. He chose instead to continue with a life that He knew would end in sheer agony and ignominy.

It is not that He desired that ending; in Gethsemane, He showed us how terrified He was of the ordeal that He was about to undergo and His wish that His Father might take it away from Him. Despite that fear and trepidation, He accepted the necessity of undergoing it to fulfil His Father's will. Finally, in His resurrection, we see Him first-hand receiving His reward for going through that suffering.

When we are going through suffering in this life, it can be difficult to see the point of it all but, as St Therese and others remind us, this is where the depth of our faith is truly put to the test and where our eventual reward is truly earned.

Learn to trust in Divine Providence... to accept all the joys and sorrows of this life

by Ciara McAlister

BORN on January 2, 1873, in Lisieux, France, Thérèse of Lisieux, also called St Therese of the Child Jesus or the Little Flower, was baptised Marie-Françoise-Thérèse Martin. Born to pious parents, Louis and Zélie Martin, she was the baby of nine children.

Prior to marriage and family life, her father, Louis contemplated going into religious life but God had other plans and called him to the great Sacrament of Marriage. Louis stated: "If I may not be religious then I will raise many to Heaven." God did fulfil these desires, as all five of his daughters entered into the religious life.

During Louis' working days, he was often told by the town folk he would be more profitable if he opened on Sundays also, but he refused and kept God's commandment, reserving Sunday for the Sabbath Day: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy" (Exodus 20:8-11).

Thérèse got the calling to religious life at an early age and entered into the convent and became a Carmelite nun. She began writing in 1895 and often spoke about her father in her writings. She expressed great gratitude towards her father; he was the one who gave her much inspiration in her faith. Louis attended early morning Mass at 5.30am daily. Thérèse recalls her father's frequent visits to the Blessed Sacrament and taking them often as young children. Attention to detail was applied to how they raised their children in the faith.

Louis was a professional watch maker and Zélie an award winning lace maker. Thérèse recalled her and her father giving alms to the poor almost every week; an offering of charity to those less fortunate. She learned to Trust in Divine Providence, to except all the joys and sorrows of this life, and that our sacrifices, no matter how small, are for the Glory of God and the greater good of others.

During her life, St Thérèse went through many sufferings from illnesses and suffered with chronic headaches. She understood the feelings of grief and separation when her mother



Ciara McAlister, Steelstown.

died when Thérèse was only four years of age, yet she embraced all her sufferings and sorrows. She turned to Our Blessed Mother for comfort and reassurance. She believed that suffering and sacrifice is all for the greater good, for the Glory of God and for the good of others.

She wanted to suffer for the love of Christ, she wanted to be so confirmed to Christ and in His suffering that He endured on the cross. She desired to be a great saint, yet she looked at herself and she saw many weaknesses and imperfections. She never dabbled with false humility and never exaggerated her weaknesses.

Thérèse compared herself to great Saints as "a little grain of sand next to a mountain whose summit reaches the clouds". Her question became: "How am I going to get from here to there?" She realised she needed a shortcut, a lift! From there on, everything that she did she offered to God for His Glory and for the good of others. She believed that on our own we are nothing and can do nothing, but with Jesus we can do everything. She threw herself to Jesus like a little child to its parents.

Commitment

Trusting in Him fully, God can live in us and through us. St Thérèse translated 'the little way' in terms of a commitment to the tasks and to the people we meet in our everyday lives. She took her assignments in the convent of Lisieux as ways

Thérèse could look beyond what troubled her and concentrate on her relationship with Jesus

by Ann McCay

WHAT does Thérèse of Lisieux have to say to us in our day? What benefits can studying the lives of any of the saints, including our own Celtic Saints of the Golden Age in Ireland, bring for us in today's world? They each have something important to teach us through the way they lived their lives, a message that is true and timeless, strong and powerful, and that reaches across the centuries.

St Thérèse was tormented by suffering of one kind or another throughout her short life, and yet she did not allow this to consume her. Instead, she was consumed by Christ, her Lord and Saviour. Her love for Him burned deep within her, and she experienced His love for her in the same deep and lasting way.

Thérèse was the youngest of nine children, five of whom survived into adulthood. As the youngest, she was doted on and cherished by her parents. As a child, she suffered sickness and loss; from her own illness as a baby to her mother's illness and death during Thérèse's childhood years, and then her father's illness and death when she was in her mid-teens. All of this caused her acute anxiety. She learned very early in life, as Scripture teaches us, to "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that He may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you" (1 Peter 5: 6-7).

Thérèse's life was one of abandonment, surrender, love and trust. Her little way, which is the way of simplicity, provided a clear path for her earthly journey. She was declared a doctor of the church in 1997 by Pope John Paul II. This declaration means that her letters and manuscripts have a special authority.

She had borne the loss of her darling mother, who died in her 40s after suffering from breast cancer, and this was

heartbreaking for Thérèse and for her siblings. Thérèse says "all my life, God surrounded me with love". She was able, by God's grace, to look beyond what was troubling her and concentrate on her relationship with Jesus. She had witnessed the faith of her parents and older siblings. She lived a quiet, hidden life at home with her parents, who were devout in their faith. Her piety was obvious and she had an early vocation. She tried to enter the Carmelite order at the age of 14, but was refused. She returned to them at 15, to ask again, and she was accepted.

She suffered from acute anxiety as a result of all she had been through, but developed her little way of peace and joy, and there is hope in everything she writes: "If I did not simply live from one moment to another it would be impossible for me to be patient but I look only at the present, I forget the past and I take good care not to forestall the future"; "Holiness consists simply in doing God's will and being just what God wants us to be".

She did not shrink from suffering, but saw it as part of the human condition, part of her life. She received such consolation from her faith. Something of her spirituality reminds me a little of the Serenity prayer written in the 1930's and attributed to the American theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr (1892-1971). The AA movement liked it and incorporated a shortened version of the prayer in their Twelve Step programme to assist both those suffering from addiction and their families. They have used this ever since.

Serenity

Lord grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, The courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Holy fire."

In living out her life of faith, she sensed that everything that she was able to accomplish came from a generous love of God in her life. She was convinced that at the end of her life she would go to God with empty hands. Why? Because all was accomplished in union with God.

"Miss no single opportunity of making some small sacrifice, here by a smiling look, there by a kindly word; always doing the smallest right and doing it all for love" (Saint Thérèse).

After a long illness with tuberculosis, on the evening of September 30, 1897, at the age

of 24, St Thérèse died. After her death, her sisters gathered her writings and had them published. The 'Story of a Soul' became a best seller, which conveys how lovingly St Thérèse defined her doctrine of the Little Way as "the way of spiritual childhood, the way of trust and absolute surrender."

One of St Therese's promises was: "I will spend my heaven doing good on earth"... "I will send down a shower of roses from the heavens." Her last words were: "I am not dying. I am entering into life. Oh, how I love him. My God I love you."

Live out your days with

Living one day at a time; Enjoying one moment at a time; Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;

Taking, as He did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; Trusting that He will make all things right If I surrender to His will;

So that I may be reasonably happy in this life

And supremely happy with Him forever in the next".

Thérèse accepted her own weaknesses and also accepted the weaknesses of others; "true charity consists in bearing all our neighbours' defects, not being surprised at their weakness, but edified at their smallest virtue".

Those who are suffering want to tell us something, they have a message for us and we need to listen. Each of the saints with their different personalities, gifts, talents and weaknesses teach us something about endurance. Thérèse experienced that "deep peace of Christ with its accompanying interior joy", as described in the rule of St Columba, a virtue which the Columba Community tries to embrace.

Thérèse writes: "I bring to God, not my perfection, but my imperfection; I know God comes rushing towards me".

As a Doctor of the Church, her teaching is seen as thoroughly reliable and trustworthy. Her sense of commitment to prayer led her to a profound experience of the love of God, of her neighbour, and an appreciation of creation. Thérèse did not have an easy life, but she did live with a great sense of peace and joy. Hers was a simple, yet powerful message. Her Little Way of allowing God to work through her life and be her guiding Light, has been an inspiration to many. Her premature death from tuberculosis at the age of 24 was a great tragedy. Had she lived



Ann McCay, Columba Community.

today, modern medicine may have changed this outcome.

Would Thérèse have chosen the path of suffering for herself, would I? Would anyone? No, I don't believe so, and yet it happened to her and her great achievement was to have endured it all, not by leaning on her own understanding but in trusting the Lord with all her heart because she "rested quietly in the heart of Jesus". This was key to her lasting legacy. Jesus was her joy, Jesus was her consolation. Jesus was her everything, her constant companion on life's journey. She did everything through Him and with Him and in Him. Hers was The Story of a Soul, a faithful servant of God who found completeness in Christ and was ready for Heaven.

I know people like Thérèse in my own life. They are challenged every day by some difficulty and they keep on smiling, keep on rising, continue to persevere and are an inspiration to me. They find a way to be thankful, to be strong in their spirit even in adversity. Could it be that they learned, as Fr Neal Carlin did, that "Youth may grow tired and weary, young men may stumble and fall but those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength they will mount up with wings as eagles. They will run and not grow weary, walk and not faint" (Isaiah 40:31).

confidence in God's love for you. Learn to Trust in Divine Providence, to accept all the joys and sorrows of this life, and that our sacrifices, no matter how small, are for the Glory of God and for the greater good for others. Recognize that each day is a gift in which your life can make a difference by the way you choose to live it. Don't we all need a short cut! A lift!

We implore your help and intercession, St Thérèse, to help us to follow you, in leading by your example to embrace all of life's joys and sorrows by following your 'Little Way'. Amen

St Therese of Lisieux...our signpost to Heaven

by Brenda Deery

THERE is something very endearing about St Therese, the Little Flower. Her innocence, youth, submission, and total trust in God are all contrary to the values promoted by our present-day culture. Many of her dispositions today would be seen as weaknesses, yet despite her many trials and tribulations, she always radiated hope and belief that our ultimate destination to be with God for eternity was worth the struggle.

St Therese's exposure of her 'little way' makes holiness achievable to all in their everyday lives, no matter what their profession. Her message is that if we do even the simplest of tasks, that is, lifting a thread from the ground for God, then we are growing in virtue. The road to holiness is offering all our daily tasks to God and that is why the Church encourages us to pray our Morning Offering prayer. It is certainly a very wise and positive start to any day.

St Therese allows us ordinary people to know and believe holiness is within our reach, as she said: "God would never inspire me with desires which cannot be realized, so in spite of my littleness, I can hope to be a saint".

When we learn that Therese struggled with a melancholic disposition, this can assist us to appreciate that every single day

must have been a challenge for her, as it is for many people today. Reading her autobiography, 'The Story of a Soul', gives us insights into her over sensitive personality, which she had to work at to conquer.

St Therese helps us to understand that no matter what goes on around us, in this big world, that the real battles lie within our own minds, hearts, and souls. Therese shows us that our vices, whatever they are, and they are many, can slowly be turned around if we claim them, confess them and work at developing the opposite virtues to conquer them. Challenges will always be part of our lives, but the real test of our lives is our love for God, and our many trials and tribulations can be the way to acquiring genuine holiness. We cannot control many things in life, but we can control how we respond to them.

So many times, in the Gospels, we read about the virtues of humility, diligence, chastity, gratitude, patience, love and surrender to God. These are the dispositions which Therese has shown us can be acquired with taking 'little' steps and being patient with ourselves. St Paul got an instant grace from God which enlightened him and turned him onto the 'right road', but for most of us it is Therese's theology, 'the little way', that

needs to be applied in our lives. 'Slow and steady' should be our mantra. What we do know is that discouragement does not come from God but is very prevalent in our secular society. We, like St Therese, must battle daily, as she stated: "Without love, deeds, even the most brilliant, counts as nothing".

St Therese shows that our own sacrifices and endeavours, if offered to God, in our seemingly 'unimportant' lives are the instruments God uses to conquer the evil in our world today. St Therese knew her role, as a religious sister, to live within the confines of the convent with its many daily struggles were her means of serving God and His Church. Humility and trust in God are the real weapons we need in our armory.

St Therese's life and writings are reminders to us to turn away from the worldly view and follow Jesus' ways of faith, littleness, trust, suffering and surrender. All these qualities are challenging and require our co-operation as we have been gifted with free will. Today, more than ever, they are needed as the 'leaven' to defeat the deceptions that lurk everywhere. St Therese has been gifted to us to show us the 'roadmap' to live our lives as faithful Catholics, who know this world is passing and our true destination with God is eternal.



Brenda Deery, teacher at St Mary's Limavady.

Like Therese, we need to take time out from our daily tasks and rest with God. We need to silence ourselves each day in order to hear and respond to His will for us. The Holy Spirit works in the silence of our hearts, and in our world today it can be difficult to disconnect from all the noise and busyness. However, St Therese consoles us with the solution of keeping life 'simple', doing the routine tasks with love and devotion, and remaining close to Our Father and Mary, Our Mother.

Fear has no place in our lives when we know the true Master is God and His Will, will be done. As St Therese states: "The world's thy ship and not thy home".



Martin Callaghan, Burt, helping to carry St Therese relics.

To understand the need for suffering I look to our Saints and the Bible

by Martin Callaghan

THERE are distinct types of hardships in the world, such as financial, bodily, mental, physical, and spiritual. Even the saints have battled with one or more of these dilemmas. I, too, have suffered from sickness and soul searching throughout my life. But for suffering, I look to our great saints and to the Bible for answers, to see how the people of the Old Testament and New Testament managed to cope with their trials.

Job was a holy man, but he thought it was only through good works that we gained mercy from God. Moses showed us that we are given mercy from God not by what we do (e.g. burnt offerings), but that it is a gift from God to us, and we only have to accept this gracious gift of mercy that is bestowed upon us.

Suffering along with obedience is like a hitter in a baseball game who is ready to meet whatever the opposing pitcher sends down the track.

I recognise suffering as a weakness, strength, or competition for souls. I believe suffering is mercy just like St Therese of Lisieux, who knew that God was closer to her in pain and in enduring the pain she was closer to God, because nothing from God is evil but only good. So this suffering is twofold on behalf of the sufferer and the giver. Like Jesus on the cross who showed us true love by accepting His crucifixion. He opened the gates of Heaven and showered His Mercy upon us, so that we can imitate Him and offer up our own suffering for any offence against God.

I carried St Therese's casket around the churches of the West Coast of Ireland during the

visit of her relics in 2001. When carrying the casket up the aisle, the congregation created a sea of hands as they tried to touch it. My mind wandered to the Passion of Christ and Palm Sunday, because the people at that time must have tried to grab, wave and support Jesus too.

Jesus was born into a society full of ethnic tensions and religious strife that saw Him involved with the poor and vulnerable, and through His actions of living among them and healing their diseases, we, as Christians, can implement this compassion of Jesus in our lives.

We hear the old saying, "It is a cross to bear" or "This it is what we are about. We follow Christ crucified". This reminds us of daily sacrifices to be more loving and peaceful, less selfish, and more loving to our neighbour.

God gives everyone the gift to become a saint by surrendering totally to Him, and St Therese did this by accepting the Church is the Body of Christ. Her desire was to be the heart that pumps love around the Church by presenting her pain to the communion of saints, because a little thing can become a greater thing if you gather them all together. Like a raindrop that becomes a puddle and a puddle a river. So, no matter how small a prayer or a charity act I do, by the time it reaches God it can be an ocean in His eyes. So, I pray that each day I may rise with God and may God rise with me.

I'll finish with this example from the Bible. When the day came for heavenly beings to appear before the Lord again, Satan was there among them. The Lord asked him, "Where have you been?" Satan answered, "I have been walking here and there, roaming round

Life lessons from St Therese by Sonya Darcy

ST Therese of Lisieux, often called the Little Flower, was always one of my favourite saints as a child. Her message to live a simple life with love at its centre appealed to me and many others who strive to find holiness in our ordinary everyday lives.

The story of the young Therese, who was known to be incredibly stubborn, didn't like to do housework and was prone to an emotional outburst or two, was a tale that I found myself relating with.

Therese was the youngest in the house and was lavished with affection and attention by her parents and elder siblings. Yet her young life held so much tragedy; she was born into a family that lost four children before her arrival, and the young Therese herself was born weak and frail and was not expected to survive. Alas, Therese was much tougher than anyone realised and, a year later, was a healthy infant described as a sheer joy to everyone. However, suffering and loss came once more with the loss of her mother, Zélie Martin, when she was just four years of age, and then her sisters, each in turn, left the family home to enter the Carmelite monastery.

In the book 'Lessons from

Saint Therese', by John Paul Thomas, Therese recounts how the loss of her mother affected her deeply and she lost her happy disposition. He describes the death of her mother as leaving "A wound of love deep in her heart, a wound that was healed by balm of her father and sisters' love".

Grief has been referred to as the last act of love we have to give to those we loved, and this line has often given me comfort when experiencing the loss of a loved one. The traditions associated with an Irish wake and funeral service, where we fondly remember that love and recount tales of how the deceased has impacted the lives of many, can bring comfort to those left behind.

If we are to follow the example of St Therese, we are challenged to love deeply in our relationships and in all that we do, despite the risk of loss that is attached to it. This is much more than the romanticised version of love, but echoes the unconditional and self-sacrificing love Jesus had for His Church.

St Therese focused on making small sacrifices every day - expressions of concern, patience and understanding. Her example is something that we can each

take on board in our everyday lives, when we are quick to anger and impatient with those that are slower than us, let us become more Christ like in little ways every day.

Throughout our lives, we can be assured that we will encounter a storm or two of our own. In the aftermath of Covid, the increasing hikes on energy and food, the number of families dependent on food banks for survival, and the images on our TV screens of war and turmoil, have many of us feeling like the world has been turned upside down and we are in the depths of a never-ending storm. We did not plan for this unwelcome disruption to our lives, which has left us with many questions and fears.

Scripture repeatedly tells us that we are to hand over our troubles to God. In the book of Proverbs, we are told to "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding".

The message is found again in my favourite passage, 'Calming of the Storm', where Jesus rebuked the disciples when they wake him from His sleep and asks, "Where is your faith?"

St Therese herself tells us, "It is such a folly to pass one's time fretting, instead of resting quietly



Sonya Darcy, Religious Studies teacher and chaplain at Christian Brothers School, Omagh.

on the heart of Jesus." This advice is like that of my great aunt, who is 95 and has lived through many times of uncertainty before. Most recently, she has survived Covid twice and yet her faith remains as strong as ever. Her thoughts echo the sentiments of St Therese, as she often tells us that God remains constant, that no matter how lost we feel, no matter how the world spins out of control, we must turn our eyes to heaven, keep praying and trusting that Jesus will guide us through our struggles.

Connecting-up by Fr John McLaughlin ssc

THE Chilean Jesuit priest and spiritual director, Fr Fernando Montes, ran a monthly series of articles on the New Testament in the Jesuit monthly under the title "The Questions in the Bible". It was an exercise on reflection, at a time when none of us seemed to have heard of Lectio Divina, and it was stimulating. "Who do you say that I am?" "Have you any food for the people?" "Where shall we go Lord, you have the message of eternal life?"

For me, it was new and refreshing, and the practice grew with the years. It's about learning to make our own connections and not having immediate recourse to sermon-notes, or the so-called 'correct answers', to be encouraged and challenged to make, by intuition or prayers,

our own connections and to help others to grow. To be a self-starter, as some of my Columban brothers, such as the late Fr Michael Cody, used to say!

It was supposed to be the most modern Constitution in the world and a few weeks ago the people of Chile were obliged by law to vote for 'Accept' or 'Reject' in a national plebiscite. A tremendous amount was at stake and the temptation was to follow the fervent urgings of their new, very young, President; rather blindly it seemed to me. The choice was questioned by many, including myself, and others, from afar nowadays. Papers like 'The Guardian' were enthusiastic, while 'The Economist' was not. Others, including some amongst the ex-presidents, sat on the fence

in their analysis and judgment. It was a fascinating encounter with the democratic system and not at all irrelevant for the modern trends towards populism and the erosion of the power of the people. Happily, it did not pass and was rejected by 63% to 37%, and many people breathed more easily, whilst others in the Columban family and parishes were extremely disappointed that the solutions it proposed were not to be offered quite so immediately.

There was a compelling piece in my recent Bible readings, where the Prophet Jeremiah is under trial from his own people who will not accept his solutions to their plight...and the words they want to hear from him. So they put him in prison and the king tries to persuade him to moderate his prophecy, and come to an arrangement with him to make a cover-up.

There are critics of the Catholic Church, within the fold, who feel that many of the hierarchies of the Bishops may be falling into that trap. Amongst them, I found the former leader of the Charismatic Renewal from Ann Arbor, Ralph Martin. There are others in the Web podcast, eg, Catholic Culture.Org. I feel they must be taken seriously in the present wars of words in our media. They are there also on YouTube. The prophetic connection of the Church has to continue to challenge, in its leaders and amongst its members, I feel.

Personally, I have used in meetings and workshops some of the modern parables of Tony de Mello, or the Spanish nun, Dolores Aleixandre, and others, which allow for some questioning and reflection on a personal basis. It seems to me ever more important that, during their pastoral activity, their leaders in the laity can find their own 'North' on the compass of their own lives and 'connections'.

The need for silence is surely part of our modern culture. Two recent chats with a nurse and a teacher here showed me how they dealt with some of their need for silence by switching off the car radio on their daily drive to work in Moville and Derry. Good on them! I think of the words of Pope Benedict in his Letter on the Word of God, 'Verbum Domini', which I mentioned in an earlier article, "Without Silence or some periods in our lives there is little chance of making real Connections...: 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 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



continued from page 26

the earth". "Did you notice my servant, Job?" the Lord asked, "There is no one on earth as faithful and good as he is. He worships me and is careful not to do anything evil. You persuaded me to let you attack him for no reason at all, but Job is still as faithful as ever."

Satan replied, "A person will give up everything for his own life. But now suppose you hurt his body - he will curse you to your face!" So, the Lord said to Satan, "All right, he is in your power, but you are not to kill him".

Then Satan left the Lord's

presence and made sores break out all over Job's body. Job went out and sat by the rubbish heap and took a piece of broken pottery to scrape his sores. His wife said to him, "You are still as faithful as ever, aren't you? Why don't you curse God and die?" Job answered, "You are talking nonsense! When God sends us something good, we welcome it. How can we complain when he sends us trouble?" In spite of everything he suffered, Job said nothing against God" (Job 2:1-10).

Great comfort for our suffering awaits us in Heaven

by Bronagh Currie

THINKING about St Therese saying: "Be quite sure that God will bless you and that the depths of your sufferings will be matched by the consolation reserved for you", I find it consoling that she is suggesting that even though you may suffer in this world, you are not alone.

God is present in the people comforting and trying to help us through our suffering, to give us the strength to come through and cope with our suffering. And, Therese is, perhaps, suggesting that great comfort for our suffering awaits us in Heaven.

Reading St Therese's quote, "It is such a folly to pass one's time fretting. Instead of resting quietly on the heart of Jesus", reminds me a little of a friend's saying, "Worry is like a rocking chair, it gives you something to do but gets you nowhere".

In other words, when you worry, your time is wasted, when it could be put to a better use. St Therese,



Bronagh Currie, Bellaghy.

I think, is recommending that it would be better use of time not to be worrying, but to instead try and use this time to be at peace, contemplating and resting on the heart of Jesus.

means rediscovering a sense of recollection and inner repose. The great patristic tradition teaches us that the mysteries of Christ all involve silence[232] 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 deficiunt'. [233]

"The importance of all this is particularly evident in the Liturgy of the Word, "which should be celebrated in a way that favours meditation".[234] Silence, when called for, should be considered "a part of the celebration".[235] 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".

There is a song of Gregory Porter, 'Water under the Bridges', which I have made feeble enough efforts to sing in the Men's Shed, "Somebody told me 'Get over it'. It's like water under bridges that have already burned...even our worse days are better than loneliness. Do you remember the days we used to spend? Memories so strong it keeps me from moving on. If I could go back I'd take our worst days..."

Synodal

That might be the world of many people invited to 'Connect up' and participate in the Synodal Process on 'Communion and Participation', which seems to have had varying degrees of success. Though to read Bishop Phonsie of Waterford in his Diocesan bulletin, there have been questionable conclusions drawn from the National Report and its interpretations. Even in my own country of Mission, I gather that very many did not enter into the spirit and 'Connect up'.

We are now in the World of Instagram and Facebook, and other forms of connection, which are surely presenting their own challenges, and the following quotations certainly got to me... God in Cyberspace: Friedman (The Lexus and the Olive Tree) (Rabbi Kushner..9)...

"My own view of God, growing out of my own Jewish tradition, is different. I share the post-biblical view of God. In the biblical view of God, He is always intervening. He is responsible for our actions. He punishes the bad and rewards the good. The post-biblical view of God is that we make God present by our own choices and by our own decisions. In the post-biblical view of God, in the Jewish tradition, God is always hidden, whether in cyberspace or in the neighboring shopping centre, and to have God in the room with you, whether it's real room or a chat room, you have to bring him there yourself by your own behavior, by the moral or immoral choices and mouse clicks you make.

"Rabbi Marx, my teacher on Isaiah's text: 'If you are my witness, I am the Lord, and if you are not my witness, I am not the Lord'. In other words, explained the Rabbi...Unless we bear witness to the Lord's presence by our own good deeds, He is not present. Unless we behave as if He were really running things, He isn't running things. In the post-biblical world we understand that from the first day of the world God trusted me to make choices, when He entrusted Adam to make the right decision about which fruit to eat in the Garden of Eden. We are responsible for making God's presence manifest by what we do. And the reason that this issue is most acute in cyberspace is that there is no one else in charge there. There is no place in today's world where you encounter the freedom to choose that God gave man more than in cyberspace.

"So what I should have said to that deliveryman was that God is not in cyberspace, but He wants to be there - but only we can bring Him there by how we act there. God celebrates a universe of such human freedom because He knows that the only way He is truly manifest in the world is not if He intervenes, but if we all choose sanctity and morality in an environment where we are free to choose anything. Rabbi Marx puts it this way: 'In the post-biblical view of the world you cannot be moral unless you are

totally free, because if you are not free you are really not empowered and if you are not empowered the choices that you make are not entirely your own. What God says about cyberspace is that 'you are really free there, and I hope you make the right choices, because if you do I will be present'."

It does seem to me while reflecting upon how or when people can 'Connect up' in this modern, and maybe, fragmented world, that poetry, music, song and art are very much at our disposition if we guide ourselves, or are guided wisely; and choices are to be made, where the stakes are very high.

Again, in my own pastoral experience, one of the great 'connectors' was the (messianic banquet!) community meal at various moments of the pastoral year and at the end. Ostensibly a fundraiser with fried fish, an empanada (pie) or a breast of chicken, it made for healthy conversation and interaction of pastoral agents and members of the wider community and was not to be missed by the pastor.

Finally, from the Word of God, there is the parable that always challenges me about 'Connecting -up', in John 15, and using the version of James Quinn from the Prayer of the Church:

*I am the holy vine,
Which God my Father tends.
Each branch that yields no fruit
My Father cuts away.
Each fruitful branch
He prunes with care
To make it yield
Abundant fruit.*

*If you abide in me,
I will in you abide.
Each branch to yield its fruit
Must with the vine be one.
So you shall fail
To yield your fruit
If you are not
With me one vine.*

*I am the fruitful vine,
And you my branches are.
He who abides in me
I will in him abide.
So shall you yield
Much fruit, but none
If you remain
Apart from me.*

Saints we celebrate in October *by Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd*



St Thérèse

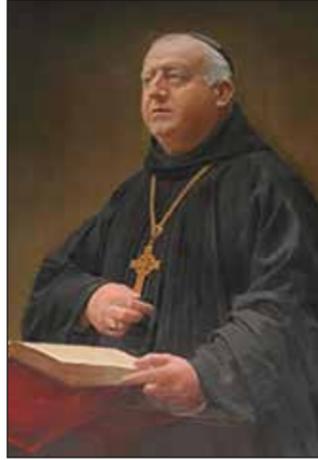
St Thérèse

Thérèse was born in France in 1873, the last of nine children, to Louis and Zélie Martin. Tragedy and loss came quickly to Thérèse, when her mother died of breast cancer when she was four and a half years old. Her sister, Pauline, who had become a second mother to her, entered the Carmelite monastery a few years later. The two losses caused Thérèse to have an emotional breakdown. Prayers were offered to Our Lady and Thérèse relates that she saw Mary smile at her. She was suddenly cured. She found her school years difficult.

After her sister, Marie entered Carmel, Thérèse felt called to follow her but was only 15. During a visit to Rome, she asked Pope Leo XIV to allow her to enter. While he did not give the permission, some of the priests on the pilgrimage were so impressed that they asked the bishop to give permission which he did.

Thérèse entered the Carmelite monastery at Easter 1878. She lived a very simple life in the monastery. She learned of God's mercy and offered her life in love to God. She found her Little Way to God: a way of trust in God's love and mercy. She died at the age of 24, after a long and painful illness.

Shortly before she died, she said, "Upon my death I will let fall a shower of roses; I wish to spend my heaven in doing good upon the earth." Her sister Pauline had asked her to write a record of her life, which Thérèse called the 'Story of a Soul'. Pauline had this printed after Thérèse's death. Such was the interest that the 'Story of a Soul' has never been out of print and has been translated into 90 languages. Within 28 years of her



Bl Columba Marmion

death, the public demand was so great that she was canonized. In 1997, St John Paul II declared her a Doctor of the Church. Her feast is October 1.

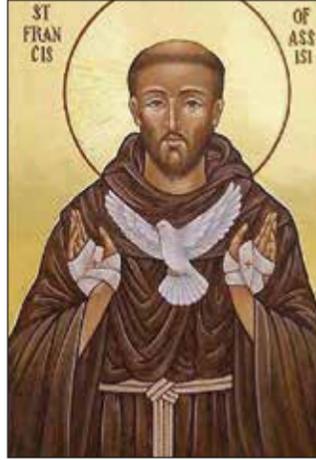
Bl Columba Marmion

The son of an Irish father and a French mother, Joseph Aloisius Marmion was born on April 1, 1858, in Dublin, Ireland. In 1874, he entered the Dublin diocesan seminary and, after completing his studies in Rome, was ordained a priest on June 16, 1881. His ambition was to become a missionary in Australia, but after visiting the Benedictine Abbey of Maredsous (Belgium), he felt called to join the community. His bishop did not give the permission for five years.

On entering the Maredsous community, he took the religious name of Columba and made his solemn profession on February 10, 1891. As a monk, he was asked to help found an abbey in Louvain. He was made Prior and served as a professor at the university there, and as spiritual director for young monks. In addition to these duties, he preached retreats in Belgium and in the United Kingdom, and was spiritual director for many religious communities.

On September 28, 1909, Dom Columba was elected third Abbot of Maredsous, a community with over 100 monks. He also had to oversee a humanities college, a trade school, and a farm. Despite these demands, he continued to give retreats and serve as a spiritual director. His retreat conferences were published as *Christ the Life of the Soul*, *Christ in His Mysteries*, *Christ the Ideal of the Monk*, and *Christ the Ideal of the Priest*.

He died during a flu epidemic



St Francis of Assisi

on January 30, 1923, at the age of 65. His feast day is October 3.

St Francis of Assisi

Francis was born at Assisi in 1181, into a wealthy family. The times were permissive, and his biographer wrote, "He attracted to himself a whole retinue of young people addicted to evil and accustomed to vice".

His early life was as soldier, and he wanted to join in the Fourth Crusade. On his first night of the journey, he had a dream in which God told him that what he was doing was wrong and to return home. He began to pray more.

One day, while praying at the church at San Damiano, he heard Christ on the crucifix speak to him, "Francis, repair my church". When he realized that Christ was not talking about the physical fabric of the church, he spent the rest of his life trying to rebuild the church. He gave away all that he had and lived as a poor man. He started to preach about returning to God and obedience to the Church.

Slowly companions joined Francis, determined like him to live by the Gospel. Francis and his companions went out to preach two by two. While there was initial hostility, the joy of the friars won people over. By his way of life, Francis made poverty holy. Francis could be impetuous. He decided to go to Syria to convert the Moslems while the Fifth Crusade was being fought. He and his companions were captured, but Francis charmed the Sultan who freed them.

Praying to share in Christ's passion, Francis had a vision in which he received the stigmata. The years of poverty and wandering took their toll on



St John Henry Newman

Francis and gave him a share in Christ's suffering. He began to lose his sight, but his reaction was to write his beautiful *Canticle of the Sun*. Francis never recovered and died on October 4, 1226, at the age of 45. His feast day is October 4.

St John Henry Newman

John Henry Newman was born in London on February 21, 1801, the eldest of six children of a London banker. He grew up in the Church of England. In his youth, he experienced a deep religious conversion. He was ordained as a priest in 1825, and in 1828 became the Vicar of the University Church of St Mary's.

He became a leading light in the Oxford Movement, seeking to recover elements of catholicity within Anglicanism. In 1843, he resigned from his role at St Mary's and retired to a converted stable near Oxford, to think and pray. He and some followers lived a semi-monastic life there. During a visit from Father Dominic Barberi (now Blessed) in October 1845, he was received into the Catholic Church.

In 1846, Newman went to Rome to study for the priesthood and was ordained a priest there on Trinity Sunday 1847. He returned to England and the English Oratory was founded in February 1848, in Birmingham. He was invited to found a university in Ireland, which he did in 1854. But the misunderstanding he experienced caused him to return to England.

He was a prolific writer of letters, sermons, and articles throughout his life. In 1879, he was made a Cardinal. He lived out the rest of his days, quietly and prayerfully, at the Birmingham Oratory



St John XXIII

where he died on August 11, 1890.

St John XXIII

Angelo Giuseppe Roncalli was born in the small village of Sotto il Monte in Italy, on November 25, 1881. He was the fourth of 14 children born to poor parents, who made their living by sharecropping. He was ordained to the priesthood on August 10, 1904.

During World War I, he was drafted into the Italian Army as a stretcher bearer and chaplain. He was discharged from the army in 1919. He was then appointed to be the Italian president of the Society for the Propagation of the Faith, handpicked by Pope Benedict XV. In February 1925, Roncalli was sent to Bulgaria as the Apostolic Visitor to that country. Later, he was appointed apostolic delegate to Turkey and Greece.

During his tenure as archbishop, Roncalli saved thousands of Jews, enough that he was named a 'Righteous Gentile' following the war. In 1944, he was appointed as nuncio in France. In a consistory on 12 January 1953, Pope Pius XII made him a cardinal in addition to naming him as the Patriarch of Venice. Roncalli was unexpectedly elected Pope on October 28, 1958, at age 76. Pope John XXIII surprised those who expected him to be a caretaker Pope by calling the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965).

On June 3, 1963, Pope John XXIII died from stomach cancer at age 81. Remembered as the 'Good Pope', he was canonized on June 3, 2013, the 50th anniversary of his death. His feast day is October 11.

St Teresa of Avila

Teresa Sánchez de Cepeda y



St Teresa of Avila

Ahumada was born on March 28, 1515, in Avila, Spain. She was well educated at home by her parents, where she developed her love for Our Lady and the saints. At 17 her father resisted her entry into religious life, so she left without informing anyone and entered the Carmelite Monastery of the Incarnation in Avila. She became seriously ill in her 20s and never fully recovered.

While in the monastery, she became tepid in her devotion. An experience before the statue of Christ in His Passion led to a conversion of her life. She felt the need for a more committed form of Carmelite life and, with five companions, founded the first house of the Discalced Carmelite nuns at St Joseph's in Avila.

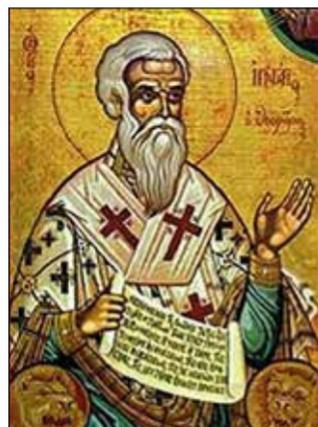
She led a life of deep prayer and had mystical experiences. Her nuns asked her to give them guidance about prayer and she wrote *The Way of Perfection* and *The Interior Castle*. She also wrote books on her Life and her Foundations. She invited St John of the Cross to found, with her, the Discalced Carmelite friars. She went on to found 16 other monasteries of nuns. All the travel wore her down and she died in October 1582. She was canonized in 1622 and declared a Doctor of the Church in 1970. Her feast day is October 15.

St Margaret Mary Alacoque

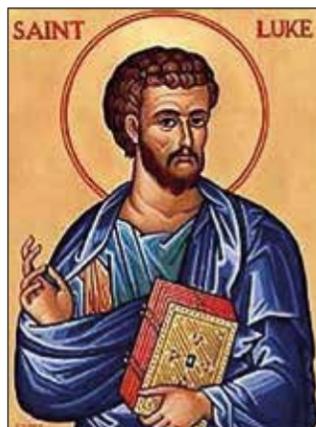
St Margaret Mary Alacoque was born in 1647, in France. From early childhood, she showed an intense love for the Blessed Sacrament. During her teenage years, rheumatic fever confined her to her bed for four years. After making a vow to the Blessed Virgin Mary to consecrate herself to religious life, Margaret



St Margaret Mary Alacoque



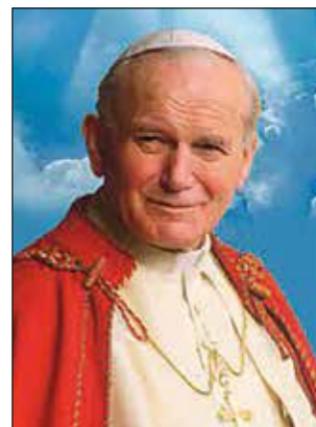
St Ignatius of Antioch



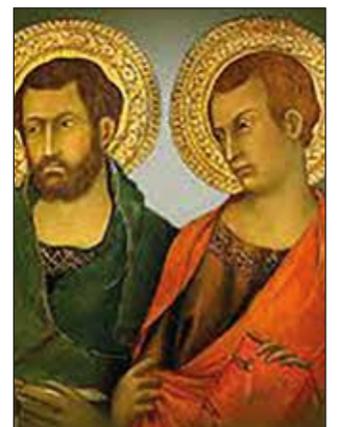
St Luke Evangelist



St Paul of the Cross



St John Paul II



Sts Simon and Jude

Continued from p28

instantly returned to perfect health. In recognition of this favour, Margaret added the name Mary to her baptismal name.

One night after attending a ball, Margaret had a vision of Christ, scourged and bloody. He accused her of forgetting about Him. He showed her that His heart was full of love for her. After this vision, Margaret was determined to fulfil her vow and entered the Visitation Convent at Paray-le-Monial in May 1671.

During her time in this monastery, Margaret received several revelations of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Jesus requested His love be made evident through her. While the visions were initially treated with suspicion, the community's confessor, St Claude de la Colombiere, declared them to be genuine.

In December 1673, Jesus appeared to Margaret Mary again, and allowed her to rest her head on His heart. His human heart was to be the symbol of His love. He explained to her that He wished to make these wonders known to all the world through her. Margaret Mary died, at the age of 43, on October 17, 1690. She was canonized in 1920. Her feast day is October 16.

St Ignatius of Antioch

Ignatius was born around 35 AD. He was a disciple of St John the Evangelist. He was ordained Bishop of Antioch, in Syria, around the year 69 by the Apostle Peter. Ignatius was a holy man who was deeply loved by the Christian faithful. In 107, during the reign of the brutal Emperor Trajan, he was sentenced to death because he refused to renounce the Christian faith.

He was taken under guard to Rome to be devoured by wild beasts in a public spectacle. During his journey to Rome he wrote seven letters of encouragement, instruction and inspiration to the Christian communities that he had met.

It was Bishop Ignatius who first used the term 'catholic' to describe the whole Church. He had no fear of death and wrote in one of his letters, "Permit me to imitate my suffering God ...I am God's wheat and I shall be ground by the teeth of beasts, that I may become the pure bread of Christ". His feast day is October 17.

St Luke Evangelist

Luke the Evangelist is one of the four authors of the Gospels. The Early Church Fathers ascribed to him authorship of both the Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles. He is believed to have lived in the Greek city of Antioch in Ancient Syria.

The New Testament mentions Luke briefly a few times, and the Epistle to the Colossians (4:14) refers to him as a physician. He was a disciple of St Paul. Luke's presence in Rome with the Apostle Paul, near the end of Paul's life, is attested by 2 Timothy 4:11: "Only

Luke is with me".

The composition of the writings and the large vocabulary used suggest that Luke was an educated man. He is believed to have been a martyr. The Catholic Church and other major denominations venerate him as patron saint of artists and physicians. His feast day is October 18.

St Paul of the Cross

Paolo Francesco Danei was born on 3 January, 1694, in the town of Ovada, Piedmont, in Italy. He was the second of 16 children, six of whom survived infancy. His father, Luca ran a small dry-goods store and moved his family and store from town to town trying to make ends meet.

Paul experienced a conversion to a life of prayer at the age of 19, which led him to the conviction that God is most easily found in the Passion of Christ. When he was 26, he had a series of prayer-experiences in which God invited him to form a community to promote the love of God revealed in the Passion of Jesus. They would become known as the Congregation of the Passion of Jesus Christ, or the Passionists.

The community was to live a penitential life, in solitude and poverty, teaching people how to meditate on the Passion of Jesus. His first companion was his brother, John Baptist. By 1737, there were nine members and Paul opened his first Retreat, the name Passionists traditionally gave to their monasteries. While the new congregation grew slowly, there were 180 members by the time Paul died in 1775. He also founded a monastery of contemplative sisters to promote the memory of the Passion of Jesus by their life of prayer and penance. His feast day is October 19.

St John Paul II

Karol Józef Wojtyła was born on May 18, 1920, in Wadowice, Poland. His early life was marked by loss, with the death of his mother when he was nine and his brother when he was 12. Karol was an athletic young man and enjoyed skiing and swimming.

As he wanted to become a priest, he had to study at a secret seminary run by the Archbishop of Krakow. To avoid arrest and deportation, he worked in a factory for four years. After World War II ended, he completed his theology studies at the seminary in Krakow and was ordained in 1946. He then went to Rome for two years and finished his doctorate in theology. He returned to Poland in 1948 and served in several parishes in the diocese of Krakow.

In 1958, he was appointed Auxiliary Bishop of Krakow. He made such an impression at the Second Vatican Council that he was appointed Archbishop of Krakow six years later. Karol was made a cardinal in 1967 by Pope Paul VI. In 1978, he became the first non-Italian Pope in over 400 years. As a mark of esteem for his predecessor he took the name John Paul II.

Rejoice! by Vera McFadden

Fra Angelico, The Visitation.

ONE time I had to stay unexpectedly overnight in my daughter's home. Because of my handicap, I was not able to go upstairs. They wanted to bring a mattress downstairs, but I pointed out that my handicap would not permit me to use this either. So I ended up with a pillow, a blanket and some cushions on the sofa. It was reasonably comfortable for some time, but now and again quite uncomfortable. Then the word 'Rejoice!' came into my head. Huh! I thought, what have I to rejoice about? In fact, I had plenty of reasons to rejoice. Apart from the temporary discomfort, it was one of those periods in life when everything was going well.

St Pio once said, "The Rosary is a great weapon against Satan". Of course, it has to be. In it we continually repeat the Angel Gabriel's greeting to Our Lady – "Hail Mary!" – Rejoice, Mary!

When Gabriel said, "Rejoice, so highly favoured!" to her, Mary did not understand. She was a teenage girl and unaware of the great privilege of her immaculate conception. So she wondered at the angel's greeting, for Gabriel had called her "full of grace".

Gabriel also told her that her cousin, Elizabeth was to have a child in her old age, for nothing was impossible with God. So Mary set out to visit her ageing cousin. When Elizabeth's greeting made her aware that the older woman

had had an insight from God, Mary prayed the Magnificat.

One time, when one of my daughters received her results by post and learned that she had been given the scholarship she had worked so hard to obtain, we gave excited shouts of delight and jumped up and down in joy. I think Mary's meeting with Elizabeth was something like that, though, of course, their reason for rejoicing was much more profound and deeply spiritual.

When we sometimes went on pilgrimages by bus, we prayed several rosaries and usually sang the chorus of the 'Lourdes Magnificat' – 'God fills me with joy, alleluia! His holy presence is my robe. Alleluia! Everyone's heart was in the prayers and the singing. There was a great sense of rejoicing.

We also said 'The Magnificat' during the Legion of Mary meetings and we sang it at the end of Franciscan tertiary meetings. It had an important part in the chanted hours of the early Christian monasteries, and still holds a permanent part in the chanting of the hours in monasteries today.

The Angel Gabriel had told Mary to rejoice and she expressed her great joy when she said to Elizabeth, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord, and my spirit exalts in God my Saviour, for He has looked with mercy on

As Pope, he visited more than 100 countries to spread the gospel message. In 1981, there was an assassination attempt on him. Fortunately, he was able to recover from his injuries and later forgave his attacker. He wrote many encyclicals of great depth and wrote at length on the theology of the body. He promoted the Divine Mercy devotion.

Pope John Paul used his influence to bring about political change and is credited with the fall of communism in Poland. In his later life, he suffered from Parkinson's disease but continued to serve heroically until his death on April 2, 2005. He was canonized on April 27, 2014, with St John XXIII. His feast day is October 22.

Sts Simon and Jude

Simon the Zealot and Judas, also



Fra Angelico, The Annunciation.

my lowliness and my name will be forever exalted – for the mighty God has done great things for me and His mercy is from age to age on those who fear Him. He puts forth his arm in strength and scatters the proud hearted. He casts down the mighty from their thrones and raises the lowly. He fills the hungry with good things and the rich He sends empty away. He has received Israel His servant, being mindful of His mercy, the mercy promised to Abraham and His seed for ever".

Mary had told the Angel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord". She told Elizabeth, "The Mighty God has done great things for me".

Everything good we have comes from God, and all is to be used to give Him glory. At school, we

were advised that before we began to work on something, to write, A.M.G.D. – Ad Majorem Gloria Dei – For the greater glory of God. Then we would do it carefully and conscientiously.

While Mary's Immaculate Conception was unique, God has given us all many gifts, and He is with us as well. He told us, "I am with you always, even to the end of the world". There are so many things to be happy about – the spiritual and temporal gifts, the beauty of nature, the company of family and friends, music, a good book, and all the other engrossing hobbies that God has given us.

So, in spite of the trials or discomforts which may occur, we can realise that God is with us and be glad in His Presence.

**Pope's monthly intention**

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during October for:

For a Church open to everyone:

We pray for the Church; ever faithful to and courageous in preaching the Gospel, may the Church be a community of solidarity, fraternity and welcome, always living in an atmosphere of synodality.

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)

'Lord, increase our Faith' by Fr Johnny Doherty, CSsR



Fr Johnny Doherty

WE are often inclined to be content with how things are, especially in our lives of faith, and we resist change or growth. When we are like that, we can be certain that faith will grow weaker.

This month of God's Word is another opportunity to stir ourselves out of any complacency that we might have and reach for a more vibrant, living faith that can move mountains.

Enemies of faith

1. Fear

The single greatest enemy of faith is fear. This is how the Scriptures see it. It is said that the sentence, "Do not be afraid" is found 365 times in the Scriptures. The greatest fear of all is that of how much faith will cost us in terms of our own lives. The result of this fear is that we then set very low limits to faith and the practice of faith. We keep it well within

our own control.

As Catholics, we have often reduced the practice of faith to going to Mass on Sunday, and then many search around for the quickest Mass! We miss the point entirely. When we ask the Lord to 'increase our faith', we need to let Him set us free from our fears so that we can trust Him.

2. Pride

As a word, pride is often thought of as meaning thinking highly of yourself, and that is not the case at all. In fact, one of the greatest weaknesses in human life is the poor self-image that so many people have. Much of the escapism in our world is precisely because of that.

Pride means putting myself at the centre of my life and concerns. It means living as if all I have is mine rather than a gift from God and others. It is living as if I am my own creator and redeemer. We talk about looking after number one! That is the pride that prevents us from giving God His rightful place and it hinders us from making others really important in our lives. When we come to ask the Lord, "Increase our faith", we are looking for freedom from pride and self-centredness.

Growing in faith

1. The single most important help for increasing faith is prayer. The two-fold purpose of Christian prayer is:

a) To know that the Lord is with us. We can use prayer for many other purposes but this is what it is for. When we know that the Lord is with us, we recognise that listening in prayer is much more important than speaking. In prayer, we listen to life, to our own experience, to other people, to God's Word. Through listening like this, we grow in awareness of what is really important in life. In prayer, we listen so keenly that we can know and experience the Lord walking with us, talking to us, carrying us, urging us on to more, loving us.

b) The second purpose of Christian prayer is to equip us with all that is necessary to follow Christ more fully. "Increase our faith" is not so much a desire for stronger beliefs as a request for greater freedom to follow Him, to be like Him in His Body, the Church. We cannot do that with our own resources. We can only do it through the power of God. That power is there for us through prayer.

2. Humility: This does not mean thinking badly of ourselves or putting ourselves down. True humility is about giving God His proper place as the acknowledged centre of true human life.

Humility is about letting ourselves know the wonderful beauty of nature, the dignity of every human person, the great goodness of those who love us and whom we love. Humility is the ability to revel in the joy of being alive and being in love.

The Sunday Liturgy week-by-week through October

Week 1. October 2-8.

The gift of faith

Jesus said to His disciples: "When you have done all that you have been told to do, say, 'we are merely servants; we have done no more than our duty'."

One of the most disturbing features of our life of faith today is the number of people who reduce the practice of their faith to the barest minimum, and mostly without any joy. Many people are the same way about marriage and family life, where the whole thing becomes a burden for them.

We have a wonderful God who loves us with a passionate love. We have unbelievable gifts from God, especially in the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation, through which we share in the intimate life of God.

We are temples of God's Holy Spirit, with all the power of God's love to transform our world. It seems such a shame to ruin it all with the mentality, 'Do I have to do this?' instead of freely taking our full part in building God's Kingdom.

Week 2. October 9-15.

Thanksgiving

Jesus said: "Were not all ten made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no one has come back to give praise to God, except this foreigner".

One of the worst experiences of human living is that of being taken for granted, and it is also one of the most common. It reduces us to being objects of service to others and can easily result in resentment.

But those who suffer most from ingratitude are those who are ungrateful. They become very self-centred and gradually lose touch with the wonder of life. They cannot smell the beauty of the flowers or hear the wonderful song of the birds. They don't notice the sun shining or appreciate the greatness of the changing seasons and the magnificence of the world we live in. And they miss the real experience of being loved. They are living dead. Come alive through gratitude.

Week 3. October 16-22.

The power of prayer

Jesus told His disciples a parable about the need to pray continually and never to lose heart.

There are so many things that knock the heart out of us today. In the Church, there are all the sex abuse scandals; in society there are the financial scandals of politicians and business people; in family life there is a major breakdown; in parishes there are so many people who have given up. And on and on it goes. And yet, we have a power that can bring us through all of it - the power of prayer.

Prayer should not be an escape from the serious things that are all around us. We have to face

up to all of them. But prayer is a reminder that we don't have to face up to them on our own, but with the presence and help of God. The two places where this prayer is most urgent is in our homes so that our family life can grow, and in our faith community so that we can become the people God wants, a people committed to His way for our world.

Week 4. October 23-29.

The Lord, our Judge

Jesus said to some people who prided themselves on being virtuous and despised everyone else: "Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, but those who humble themselves will be exalted".

We often think that being humble means to think badly of ourselves. The truth is that we have a right to think very highly of ourselves. True humility is about acknowledging God as the source of all life and all goodness and giving praise to Him from our hearts.

It also teaches us that we have no right to judge anyone else because God alone is our judge, and He only sees the goodness in each one. We look at each other and see all that is wrong, and we criticise.

If we learn to look with the eyes of God, we will see the wonder and beauty of each other and learn to praise. This is particularly important for married couples, for families and for the health and happiness of our faith community.

Casting A Long Shadow

- New book charting the People's History of Long Tower Church

by Ivor Doherty

GROWING up, from a young age I had always an interest in history, but especially history of the great events in the world. Events like the world wars and the Irish War of Independence, etc.

Around the early 1980s, I decided to try to trace my ancestors and it opened up a whole new world of books to me. Books all about my own City of Derry, covering its history, and I got the bug for this different view on history.

Around this same time, the late Rev Bernard Canning brought out a book on the Long Tower Church, recording the gravestones which were, at that time, visible.

The book was called "By Columba's Footsteps Trod". It also contained short snippets of Long Tower History. Having read this, I started to think more seriously about what this area looked like over 200 years previous. I started to visit my local library regularly, looking at the many microfiche rolls they had there. Over the years, I started to build quite an archive of local history.

In 2001, I retired from my day job, which gave me more opportunities to pursue my interest. At that time, I asked Martin McGeehan who

had his own interest in history, to assist me in cleaning the Long Tower Churchyard. Martin obliged me and this eventually led us to investigate the bare looking graveyards.

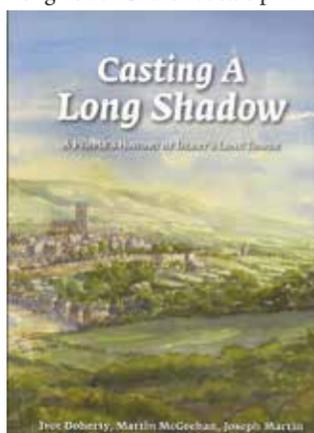
We began to check for gravestones which were under the grass carpet which, over many years, had covered many gravestones. From this information, we were able to review the death notices over the centuries to trace who these people were, and where they had lived in life.

We created a database, which we placed on the Aras Cholmcille website. Alongside all this going on, we built up a history of the church covering many events. The Honourable The Irish Society weighed in behind us and granted us the money, through our parent society, Aras Cholmcille, to buy a computer and accessories, to build a picture of the church through the decades.

All this culminated in a visit to the Colmcille Press office at Rath Mór Centre in Creggan, seeking advice from Garbhan Downey about writing a book. Following on from this, Garbhan put us in contact with Joe Martin.

On meeting with Joe, the impetus to bring the book to reality greatly increased. Joe, a former teacher, edited much of our research on the various events in the Long Tower Church and, with his wide network of friends, was able to get a number of them to write up their own personal memories of growing up in the shadow of the Long Tower Church, and Garbhan, with his publishing skills, was able to guide us through proof reading, and book editing to publication day.

Entitled 'Casting A Long Shadow' and priced at £20, the book will be launched on October 28 in the Long Tower Church at 8.30 pm.



'The Letter' - New Laudato Si' Film

by Patricia McCormack

ON October 4, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, a new documentary film was released telling the story of the Laudato Si' encyclical letter.

The film is called "The Letter" and is now available on YouTube, making it accessible to as many viewers as possible. (TheLetterFilm.org)

In 2015, Pope Francis addressed his Laudato Si' encyclical letter on care for our common home, not just to Catholics, but to every single person in the world. Reading the signs of the times and mounting scientific evidence, he called everyone to a change of heart - an ecological conversation.

Without a sense of awe and wonder for nature, without a humble spirit of gratitude for all that has been created, so beautifully expressed in the Psalms, we have come to see ourselves as masters. Our true relationships with The Creator, the Earth and each other are broken.

Without insight into the interconnectedness of everything, we believe that we are entitled to endlessly exploit and consume the Earth's resources to satisfy our ever increasing appetites and demands for profit and growth. We have ignored the consequences.

Seven years on, the growing crises

of loss of biodiversity and man-made climate change are harder to ignore.

The cry for justice is a theme which runs throughout the Scriptures. It is central to Christ's message. This new documentary film, "The Letter", is an invitation to listen to Pope Francis, who has continued to urge us to hear "the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor".

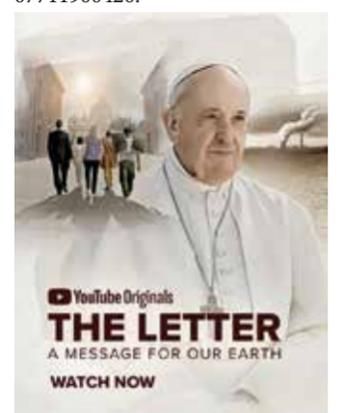
Other voices are also featured, representing the peripheries of the ecological crisis. Ridhima is a teenage youth activist from India, Cacique Dada is an indigenous leader from the Amazon, Arouna is a climate refugee from Senegal, and Robin and Greg are a couple of scientists from Hawaii. The film follows their journeys to Rome, where they had the opportunity to tell the Pope, in person, the difficulties they are going through and how the climate crisis affects them closely. Their stories are prophetic and moving.

The film is the fruit of several years' work of the Laudato Si' Movement, in partnership with Off the Fence (Oscar-winning producers of My Octopus Teacher) and the Vatican. The producers hope for an ocean-like ripple, with screenings around the world accompanied

by a campaign to provide concrete tools for communities to take bold action for climate and ecological justice.

The film will be brought to the halls of power - to parliaments and UN COP27 and COP15 summits, demanding politicians to do better. Closer to home, you are encouraged to take the time to view it personally and to encourage family and friends to watch it. Think also of possibilities for viewing it collectively, for example, as a parish, a school community, a youth group, a prayer group.

Contact the Derry Diocesan Laudato Si' Group for information and support at laudatosiderry@gmail.com or ring Patricia McCormack on 07711900420.



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. 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 Mystery; The Glorious Mysteries; and The Luminous Mysteries. Every time we pray the Rosary we should focus on Jesus' life and remember a special intention that we want to pray for.



- many Our Fathers.
4. When you pray the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.
 5. While holding the crucifix in the hand you do the ____ and recite the Apostles' Creed.
 6. You conclude the Holy Rosary by praying this.
 7. Each mystery has ____ different themes to meditate on.
 8. When you pray the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary
 9. Each decade consists of this many Hail Marys.
 10. When you pray the Sorrowful Mysteries of the Rosary

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) in 1571 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 St Pius V 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 St Pius V dedicated this day as a day 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 called 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.

Rosary

Match the following to the answers in the Word Bank

1. When you pray the Joyful mysteries of the Rosary.
2. The Rosary consists of ____ mysteries altogether.
3. Each decade consists of this

Word Bank

- A. Hail Holy Queen
- B. 10
- C. Tuesday and Friday
- D. 5
- E. Thursday
- F. 1
- G. Wednesday and Sunday
- H. Monday and Saturday
- I. Sign of the Cross
- J. 20

Answers

- 1-H, 2-J, 3-F, 4-E, 5-I, 6-A, 7-D, 8-G, 9-B, 10-C

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.



'Little Way' which Thérèse spoke of meant that we should come to God as a little child goes to their father, always trusting in their love and care. Thérèse fully surrendered herself to God's unconditional love and mercy.

We should remember St Thérèse's 'Little Way' by trusting completely in God's mercy and love. We should always try to be merciful to everyone and even if we fail to do this as we often do then we should be merciful to ourselves and know that God is all-merciful. St Thérèse Pray for us



Saint Thérèse of the Child Jesus

We celebrate the feast day of St Thérèse on the 1st of October. Thérèse Martin was born in 1873 in the small French town of Alençon. She was the youngest of five children. Her mother died when she was only four years old, so her father had to sell his business and move the family to Lisieux, where their aunt could help to raise them.

Thérèse had an ordinary and joyful childhood. She always showed a great love for Jesus and her 'Little Way' approach to God has become a great help to others in their daily lives. The

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 or 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. It was believed that October 31 was the last day of summer, 'Samhain', and on this night, when the seasons changed, that the curtain which separated 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 good meaning and we pray that someday we also will be saints in heaven.

Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. Angkor Wat - the world's largest religious monument - can be found in what country?
2. With which pop band was Dave Bartram the lead singer?
3. Which former Italian International footballer was manager of West Ham United between 2008-2010?
4. Which TV presenter and fashion designer recently switched on the 2022 Blackpool illuminations?
5. What is Scotland's third largest city by population?
6. Ulm Minster, the world's tallest church, can be found in what country?
7. In which 1985 novel did the fictional Republic of Gilead overthrow the US Government?
8. In which European country is the city of Craiova?
9. Who had a 2009 hit with the song 'I gotta feeling...?'
10. In what year was Slane Castle badly damaged by fire?
11. Who presents the new Channel 5 TV show 'Digging for Treasure'?
12. The M7 - Ireland's longest motorway - runs from Kildare to what city?
13. Who are the current Six Nations rugby champions?
14. Who first recorded the song 'Blue Bayou'?
15. Who played Joey Tribbiani in the US sitcom 'Friends'?
16. What is the world's most northerly capital city?
17. What mode of transport was formally decommissioned in 2003?
18. South Africa has three recognised capital cities - Pretoria, Cape Town and which other?
19. In what city are the 2028 Olympic Games to be held?
20. What was the Christian name of Russian revolutionary and political leader Lenin?
21. Who played the role of JR Ewing's long-suffering wife Sue-Ellen on US TV series 'Dallas'?
22. In what month did the current invasion of Ukraine begin?
23. Which South American country is the world's largest exporter of bananas?
24. Who became third in line to the British throne following the death of Queen Elizabeth II?
25. Of which country is Alexander De Croo the current Prime Minister?

Quiz Answers: 1, Cambodia. 2, Showaddywaddy. 3, Gianfranco Zola. 4, Laurence Llewellyn-Bowen. 5, Aberdeen. 6, Germany. 7, The Handmaid's Tale. 8, Romania. 9, Black Eyed Peas. 10, 1991. 11, Dan Walker. 12, Limerick. 13, France. 14, Roy Orbison. 15, Matt Le Blanc. 16, Reykjavik. 17, Concorde. 18, Bloemfontein. 19, Los Angeles. 20, Vladimir. 21, Linda Gray. 22, February. 23, Ecuador. 24, Princess Charlotte. 25, Belgium.

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

Let Your Light Shine!

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

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnyloop, Drumquin, Duramannagh, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,



Humble and Kind is Joseph the Man by Pat Deeny, Ballyrory©

Chorus

*Joseph, Joseph, Joseph the man,
Joseph, Joseph...help us understand.
Holding young Jesus, the prophet to be,
Showing the world, the Saviour we see.*



*Humble and kind, is Joseph the man.
Descendant of Kings, just doing what he can,
Creator of homes and craftsman of love,
Saint of our church and guardian above.*



Sing Chorus

*Finding a stable and manger of straw,
A beautiful scene that all the world saw,
You talked with the Wise men and listened to a dream,
Saving the child, a redeemer serene.*



*Holding white lilies, so virtuous and pure,
A love of Our Lady of that we are sure,
You respected the mystery of what Gabriel says,
Help us to love in this whole-hearted way.*

Sing Chorus

*Celebrating 200 years of worship in
St Joseph's Church, Craighane (1822-2022)*



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