

The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 122. OCTOBER 2026

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See inside...



Pet Blessings - Kilrea



Friendship & Floral Art - Three Patrons



Re-opening of St Eugene's Glenock - Newtownstewart



Great excitement as Derry Diocese begins new chapter (see p4-7)

Bishop Michael Router at St Eugene's Cathedral for his Mass of Installation as Bishop of Derry. (Photograph by Stephen Latimer)



Celebrating 200 years of St Aidan's - Magilligan



Granaghan sacristan retires - Swatragh



Mass in honour of St Pio - Clonleigh



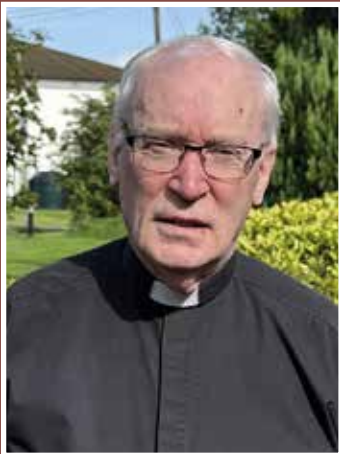
New School Year Mass - Greenlough



Adam Doherty - Castlefin



Aine & Eoghan Hanna - Castlederg



Fr David O'Kane - Ballinascreen, PP Cumber Upper & Learmount



Venerable Matt Talbot

People in focus

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Fr Michael Canny, of the Diocesan Hospital Chaplaincy Team, reflects on the Pope’s October prayer intention for Mental Health Ministry:

“Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.”

Acknowledging and addressing mental health challenges does not weaken us...it makes us human



Fr Michael Canny, Waterside PP & Hospital Chaplain

OVER the last couple of years, we have all become familiar with advertisements on billboards and our TV screens reminding us that “It is good to talk”, and that “It’s

all right not to feel all right”. These advertisements remind us of issues around mental health that for so many decades was a taboo subject. In recent years, we also see a willingness of sports people and celebrities to write and speak about their mental health and related issues.

The old Latin saying “mens sana in corpore sano” – a healthy mind in a healthy body – reminds us of the accepted meaning of mental health as a vital part of human well-being. The Pope’s intention for the month of October invites prayer “that the mental health ministry might be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma

and discrimination of persons with mental illness.”

Mental health has an impact on all aspects of life, shaping how we think, feel, and react to things. It influences how we handle stress and make decisions, which eventually affects our lives. Despite its importance, mental health remains an issue filled with stigma and ignorance.

Issues around mental are very common, yet can be the most complex issues affecting a person. It affects people of all walks of life and from all cultures, regardless of their spiritual circumstances. The person themselves cannot understand what is going on and, very often, family and

friends are likewise struggling to understand.

Mental health is more than just the absence of mental illness; it also includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. Good mental health means being able to deal with the ups and downs of life, being productive, and contributing to society. However, as we experience physical health - heart attacks, strokes, broken limbs, etc - we also encounter mental health issues, such as anxiety, sadness, and stress-related diseases. And, just like physical health, mental health requires care.

Despite the fact that many people may have a mental health issue, mental health is

frequently viewed as a silent struggle. Stigma, shame, and fear frequently hinder people from obtaining the help they require. This hesitation can lead to isolation, worsening of symptoms and, sometimes, tragic outcomes. This stigma around mental health is something we need to break.

Acknowledging and addressing our mental health challenges does not weaken us; rather, it makes us human. Life is full of problems, and everyone is coping with some kind of issue that requires help. By openly discussing mental health, we create a safe environment in which others feel supported to do the same.

During my pastoral ministry

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

Aghyaran: Thursdays, 10.30am–12 noon.	Cappagh: Wednesdays, 8 -9pm, concluding with Night Prayer, and Sundays, 3.30-6.30pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.
Ardstraw West & Castlederg: Fridays, 10.30am–12 noon, St Patrick’s Church.	Claudy: Tuesdays, after 10am Mass until 8pm, St Patrick’s Church, Claudy, and Wednesdays, after 10 Mass until 8pm, St Joseph’s Church, Craighane.
Badoney Lower: Tuesdays, after 12 noon Mass until 5pm, St Patrick’s Gortin; and Wednesdays, Mass 7.30pm, Adoration and Confession until 9pm, St Mary’s, Rouskey.	Clonmany: Tuesdays, 7.30 -8.30pm, the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin; Wednesdays, 3–4pm, St Columbcille Village, Cleagh;
Badoney Upper: Wednesdays, after 7.30pm evening Mass until 9pm, St Patrick’s Cranagh.	Fridays, 3–6pm (Rosary at 5.40pm), St Michael’s Church, Urris.
Ballinascreen: First Mondays, from 12 noon–7.30pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.	Coleraine: Wednesdays, in St John’s Church, 2–4pm, with Rosary at 3:45pm.
Banagher: Thursdays, 10.30-11.30am, St Mary’s Church, Altinure, and Fridays, 10 –11am, St Joseph’s Church, Fincairn.	Creggan: Sundays 1.30pm-6pm; Mondays 10.30am - 7pm; Tue - Sat 10.30am - 12pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.
Bellaghy: Every Friday, from 10am until recitation of Rosary at 7.30pm, in St Mary’s Church.	Donagheady: First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St Mary’s Church, Aughabrack.
Buncrana: Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, Fridays, 6am-10pm and Sundays, 2-10pm, St Mary’s Oratory.	Donaghmore: Tuesdays,

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

Steelstown: Mondays, from after 10am Mass until 6.50pm.
Strabane (Camus): Every day from 10.30am-1pm in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), at the back of the Church.
St Columba’s Long Tower: Wednesdays, after 10am Mass until 7.30pm Mass.
St Eugene’s Cathedral: Sundays, 3-6pm, and Tuesdays, 10.30am-7.20pm.
Three Patrons: Tuesdays from 11am-7pm in Our Lady’s Chapel, St Joseph’s Church, Galliagh; Wednesdays from 10.30am-7pm, in St Patrick’s Church, Pennyburn, and seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid’s Church, Carnhill, from 8am until 8pm.
Urney & Castlefin: Tuesdays, 12 noon-8pm, St Anthony’s Chapel.
Waterside: Mondays, 11.30am-12.30pm; Wednesdays, 6.30-8.30pm, Strathfoyle; Thursdays, 1-6pm, Immaculate Conception Church; Fridays, 1-6pm, St Columb’s Church.

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

The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

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

The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Supporting us:

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

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

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

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The ministry of

The NET

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

Donegal Youth Garda Award recipient, Adam Doherty does his parish proud with...

Young Castlefin baker's buns raising thousands for worthy causes



WHEN young Urney & Castlefin parishioner, Adam Doherty won one of the six Donegal Youth Garda Awards last month, in a ceremony in the Abbey Hotel in Donegal Town, his success was met with delight not only by his family and friends, but the whole village of Castlefin!

The 16-year-old was nominated by Castlefin native, Dominic McGlinchey, who now lives in Ramelton, for his bake sales and raffle, which have raised around 10,000 Euros over the past five years for worthy causes like Dublin's Our Lady's Hospital, Crumlin, and Temple Street Children's Hospital.

A great achievement for any youngster, those who have watched Adam grow up will see this county recognition of his fundraising efforts as all the more special because of the challenges he has overcome in being autistic. And there is one person in particular that Adam's mother, Louise credits with having helped her son pass milestone after milestone, and that is the late Fr Oliver Crilly, who came to Castlefin as priest-in-residence after retiring as parish priest of Greenlough, in Co Derry.

"With Adam being autistic, we realised that we needed a plan to get him to the altar when his First Holy Communion was approaching," recalled Louise, adding: "We wondered how it was going to work when your child doesn't sit still. We started to take

him to Mass and many a night he made noise, but Fr Crilly never let on, and at the end of Mass he would get Adam to ring the bell. He just got better and settled down.

"Then Covid hit and everything closed down. One of the first Masses when the restrictions were eased was for Fr Crilly's 80th birthday. The parish would have liked to have had a big celebration but couldn't. At the end of Mass, on the morning of his birthday, Adam took up a birthday card for Fr Crilly, who then asked him to ring the bell."

Saying that Mass is now part of Adam's routine every Sunday, she remarked: "It only worked because Fr Crilly was more than welcoming. He said that we would get there, and we did. Fr Ciaran Hegarty is very good with him too."

"Adam is a bit of a character and loves wearing his suit to Mass. Sometimes he might forget himself and speak out loud and recite something, but as soon as he has done it, he realises that he shouldn't have."

"He has three favourite things that he likes to do on a Sunday: receive Holy Communion at Mass; say his prayers; and go to Granny Grieve's afterwards."

Whole village

Highlighting that the people of Castlefin have supported Adam every step of the way, Louise added: "It takes the whole village to raise

a child like Adam, to accept him and work with him. He is getting to know them all. He would have been coming eight when he first attended Mass and now people be looking for him if he is not out.

"So, many have seen him grow up at Mass, from the boy who made noises to the boy who now goes to Mass every Sunday and not only genuflects and prays, but also takes his turn as a Parish Reader and helps with cleaning the chapel.

"I always tell him that there is no such thing as 'can't'. There are ways and means. He practices the reading for a full seven days beforehand and then he can do it. He is blessed in that he doesn't be nervous when he is reading at Mass, that is part of his nature."

While Adam misses Fr Crilly, Louise said that it helps him to think that he is in Heaven. "Fr Crilly sat in the 'crying chapel' for Mass," she recalled, "and Adam would have waved to him before taking his seat. So, after he died, he still had a look in the window. It took a while for him to get used to Fr Crilly not being there, but he is ok now. He has the photograph of them both on his First Holy Communion Day on the mantelpiece in the living room. I told him that when people go to Heaven, they are very happy to be there. He is happy if Fr Crilly is happy."

Louise went on to tell how Fr Oliver had been one of the special recipients of Adam's delicious baking, which he mastered during the Covid lockdown: "He made Fr Crilly's birthday cake the year before he died. He said that he loved Adam's buns, but he shouldn't have been taking them as he had diabetes! Adam took him special buns at Easter, Christmas and for his birthday. They just both took to each other."

"At first, he delivered them to neighbours, and when he started a bake sale for the hospitals, we asked Fr Ciaran for the use of the parish hall and we have been holding the bake sale there every year since, two weeks before Easter. And, Adam always brought some of his baking to Fr Crilly after the sale too."

"We have been doing this for five years. All the proceeds go to Our Lady's Hospital, Crumlin, and Temple Street Children's Hospital. Adam's older brother, Matthew was treated in both hospitals when he had a kidney transplant 10 years ago."

Great night

"It was for this that Adam was nominated for the Donegal Youth Garda Award," said Louise, "He was very happy and had a great night. He had a big smile on his face as he went up to get his Award. We weren't expecting him to win as there were some amazing stories, such as young people going to entertain in nursing homes, saving people, and doing a bed push for charity. Everybody nominated was

worthy of winning.

"There were 22 people nominated for an award and six were picked for the Donegal Youth Award. Not all six will be representing the County at the Nationals in Portlaoise in December. If Adam gets through, we will get a 'phone call, and if not, he is still a Donegal Youth Garda Award winner for 2026."

Adam's baking also helped towards the cost of sending pupils from St Mary's National School, Castlefin, who had got through to the World Robotics Championship, to the finals in America.

"This year, Adam went into St Mary's to do his work experience during Transition Year," explained Louise, "and he wanted to help with the fundraising in return for the school giving him the placement. So, when he held his annual bun sale and raffle, he gave the 371 Euros raised from the raffle towards the cost of the American trip."

A fifth-year student at Finn Valley College, in Stranorlar, Adam is delighted to also be doing work experience for two hours every Wednesday in Maple grocery shop.

"He will be doing the Leaving Cert Applied, which involves more practical assignment, with a written essay at the end," said Louise, adding: "He is very into sport and computers, so he may go on to do something in computers or sport exercise. As long as he is happy. Physically, Adam can do anything that everyone else can do, but he can get distracted, so he needs someone to keep him on track."

"He was away on a European tour to Barcelona with his SNA Kate, and had a great time with his school colleagues. The hope is that he will have a certain amount of independence in the world."

And, by all accounts, with such a loving and supportive family and community rooting for him, Adam has a great foundation on which to build for the future.



Clerical changes 2026

THE Bishop of Derry, Bishop Michael Router, has announced the following clerical changes, effective from 30 October 2026:

- Rev Eamon McDevitt PP Dunamanagh, to retire.
- Rev Paul Fraser, PP Ardstraw West & Castlederg, PP Langfield and PP Termonamongan, to be PP Drumragh.
- Rev Patrick Lagan, CC Glendermott and CC Strathfoyle, to be PP Greencastle and PP Badoney Lower.
- Rev Chris McDermott, Adm Granaghan, CC Kilrea & Desertoghill and CC Errigal, to be PP Ardstraw West & Castlederg, PP Langfield and PP Termonamongan.
- Rev Roland Colhoun, CC Ardstraw East, CC Badoney Upper, CC Badoney Lower and CC Greencastle, to be Adm Granaghan, CC Kilrea & Desertoghill and CC Errigal

Ardstraw East and CC Badoney Upper

- Rev James Devine, CC Ardstraw East, CC Badoney Upper, CC Badoney Lower and CC Greencastle, to be Adm Granaghan, CC Kilrea & Desertoghill and CC Errigal
- Rev Stephen Baxter, CC Drumragh and CC Cappagh, to be CC Glendermott and CC Strathfoyle

Bishop Router notified that Very Rev Michael Canny, PP Glendermott and Adm Strathfoyle, and Rev Paul McCafferty were recently re-appointed as Vicars General.

Bishop Router also confirmed the re-appointment and appointment of a number of clergy in the role of Vicar Forane:

- Very Rev John Farren, as Vicar Forane for Inishowen Deanery

• Very Rev Peter Madden, as Vicar Forane for Co Derry Deanery

• Very Rev Kevin McElhannon, as Vicar Forane for the Co Tyrone Deanery

• Very Rev Paul Farren, Adm St Eugene's Cathedral, to be in addition Vicar Forane of the Derry City Deanery

Rev David O'Kane is retiring as Vicar Forane for the Derry City Deanery, while remaining as Adm Claudy.

Bishop Router thanks the priests of the diocese for their continued ministry and service and sends his good wishes to those who are taking up these new appointments. He also thanks the people of the Diocese of Derry for their ongoing prayers and support for their clergy. He encourages them to warmly welcome their new priests in the coming weeks.

Continued from p2

as a hospital chaplain, I and my other chaplains encounter people who suffer from all types of illness, including mental health. Just as we believe that spirituality can positively influence physical health, we also believe that spirituality can enhance mental health by enhancing resilience, providing meaning, and supporting recovery. Spirituality also provides a sense of purpose, meaning, and hope, which can improve self-esteem, confidence, and coping abilities

While spirituality often supports mental health, it can also be a source of distress for some individuals. Negative effects may arise if spiritual beliefs are rigid,

guilt-inducing. Spirituality, when integrated carefully into mental health care, can complement traditional treatments, enhance recovery, and improve overall well-being, while acknowledging individual differences and potential risks.

In reflecting on mental health, I like to remind myself of Romans 8:38-39, when St Paul reminds us that "nothing can separate us from the love of God".

During this month of October, when we celebrate the Feast Day of St Luke (October 18), who is the patron saint of medical people, it is good that we pray for all who are involved in healthcare and with a special focus this year on mental health ministry.

Installation of Bishop Michael Router...

Congratulations and celebrations filled the Derry air as blessings bestowed on new bishop



THE greatness of the occasion for the installation of the new Bishop of Derry in the Mother Church of the Diocese could not have been lost on anyone present in the packed Cathedral or watching on-line on Sunday, September 20.

The magnificent singing of the opening hymn by St Eugene's Choir, was followed by the voice of Archbishop Eamon Martin, as Metropolitan of the Province of Armagh, asking the College of Consultors of the Diocese to receive Bishop Michael "as a father and shepherd, and to respect him as a minister of Christ and a steward of the mysteries of God".

As chairman of the College of Consultors, Fr John Farren was heard to say: "We gladly and gratefully receive you, Bishop Michael, as a father and brother, and offer you our respect and loyal assistance in your ministry as shepherd of the flock entrusted to your care."

Fr John then presented Bishop Michael with an image of the crucified Saviour, whom he highlighted had come "not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many".

This opening part of the ceremony took place at the front door of the Cathedral, and included Dr Anne Friel, chair of the Derry Diocesan Pastoral Council, who presented Bishop Michael with Holy Water as "the symbol of entry into the life of Christ, through the waters of baptism".

Bishop Donal and the Papal Representative, Mgr Patrick Zay Han, were also present at the door for this, and all processed up the Cathedral aisle after Marguerite Hamilton welcomed them and read out the names of the parishes in the Diocese, as the various banners

lined the aisle. Taking up the rear of the procession, Bishop Michael then led those who had carried the names of the parishes up the aisle as the choir sang St Patrick's Breastplate.

Addressing the congregation, Archbishop Eamon welcomed everyone, remarking that it was "a special blessing" to have Bishop Donal present, and thanked God for his "great service to the Diocese", and also to the Diocese of Down & Connor where he had served as a priest and bishop. And there was a loud applause when Archbishop Eamon wished God's blessing on Bishop Donal for a healthy retirement.

Paying tribute to Bishop Michael, he continued: "I had you as a trusted co-worker in the Archdiocese of Armagh. You were like a brother to me and I know very well the gifts that you bring here. You already know that the work of a bishop in a diocese can be very challenging. We pray that the Holy Spirit will continue to nourish you and that you will never feel overwhelmed by what the Lord is asking of you."

With Mass now underway, the Apostolic Letter of Appointment was presented by the Papal Representative to Fr Michael Canny to read out, who then gave it to Bishop Michael to show to the College of Consultors and the people.

Bishop Michael then announced: "I freely and willingly and with full awareness of my human frailty, accept this pastoral office entrusted to me by Our Lord Jesus Christ through the chief shepherd of the Church, His Holiness Pope Leo XIV."

Holy Spirit

All joined in singing the eighth

century Veni Creator, praying for the guidance, strength and outpouring of God's Holy Spirit.

Bishop Donal then presented Bishop Michael with the Crosier, which first belonged to Bishop Charles McHugh, who was presented with it at his Episcopal Ordination in 1907, and Archbishop Eamon formally installed him in the Church of St Eugene, the Cathedral of the Diocese of Derry, to a sustained applause from all present.

After being led to the Cathedra to the singing of The Lourdes Jubilate Deo, Bishop Michael went to be greeted by various representatives of the Diocese, before moving to greet representatives from the other Churches, and his parents and sisters.

The Liturgy of the Mass then got underway, with Bishop Michael the main celebrant and homilist. The readings of the Mass were led by Bishop Router's niece and a representative of the Derry Diocesan Trust, with the Prayer of the Faithful read by young people from schools in the diocese and other young people, including one of 'The Net' Young Writers. The offertory gifts were brought forward by young pilgrims who travelled with the Diocese to Rome for the Jubilee of Hope and to Lourdes.

As well as the Cathedral Choir, there was instrumental music during the ceremony by An Grupa Beag Ceol.

At the end, Bishop Michael thanked all involved in the preparations for the Mass, particularly the Diocesan Catechetical Centre team, and all who attended and took part in the ceremony. And he expressed deep appreciation for those throughout the Diocese who had taken part in the Triduum of Prayer in the lead-up to his installation as Bishop of Derry. He also thanked Bishop Donal for his welcome and support since he was announced as his successor, and for all his work on the Irish Episcopal Conference.

Going on to thank Archbishop Eamon, Bishop Michael said: "I have experienced your trust, encouragement and generosity over the last seven years. I have learned a great deal from you and I thank you for your support. It is wonderful to have had a native of this Diocese install me today."

Expressing thanks to his parents and sisters for all their support, he said: "You have accompanied me in every step of my ministry. Your presence here today means more to me than I can adequately put into words." Bishop Michael's mother, Nora was presented with a bouquet of flowers, and all were invited to St Mary's College for refreshments.

Concluding, Bishop Michael made a special request which drew another loud applause: "As I begin my ministry here in Derry, I ask one gift above all other, to keep me in your prayers that I may have the health and strength to serve this Diocese."

As the priests and bishops processed out of the Cathedral, the bells of St Eugene's rang in joyous celebration, followed by Carndonagh Brass Band enthusiastically playing the tune to Cliff Richard's popular 'Congratulations' song and other tunes, which had Bishop Michael's lively 89-year-old father and his sister showing that they were as happy as can be through their dance moves, while he took time to meet all those who wanted to wish him well and have their photograph taken with the new Bishop.



Installation of Bishop Michael Router...

Vital baptised realise they are sent as missionaries into world thirsting for new life and hope

IN his first message as the new Guardian of the See of St Eugene, Bishop Michael Router spoke of the enormous encouragement he had received in discovering that one of the Derry Diocese's greatest assets was the mutual affection and trust that still exists between many priests and their people.

Recalling separate meetings that he had held with clergy and lay people, and their responses as to what they considered to be the positive, life-giving, aspects of the Diocese that have sustained, nourished and inspired them over the years, Bishop Michael noted that the continuing faith of the people was highlighted.

Delivering the homily for his installation Mass, he went on to highlight that both the clergy and laity had "identified a spiritual depth in the local Church", with the clergy repeatedly referring to "the goodness, welcome and support of parishioners", and the laity speaking warmly of "priests who are dedicated, available and involved in community life".

"It is evident," remarked Bishop Michael, "that the Church here is experienced as a network of relationships rather than simply an institution", and he went on to thank Bishop Donal for his "pastoral care of the diocese, which has ensured that such a culture of love and respect is flourishing amongst the faith community in Derry today".

He also found that both priests and lay people "recognised a strong resilience in the face of difficulties". While Church scandals and the changing patterns of practice were prominently mentioned, Bishop Michael noted that all spoke of "pockets of hope" and a "strong foundation to build upon".

"The common picture," he said, "is that of a diocese whose spiritual life is sustained not only by formal liturgy, but by a broad culture of popular prayer and devotion."

He added that as well as "a realistic awareness of decline and change", there was also "a conviction that considerable spiritual resources remain, and that the Diocese of Derry possesses a recognisable ecclesial culture and identity that will endure".

"Both the priests and the laity I listened to in the formal meetings

and in casual encounters, valued inherited traditions," recalled Bishop Michael, "but they also recognise the need for renewal, for new approaches that speak to people immersed in a modern culture so completely different from anything experienced before in history. Much of what emerged from these brief consultations are the foundations upon which a future pastoral strategy can realistically be built."

Referring to the reminder in the readings for the day that an essential element in any renewal of our Church was to highlight God's mercy in all that we say and do, Bishop Michael commented: "Being merciful is never easy. In this increasingly polarised world, we are often quick to rush to judgement, and the dominance of social media gives some users multiple opportunities to condemn and castigate those with whom they disagree."

The Gospel reading on 'The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard', he said, was a reminder that "God's thoughts are not our thoughts, and His ways are not our ways".

"We often expect God to act and to think like we do, but God's love is greater than our understanding and His mercy is more generous than our often-limited expectations," said Bishop Michael, adding: "It is also important to note in the parable that the owner of the vineyard repeatedly goes back to the marketplace. He does not give up on those who are standing idly by. The invitation to join him is repeated time and time again."

"So, every parish and diocese, every bishop, every priest, every religious community, every committed and faithful lay person must openly issue that same invitation. We cannot stay anymore within the safe confines of a Church building or in a particular holy huddle. We must leave our comfort zones and strive to help others to encounter Jesus Christ where they are at, so that they may enter into a deeper relationship with Him."

Difficult mission

Acknowledging that this mission had become much more difficult in the modern world, he went on to

say: "We cannot ignore the realities we face today, but neither can we simply wish ourselves back to another time, no matter how idyllic we believe that time to have been. The Lord does not ask us to live yesterday's mission, but to proclaim the Gospel in the here and now. To proclaim it, not just to those who have arrived early in the vineyard, but also to those who wilfully and stubbornly stay outside the gate."

He continued: "This is why the revival of synodality is such a great gift to our Church. It is sometimes misunderstood as just another programme, a succession of meetings or even a kind of ecclesiastical parliament. It is none of those things. At its core, synodality helps us to appreciate that the Church does not belong to any individual or political ideology. The Church is the Body of Christ, it belongs to Him and we are part of it. Our task, therefore, is not to reshape His teaching according to our preferences, but to listen together to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us for the common good of all."

"That means being willing, as Jesus was, to walk with and accompany people whose lives are sometimes complicated and messy. He sat at table with tax collectors and sinners. He was criticised for the company He kept by those who considered themselves righteous. Jesus always called people to conversion, but He did not wait for people to become perfect before He reached out to them. Often, through that encounter, their hearts and lives were radically changed."

"A synodal Church is, therefore, a missionary Church. It forms people in their faith. It develops cooperation and co-responsibility between priests and people. It values the gifts that the Holy Spirit has given to every baptised person. Far from diminishing the ministry of priest and bishop, properly understood it strengthens their responsibility as pastors, teachers and guardians of the apostolic faith."

Commenting on a conference he had just attended in Wels, Austria, entitled 'Shaping Synodality in Europe', which involved 31 national Bishops' Conferences from around Europe, with around 180 people

in attendance, Bishop Michael said: "The vast majority were lay people, predominantly women, who work along with the bishops in their respective countries, in administration or to promote pastoral development and adult faith formation."

"The topic of the conversation at the conference focused on the importance of baptism, and how we must deepen our understanding of the gifts and vocation we all receive through this foundational sacrament. The Second Vatican Council helped move the Church away from viewing baptism as just simply the removal of original sin. It restored a more authentic vision of the laity, emphasising that every baptised person bears active responsibility for the Church's mission."

"If the Church in Ireland, and in Europe, is to thrive in the 21st Century, then formation in this understanding of baptism will need to be a priority. It is vital that every baptised person realises that they are sent as missionaries into a world that is thirsting for the new life and hope that only the Gospel of Jesus Christ brings."

"As your bishop," he added, "I look forward to working alongside you to welcome people into the vineyard of the Lord, so that our parishes become places where His mercy can be encountered, where people are welcomed before they are judged, and where those who have drifted away from the Church know that the door remains open. We pray that Jesus will give us the courage to keep saying 'yes' to His invitation and the confidence to help others do the same."

"So, today, I place our Diocese, and myself, into the hands of our loving and merciful Lord, and I entrust our future to Him."



Installation of Bishop Michael Router...

Great excitement as Derry Diocese begins new chapter



IN an introduction at the Derry Diocesan Religious Education Conference some time prior to his installation as the Bishop of Derry, Most Rev Michael Router jokingly recalled a remark that with a surname like his he should always get a good reception...and that is certainly what he got when people of all ages from every parish in the diocese gathered at St Eugene's Cathedral to warmly welcome their new shepherd.

Over two hours before the start of the Mass of Installation, people began arriving to secure a good seat for the magnificent ceremony to install the ninth Bishop of Derry since the Cathedral opened in 1873 – and the 49th in the list of Bishops of Derry since the year 1152.

Amongst them were Waterside parishioners, Siobhan Carroll and Gerard McReavy, who spoke fondly of Bishop Donal McKeown, while looking forward to this new chapter for the Diocese with Bishop Michael Router.

Bishop Donal, they said, “walked the road with everyone, sometimes literally, and even heard confessions on that road”, and they wished him well in retirement. As for the new Bishop of Derry, they felt that Bishop Michael was “a man of great energy, warmth and empathy, with a great affinity for the lay church.”

Swatragh couple, Jane and Seamus Lagan, from the Granaghan Parish, were delighted to make the journey from South Derry for this great day for the Church in Derry. They remarked: “It's lovely to see a new man in the job and we hope that he has as long service as Bishop Donal, who was great. We bought our engagement and wedding rings in his father's jewelry shop in Randalstown in April 1967, and we still have the barometer that he gave us as a gift.” It turns out that this is connection lots of couples in the Diocese had with Bishop Donal.

A group of Magilligan parishioners, representing St Aidan's in the year of its 200th anniversary, said that they felt honoured to be there. “We are sorry that Bishop Donal is retiring, and wish him a long and happy retirement,” they said, “and we look forward to welcoming Bishop

Michael to St Aidan's.”

Nora Canning and Veronica Jackson, also from the Waterside Parish and members of the Vocations Society of St Joseph, said: “We will really miss Bishop Donal; we greatly enjoyed his sermons. But we are also looking forward to meeting up with Bishop Michael.”

Others from such parishes as Desertmartin, Kilrea, Clonleigh, and Steelstown added their best wishes for Bishop Donal on his retirement and Bishop Michael in taking up the mantle, and there were Cavan folk too, who made the two-and-a-half-hour journey to support their fellow county man.

Bishop Michael was greatly blessed to have both of his parents, Anthony and Nora, present for the occasion, along with his two sisters, Breda and Martina, and other family members. His father commented: “It is a great occasion and we are really happy to be here. He will be further away from home now, so we will not see him as often, but we have to hand him over to Derry.”

Young people

Amongst the large attendance, which filled the Cathedral to overflowing, was a great number of young people, with pupils and staff from post primary schools across the Diocese, and primary schools in the Templemore Parish, turning out to form a guard of honour, as well as many representing their parishes in the procession of parish banners. Feeling honoured to be part of such a wonderful occasion, one young lad said that his priest had asked him to carry their parish banner after hearing his Confession, while another said that he had been nominated by his auntie.

There were around 115 priests in attendance, with priests from all the parishes in the Diocese joined by clergy from other areas, including Bishop Michael's home Diocese of Kilmore and the Armagh Diocese, where he had served as Auxiliary Bishop for seven years.

Any feelings of nervousness on the day were surely alleviated for Bishop Michael in having the installation ceremony led by the Primate of All Ireland and Derry

native, Archbishop Eamon Martin, whom he knows well through assisting him in the pastoral and administrative responsibilities in Armagh.

Commenting afterwards, Archbishop Eamon told ‘The Net’: “Seven years ago, I was privileged to preside at his Episcopal ordination in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, and it was very moving for me to be back in St Eugene's Cathedral – the place where I myself was ordained by Bishop Edward Daly in 1987 – to lead his installation as the next Bishop of Derry.

“I have great respect for Bishop Michael, who brings many gifts to his new role. No doubt, he will be nervous starting off, but the Holy Spirit will give him all the graces he needs to be a kindly shepherd for his people across the diocese. I look forward to keeping close contact with him in the coming years as we work together to bring the Good News to a world which needs a reason to hope.”

Mgr Patrick Zay Han, Deputy Head of Mission, Apostolic Nunciature, was also in attendance, and was joined by His Eminence Sean Cardinal Brady DD, DCL, Archbishop Emeritus of Armagh, Most Rev Eamon Martin DD, Archbishop of Armagh & Apostolic Adm of Dromore, Most Rev Francis Duffy DD, Archbishop of Tuam and Bishop of Killala; Most Rev Diarmuid Martin DD, Archbishop Emeritus of Dublin, and Most Rev Kieran O'Reilly DD, Archbishop of Cashel and Emly.

Other bishops present included: Bishop Emeritus of Derry, Most Rev Donal McKeown; Most Rev Paul Connell DD, Bishop of Ardagh & Clonmacnois; Most Rev Larry Duffy DD, Bishop of Clogher; Most Rev Donal Roche DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin; Most Rev Tom Deenihan DD; Bishop of Meath; Most Rev Martin Hayes DD, Bishop of Kilmore; Most Rev William Crean DD, Bishop of Cloyne; Most Rev Ger Nash DD, Bishop of Ferns & Bishop of Ossory; Most Rev Leo O'Reilly DD, Bishop Emeritus of Kilmore; Most Rev Brendan Leahy DD, Bishop of Limerick; Most Rev Paul Dempsey DD, Auxiliary Bishop of Dublin; Most Rev Denis Nulty DD, Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin; Most Rev Kevin Doran DD, Bishop of Elphin & Bishop of Achonry; and Most Rev Niall Coll DD, Bishop of Raphoe.

Religious Orders located in the Diocese were also represented, as were the Church of Ireland, by The Right Rev Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry & Raphoe, Very Rev Nigel Cairns, Dean of St Columba's Cathedral, Derry, and Rev Robert Miller, outgoing Rector of Christ Church, and the Methodist Church

by Joan and Ken Doherty. The Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council, Cllr Grace Uí Naillais, was in attendance too.

The magnificent music and singing during the Mass of Installation was provided by St Eugene's Cathedral Choir, led by Maghnus Monaghan, organist Aidan Watkins and Keyla Duffy on trumpet. An Grupa Beag Ceol, an Irish traditional group of young people, took part as well, upholding Derry's reputation for musical talent.



Installation of Bishop Michael Router...

Coat of Arms



BISHOP Michael's Episcopal Coat of Arms is in the standard form of cross, shield and galero, which traditionally is the broad brimmed hat and tassels worn by a bishop.

The central symbol is the torch representing the flame of faith. This particular torch is a copy of the one St Benan holds before St Patrick in the stained-glass window by Harry Clarke located in the Honan Chapel, in Cork. St Benan was one of the earliest disciples of St Patrick and he accompanied him on many of his travels around Ireland. St Benan established a church in Drumbannon, near Bailieborough in Co Cavan, the parish where, for five years, Bishop Michael served as Parish Priest.

The flame is a rich symbol representing the light of Christian faith which guides the footsteps of the faithful from birth to death.

A lighted candle is handed to the parents of the newly baptised child as the priest prays, "May they keep the flame of faith alive in their hearts". The mission of the Christian today is to keep the flame of faith alive in the darkness of evil that threatens our world.

In the top left-hand corner, as you view the crest, the dove represents the Holy Spirit who constantly renews the Church and ignites the flame of faith even in the most difficult of situations. The seven rays which proceed from the head of the dove signify the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgement, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence and Wonder and Awe in God's Presence. The background colour of blue represents the Blessed Virgin Mary.

In the top right-hand corner, there is a representation of a yew tree. Bishop Michael is from Virginia in Co Cavan, and the Irish name for the town is 'Achadh an Iúir', meaning the field of the yew tree. The background colours of black and amber also represent his home place. The yew tree, an evergreen tree noted for its longevity, is a symbol of renewal, regeneration and resurrection.

Bishop Michael's episcopal motto, 'In Manus Tuas Domine' (Into Your Hands, O Lord), is taken from the Gospel of Luke 23:46.



A little background...

A native of Virginia in Co Cavan and the Diocese of Kilmore, Bishop Michael Router was born on April 15, 1965. He entered St Patrick's College, Maynooth, to study for the priesthood in 1982, and graduated with a Bachelor in Divinity Degree and a Higher Diploma in Education.

He was ordained as a priest for the Diocese of Kilmore on June 25, 1989, and ministered as a curate before joining the teaching staff of St Patrick's College, Cavan, in 1991. He was then appointed Chaplain of Bailieborough Community School in 1996 and Priest-in-Residence in the Parish of Kilmainhamwood and Moybologue. In 2002/2003, he studied at Mater Dei Institute of Education in Dublin and assisted during that time in Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish in Drimnagh. He graduated with a Masters in Religion and Education in 2003.

Returning to the Diocese of Kilmore, he was appointed the Diocesan Director of Adult Faith Formation and Pastoral Renewal, while also serving as a Priest-in-Residence in the parish of Castletara/Ballyhaise. His role included providing training, encouragement and support for Parish Pastoral Councils, Liturgy Groups, Eucharistic Ministers and Ministers of the Word. He also helped to provide Adult Religious Education courses, which were accredited by the Mater Dei Institute of Education and the Maryvale Institute.

In 2010, in addition to these roles, he was appointed director of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, and in 2013 he was transferred as Curate to the Cathedral Parish in Cavan. In 2014, he was appointed Parish Priest and as Vicar Forane. He was also a member of the College of Consultors of the Diocese of Kilmore and chairman of the Diocesan Priests' Council from 2017 to 2019.

Appointed Auxiliary Bishop of the Archbishop of Armagh and titular Bishop of Lugmad by Pope Francis on May 7, 2019, Bishop Michael assisted Archbishop Eamon Martin with pastoral and administrative tasks. He chaired the Pastoral Team, directed the national and international Synodal process within the archdiocese, culminating in a Diocesan Congress on Youth, Family and Faith last March. He also sat on the various administrative committees in the diocese and was a director of the St Patrick's Diocesan Trust.

In addition, Bishop Michael is chair of the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference's Council for Healthcare, Vice-President of the Catholic Marriage Care Service Accord CLG; Liaison Bishop and Vice-Chair of the Irish Bishop's Drugs Initiative; Chair of the Family Addiction Support Network; and, a member of the Irish Inter-Church Committee, the Commission for Pastoral Care, the board of Towards Healing and the National Synodal Steering Committee.



Young Writers share thoughts...

TWO of 'The Net' Young Writers had the honour of being involved in the liturgy during Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral for the installation of Bishop Michael Router as Bishop of Derry. While both had a part in the writing of the Prayers of the Faithful, Harry was one of the young people who read the Prayers at the ceremony, and Niamh took part in the Offertory Procession as one of the young people who had travelled to Rome with the Diocesan Youth team for the Jubilee of Youth last year.

For her article this month, Niamh reflects on her experience of not only being part of the ceremony in the Cathedral for this special occasion for the Diocese, but also in writing the thoughts that came to her when asked to write one of the Prayers of the Faithful, making her aware of the extent of Bishop Michael's responsibilities and so the need for much ongoing prayer by the faithful for his ministry.

Settling into life at university, Erin writes about the great change this is in her life, and how she finds comfort in her faith and the reality that God never changes and is always present.

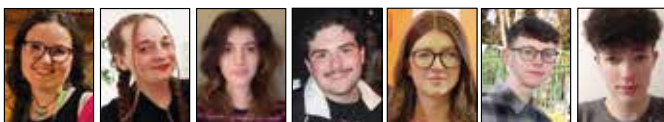
Nieve shares her struggle with faith at times and how she has come to the conclusion that questioning God doesn't necessarily mean that you are a 'bad Christian', but are going through periods of growth.

Considering that our words, thoughts and actions are opportunities to love God, James concludes that the greatest witness to God that we can give is not only in proclaiming the Good News, but in the quiet love and care we give to others.

Harry looks at human intellect and will in reflecting on our call to come to know and love God, while Ryan considers the duty of Christians to cultivate a culture of care, quoting Pope John Paul II and the Catechism in highlighting that euthanasia is a grave violation of God's law.



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



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

Remember our Bishop in personal prayer...at Mass...and in our parish communities

by Niamh

THE Diocese of Derry recently celebrated the installation of our new bishop, Bishop Michael Router. It was a special occasion for our diocese, bringing together people from parishes, schools and communities to welcome him as he begins his ministry among us.

For me, the Mass was made even more meaningful because I had the opportunity to take part in it. I was asked to bring up a gift in the Offertory Procession, which might seem like a small part of such a large celebration, but it gave me a chance to reflect on the importance of the occasion.

Being involved in the Mass reminded me that the installation of a bishop is not simply a formal ceremony. It is about welcoming someone who has been called to serve the people of the diocese and to help guide us in our faith.

Before the Mass, I also had the opportunity to write one of the Prayers of the Faithful. This was something I found particularly meaningful because it made me think about what I would actually pray for our new bishop as he begins his role. When we pray for our priests and bishops, it can sometimes be easy to think of them as people who are simply there to celebrate Mass or speak to us about our faith. Writing the Prayer of the Faithful made me think more deeply about the responsibility that comes with being a bishop.

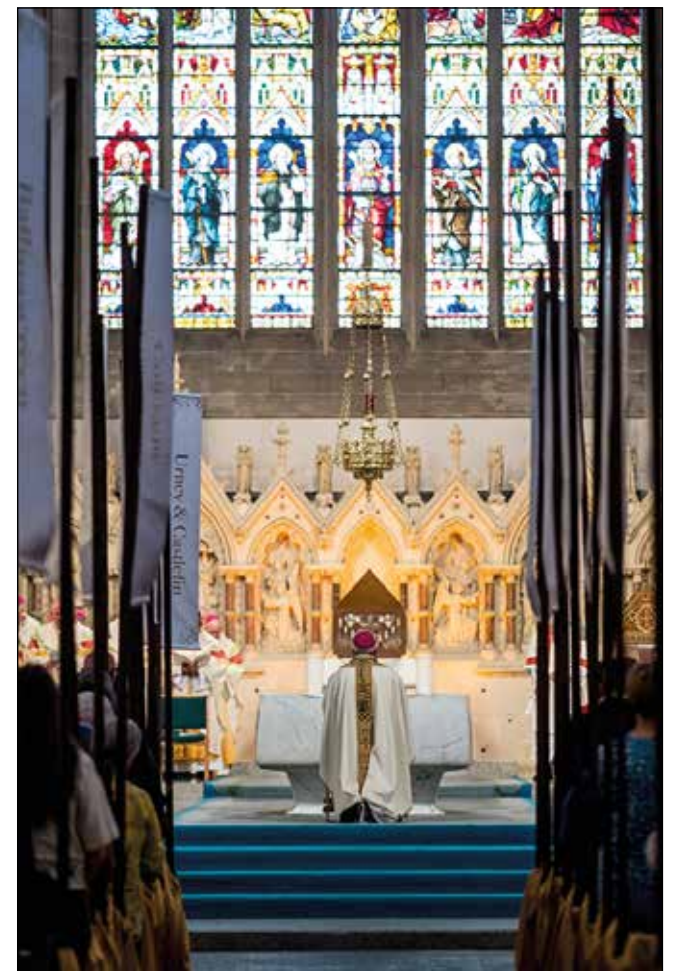
There are many people across the Diocese of Derry, each with their own experiences, struggles,

hopes and questions. A bishop has the responsibility of supporting these people and helping to lead the diocese closer to Jesus. As I wrote the prayer, I found myself thinking about how I could continue to pray for Bishop Router beyond the day of his installation. It is easy to pray for someone when they are beginning a new role, especially during a special celebration, but our prayers should not stop once the Mass has ended.

I think this is something that we can all do as members of the diocese. We can remember our bishop in our personal prayers, at Mass and in our parish communities. We can pray that he will have wisdom when making decisions, strength when facing challenges and the courage to continue sharing the Gospel. Most importantly, we can pray that he will remain close to Christ as he carries out his ministry.

Taking part in the Mass also reminded me that the Church is something we are all part of. There were people from many different parishes and backgrounds gathered together for the same reason; to welcome our new bishop and pray for him as he begins his ministry. Even though we each have different roles within the Church, we all have a part to play in supporting one another.

As Bishop Router begins his time in the Diocese of Derry, I hope that we can continue to welcome him not only through celebrations like his installation



Mass, but through our prayers and support. For me, writing the Prayer of the Faithful gave me a reminder that prayer is one of the simplest ways we can support our bishop.

The gift I brought forward during the Mass was only a small part of the celebration, but the experience left me with something

that I can carry forward. Whenever I pray for our diocese, I can now remember Bishop Router and the responsibility that he has taken on. I hope that, as a diocese, we can keep him in our prayers and ask God to guide him as he begins this new chapter of his ministry amongst us.

Are our hearts too small to know and love God? by Harry

IN humans there is an intellect and a will. Knowing belongs to the intellect and loving belongs to the will. The intellect and the will operate in quite different fashions.

Firstly, whenever the intellect knows anything above its dignity, it always brings the object down to the level of itself, but the will always goes out to meet the object loved.

When a teacher wants to explain an abstract principle to a student, they will bring it down to the level of the child's intellect and

experience. However, the will goes to meet the object loved, eg, if you love a foreign language, you submit to its grammar and syntax. If a young man is courting a woman who loves poetry, he is a fool if he talks mathematics.

Secondly, when the mind knows anything that is below it in dignity, it elevates that thing by knowing it, and whenever the mind knows anything above it in dignity, to some extent it degrades it. The will on the contrary, when it loves anything above its dignity

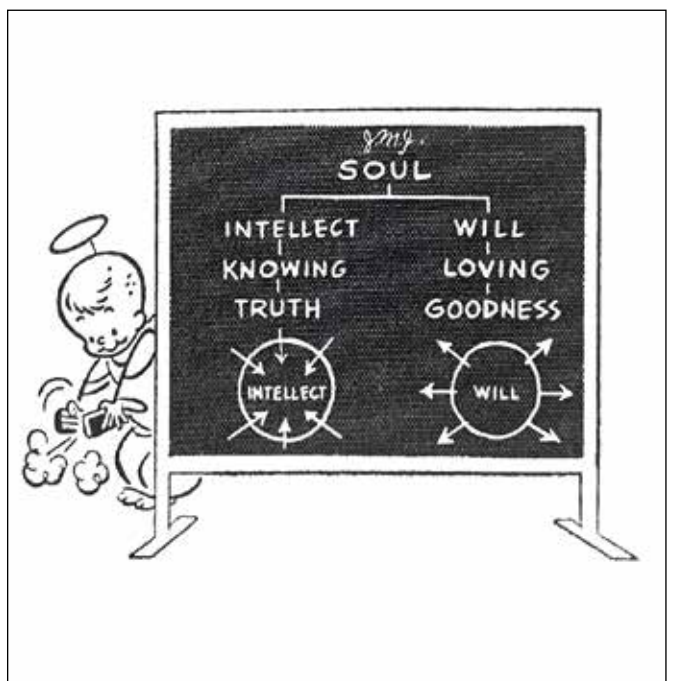
goes out to meet the demand of what it loves, but when the will loves anything below in dignity, it degrades itself.

That is why we become that of which we love, and that the least love of God is better than the knowledge of all the created things in the world. Also, a man can know much but still be evil, because in knowing things we bring it to our level, but in loving God we have to go out to His level and many 'wise' men refuse to do this.

Thirdly, we can never love

anybody or anything unless we know that person or know that thing. That is why there has to be an introduction to a person before there can be a beginning of love for that person, then love creates knowledge.

So, in order to love God, we must know Him, but by loving Him we increase our understanding of Him. Our brains today are big enough, but could it be that our hearts are too small?



Young Writers share thoughts...

On love of God in all things *by James*

NEVER must we allow ourselves to believe that we can find ourselves in any situation or circumstance, in which we cannot love God. Simply put, in every word we speak, thought we have, and action we do, we should view as an opportunity to love God.

I once listened to a question being asked about how to maintain oneself in the presence of God. The answer was that every so often throughout the day, when that thought of Christ, or the Mass or anything religious pops into our head, we should give thanks in a moment of contemplation. This is surely positive, but I would add more.

It is not simply thinking about God that reminds ourselves of His presence, but by doing His will with loving intention, we intimately unite ourselves with our Lord in a way that is so much more profound than just thinking about His presence. In authentically Thomistic theology, anything good done with charity, and directed towards God with positive intention, can become supernaturally meritorious.

What does this really mean? Do not consider your daily work, the making of your bed, the interaction with your family, as chores or obstacles to advancement in the spiritual life, not at all! It is in these daily endeavours, which can often be mundane, that we can truly find God in any situation, henceforth, ensuring that we are not just 'Catholic' when we pray or go to Mass, but in all things that we do.

In this, we encounter what can be truly meant by a 'lay spirituality', not a spirituality for

laymen. Whatever we do, we can offer it for Christ, when we seek to do it well and in charity. This lay vocation then does not find itself solely in seeking to serve on many lay ministry committees or on the parish council, which are both excellent contributions, but is not what God asks of all the laity. Rather, for something to be intrinsically linked to the lay vocation, it must be applicable to all the laity. In this, there are some certainties, such as taking care of your family, passing on the faith to your children and grandchildren, offering all that you do, in your normal job or duties assigned to you, with the joy and love in the knowledge that you are a son/daughter of God.

Could it be said that God is displeased with the mother caring for her child if it prevents her from saying her prayers? This cannot be! It is in our human state, through our earthly actions, that we can further sanctify our environments and also those around us. There are many called to religious life, to the priesthood, but there are also those who God wants right in the middle of the world. We cannot adopt an attitude of differentiating what in this world belongs to God and what is secular, and then only interacting with what and who seems holy. Since all belongs to our Lord, we must work to sanctify everything and everyone in which we come into contact with.

Sustainer

In the 'Summa Theologiae' I, q. 44, a. 1, Aquinas argues that God is the cause of every being. In q. 45, a. 1, he describes creation as the coming-to-be of all being from

God; not merely the making of one thing out of pre-existing material. Creatures, therefore, depend on God not only at the beginning of their existence but for their continuing existence. Aquinas says in I, q. 104, a. 1 that creatures would return to nothing if God did not sustain them. This is more than saying that God owns the world in a human or legal sense. God is its source and sustainer; the world is real and distinct from God, but it is never independent of Him. Aquinas also says that God is present to all things by giving them being.

I find a passage from the second Vatican Council's 'Gaudium et Spes' to explain this issue as particularly helpful:

"Nor, on the contrary, are they any less wide of the mark who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations, and who imagine they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from the religious life. This split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age. Long since, the Prophets of the Old Testament fought vehemently against this scandal (15) and even more so did Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament threaten it with grave punishments. (16) Therefore, let there be no false opposition between professional and social activities on the one part, and religious life on the other. The Christian who neglects his temporal duties, neglects his duties toward his neighbour and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation."

In all that we do, we must recognise that God is interested in what we do. It is notably remarked in the Gospel of Mark about Jesus that "He has done all things well". With this in mind, seeking to imitate Christ in our own lives, we can love God in all the actions of our lives, insofar that they are good and ordered towards what is just.

Before we speak to our friends about Jesus Christ, let us first speak to Jesus Christ about our friends, in humble prayer and petition. Our greatest witness to our Lord, is not only about boldly proclaiming the Gospel, but in the quiet, loving example and care we offer to others. I have often found that people are much more receptive to the truth when they see Christians do what Christ has called us to do, rather than just talk about what we should.

Faith isn't easy *by Nieve*

I don't think I'll ever say that faith is easy. There will always be struggle because we are human, and our lives are filled with difficulties, doubts, questions, and times when we don't understand why bad things happen the way they do. For some time, I felt like questioning God was a bad thing. I thought that if I truly had faith, I shouldn't have doubts. I thought that believing in God meant being completely certain, trusting without hesitation and never asking why.

When I did question things, I sometimes wondered if that meant my faith wasn't strong enough, or that maybe I simply didn't have it in me to believe properly. Over time, I have started to see faith differently. I have realised that questioning God does not necessarily mean that you have stopped believing in Him. Sometimes, I think questioning God can actually be one of the most human parts of faith. When something is difficult, it is natural to ask why. When we are hurting, it is natural to ask where God is. When we pray for something to change, and it doesn't, it is natural to wonder whether our prayers are even being heard. I don't think having those thoughts makes someone a "bad Christian".

I am told to pray to God for help, to ask Him to make things better when I have been struggling, whether that struggle is mental, physical or emotional. But what happens when you pray and the answer isn't what you think, or is hidden in details? What happens when you ask for something to change, but the next morning everything feels the same? I doubt, and I can admit it. There have been times when I have wanted an immediate answer. I have wanted to pray about something and wake up the next day feeling completely different. I have wanted God or someone to simply take away whatever I was struggling with and make everything easier. And when that didn't happen, I found it frustrating.

Being told to "have faith" can sometimes feel difficult when what you really want is change. Faith can sound simple when you are looking at it from the outside. Just pray. Trust God. Have faith. But when you are the person actually going through something, it can feel much harder than that. When you are lying awake thinking about everything wrong, or when you are questioning what you believe, simply telling yourself to have faith doesn't always make those feelings disappear. And I think it is okay to admit that.

Having faith does not mean pretending that you are not struggling. Asking God to help us does not necessarily mean that everything will change without us having to do anything ourselves.

"Being told to 'have faith' can sometimes feel difficult when what you really want is change. Faith can sound simple when you are looking at it from the outside. Just pray. Trust God. Have faith. But when you are the person actually going through something, it can feel much harder than that. When you are lying awake thinking about everything wrong, or when you are questioning what you believe, simply telling yourself to have faith doesn't always make those feelings disappear. And I think it is okay to admit that."

Sometimes, the desire to get better has to become something we act upon. We have to take the steps ourselves, even when they are small. We have to accept help, make changes, speak to people, try again and sometimes simply get through one day at a time.

We cannot always say, "I have prayed, so why hasn't the situation changed?" Sometimes the situation may not immediately change, but something within us can. Perhaps, we become a little stronger. Maybe we become more willing to ask for help, or we begin to see things differently, and we can find the courage to do something that we couldn't have done before.

Strength

Sometimes, we might not even realise that we have changed until we look back. That is something I have found difficult to understand. When I look back at moments where I struggled, I can see that I am not the same person I was then. I have gained strength and confidence. I have learned things about myself and about how I see the world. I have learned that getting through something does not always mean that the struggle suddenly disappears. Sometimes it means learning how to carry it differently.

But I still question where that strength came from. Was it simply time? Was it because I changed the way I thought? Was it because someone said something to me at exactly the right moment? Was it because I prayed? Was it God giving me the strength I needed? I don't know.

Maybe God doesn't always work in the obvious ways that we expect Him to. Maybe an answer to a prayer doesn't always look like a miracle or an instant solution. Maybe sometimes it looks like the person who decides to listen to you. Maybe it looks like the courage to get out of bed on a difficult morning. Maybe it looks like finally admitting that you need help. Maybe it looks like finding hope when you thought you had none left. That doesn't mean every struggle suddenly makes sense. There are still things I question. There are still moments when I

wonder why God allows certain things to happen. There are still prayers where I wish the answer had been different.

Sometimes, I think we put too much pressure on ourselves to have a perfect faith. We see people who seem completely certain in what they believe, and we compare ourselves to them. We think that because we have doubts, we must be doing something wrong. But faith is personal. Everyone's relationship with God is different, and everyone will go through periods where their faith feels stronger and periods where it feels more difficult. There may be times when prayer comes easily, and other times when you don't even know what to say. There may be moments where you feel close to God and moments where He feels very far away. That does not necessarily mean that faith has disappeared.

Sometimes, faith might simply look like continuing to pray even when you aren't sure what you believe that day. Sometimes, it might be going to Mass when you don't feel particularly connected to your faith. Sometimes, it might be asking God, "Where are You?" instead of knowing exactly what to pray. And sometimes, faith might simply be hope.

I do feel frustrated when I am told to "have faith" while I am struggling, because sometimes I want more than hope; I want an answer. I want to know that everything is going to be okay. I want to know when it will get better and how it will get better. But life rarely gives us those answers immediately. Maybe that is where faith becomes meaningful. If we already knew exactly what was going to happen, perhaps we wouldn't need faith in the first place.

I haven't figured it all out. I still question God. I still have moments where I struggle to understand. I still sometimes wonder whether something happened because of God, because of my own choices, because of other people, or simply because time passed.

Just because nothing seems to have happened doesn't mean that nothing is happening.

"In all that we do, we must recognise that God is interested in what we do. It is notably remarked in the Gospel of Mark about Jesus that 'He has done all things well'. With this in mind, seeking to imitate Christ in our own lives, we can love God in all the actions of our lives, insofar that they are good and ordered towards what is just."

Young Writers share thoughts...

A new chapter...an unchanging God *by Erin*

THERE is something daunting and almost terrifying about entering a place where no one knows who you are yet. Whilst moving to university, I was filled with excitement about this idea of new beginnings and an entirely new chapter of my life, however, I failed to consider the challenges that would arise alongside this. I had not prepared myself for how much everything would change and how unsettling this major life change would feel at the beginning of my time here.

Personally, I had not struggled emotionally with leaving secondary school as much as most people do, and I didn't believe that I would struggle with moving to Belfast either, as it is "just an hour up the road." The only real struggle for me had been saying 'goodbye' to my friends who were travelling to other countries for university,

like Wales and England. Perhaps, comparing myself to them had caused me to dismiss any of my own quiet and underlying fears about the changes ahead.

As much as I am glad that I went in open-minded and with a positive attitude, Freshers Week and starting lectures was like a reality check for me. I realised just how hard it could be to push myself to make friends and fit in, and how much I would have to grow in independence during my time here.

In all of that change, I found my mind coming back to the biggest blessing of all: God doesn't change. Hebrews 13:8 reinforces this idea, telling us "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." This reminds us that Jesus is reliable and unchanging, and encourages us to remain faithful to Him. Although everything around

us might be changing, God is not, and nor is His love for us.

One of the strangest things about starting university is realising that no one knows anything about you: your friendships; successes; struggles; or past. This can be exciting. I know that it was for me as someone who had been in the same all-girls secondary school for all those years. However, it can also lead to a certain pressure to 're-invent' ourselves or change ourselves to fit in.

We may think this will help us make friends and adjust better at university. But we do not need to change to gain the love or good opinion of others. We simply must remind ourselves that God already knows us fully. We have no need to prove our worth. He already loves us all unconditionally. Although university, or any new chapter, can shape us and mature us, especially

with the help of God, we can still remain grounded in our identity in Christ.

The consistency of God's love can be something we struggle to be certain of, and university has made me realise that I have a lot to learn about trusting God. I need to make a conscious effort to continue to nurture my faith as I become more independent.

This is one of the reasons that I look forward to getting involved with the Chaplaincy at Queens. I enjoyed attending their events over my first week in Belfast, as I knew it was somewhere that I could go to meet people my age who share my faith and have similar interests to me. This was both encouraging and comforting, as I felt less pressure socially knowing that we already had something important in common.

I am excited to make more friends



who can help encourage me in my faith and who I can pray with. I look forward to seeing where God leads me through this.

We may not know exactly what will come in the next chapter, or what new experiences life will throw at us, but praying to God can help us come to terms with uncertainty. Faith makes change less like something to fear and more like something God can

guide us through. Our identity is not shaped by our surroundings or friendships, but by Him who created us. Faith is not about knowing exactly what is coming next, but trusting that we are not entering the unknown alone.

As Isaiah 41:10 reminds us: "Do not fear, for I am with you..." While everything around us may change, God does not.

You shall not murder (Exodus 20:13) *by Ryan*

ON February 1, 2024, the Dutch government gave approval for the euthanasia of children aged 1 to 12. According to the Government of the Netherlands website, euthanasia has two different forms: termination of life on request and assisted suicide. Saying termination of life on request is when a physician administers the substances to the patient. Assisted suicide is when the physician hands a lethal substance to the patient who then ingests it. For adults and for children aged 12 and over under the original 2002 Act, the law is unambiguous on consent: "The patient must make the request personally. A request for euthanasia made by another person on behalf of the patient cannot be granted. It must always be clear that the request has been made by the patient personally." But the 2024 extension covering children aged 1 to 12 does not carry this requirement forward. It cannot; children that young cannot meaningfully request their own death, so the law instead rests the decision on parental consent and a physician's judgement that the child's suffering is hopeless and unbearable. In other words, the very safeguard the Dutch government presents as central to euthanasia, that only the person whose life is at stake can ask for it, has been quietly set aside for its youngest victims. A right that supposedly exists only because someone chooses it for themselves has been extended to those who are, by definition, incapable of choosing it at all.

A two-year-old toddler, who was severely disabled suffering from periventricular leukomalacia, which caused visual impairment,

had cerebral palsy, was diagnosed with infantile epileptic spasm syndrome, and largely did not respond to epilepsy medication. Due to the epilepsy, the child was restless and often unable to sleep. Additionally, mucus gathered in the lungs, making breathing and swallowing difficult. All this due to being born prematurely and having severe brain damage. The first opinion doctors did conclude that euthanasia was a course of action, as did the third opinion doctors. But the second opinion doctors believed that there were reasonable alternative solutions. They suggested palliative options and pharmacological alternatives to reduce the seizures. With the Dutch committee assigned to the case saying: "These doctors noted that at that time there was no continuous unbearable suffering. The epilepsy was accompanied by significant discomfort, but the epileptic seizures were not continuous." They told this to the parents, who refused the palliative care and instead sought the opinion of the third who agreed, and the two-year-old was euthanised despite any ability to assess or understand the situation.

This child's life was ended by those doctors involved and the committee decided that "the child was severely multiply (intellectually and motorically) disabled, and the prognosis was that the child would remain dependent on care for life for all activities of daily living." However, under that law the ending of a child's life in euthanasia is only allowed if a child is terminally ill, suffering unbearably with no prospects of improvements. At no point does the committee claim that the child was dying, and they

have evidence of doctors believing that there are alternatives to the euthanasia and that, while the child would rely on its family for the rest of its life, it could live a life. That was all cut short due to the legalisation of euthanasia within the Netherlands, who proudly wear the badge of being the first to legalise it.

Within the encyclical letter, 'Evangelium Vitae' by Pope John Paul II, he states: "Euthanasia is a grave violation of God's law, as it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person." Showing very clearly and plainly that true compassion does not consist in eliminating suffering by eliminating the sufferer, but in sharing the pain and offering love and support. He proposed the promotion of a culture of life as opposed to the culture of death that considers euthanasia an acceptable solution.

The Catechism confronts euthanasia clearly by saying: "Those whose life is diminished or weakened have the right to special respect. Sick or diminished people should be treated to lead as normal a life as possible" (n. 2276), going on to say: "Although death is considered imminent, ordinary care due to a sick person cannot be legitimately interrupted. The use of painkillers to alleviate the sufferings of the dying, even at risk of shortening its days, can be morally in accordance with human dignity if death is not intended, neither as an end nor as a means, but only foreseen and tolerated as inevitable. Palliative care is a privileged form of selfless charity. For this reason, they must be encouraged" (n. 2279).

As followers of the Lord, we

must pursue to care and cultivate a culture of care. And yet, one of the top-ranking health systems in Europe, with a gross domestic product of 1.45 trillion and spending 120.2 billion Euros, or 10-13% of its budget on its medical industry, take the life of a child and then use the government to support the act, even though it breaks the very boundaries they have set on the euthanasia.

The Netherlands allows children to take their own life, with oral requests being enough for you to be killed by the government. Rather than treat people, their general practitioner will offer them to die. Euthanasia is murder, without a shadow of a doubt, and should be seen as nothing more than that act. While it has an intention of helping its victims live without the suffering of this world, that suffering is nothing when compared to what our Lord Jesus Christ suffered for us.

To kill a child and to make it stumble on its life is a sin that is clearly addressed within the Gospels. Matthew 18 addresses it clearly, with Jesus saying: "If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea."

Is the murder of children of all ages, putting the ideas of death into their heads, not causing them to stumble? It is pushing them over. An assault on the innocent of our world was brought to us as a way to allow our most afflicted and pained to have a peaceful death.

Recently, the campaign for assisted dying in England and Wales suffered a real defeat.

***"Euthanasia is a grave violation of God's law, as it is the deliberate and morally unacceptable killing of a human person."
(Pope John Paul II - 'Evangelium Vitae')***

However, you can see how persistent the push for euthanasia has become. Kim Leadbeater's Terminally Ill Adults (End of Life) Bill actually passed its third reading in the House of Commons in June 2025, by a narrow margin of 314 votes to 291, and moved on to the House of Lords for further scrutiny. It never became law. It ran out of parliamentary time in the Lords and fell at the end of that session, and due to there not being a carry-over agreement, the bill died. But it was not rejected outright by the Commons that first time. Only months later, when a nearly identical bill was reintroduced, did MPs actually vote it down at second reading, killing it by a narrow margin and, for now, ending the latest attempt to bring legalised assisted dying to England and Wales.

That the Commons once approved this and needed a second attempt to finally reject it, should sober us rather than comfort us. It shows how close this culture of

death has already come to being written into law, and how quickly a defeated bill can be dusted off and returned to the order paper. A single vote, decided by a matter of a few dozen MPs, is not a foundation anyone should rest easy on. The right response to this narrow reprieve is not complacency but urgency - campaigning for the permanent withdrawal of such bills and, above all, pressing the government to redirect that same energy and funding toward expanding palliative care, so that dying well in comfort and dignity, not dying early by design, becomes the assumed standard of care. You take your victories as they come, but a victory this narrow is a warning, not a resolution.

Life must be saved and cared for, even if it lasts just one more day. We have no right to kill another person due to our personal belief on what is good for them, nor do they have the right to take their own life and destroy the plan laid out for them by God.

Castlederg family still processing powerful moment they met Pope Leo



A Castlederg family are still pinching themselves some six weeks after meeting Pope Leo XIV during their first trip to Rome, back in August. Having shook hands with the Holy Father, Aine and Eoghan Hanna, and their mum, Edel, have been left in no doubt as to the relic-like status that their hands have been raised to, with everyone who hears of their encounter wanting to touch the hands touched by Christ's representative on Earth.

Speaking to 'The Net' about the unexpected experience, 20-year-old Aine recalled how it all came about: "Mum and I have been to Lourdes four times with the Derry Diocese, and were always saying that we would like to go to Rome, so we just booked it and went. The booking of tickets for the Wednesday audience with Pope Leo was only arranged about a couple of weeks before we left, when a friend of the family, who goes to Rome about once or twice a year, asked if we would like to be at the audience with the Pope. But she didn't think we would actually get to meet him!

"Before we left, we got a letter to say that the tickets had to be collected from the Swiss Guards the day before the audience. It didn't say in the letter or on the tickets where we would be seated."

With the temperature in the high 30s, the 10am audience was held inside. Wanting to get a good place in the queue, the trio were there for 7am only to find that two queues were already forming.

"We discovered that the shorter one was for those with mobility issues, so we were in that as mum has MS and was in a wheelchair," said Aine, adding: "We were moving along in the queue through security, and when we showed the tickets to the Swiss guards, we were led to the front by a member of staff, passing rows of plastic chairs to seating reserved for VIPs."

"Realising that we were close to the front, I asked a staff member if we would get to meet the Pope, and he said 'yes' and that Pope Leo would come around and shake our hands, and a photograph would be taken. I was shocked. I just couldn't believe it! There are no words to explain the experience."

"On the spur of the moment, I wondered how do you greet a pope! I contacted my Granny, Annie Quinn, to ask her, and she told me to say 'Your Holiness'. Mum was in shock too. I did most of the talking when Pope Leo came to us as mum and Eoghan were shaking. He shook hands with us and asked how we were, where we came from, how we were related, how long we were there for, and if we were enjoying our stay."

"He then wished us a safe journey home and gave us a blessing. We got our photograph taken with him and received a pair of Rosary beads each. Eoghan got black beads in a green case, and mum and I got white beads in burgundy boxes. I wasn't expecting to receive Rosary beads, but they are a lovely keepsake, along with the photographs."

The hand that shook the Pope's

Sharing the news when we got home again, Aine said: "People asked me which hand I had shook the Pope's with! So, everyone wanted to shake my right hand, and asked how did we manage to meet him and what he was like. People couldn't believe it... we couldn't believe it! It was the highlight of the trip!"

A Year 10 student at Sacred Heart College, Omagh, Eoghan said that it was exciting meeting the Pope: "I wore my Tyrone GAA jersey because I wanted to promote my home county, and I saw Pope

Leo looking at it. My friends were impressed that I had met the Pope and asked me about it. It was a great experience that I will always remember."

Still mesmerized by the encounter with the Holy Father, Aine and Eoghan's mum, Edel remarked: "I could hardly speak to him, I was so nervous and excited." While her mother, Granny Annie declared it "a miracle", saying: "I was shocked when they rang and said that they were getting to meet the Pope. It was just a miracle."

Not fond of flying, after venturing on a pilgrimage to Lourdes once, the 78-year-old said: "I love going to Knock, it is very beautiful and peaceful."

As well as enjoying the rest of what Rome has to offer, the family were particularly impressed by the Colosseum and the burial place of Pope Francis. And, they set off on the train for a day in Assisi, where they visited the tomb of St Francis, and viewed the bodies of St Clare and St Carlo Acutis.

Stunned at the sight of St Carlo lying there as a youth, Aine commented: "It was surreal. You just expect him to waken up. We always pray for St Carlo's intercession. I have his prayer card

and two pairs of St Carlo Acutis Rosary beads, and I brought back a wee statue of him from Assisi."

Comfortable still practicing the Catholic faith she was brought up with, the second-year student at Magee, UU, where she is studying Personalised Medicine, said: "My friends don't make fun of me for it; they stand by me. My faith brings me comfort and I get a feeling that my Guardian Angel is present and looking after me."

"I am a Eucharistic Minister in my parish and we go to Mass regularly at the weekend."

We also pray the Rosary and, every Friday, we go to Granny's to say it together. My mum and my grannies have all influenced me in my faith, but especially Granny Annie. We are very close and go to Mass with her. Now that I am driving, we try to go to Knock once or twice a year for Granny. Knock is lovely too."

Recalling her experience in Lourdes as a Pope John Paul II helper on the Derry Diocesan pilgrimage, in 2024, Aine said: "It was a completely different experience and opened up my eyes to what some people are suffering. It makes you grateful to be able to get up and walk about."



A new gathering place for young adults

by Yvonne Rooney - Diocesan Youth Ministry

THE Derry Youth Ministry team are thrilled to announce the opening of a new gathering space for young adults in Claudy Pastoral Centre. Starting October 20, we invite you to join us every Tuesday night at 7.30pm for an evening of faith, fellowship, and community.

Building community of faith

Life for young adults can often be busy and challenging. Our new gathering space aims to provide a supportive environment where young Catholics, aged 18-35, can come together to share their faith and experiences.

We believe that faith can offer greater meaning to our lives and guide us through important decisions. By drawing on the richness of scripture, prayer, and the sacramental life of the Church, we hope to accompany each other in a spirit of joy and service.

What to expect

Our weekly gatherings promise an enriching experience, with a variety of activities designed to foster connection and spiritual growth:

- Invited Guest Speakers: Hear

from inspiring individuals who will share their experiences and insights.

- Scripture and Prayer: Engage with the Word of God and deepen your prayer life.

- Social Events and Faith Experiences: Participate in fun activities that also nurture your faith.

- Food and Fellowship: Enjoy some food while building lasting friendships.

Be part of our journey

As you join us, you will have the opportunity to influence the development of this new initiative. Everyone is welcome to drop in and be part of our vibrant community.

If you are between the ages of 18 and 35, and looking for a place to connect with others, take some time out for reflection and explore your faith, we would love to see you there.

For more details, please email yvonne.rooney@derrydiocese.org or scan the QR code to join our group.

We look forward to welcoming you and embarking on this journey together.





Derry Diocese Young Adult Community (18-35)

"For where two or three are gathered together in my name,
there am I in the midst of them." Matthew 18:20

Meetups • Social Activities • Faith Events
Tuesdays* • 7.30pm • Claudy Pastoral Centre

 Derry Diocesan Youth

 DerryYouth



*Term time only - check our socials for updates

Scan to Join

Strabane Pastoral Area News...

Celebrating Mass in Clonleigh in honour of St Pio of Pietrelcina, Bishop Michael shared his message to...

Never lose hope in God's power to heal and renew



THE great devotion to St Pio of Pietrelcina in the Strabane Pastoral Area was celebrated with Mass in St Patrick's Church, Lifford, in the Parish of Clonleigh, on his Feast Day, September 23, when the main celebrant was the newly installed Bishop of Derry, Most Rev Michael Rouser.

Organised by the hard-working Pastoral Council for the conclusion of a Triduum of Prayer in honour of St Pio, young people from the various schools in the area were very involved in the liturgy of the Mass, which was attended by a large number of the faithful, particularly those who attend the monthly St Pio Prayers. Fr Declan Boland was also present as a concelebrant. Prior to the Mass

starting, the Rosary and St Pio Prayer were prayed.

Welcoming everyone, especially Bishop Michael, the parish priest of Leckpatrick, Camus & Clonleigh, Fr Michael McCaughey spoke of how they had journeyed together in the seminary at Maynooth, though Bishop Michael had been junior to him.

Inviting the school pupils to bring forward seven images to be received by Bishop Michael and placed at the front of the sanctuary, Fr Michael explained that they included images of the five chapels in the Strabane Pastoral Area, and images of the Sacred Heart and St Pio.

Delighted to be part of the celebration, Bishop Michael took

the opportunity to share a bit about himself, saying that his visit to Clonleigh was actually his first official event following the Mass of Installation at the weekend.

He went on to talk about how St Pio was well known around the world as Padre Pio, and was associated with healing: "There are so many miracles attributed to his intercession. During our Mass, each of us will pray for healing as all of us are in need of healing in some way, whether in body, mind or spirit."

Later, in his homily, reflecting on the Gospel image of Jesus sending out the Twelve "to proclaim the Kingdom of God and to heal", Bishop Michael remarked: "These two things belong together, proclaiming the Good News and bringing healing. Healing abounds where Christ is truly present. Padre Pio understood that very deeply. His own life was marked by suffering. He experienced prolonged ill health and carried the wounds of the stigmata for many years. He also experienced misunderstanding and suspicion. Yet, he did not allow those experiences to make him bitter. Instead, his suffering deepened his dependence upon God and his

compassion for others."

"Thousands came to him carrying wounds of every imaginable kind," he continued, "some were physically suffering. Others were troubled in mind, carrying guilt, regret or the burden of things that had happened years before. It is important for us to remember that we are not divided into separate compartments of body, mind and soul. We are one person. What affects the mind can also affect the body, what can affect the body can also affect the mind."

"When our mental health is struggling, we can feel physically exhausted, and when our bodies are weakened by illness, our confidence and emotional well-being can suffer. And when our spiritual life is neglected, when prayer disappears or when we lose our sense of God, that too can affect the whole person."

Christian faith reminds us that healing must always concern the whole person – body, mind and spirit. One of Padre Pio's greatest practical achievements, however, was the establishment of a hospital, the Home for the Relief of Suffering in San Giovanni. Religion and science and medicine were not competitors for him. They



Strabane Pastoral Area News...

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belonged together in the service of the whole human person."

Human relationships

Noting that Jesus displayed that same approach to healing throughout the Gospel, Bishop Michael recalled: "When the woman suffering from the haemorrhage reaches out to touch His cloak, Jesus does more than cure an illness. He stops to speak to her and, through that acknowledgement of her, He restores her dignity. Someone who had been isolated and marginalised is welcomed back into the warmth of human relationships."

"Healing, however, is not just for individual people alone," he pointed out, saying: "Whole communities can be wounded too. Families can experience difficult chapters in their lives and larger communities can pass through times of disappointment, sadness, confusion or hurt. Things happen that cannot simply be erased or pretended away."

"Christian hope does not ask us to pretend that the past never happened. Nor does forgiveness mean denying truth or avoiding responsibility. Instead, Christ invites us to believe that the past need not have the final word. Patiently rebuilding trust can help and listening to one another is essential. Above all, we must allow God to lead us forward and be part of it."

"The Church herself is called to be a listening, healing and servant community, and that means every one of us who is a part of the Church can become an instrument of healing. You do not have to be a doctor to heal someone. Kind words, forgiveness, encouragement and presence can heal another."

Highlighting that is why the parish community is so important, Bishop Michael continued: "As followers of Christ, we are not meant to be isolated individuals who happen to occupy the same church building on Sunday. St Paul refers to us as the Body of Christ, and at the heart of our

community life is the celebration of the Eucharist, the Mass. The source and summit of our Christian life.

"The Eucharist does not magically remove every difficulty we encounter, every physical or emotional pain that we feel, but it assures us that we do not carry those difficulties alone. As we celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, we encounter the Christ who took human suffering upon himself and transformed the Cross into the doorway to new life. After receiving Him in grace, we are sent out to bring His compassion to others."

"That, perhaps, is the message Padre Pio leaves us with at the conclusion of these days of prayer – never lose hope in God's power to heal and renew. Some of the wounds we carry heal quickly, others take years and some leave lasting scars. A scar, however, is not simply evidence of a wound. It is also evidence that healing has taken place."

"So, whatever wounds we carry tonight as individuals, as families or as a community," he said, "let us place them confidently into the hands of Christ. May Christ, the Divine Physician, heal what is wounded, reconcile what has been divided and lead us together, with renewed faith and hope, into the future He has prepared for us. May St Pius of Pietrelcina pray for us. Amen."

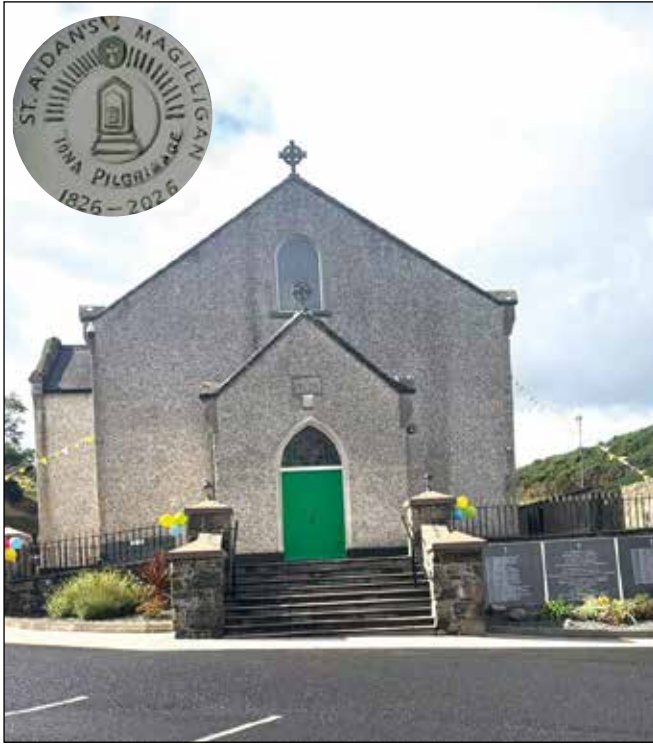
At the end of Mass, Fr Michael, a great devotee of St Pio himself, thanked everyone who had joined in the Triduum of Prayer, and extended a welcome to anyone interested in attending the monthly St Pio Mass, at 7pm on the first Wednesdays, in Immaculate Conception Church, Strabane, to pray for the intercession of St Pio.

The celebrations continued with refreshments afterwards, including a beautiful cake in honour of Bishop Michael. Making time to speak with all the well-wishers, he felt particularly honoured to meet the spritely Eileen McDevitt, who at 106-years-young walked forward with a gift for him as the new Bishop of Derry.



Magilligan Parish News...

Celebrating 200 years of St Aidan's



THE scenic Parish of Magilligan, in Co Derry, has celebrated 200 years of worship at St Aidan's (1826-2026), and two of its parishioners of different generations, Gerry Bond and young sacristan, Ryan Butcher, report on this important milestone for the community.

Writing about a series of events to commemorate the anniversary, Gerry recalled the publication in autumn 2025 of a special bicentenary calendar depicting important occasions in the life of the parish.

He added: "The calendar also introduced our Bicentenary prayer, composed by our priest-in-residence, Fr Francis O'Hagan and Mgr Bryan McCanny. The prayer has been used at the end of all Masses in St Aidan's throughout 2026, and reads – 'Lord, we thank You for Your faithfulness as we celebrate this 200th anniversary. You have been our foundation, guiding us through every season, every year with love and grace. May this milestone renew our passion for Your Word and strengthen our commitment to serve, so that this Church of St Aidan remains a beacon of hope and light for generations to come. amen.'"

Three large memorial plaques were unveiled on Cemetery Sunday at the end of June this year, to commemorate and honour all the priests known to have served in

the parish since 1607.

Commenting on it, Gerry said: "One plaque honours the five saints known to have had close association with the parish: St Patrick, founder of the first Church here in the 5th century; St Cadan, a guest master of St Patrick and patron saint of the Roman Catholic Church in Magilligan prior to the reformation - Cadan is still the Patron Saint of the Church of Ireland in Magilligan; St Columbcille, the great Church builder. As late as the 17th century, one of the, and possibly the most important, Christian Shrines in Ireland created and dedicated to Columbcille was here in Magilligan. Every June 9, the Feast of St Columbcille, hundreds of pilgrims came to take part in a ceremony very similar to the modern devotions at Lough Derg; St Aidan, the great Apostle of England - bones of St Aidan were carried by St Colman, from Lindisfarne, back to Ireland. St Aidan's remains are reputedly entombed in the grave beneath the gable of the ruined St Cadan's Church in Magilligan; St Redmond O'Gallagher +, Vice-Primate of Ireland - during penal times in the 16th century, disguised as a shepherd, he ministered to the people of Magilligan until he was caught and hacked to death near Killea in 1601."

Gerry also recalled that, in July this year, a Celtic cross, made from local rushes, was taken to Lindisfarne to be blessed first in the Abbey and then at the National Shrine to St Aidan in the Anglican Church of St Aidan in Bamburgh. The cross is now kept in a beautiful wooden case made by Pat Brown, a very skilled, local, wood-worker."

He continued: "On Wednesday, August 26, Fr Laurence Kettle OFM Cap. Guardian of the Franciscan Centre in Cork, arrived to begin a six-day Parish Mission to mark our Bicentenary. On Wednesday evening, the Mission opened with the Rosary, followed by the Mass of Padre Pio, at the end of which everyone received the blessing with a relic of St Pio."

"Early on Thursday morning, Fr Laurence and 11 pilgrims then set off from Ballycastle on a one-day pilgrimage to Iona. A five-hour boat trip lay ahead but spirits were high. As we left Ballycastle at 7am, Fair Head was a dark silhouette set against an intense flaming sunrise. The crossing was fairly calm and our boatman, Richard did an excellent job of maintaining a comfortable ride. Our arrival on Iona at midday was in brilliant sunshine. Not a cloud in sight."

"Following the Papal flag, the banners of Aidan (a deer symbol) and Columbcille (a dove), and the bicentenary Cross, the pilgrims walked to the Catholic House of Prayer, where Fr Laurence celebrated Mass and blessed our cross and a set of ceramic medallions, one for each of the pilgrims. The medallions were made by Gerry Mullan, Limavady potter and ceramics expert. Each one individually made and inscribed on the reverse with the name of the recipient."

"After Mass, there was an excellent lunch at the harbour-side restaurant and then a little free time to visit the Abbey. Our arrival back in Ballycastle mirrored the morning departure, with an intense scarlet/orange sunset... the perfect ending to a memorable day."

Fr Laurence visited the sick and housebound in the Parish on the Friday, and on Saturday evening, Mass was celebrated for the intentions of all who had helped, throughout the year, with the

running of the parish. The singing at this Mass was by Liam and Jeanette Kelly.

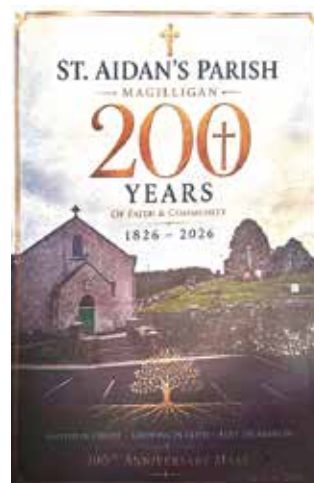
"On Sunday, there was a very special Mass for our children, their godparents and sponsors," recalled Gerry, "with Readings, Prayers and the Offertory gifts all carried out by our children. Three young Irish dancers led the Offertory procession, and music and singing were by the recently formed children's choir."

He added: "Then, on the Feast of St Aidan, Monday, August 31, a very special Mass was celebrated. Fr O'Hagan, accompanied by Fr Laurence, led the congregation in what was to be a fitting climax to the Parish Mission and celebration of 200 years of St Aidan's Church. As the altar group, led by the bicentennial cross and the banners of Columbcille and Aidan first paused to pay homage to our past priests and saints, the pipes and drums of St Mary's, Limavady, joined in with their own tribute. A single piper led the procession into the church as the adult choir sang 'Faith of Our Fathers'."

"It was a truly memorable Parish Mission and Bicentenary celebration. At the refreshments in the Church Hall, there was another little surprise. This time for Fr O'Hagan, to mark his 30 years' service in Magilligan - the longest of any priest in the last 420 years. Our sacristan, Ryan, presented Father with a beautifully iced cake."

Parish community

For Ryan too, Monday, August 31, will "forever hold a special place in the history of St Aidan's Parish,



Magilligan Parish News...



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as the parish community came together to celebrate 200 years of faith, prayer, sacrifice and service".

He wrote: "For two centuries, St Aidan's has stood as a place where generations of people have gathered to celebrate the great moments of life - baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, weddings and funerals - and, above all, to come together in prayer and worship.

"From the earliest days of the Parish in 1826, countless men, women and children have passed through the doors of St Aidan's. They came with hopes, worries, joys and sorrows, but they all shared something in common: their faith and their love for their parish community. Over these 200 years, the world around Magilligan has changed beyond recognition. Generations have come and gone, families have grown, and society has transformed, yet the heart of St Aidan's has remained the same. It is a place where faith has been handed down from parent to child, from grandparent to grandchild, and from one generation to the next."

"The bicentenary celebration on August 31, 2026 was, therefore, much more than a celebration of a building or a date in history," he added, "it was a celebration of the people who made St Aidan's what it is today.

"We remembered those who built, served and cared for this parish throughout the generations. We remembered our priests, sacristans, altar servers, catechists, musicians, volunteers and parishioners - those whose names are remembered and those whose quiet acts of service may never have been recorded.

"We also remembered, with gratitude, those who have gone before us and now rest with God. Their faith, their prayers and their example form part of the story we continue to write today. As we celebrated 200 years, we were reminded that we are not simply

looking back at history - we are part of it.

"Today, a new generation is taking its place within St Aidan's. Young people serve at the altar, families gather for Mass, parishioners volunteer, and the faith continues to be lived and shared. The story of St Aidan's is, therefore, not finished; 1826 was only the beginning. Two hundred years later, the same faith continues to bring people together, the same prayers continue to rise to Heaven, and the same hope in Christ continues to shine within our parish.

"May the next chapter of St Aidan's be filled with the same courage, faith and dedication shown by those who came before us. May we cherish the heritage entrusted to us, protect it, and pass it faithfully to those who will come after us. And may St Aidan continue to watch over our parish, our families and our community for generations to come."

Adding his own comment about the celebrations, Fr Frank O'Hagan, priest-in-residence at Magilligan, said: "Thank the Lord for 200 years of Christian faith in Magilligan, and we pray that it will remain for another 200, or even 2,000 years, as the people of St Aidan's Parish have a long record of practising their Catholic faith."

The 78-year-old had a wonderful summer of celebration, with the 53rd anniversary of his Ordination to Priesthood in June, his birthday in August, and his 30th year in the parish was marked during the 200th celebrations.

He remarked: "I am happy to be doing what I am doing in this beautiful, country parish."



Parish Pet Blessings

Holy Family



Kilrea



Long Tower



Ardstraw East Parish News...

Celebrating new chapter of Christian life and mission in Glenock



It was a wet, autumnal afternoon as people gathered for the Mass of re-opening and blessing of the quaint, rural Church of St Eugene at Glenock, on the outskirts of Newtown Stewart, on Sunday, September 27. But, as the three o'clock start hour drew closer the sun emerged, sending shafts of light through the sanctuary windows that had been discovered during the restoration works.

The dedicated members of Friends of Glenock, who were the drivers behind this precious project to restore the 240-year-old place of worship, were the first to arrive to warmly welcome current and former parishioners, and priests who had a special connection with St Eugene's over the years.

Papal bunting decorated the grounds for the occasion, which had amongst its concelebrants and distinguished guests, Most Rev Michael Router, who had just completed his first week as the new Bishop of Derry, Most Rev Donal McKeown, Emeritus Bishop of Derry, who had given the restoration works his blessing, and Archbishop Seamus Horgan, Titular Bishop of Ardstraw and Apostolic Nuncio to South Sudan, who hails from Ennis, Co Clare, in the Diocese of Killaloe.

Arriving up to 90 minutes before the start of Mass, some people took the opportunity to view the fabulous restoration works carried out in the T-shaped Church, with its marble altar, complete with rails, and three galleries. Some reminisced about the Saturday night tradition in their childhood homes of the shoes being polished and set out, along with the Sunday suit in readiness for the morning Mass. And there were those who

remembered which pew had been the one favoured by their family to sit in, and delighted in kneeling there together once again. The ringing of the church bell to welcome all to Mass was another emotional reminder of days gone by for one lady, with it not having rung for years.

The Rosary was prayed prior to the beginning of Mass, after Fr Roland spoke briefly about the significance of the occasion, noting that "if history had been kinder", Bishop Router would have been installed in "the Cathedral of Ardstraw". He explained that the parish of Ardstraw had been the original See of what is today, Derry Diocese, as it was here that St Eugene had founded his monastery in the sixth century."

It was also explained in the Mass leaflet that the reason the Cathedral in Derry has the patronage of St Eugene is that his monastic foundation is the genesis of the Diocese of Derry. When the Synod of Rath Breasail designated the dioceses of Ireland in 1111AD, this was named the Diocese of Ardstraw. Within four decades, the See moved to Rathlury, Maghera, around 1150AD, and a century later settled in Derry-Colmille (1254AD). With its spiritual roots in monastic Ardstraw, the newly named diocese of Derry gained St Eugene as its patron.

Bishop Router was the main celebrant of the Mass, with Parish Priest, Fr Brian Donnelly, and his curates, Fr Roland Colhoun and Fr James Devine, joining him and the other bishops in the sanctuary. Also present were Fr Peter McCawille, SMA, Fr Declan Boland, Fr Paddy Doherty, Fr Paul Fraser, Fr Michael McCaughey,

Fr Kevin McElhennon, Fr Patsy Arkinson, and the recently ordained, Fr Stephen Baxter.

Reflecting on how different the first church opened on the site in 1785, with its simple, rectangular structure, clay floor and thatched roof, was to what it is today, Bishop Michael noted how each generation had left its mark over the years since: "The church was enlarged in 1823, a belfry was built in 1834 and the galleries and interior were remodelled in 1861, when the church was solemnly dedicated to St Eugene of Ardstraw. Later generations installed the Stations of the Cross, built the tower and spire, provided the marble altar, renewed the sanctuary and baptistery and replaced the windows. And then, in 2025, this latest major renovation began, bringing us to today's joyful gathering and reopening."

"The important thing for us to contemplate today," he said, "is that the community who built this church originally in 1785 did not build this place simply so we could admire it in 2026. They built it so that people could meet Jesus Christ here in this place in the Eucharist, the proclamation of the Word and in each other."

Renew and revitalise

Finding the message of the readings for the day, including that of the parable of the two sons' response to their father's request to go and work in the vineyard, a fitting and challenging one for the re-opening of a church, Bishop Michael said: "We have renewed and revitalised the building, but the greater question is whether we are willing to allow God to renew and revitalise us personally."

"It would be very sad and unfortunate if St Eugene's were beautifully restored as a building but gradually became only a monument to the faith of previous generations. Our churches must never become museums – places that gather dust. They must remain living places where people discover Christ, sinners encounter God's mercy, families gather around the altar, the broken-hearted find consolation and the dead are commended into God's hands."

"This church," he noted, "has been all of those things for generations because of the priests, religious and people who have served here. The heritage record contains a remarkable roll-call of priests stretching back to Fr Charles McBride and Fr Patrick Higgins in 1785, as well as priests and religious who went out from this parish to serve the Church elsewhere. Today, we remember all of them with gratitude, together with the generations of ordinary parishioners whose names may never appear on a plaque but whose faith built the Church in the truest sense."

Delighted at Archbishop Séamus Horgan's presence, with his particular ecclesial connection with Ardstraw, Bishop Michael remarked: "That should remind us that the Church is always both local and universal. From this small corner of Tyrone, we are today, through Archbishop Séamus, united with Catholics in South Sudan and many places throughout the world. The Eucharist celebrated on this altar today is the same Eucharist celebrated around the world in every language and culture."

"So, today is rightly a day of thanksgiving. We thank everyone who has made this restoration possible, those who planned, organised, fundraised, designed, painted and contributed financially. St Paul, however, gives us another important challenge in the second reading when he says, 'In your minds you must be the same as Christ Jesus.' He asks us to be united in love, looking not only to our own interests but to the interests of others. Ultimately, that is the type of Church we must now build, not just within but also outside these sacred walls."

"May St Eugene's remain a place where God is worshipped and Christ encountered, and where every generation learns again to say 'yes' when the Father calls us into His vineyard."

Today, we bless and reopen a building whose story began in 1785. But, please God, we are not celebrating the end of a restoration project. We are celebrating the

beginning of another chapter of Christian life and mission in Glenock. A new story of restoration and regeneration that takes place not just in bricks and mortar but in our hearts and minds. May St Eugene of Ardstraw pray for us, and may God bless this church and all who walk through its doors for many generations to come."

Speaking at the end of Mass to thank all involved in the restoration project, Fr Brian Donnelly said: "This day was in the making for at least eight years, when we discovered mortar falling from the tower and came together as a committee to see what we could do. It was important to look after this gift to us, not only in gratitude for the past but also to build for the future."

Remarking that the parish had so many gifted people, Fr Brian added: "I couldn't speak highly enough of the committee

members. We met every week for eight years, even during Covid, that is how committed we were."

Fr Brian then named each member and the important contribution that they had made, and expressed gratitude to the benefactors for their important contributions, to Bishop Donal for believing in them and the Diocesan Buildings Committee for its support, and all within the community who shared their skills, and the funders.

The ceremony came to a close with the lighting of the Sanctuary lamp by the foreman, Kevin Cartin, and the magnificent sound of the choir leading the recessional hymn, 'Be Thou My Vision', as the priests and bishops processed down the aisle.

All were invited afterwards for refreshments and concert in St Eugene's Hall in the town.



Ardstraw East Parish News...

Newtownstewart reopens Glenock Church by Fr Roland Colhoun

REOPENING a church is a milestone event. Glenock has had more reopenings than any church I know because she has had extensions, renovations, inundations and recreations down the years. This is our fourth time to reopen this church in 10 years. Please God, it will be the last time for a very long time, that we have to close its hallowed doors.

Like every parish, the community loves its church. Still, I suggest that there is a particular affection for Glenock, one that surpasses the bond with most churches. She has 241 years of stories to tell. In 1785, she was a blessed refuge for a very grateful community, relieved to get indoors to worship, in the closing era of Penal Law. In 1834, with her newly built tower, she was the first church in Derry Diocese to ring a bell after Catholic Emancipation (1829).

She saw major upgrades in 1823, 1834, 1861, 1904, 1949, 1960, 1977, 2003, 2016 and 2021. Each of those renovations and restorations left the community temporarily bereft of its house of worship. The Town Hall and the Parish Hall came to the rescue each time and, since the Jubilee year 2000, the new Oratory on Main Street capably filled the spiritual vacancy.

Etched

All the same, the multiple closures of Glenock are etched in the minds of this community. "Absence makes the heart grow fonder," the adage declares. And it is true for Glenock. The parishioners always long to see this church open again, to know that she is here for them, like a beloved grandmother, with whom you need no appointment

to visit.

Therefore, beloved Glenock has opened her three doors again and waits for her children to genuflect frequently to her tabernacle, to climb to the three galleries and to receive the Eucharist at her altar rails. We must make sure to fill these pews every Sunday, so that we do not disappoint her Lord and Master, who declares, "I stand at the door and knock" (Revelation 3:20).

St Augustine said that while people gather in a physical house of prayer, the believers themselves are the true living house of God (St Augustine, Sermon 336: 'On the Dedication of a Church'). Therefore, we rise to the occasion every time duty calls. We raise our hands in prayer and bend our knees in reverence.

Inheritance

St Eugene, patron of this parish, taught our ancestors conformity to Christ, meekness of character and obedience to Christ, and we will be faithful to this blessed inheritance. Let us pass on the Faith in a powerful way to the coming generations and teach them to love the Church.

May the spire of Glenock beckon the passerby. May the oak crucifix above the tabernacle draw our minds to the Lord's sacrifice on Calvary, and prompt us to be faithful to the sacrifice of the Mass on the Lord's Day. In this way, St Eugene's mission will continue and the church that bears his name will be a sanctuary of faith for our descendants. May this day of reopening and blessing bear fruit every day until the end of time.



Cumber Upper & Learmount Parish News...

Claudy & Craigbane celebrate retiring parish priest's extraordinary ability to give and serve

SO great was the number of people wanting to be part of the Cumber Upper & Learmount Parish celebration of Fr David O'Kane's time of ministry amongst them, as he prepares to retire, that two separate occasions were held... one in St Patrick's Claudy and the other in St Joseph's Craigbane.

Both began with crowded churches for the celebration of Mass, which were attended by members of Fr David's family, as well as current and former parishioners from other areas where he had served.

The first celebration of Fr David's faith, service, and dedication was held in Claudy, where parishioner, Rosemary O'Connor paid a touching tribute to him on behalf of the people he had ministered to since being appointed parish priest there in August 2009, by Bishop Francis Lagan.

"During this time," Rosemary recalled, "we were privileged to celebrate some significant milestones with you, most notably, the occasion of your 40 years ordination to the Priesthood in June 2025."

She continued: "When someone retires from a post after long service, like you Fr O'Kane, there should be a feeling of fulfilment as you reflect on your life of service, especially when it has been a life of service to your parishioners and to the Church. You should be justly proud to look back on your vocation that had, at its heart, an extraordinary ability to give and to

serve others.

"When most people think about their job, it is all too often in terms of 'what can I get'. But for you, Fr David, it was always a question of 'what can I give?' Everything you turned your hand to in the parish was done with meticulous care. You extended to everyone whom you came into contact with dignity, respect, encouragement – and you did this with great humility, compassion, kindness and pastoral love.

"You also brought energy and enthusiasm to some of the bigger projects undertaken in your time with us. You have left us a lasting legacy in the completion of the restoration of the Old Parish Church; now re-purposed as a Pastoral Centre which opened in April 2015. It is very fitting, therefore, that we will gather there shortly to celebrate your retirement with you and your family."

"I think it would be remiss," remarked Rosemary, "to let you leave us without taking this opportunity to highlight in particular, Fr O'Kane, the great pastoral love and encouragement that you have always extended to the youth in our parish. In the words of the Romero prayer – 'You have planted seeds that one day will grow. You have watered seeds already planted, knowing that they hold future promise'. You have also faithfully attended our elderly, sick, infirm and housebound with deep devotion, compassion and care.

"Our lives have been enriched

by your presence. We have been abundantly blessed that you were appointed to shepherd us for the last 17 years. We will hold you within our hearts in the days and years ahead. Without a doubt, we will miss you deeply. We hope, as you prepare to take your leave from us to head 'over the mountain', that you won't be a stranger and that you will come back to visit us as often as you can.

Milestone

"Whilst we are very sad to see you go, we do also recognise that retirement is a happy occasion and a significant milestone to be celebrated. We take comfort knowing that you leave us in good health, and that you will now be able to enjoy spending precious time with your family and friends. We wish you a very well-deserved rest from your tireless labours over the years."

In a further act of appreciation, presentations were made to Fr David on behalf of the parishioners, which included a watch and the proceeds from a retirement collection that was generously contributed to. Afterwards, the celebrations continued with refreshments, including anniversary cake, in the nearby Pastoral Centre.

The following Sunday, Fr David's family gathered for a second time to join him and the people of Craigbane, and well-wishers from further afield. The celebration started with Mass in St Joseph's

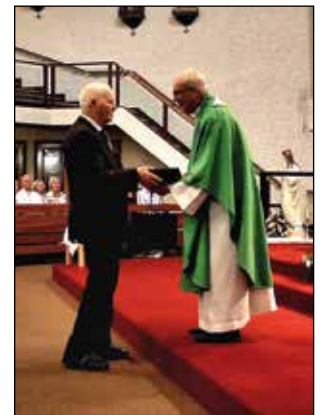
Church, when the homilist was concelebrant, Fr Peter Madden, the parish priest of Fr David's home parish of Ballinascreen.

More than happy to welcome Fr David back home, Fr Peter expressed his appreciation of the Derrynoid man's offer of assistance during his retirement years, adding: "With six churches in Ballinascreen and Desertmartin, and six primary schools and a High School, I hope he doesn't come to regret the offer."

He went on to say: "Certainly, I know that Fr David's arrival back to Draperstown is eagerly anticipated by its parishioners. But I will, nonetheless, be making it clear to them they can't be taking advantage of him. Because unlike a parochial house, which is for us a place of work, home is home... And as all of you who are retired know, not having to work full-time usually comes at a time when you are ready for it. There's a reason for retirement. I'm not giving away any secrets when I say that having reached the retirement age for priests to retire, Fr David more than deserves the rest that is his due."

Recalling the first time he had heard of him, Fr Peter said: "My sister was a pupil in Mount Carmel Grammar School in Strabane, and all she and her friends talked about was their teacher, Mr O' Kane, with the long hair. I'm not sure it was that long, but it was longer than your average short, back and sides.

"I next encountered David after



Claudy



Cumber Upper & Learmount Parish News...

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his ordination in 1985, when his first summer appointment was to Holy Family Parish, Ballymagroarty, in Derry, and I was the curate there. David covered our holidays when I was off for the month of July and Fr Kieran O'Doherty, the administrator, was away in August.”

“Over 40 years later,” he continued, “I am looking forward to working with him again, though as I already mentioned, we will make sure not to take him for granted. That would be the easy way ahead. And we have been on that road and it’s not sustainable. Priests taking responsibility for multiple parishes and churches, and priests who are supposed to be retired doing more than is reasonably expected at their age.”

“But, as Bishop Michael Router, our new bishop, reminded us at our first meeting with him a couple of weeks ago, and I am paraphrasing now, it is time for us as a church, as a diocese, as a parish, to take the road less travelled. We must make the development of lay ministry in the Diocese of Derry, and the restructuring of our diocese, a priority to reflect the reality of fewer priests.

Exciting time

“In many ways, though it is a time of challenge that we are heading into, it is an exciting time too. For we are all, priests and people, learning together to walk this road of what is called Synodality.”

Fr Peter went on to explain: “Synodality isn’t a buzz word;

it is the great legacy of Pope Francis and the fulfilment of the Second Vatican Council, which is essentially, a parish - people and priests - walking together, listening deeply, and discerning the will of the Holy Spirit as a community.”

“This will be new for us for a long time. But as the number of priests fall and we no longer will have a priest resident in every parish, then the responsibility to tell others about Jesus and to show them the beauty of the sacraments of our church belongs to the baptised who are not ordained, but who share in the priesthood of Christ through their baptism.”

“We need our priests,” he added, “and we pray for more vocations to the priesthood for our Diocese of Derry, but some of the most active Catholic communities in the world are in places where the laity are entirely responsible for the parish and the priests visit them to celebrate the sacraments.”

“Fr David, in his mission work in Belize, would have had experienced this himself; would have seen how outlying communities with no resident priest would have an appreciation of the sacraments of the church that many parishes in our western world don’t, our own included.”

“It’s no coincidence, I think, that both Pope Francis and Pope Leo are two pontiffs who have had personal experience of this way of being a church in Latin America. It is the direction the Holy Spirit is leading the Church and I look forward to walking this road with

Fr David, when he finally gets to move back home.

“On your behalf, I thank him for his service as a priest in all the parishes that he served, at home in the diocese and in Central America. Over the years that he has been your parish priest, you have been greatly enriched and blessed by his ministry, just as they were elsewhere. But he brought to you all of the life experiences that made him the good priest. Keep him in your prayers, for I know he will always have a place for you in his.”

After Mass, a salad tea and concert with Andrea Begley was enjoyed in the parish hall, where presentations were made to Fr David, including a beautiful painting of him celebrating Mass on the altar of St Joseph’s.

Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council, Clement Lynch welcomed all gathered to celebrate “a very special person who has been an important part of our parish for the last 17 years.”

He added: “His ministry and care have been exceptional, with a great willingness to listen to our views. He went out of his way to always be there for us at such times as weddings, christenings, and funerals, and visiting the sick and the elderly.”

Clement also highlighted the various parish developments and projects, thanking Fr David for his “guidance, energy, dedication and commitment” to the parish. He concluded: “You have made a lasting contribution to our parish and you will be sadly missed.”

Moved by the celebrations in his honour, Fr David thanked the parishioners for their support over the years, saying: “I don’t know how I will cope with retirement and leaving, but it will be a few days away yet, so I will probably just slip away.”

Expressing appreciation to Clement and the rest of the Craigbane Hall Committee, who had organised the celebration, Fr David commended them for their “tireless work” and went on to present them with a meal voucher.

Fr David’s younger brother, Lawrence, also spoke a few words, as he did at the Claudy event, to express the family’s appreciation for the celebrations and for the kindness they had shown to their brother over the last 17 years.

“Our community is very like yours,” he remarked, “and David always felt welcome here and always looked on it as home from home. You should be very proud of yourselves for the way you have looked after your parish priest.”



Cumber Upper & Learmount Parish News...

From police knocking on his door two days after ordination to zipping around in a jeep on mission in Belize...

Fr David O'Kane looks forward to retirement after four fulfilling decades of priesthood



LOOKING forward to retirement, the Parish Priest of Cumber Upper & Learmount, Fr David O'Kane reflects on his priesthood and the very different church today from the one he was ordained to serve over 40 years ago, highlighting the need to free up priests to focus on the ministry they were ordained for.

Ordained in June 1985, the 75-year-old has greatly enjoyed ministering as a priest in a mix of settings, from busy city parishes to tight-knit rural communities, as well as a life-changing five-year missionary experience in Central America.

The faith journey that led the Ballinascreen native into the seminary began in the Derrynoid home of Dan and Ellen O'Kane, where he grew up with four brothers and five sisters. And it was nourished further during his school years, particularly as a pupil in St Patrick's Maghera, when he was greatly influenced by the vice-principal at the time, Fr Kevin McKenna, and Fr Oliver Crilly, who was on the teaching staff.

"We were a very traditional sixties Catholic family. In those days, everyone was going to Mass," remarked Fr David, adding: "The first notion of priesthood came to me at school. While I had thought about it from time-to-time in my younger years, I never really considered it until I was doing my A'levels."

"I went to Maynooth in 1970 and studied for five years before leaving, as I didn't feel ready for it. I wanted to see if I was able to cope with life outside of the seminary. I left in January 1975 and went back home. Then, I got a 'phone call from the Sisters of Mercy Convent School in Strabane to say that the nun who taught French was going to the Missions and they needed a temporary teacher for six months. I had done a degree in French, so I took the job. They ended up keeping me on and I taught there for two-and-a-half years."

"After that, I moved back home in 1977 and got a teaching post in St Pius X, Magherafelt, and I was there for four years. Then I applied to the Diocese to go back to the

seminary in 1981, and Bishop Daly sent me to St Kieran's, in Kilkenny."

Commenting on this time of discernment in between, when he was teaching, Fr David said: "I had been thinking about the priesthood over those years and finally decided that I would have a go at it. The questions that I had were answered. I always kept clerical company during the time that I was out of the seminary, so, while I had physically left it, I suppose mentally I hadn't."

He added: "My family were very supportive and never questioned why I had left the seminary, nor did they say anything when I went back. They just wanted me to be content, and they have been very supportive ever since."

Sadly, Fr David's mother had died in 1967, when she was 48 years old and him just a 16-year-old, and his father had died the year before he was ordained to the priesthood, though had seen him ordained to the diaconate in 1984.

Arrested

Ordained in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown, in June 1985, by Bishop Edward Daly, Fr David's first days as a priest almost saw him arrested!

Recalling a somewhat comical episode, Fr David said: "My first Mass was celebrated in St Eugene's Church, Moneyneena, and the local AOH Band said that they would walk me up to the Chapel. It was about a mile walk. They banged the drums and everybody was very happy, but two days later the police arrived at the door to say that I had broken the law. They had got in touch with the band leader as well, to say that it had been an illegal march. I just said to them to do whatever they wanted to do, but I never heard any more about it."

Commenting on his first appointment to the Glendermott Parish, in the Waterside, where Fr James Clerkin was parish priest, he said: "I lived in the Top of the Hill Parochial House, on Trench Road, for a couple of years. It was a relatively new church, with two priests."

"Then I lived at Chapel Road Parochial House and, while there, I was hospital chaplain for three years, from 1991-93, which was tough. There were a lot of difficult experiences, and you could be called out in the middle of the night, but it was good learning for my ministry and I had my brother priests to talk to. I depended on them to help out, filling in as chaplain. We had a good team. But the hospital then was about half the size it is now, so it would be no comparison with hospital

chaplaincy today."

He continued: "In 1993, I was appointed to Burt; the year that Derry won the All-Ireland. The parish area included Inch and Fahan, and the parish priest was Fr Larry O'Brien. I was a curate there for four years. It was a lovely area, with a small, tight community. It was a bit of a change from the Waterside Parish and had a lot of tourists because of Grianán of Aileach."

"Then I was appointed to Dregish, in the Castlederg Parish, where Fr Jim McGonagle was the parish priest. I was only there a year before volunteering for the missions. I went to Belize in 1999 for five years, which was a great learning experience and I still have some contact with people there."

"You are a totally different priest there than at home: you don't wear a collar; you wear t-shirts; and drive about in pick-ups. There is more poverty, and while you might not receive much financially, you receive a lot of graces and help and support. I found the people very humble and appreciative."

"The culture, food and climate were totally different, and there were fewer Catholics. I found the climate sore on me and the food was hard work too. I came home for a month's holiday every summer during my time there, and was about nine stone when I came back."

Returning in September 2003 in time for the clerical changes, Fr David was appointed to St Eugene's Cathedral, where he ministered as curate for six years.

"Again, it was a very different experience," he said, adding: "There was good, strong faith in the community around the Cathedral, and it was very busy, with people calling and funerals. Fr Michael Canny was the Administrator. He had been a curate with me in the Waterside previously, so it was good to have already worked with him. Fr Daniel McFaul, Fr Gerard Mongan and Fr Colm O'Doherty were curates at the Cathedral while I was there."

Cursillo

During his time in the Waterside, Fr David had got involved with Cursillo and did his weekend about two years after he was ordained. Then, when he was based at the Cathedral, he was asked along on Cursillo's annual Walk to Knock to celebrate Mass and hear Confessions.

He recalled: "I was involved in giving talks during a lot of Cursillo weekends, but I stopped this when I was appointed to Claudy as parish

priest, though I still went along on the Walk to Knock for a while."

"Cursillo gives people that sense of belonging. It is the community aspect that keeps it going. It is for everyone and is a very good way for people to get back into the Church."

Happy with his 2009 appointment as parish priest to Cumber Upper & Learmount (Claudy and Craigbane), where he celebrated his 25th anniversary of priesthood the following year, Fr David remarked: "Being a rural parish, there is not the same pressure as in a city or big town. It would be considered a good enough appointment and I have enjoyed my time here. By the time it came to celebrating my 40th anniversary, we had a really good parish community experience and I felt a good sense of belonging."

Reflecting on his ministry in Claudy and Craigbane during the 17 years there, he said: "We set up the Parish Pastoral Council, as well as weekly Eucharistic Adoration in both churches and the HOPE Camp, and we did some works on the churches and graveyards."

"I have enjoyed working with the schools too for sacramental preparation, which were all good community occasions. However, Covid was a terrible time with the lockdown. I felt very isolated. It was very difficult for everybody. Ministry stopped. No visiting the sick, restricted numbers for funerals, and nobody at Mass. This time changed a lot for the Church, as people started to go online. Thankfully, our numbers are back to a very good level now and, for the times we are in, we have lots of young people still going to Church."

Fr David went on to note: "We also introduced a parish faith co-ordinator in a shared contract with the neighbouring Banagher Parish, which has been a great help. We need lay involvement in spreading the Gospel. We need people interested in their faith who can stimulate young people in the faith, because that is a contact that we do not have as priests. It is the way that the Church has to go. We will have to adjust and get more faith formators and other lay people involved."

"I think it would have been better not to have been bogged down by finances and other administrative responsibilities that exhaust you, on top of doing what you were ordained to do in ministering to people. That is one of the things that I didn't like as a priest. I felt more calling to the priesthood than the other business work that has to be done."

While he has felt the priesthood



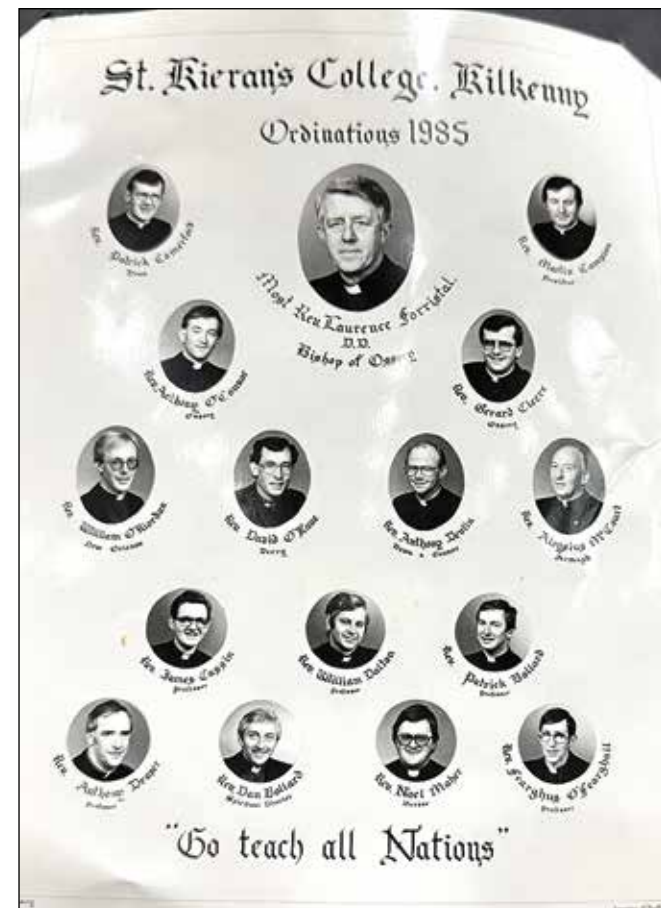
to be a worthwhile and fulfilling vocation, Fr David said that he is looking forward to retirement: "I am the age to retire and in good health, and I always wanted to end up my days back in Ballinascreen. I am leaving a Church that is very different to what I was ordained into. It needs a lot of energy and I don't think that I have it."

"I also think that leadership should be younger. In the past, we had plenty of priests and you didn't get promoted to parish priest until about 60, which wasn't good. It is

different now, where we have the situation of fellows having to stay on."

He added: "I hope to spend retirement helping out as much as I can, but I am looking forward to spending more time with family here and in Australia."

"The Net" wishes Fr David a long and happy retirement, and is greatly appreciative of the encouragement and advice that he gave in its later planning stages, sharing his copies of the Belize News, which he still receives to keep him posted on life there.



The Power of Gathering book launch

by Anne Marie Hickey

Photographs by Stephen Latimer

ST Mary's College, in Derry, was the venue for the launch of 'The Power of Gathering', a new book by Fr Paul Farren, exploring the importance of coming together as a community of faith and the central place of the celebration of Mass in our lives.

Launched by Bishop Michael Router, Bishop of Derry, the book invites readers to reflect on the true meaning of gathering for the Eucharist, and the wonderful gift of belonging to a community united in faith, prayer and worship.

Through his reflections, Fr Paul encourages readers to rediscover the beauty, richness and significance of the Eucharist,

and to appreciate the power of gathering as God's people around the table of the Lord.

'The Power of Gathering' is a book for everyone, whether actively involved in parish life, seeking to deepen their faith, or simply wishing to reflect on the importance of community, belonging and gathering together.

Copies of the book are available to purchase for £10 from the Parish Office at St Eugene's Cathedral.

The book would make a thoughtful gift and a valuable resource for individuals, families, parish groups, and anyone wishing to deepen their relationship with Christ through the celebration of the Eucharist.



Granaghan sacristan retires from labour of love

THE sacristan of St John The Baptist Church in the Granaghan Parish, Swatragh, Maisie Stewart, has retired after a very enjoyable 11 years working in the presence of The Lord.

Blessed with a strong faith from childhood and happy to be involved in parish life, it was an easy decision for Maisie when she was asked if she would take on the role of sacristan, and she served happily alongside Fr Kieran O'Doherty, as parish priest, and then Fr Charlie Keaney.

"I did it because I love the Church," the 79-year-old told 'The Net', "and I loved doing the job, but just felt that it was time to retire. I was up every morning at 6.30am and at the church for 8am. I was always used to working from I was 15 years old. I worked in the factory for a while and then in School Meals for over 20 years.

"I have a very strong faith and was brought up kneeling to pray the Rosary with my family. We weren't very rich, but we had our values in life and that is all we needed. Prayer has brought me through many a tough time."

Before she became sacristan, Maisie was already very involved in parish life, helping to collect

the parish savings and draw money, serving as a Eucharistic Minister, looking after Eucharistic Adoration and cleaning the church.

She recalled: "As Eucharistic Minister, I went around the sick every Sunday with the Eucharist, and I went to the nursing home in Upperlands too. Then, when weekly Eucharistic Adoration was set up in the parish, Fr Kieran asked me to be in charge of it and that experience was absolutely fantastic. I loved that it was so peaceful. I set up the altar for Adoration after the Monday morning Mass and reposed the Blessed Sacrament when it ended at 7.30pm.

"I loved being in the presence of Jesus. Even when I was cleaning the floors of the chapel, I prayed to Jesus and talked to Him. I knew that He was there with me, and I could just talk and pray to Him. So, I was very happy to accept when I was asked to be sacristan.

"I was under no pressure with the job. The times that I was on my own in the chapel gave me a great sense of peace and, with me being retired, I had all the time in the world and could stay there as long as I wanted to each day."



At a presentation to mark the retirement of Maisie Stewart as sacristan in St John The Baptist Church, Granaghan, are, l-r, Fr Chris McDermott, Adm Granaghan, Clare Mulholland, Minister of the Word, Olive Kearney, parish safeguarding representative, Damien Stewart, Maisie's son, Maisie, Jane and Seamus Lagan, parishioners, and Kevin Cassidy, Granaghan Pastoral Council.

"My faith is very important to me," added Maisie, who has done the Lough Derg pilgrimage 30 times and firmly believes that she has experienced six miracles in her life so far.

Now, that she is retired from her sacristan duties, Maisie is looking forward to having more time to do

other things. Taking each day as it comes, she enjoys starting out by attending Mass. And, on the days when she awakes and doesn't feel up to going out to Mass, she loves that she can still take part by going online and virtually visiting many beautiful churches near and far.

Greenlough schools come together for Mass to bless new school year



Pupils from St Conor's College and St Mary's Primary School, Clady, along with Mr Martin Meehan, Principal, St Mary's, Mrs Maresa Collins, Principal, St Conor's, Mrs Gráinne McCallion, Head of RE, St Conor's, and Fr Pat O'Hagan, Greenlough Parish Administrator and Chaplain to both schools. Photographed on September 22, after Mass in St Oliver Plunkett Church to mark the beginning of the new school year, the group is standing at the newly constructed Grotto that Bishop Dónal McKeown blessed on August 15.

Three Patrons' ladies enjoy time of friendship and floral designing



Ladies from the churches within the Three Patrons Parish have enjoyed an afternoon of friendship and floral designing with florist, John Paul. The workshop gave them an opportunity to share their gifts and creativity, in learning new ways to display flowers in church for the enjoyment of parishioners.

Set up a decade ago in response to the ever-growing use of drugs...

Cathedral's Matt Talbot Prayer Society thankful for freedoms from addiction

THE power of prayer and the importance of the Mass and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was central to the 'sober life' of the Venerable Matt Talbot. Matt Talbot replaced the time and his overwhelming desire for alcohol with prayer and a life dedicated to God.

About 10 years ago, the Matt Talbot Prayer Society began in St Eugene's Cathedral. This prayer initiative began as a response to the worryingly widespread use of drugs in the city and beyond. Too many people were dying because of drugs.

One of those involved in setting up the prayer society is Brian McCormick, who spoke about the vast number of people who have become enrolled in the prayer society for daily prayers. There is no doubt that the intercession of Matt Talbot is bringing freedom.

With interest being shown in the prayer society both nationally and internationally, Brian recalled how it all began: "It was harrowing to hear about how drugs were literally destroying so many lives and families in our society. We knew that we had to do something to try to loosen the grip they have. We looked at what we could do to help locally, but when we considered the services already available, we found that we didn't have the skills set needed.

"However, we realised that there was something we could do – something vital and necessary – that was pray. We could pray every day for people suffering from

addiction; we could pray for their freedom. We set up a process where people contact us and are enrolled in the Prayer Society for daily prayer for their freedom. We have all these people prayed for every day by various individuals. We also have the Carmelite Order in Knock praying for them continuously. The names of those to be prayed for increases every month, but we are confident that miracles have and will happen."

Mass is also offered in St Eugene's Cathedral on the first Monday of each month, at 7.30pm, for those struggling with addictions, including alcohol, drugs, pornography, gambling, eating and smoking, and for their families and all those affected by addiction.

"One of the reasons we called the prayer society, the Matt Talbot Prayer Society," remarked Brian, "was because we became aware that the Irish Bishops had decided that Matt Talbot, a man freed from an addiction to alcohol through prayer, would be the intercessor for Ireland for those suffering from addiction."

Explaining that the monthly Mass included a short homily based on addiction and freedom, and was usually related to the Gospel of the day, Brian added: "The intention of the Matt Talbot Freedom from Addiction Mass is to encourage those addicted to come to Jesus for freedom, and we have had confirmation of several freedoms being had.

"We ask for the intercession of Venerable Matt Talbot, and the

names of those enrolled in the Matt Talbot Prayer Society are placed on the altar. It is also very important that those suffering from addiction know that they belong in the Church, that they belong at Mass and that they are at the heart of the Body of Christ.

"This Mass is now also being celebrated in five other locations in Ireland, one at the Shrine of Matt Talbot in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, on Sean McDermott Street in Dublin, where Matt Talbot's body lies, and another in Ennis Cathedral, Co Clare."

He went on to note: "Even though all that we have done is local, the enquiries we get from overseas is incredible. We have people registering names from places such as England, Brazil, Germany, and particularly from the Philippines and America."

A recent introduction by the Society is a Spiritual Protection Pack for families to bless their homes as protection against drugs.

"The entry age to drugs is getting lower and lower," said Brian, "so this prayer pack, though available to everyone, is especially for parents to help protect their homes from drugs coming into them. It includes a Prayer Card and a specific prayer invoking the help of Mary Our Hope for protecting homes and families from drugs, and a small bottle of Holy Water with an image of Matt Talbot.

"Since we launched these packs about five weeks ago, we have given out a few hundred, along with over 2,000 that were taken

by teachers visiting our stall at the recent Diocesan Religious Education Conference. And, we plan to distribute packs, through parishes, through the schools, to every household that has a child at school in the Derry Diocese."

During some research, Brian was fascinated to discover that Pope John Paul II and the people of Poland had a great interest in Matt Talbot.

He remarked: "Pope John Paul II was very keen to have Matt Talbot canonised. We are still awaiting a miracle for that to happen, and people are encouraged to pray through the intercession of Matt Talbot for any and every intention, hoping that one of them will be the miracle needed."

"Pope John Paul II wrote a paper about him, which I find very interesting," added Brian, and I am trying to track it down and get permission to have it translated into English and published."

To register the name of someone addicted to be prayed for, either contact the Cathedral office on 028 71 262894 or email vita@matttalbotprayersociety.com.

For further information and prayers, visit the website: www.matttalbotprayersociety.com.



Brian McCormick manning the Matt Talbot Prayer Society stall at the recent Diocesan RE Conference, held in St Columba's College

You are invited
TO THE MONTHLY
MATT TALBOT PRAYER SOCIETY MASS
ST EUGENE'S CATHEDRAL, DERRY

FIRST MONDAY OF EVERY MONTH AT 7.30PM

Venerable **Matt Talbot**
Pray For Us

THE MASS IS FOR ALL THOSE DEALING WITH ADDICTION AND THEIR FAMILIES.

AVAILABLE AFTER MASS
SPIRITUAL PROTECTION PACKS
FOR FAMILY HOMES FOR THEIR PROTECTION FROM DRUGS.
THESE ARE FREE OF CHARGE.

ALL ARE WELCOME
Let us come together in prayer, faith and hope.

The Pioneers by Jim Doherty



SOME younger Catholics today may not be familiar with the Pioneer Association, whose members commit to abstain completely from alcohol. The full title of the movement is The Pioneer Total Abstinence Association of the Sacred Heart (PTAA), since it encourages members to pray to and have devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as an aid to resisting the temptation of alcohol. The association seeks to help members to reach their full potential and inner freedom through self-denial and prayer, and to offer good example to others.

The foundational spiritual pillar of the association is devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which is essential for enabling members to maintain life-long abstinence from

alcohol. In Catholic theology, the Sacred Heart of Jesus symbolises Divine love aggrieved by human failings and sin, which wound Christ's heart, and this requires reparation through personal sacrifice. In this spiritual rationale, intoxication and abuse of alcohol are seen as a sin, and abstinence becomes an offering of consolation and atonement.

The Association was founded in 1898 by a Jesuit priest called Fr James Cullen, along with a small number of devout laywomen in the presbytery of the beautiful church of St Francis Xavier on Gardiner Street, in Dublin, to promote total abstinence from 'intoxicating liquors' as a voluntary spiritual discipline, in response to widespread alcohol abuse among Irish Catholics. Fr Cullen's vision was to enlist those who enjoyed a social drink in moderation to sacrifice their enjoyment for the rest of their lives, for the sake of those who drank to excess, and to serve as an example to others, especially young people who had not yet made a decision about alcohol use.

From modest beginnings, the PTAA expanded rapidly, reaching 10,000 members by 1910 and peaking at nearly 500,000 by the 1950s, when approximately one-in-three Irish adults participated, exerting significant cultural influence on sobriety norms. Today, the Association has developed into an international movement that has members throughout the world, but its headquarters is still in Ireland, where membership in the 21st century remains about 100,000.

A person who is enrolled as a member of the PTAA is commonly called 'a Pioneer' (Réadóir as Gaeilge), and he or she commits to refrain from drinking any alcohol (total abstinence). An early 20th century PTAA pamphlet explains the meaning of the term: "The Members of the Association are styled Pioneers, because they help to lead the way in the vanguard of Temperance Reform by word, example and prayer – because they resolve to brave and overcome every difficulty that impedes their undertaking – and lastly,

because they are determined, by God's grace, to persevere in their resolution unto death. Their Life Pledge of Total Abstinence is called the 'Heroic Offering.' Members can decide to take a life-long pledge, or a one-year temporary pledge in preparation for taking the life-long one, or a short-term pledge for a fixed period as during Lent, Advent or November (the month of the Holy Souls), or in the case of a child or young person, who is not old enough to commit to a life-long pledge.

Membership categories

At present there are five membership categories in the PTAA:

1. Permanent Pioneer - A person who is 16 years of age or over and has not taken any alcoholic drink for one year may be enrolled in this category.

2. Temporary Pioneer (Adult) - Temporary members are adults who have consumed alcohol in the past and now wish to become Pioneers. Admission to permanent membership depends upon completing one year of total abstinence. An earlier term

for a temporary pioneer was 'probationer'.

3. Limited Pledge Period - This pledge of total abstinence is taken by a person for a length of period of his or her own choice. It may be renewed as frequently as desired.

4. Juvenile Pioneer (8-11 years old) - Juvenile Pioneers are children aged eight and upwards who, with the consent of their parents, take a pledge of total abstinence from alcoholic drink until 18 years old.

5. Young Pioneer (12 years upwards) - Young Pioneers are 12 years and over. Sometimes, those who have made the Confirmation pledge opt to join this section. In addition to committing to abstain from alcohol until 18 years of age, a young pioneer pledges to avoid drugs for life. An earlier term for a young pioneer was 'aspirant'.

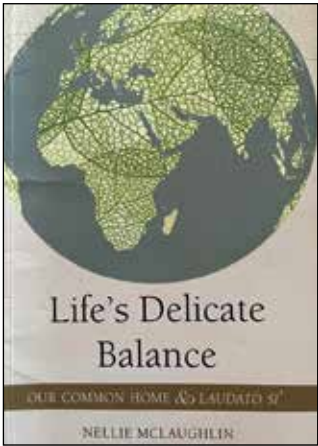
In addition to the pledge, members also commit to publicly wear the emblem of the PTAA as a lapel pin or brooch (the Pioneer pin) in order to witness to their abstinence, to alert others not to offer them alcohol, and to promote awareness of the Pioneer Association. The third commitment is to say the following prayer every

morning and evening: "For Thy greater glory and consolation O Sacred Heart of Jesus; for Thy sake to give good example, to practise self-denial, to make reparation to Thee for the sins of intemperance, and for the conversion of excessive drinkers, I will abstain for life from all intoxicating drink". There are similar versions of the prayer for fixed term, juvenile and young Pioneers.

The Association acknowledges the commitment of its members to ongoing temperance by issuing special pioneer pins for 10, 25, 50 and 60 years. For those few who are blessed with the achievement of 70 years' membership, there is the Fr James Cullen medal and ribbon. In August, this medal was awarded to three brothers from Co Derry called Hughie, Francis and Patrick Trainor, who have achieved a combined total of over 210 years of temperance.

If an individual wishes to enrol as a member of the association, details for local PTAA centres and contacts are available from the parish or diocesan office. Also, it is possible to complete an on-line enrolment form at www.pioneers.ie.

Lessons in the Encyclicals *by Dr Seán Beattie*



Sr Nellie McLaughlin, *Life's Delicate Balance, Our Common Home and Laudato Si, Veritas*, 2015

WE are constantly reminded by the media that we live in an era of climate change, the year 2026 being the hottest on record. Parts of Europe have been ravaged by forest fires, with disastrous consequences for the environment. Pope Francis drew the attention of world leaders to such dangers in his encyclical 'Laudato Si', (subtitled, *On Care for Our Common Home*), in 2015. Previous Popes have made reference to the environment. I was reminded by Sr Nellie McLaughlin,

in her book 'Life's Delicate Balance', that when 'Laudato Si' was published, it was the first time that an entire Encyclical was devoted to the environment and human ecology. The Pope also reminded us that his patron, St Francis of Assisi, "was particularly concerned for God's creation and for the poor and outcast".

The First Encyclical

The writing of Papal Encyclicals is relatively new in the history of the Catholic Church. The first was by Pope Benedict XIV in 1740, entitled 'Ubi Primum' (When it first). In some respects, the process is a follow-on from the time of St Paul, for example in his Epistles to the Romans. The High Crosses of Ireland have also helped to spread the Gospel message. The Church has employed different methods of communicating its doctrines over the ages, as it comes to terms with challenges facing society at large.

Rerum Novarum

Perhaps one of the best-known Encyclicals is 'Rerum Novarum' (Of New Things). It was promulgated by Pope Leo XIII in 1891. Rejecting socialism and unbridled capitalism, the Pope expressed concern over

the harsh conditions endured by the working classes following the Industrial Revolution. It has become the cornerstone of Catholic social teaching. To mark the historic publication, another Leo, the current Pope Leo XIV, published his first Encyclical, 'Magnifica Humanitas', subtitled - *On Safeguarding the Human Person in the time of Artificial Intelligence*. Commentators have reflected on Pope Leo's efforts to place the Church at the centre of the current debate about the impact of the new technology on our lives. Coming in the first year of his Pontificate, it is an indication that the Papacy is concerned over possible abuses.

Magnifica Humanitas (Magnificent Humanity)

The themes can be summarised as follows: the safeguarding of humanity; the promotion of truth; the dignity of work; the promotion of social justice and peace in the world. In effect, Pope Leo is taking up the legacy of his predecessors in writing a social Encyclical to address the challenges of his time, including AI.

While Leo XIII has spoken about "new things" (Rerum

Novarum), it is not enough merely to repeat these teachings, however invaluable. Technology is changing the world we live in, but it cannot be regarded as a bad influence. Society has enjoyed many benefits from digitalization and robotics, and will continue to do so in the future. Our peculiar problem is that we are unable to see where it is going, or to predict the long-term effects. In fact, the Pope poses the interesting question, "Where are we going?" It would be wrong to label the Encyclical as the papal attack on AI, despite the reference to it in the sub-title of the Encyclical.

The Environment

The Pope also voices his concern about climate change and the environment. This includes criticism of the exploitation of people not only in Asia but across the globe, for example, in mining and even in digital technology itself.

Migration

Migration is one of the great social problems of our age. The rise of the AfD in Germany, with its dramatic anti-migrant rhetoric, is a matter of great concern for the EU. Germany has set its new residence requirement for citizenship at four

years. In Ireland, new restrictions are being placed on migrants who seek to become citizens. The Minister for Justice, Jim O'Callaghan, has recently raised the requirement for citizenship to eight years, adding a requirement that applicants must show proficiency in Irish or English as well. Those on the pathway to qualification deserve a fair pathway.

The Pope makes a plea for the provision of safe, legal routes for migrants. He also appeals for their integration into society, but new restrictions will not help with making life easier for migrants. The subject is an emotional one for this country, as there are few families in the Diocese who do not have family connections abroad, a reminder of our diaspora. Migration does, however, have a cost and the Encyclical does not comment on the economic impact of local communities. The success of the large-scale citizenship ceremonies of recent times is an indication that new arrivals have a unique role to play at all levels of society in Ireland, and they value the rights acquired by being citizens of this country.

Peace and the 'Just War'?

We now have fireside reminders

nightly of the traumatic impact of war across the globe. The conflicts in Gaza and Ukraine are but two of many raging across the world. Some conflicts are no longer reported in the European media. In the past, the Church had a policy on the so-called 'Just War'. The Encyclical makes a bold statement to the effect that this theory no longer stands. In this context, the Pope offers practical solutions, such as the exercise of diplomacy for one.

Plea for Justice and Fairness

The Pope closes the Encyclical with a plea to remove inequality and injustice. In the media, the Encyclical has had a muted response or provoked little commentary or debate. To the best of my knowledge, there has been little or no comment on RTE or the BBC, apart from a passing reference to the impact of AI when the Encyclical was published.

Overall, the response has been positive. For example, Tom Golway, of the New York Academy of Sciences, has described the Encyclical as "serious and ambitious", and as an "historical force". The debate is ongoing.

Catholic Mothers Ireland celebrate annual National Mass & Family Day *by Sinéad Strong*

CATHOLIC Mothers Ireland welcomed families from across the country to its Annual National Mass and Family Day on Sunday, September 6, in Termonbacca Retreat Centre, Derry. The annual gathering is a cornerstone of the organisation's calendar, offering families a space for prayer, spiritual renewal, fellowship, and community support.

Bishop Donal McKeown joined the families to celebrate Mass and remarked on how lovely it was to see so many children present. He commended Catholic Mothers Ireland and the values it seeks to promote, noting that, "unless you create communities where values are lived out, ideas mean nothing."

Speaking of the organisation's witness to a culture of life and love,

faith and family, Bishop Donal added, "Thank you for your love of life and love of the God of life."

Retired now as Bishop of Derry, Catholic Mothers Ireland extends its sincere gratitude for Bishop Donal's ministry and wishes him every blessing for the years ahead.

The day centred on the celebration of Holy Mass, and included a marriage and family talk for parents, refreshments, and lively activities for children. The event was a great success and was greatly enjoyed by all who attended. It was designed to encourage and uplift the "domestic church" by helping parents and children deepen their faith together and strengthen bonds with other Catholic families.

"Our Annual National Mass and Family Day is a beautiful

opportunity for families from across the country to pause, pray together, and build lasting connections. In a busy world, this event provides parents and children alike with a supportive community environment to deepen their faith and find mutual encouragement."

Catholic Mothers Ireland was also delighted to welcome Patrick and Therese McCrystal, who spoke to parents about the beautiful, sacred, and sometimes challenging journey of Christian marriage and family life. Married for 25 years, Patrick and Therese brought practical wisdom, spiritual insight, and lived experience to their reflections on building a thriving, resilient home rooted in faith.

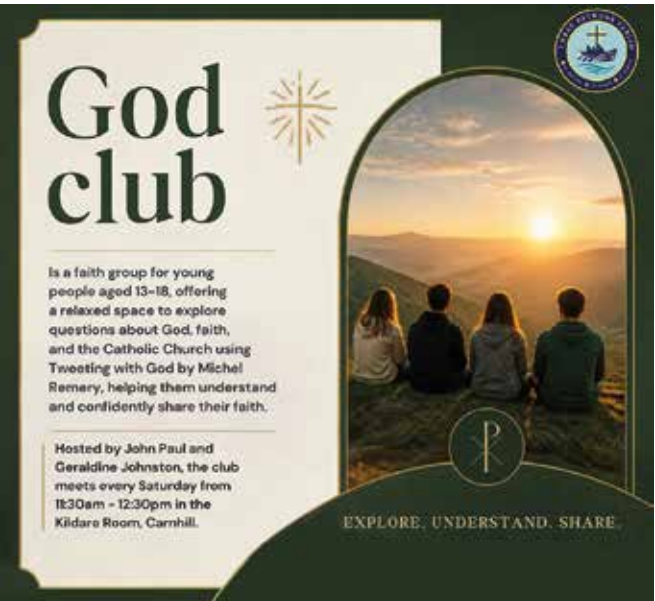
"It was a fantastic day, and we all really enjoyed it," said one mother

who attended, adding: "The talks were inspiring, and it was wonderful to have the opportunity to catch up with everyone."

About Catholic Mothers Ireland

Catholic Mothers Ireland is a national, Catholic women's apostolate dedicated to supporting mothers and families in living out their faith in daily family life. Through prayer, community gatherings, formation, encouragement, and practical support, the organisation seeks to strengthen the domestic church and foster a culture of life, love, faith, and family across Ireland.

Website: www.catholicmothers.ie and Instagram: @catholicmothersireland



Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

Arthur by Fr Eamonn Kelly



ARTHUR was an awkward man. No matter what was done for him, it was not good enough. The dinner was too cold or too hot. The potatoes were undercooked or overcooked. Even the weather seldom pleased him. If the day was dry, 'a bit of rain would be better', and if the day had rain, 'a dry spell' would be the request. Over the years, many friends left him and former companions stopped going to his place or seeking his company. Even his work colleagues on the buses seldom made much contact, except for the morning 'hello' and the evening 'see you tomorrow'. Yet, some people did try to remain friendly to him.

Passengers on the bus seldom got into conversation with the 'snappy' driver, who could give you an earful if you did not have the exact fare. Even in faith matters, Arthur had a very critical approach – the Mass was too long or too fast, the priest sings too much, the readers are not understandable, the church is far

too hot in the summer and far too cold in the winter. We, who knew Arthur, were all used to his ways and often went out of our way to avoid him as he would, to quote my big brother, "take the good out of goodness".

Arthur was 42 when a new neighbour moved into the house next to him. On her first introductory visit to his house, Jane brought a packet of Fig Roll biscuits, only to be told that "they are rotten biscuits!" Another person would have left, never to return. But not Jane. She was a warm-hearted person, who had just retired, and was determined to make new friends in her new neighbourhood. She would drop in to Arthur every now and then, without trying to win him over with Fig Rolls or any other biscuit.

It was on her fourth or maybe fifth visit that Jane asked Arthur: "Do you have a pain in your right, lower back?" She got a barrage of lousy replies: "Why are you so

nosy?"; "What business is that of yours?"; "If you are going to be so prying, there is no need for you to come back!" Jane must have been made of sturdy stuff for she asked the same question again. Arthur could not hide his displeasure and told her not to be so curious about other people's health and to mind her own affairs. Jane didn't react to his insults, but asked for the third time, "Do you have a pain in your right, lower back?"

Tension

Arthur stared at her. He looked her straight in the eye. It was a moment of tension, a moment that the clocked ticked its seconds very loudly. "I do", answered Arthur, "but I am used to it, for it is always there". Jane said that she thought he had a portion of bone growing awkwardly outwards and that, if he went to the doctor and got it seen to, it could, with quite a simple operation, be resolved. Needless to say, Arthur disagreed, and told her that it was none of her concern and that he could manage rightly as he was. But three months later, he had the operation and it was like a new Arthur was born.

He became friendly, even though it took people a long time to trust the friendship. He became outgoing but, again, people were slow to accept him into their places of recreation. Jane's repeated question took a massive change for good into the life of the bus driver and, because of that, into the lives of many more people too. Work colleagues and passengers alike slowly warmed to the new Arthur, who in turn learned to hold a

conversation without having to criticise all the time.

That is how the Holy Spirit works in the lives of many ordinary people. Out of the blue, someone asks the question, points to a new way, states a fact a different way, and a new development in life takes place. The Holy Spirit never forces. Real conversion happens because people want to be converted. The river runs as it does for years, until one day a piece of riverbank breaks away and the river runs a bit differently.

The life of your family goes on as it has always gone and then, one day, you notice the amount of work that mother does, the wages father hands over, the personality of a brother or sister. Did you ever notice, as if seeing it for the first time, that your sister never gets the chance to go out, that Mother eats very little, that your brother may have a drink problem? Did you ever notice within you the dawning realisation that you are not strong in your morals, or that you waste a lot of hard-earned money? When these things are noticed, nothing may dramatically change but everything has changed. It is in the internal shift that the insight moves, that allows the soul to come more alive and conscious. Life goes on as before, but the new awareness brings a massive change, for the soul can no longer pretend that the notice had not occurred or the awareness was not a call to awaken from the daze and fog of unknowing.

Love

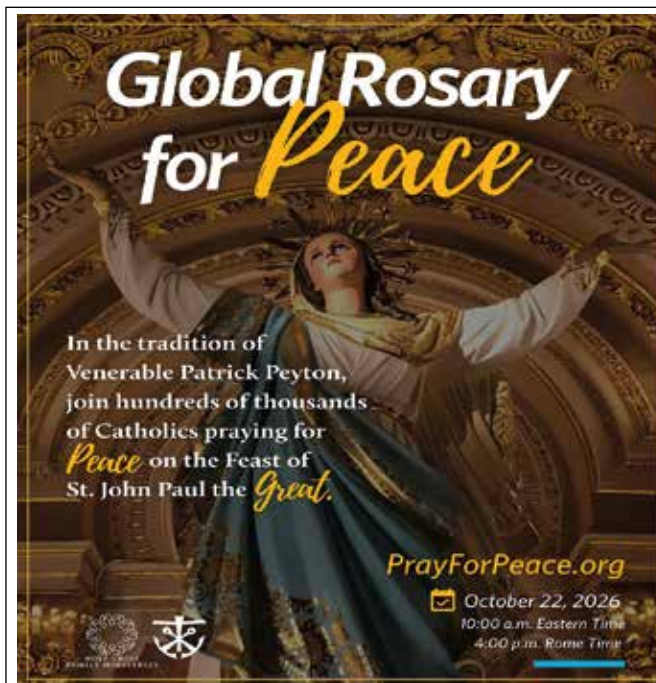
In Arthur's life, "Do you have a

pain in your right, lower back?" became a catalyst for a new way of living, a more wholesome experience of people, and a fresh opening up of the beauty around him. Name for yourself the pain in your life – the regret, the anger, the fear, the worry, the concern. Jane cannot visit every house, but if you open the curtains, amazing things await. The power of unconditional love is not just that it gives life, but that it allows you to live life. The power of love is not that it changes life, but that it allows us to know – even for just a second – love. The Cross of Christ is the release of the Holy Spirit allowing us to breathe in love.

In fact, you do not need Jane. Listen to the questions that your soul is asking. Why are you always

rushing, but getting so few things done? Why are so many things left undone? Why are you always planning to start another day? Why do you try and satisfy everybody? What prevents you from sitting in peace with yourself? It is not in the challenge of finding answers to the questions in your life, it is in the insight of new wisdom that opens the heart to a more genuine and profound experience of love.

Seventeen years have come and gone since Arthur's operation. I would love to tell you of a great romantic ending, with Arthur and Jane falling for each other, but that is not what happened, even though they became and remain good friends. No, Arthur went on to meet and marry a lovely woman from Austria and they have one son.



Made for community and called to serve by Sinéad Strong

EACH Wednesday, pilgrims gather for the Pope's general audience; a time of teaching, prayer and blessing. Pope Leo XIV is currently giving catechesis on the documents of the Second Vatican Council, including 'Gaudium et Spes', the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World. Promulgated by Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965, its title means 'Joy and Hope'. Its opening words remind us that the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of humanity – especially those of the poor and afflicted – are also the joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ.

For me, this is not just a lovely thought. It is a real challenge. Our faith was never meant to be something private that we keep to ourselves. We are the Church, gathered in Christ and sent out into the world. If another person's suffering never interrupts my plans, if another family's loneliness never touches my heart, or if the needs of my parish never call me to use my gifts, then I have to ask whether my faith has become too comfortable.

We are made for community

'Gaudium et Spes' teaches us that

every person is made in the image of God and has a dignity that can never be taken away. But we are not made to live in isolation. We are made for relationship – with God, with one another and with the world entrusted to our care. Pope Leo XIV has spoken about the close connection between the growth of each person and the good of society as a whole. This is something that we see in our own lives; we need real relationships, not just passing contact, if we are to grow in faith and become the people God is calling us to be.

Community begins in very ordinary places: in our homes; our parishes; our friendships; and our neighbours. It begins when we notice the person who is on the edge, when we make time to listen, when we offer practical help, or simply let someone know that they are not alone. We need one another's prayers, encouragement, wisdom and support. None of us has every gift, and none of us is meant to carry every burden alone. When faithful Catholics work together, our different gifts become something much greater, and the Church becomes more clearly what she is meant to be: the Body of Christ.

We find ourselves by giving ourselves

One of the best-known lines in 'Gaudium et Spes' is found in section 24: the human person "cannot fully find himself except through a sincere gift of himself". I think this gets to the heart of Christian life. We do not really discover who we are by protecting our time, keeping our distance or avoiding every demand. We discover ourselves by giving – our time, our attention, our abilities and our love.

God Himself is a communion of love: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Made in His image and redeemed by Christ, we are called to reflect that love in the way we live. The Christian life is not a solo project. It is a call to communion and to service.

Beyond the comfort zone

Stepping out of our comfort zone does not have to mean doing something dramatic. Very often, it is something small: going to a parish gathering where we know no one; making the first move to introduce ourselves; asking how we can help; sharing a skill instead of waiting to be asked; welcoming

somebody new; or taking on a job that may never be noticed. Sometimes it means admitting that we need help ourselves and allowing someone else to support us. Community is about giving, but it is also about being willing to receive.

Working together does not mean that we all have to think, speak or serve in exactly the same way. The Church is made up of people with different gifts, vocations, ages and experiences, and this should enrich us rather than divide us. Unity is not the same as uniformity. It means keeping Christ at the centre, trying to see the best in one another, speaking the truth with charity, forgiving quickly and choosing what is good for the whole community rather than simply what suits us.

Catholic Mothers Ireland: Communion in Practice

For me, Catholic Mothers Ireland is one practical example of what this can look like. It brings women together through our shared Catholic faith and our vocation as mothers, giving us opportunities to pray, learn and support one another through both the joys and the challenges of family life.

It began because we saw a need for encouragement, and it has grown into a wider community through gatherings, retreats, Pray & Play groups and the everyday friendships that come from them.

Taking that first step can feel daunting – turning up when we do not know anyone, introducing ourselves, admitting that we need support, or offering to help. But these small acts of courage matter. They build friendships, strengthen mothers, support families and help renew the domestic Church. They remind us that we grow in faith by walking together, carrying one another's burdens and placing our gifts at the service of Christ and His Church.

In marriage and family life, this means giving ourselves in the ordinary things, day after day. In parish life, it means moving from simply attending to taking part. In the wider community, it means standing up for human dignity and helping to build a society in which people serve one another rather than use one another. Whatever our vocation, the question is not only what we achieve or acquire, but how generously our life becomes a gift.

Our faith becomes real when it



is lived out in community and in service. Perhaps, each of us can ask: Who needs encouragement from me? Whose burden can I help to carry? What gift am I holding back? What might God be asking me to do that feels unfamiliar or uncomfortable? We were not made to live in isolation or to stand at the edge watching. We were made for community, and we were made to serve one another. When we step beyond what is comfortable and offer ourselves in love, we do not lose who we are. By God's grace, we become more fully the people He created us to be.

For more information, or to connect with Catholic Mothers Ireland, visit our website or email info@catholicmothers.ie.

Fr Pat O'Hagan, Diocesan Vocations Director, reports here, and in next month's edition, on the National Vocations Directors' Conference at Knock Shrine, Co Mayo, on September 14...

Vocations come from parishes where disciples are formed



AT the invitation of the National Vocations Office, the vocations directors of 16 of the 26 dioceses of Ireland gathered in Knock, Co Mayo, for their annual autumn Conference, along with Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore, chair of the Bishops' Commission for Vocations, Fr Willie Purcell, national vocations director, Carol King, secretary of the Commission, Gerald Harbinson, representing the Knights of Columbanus, and Fr Stephen Langridge, a priest of the Archdiocese of Southwark, and former director of vocations for England and Wales, the keynote speaker of the Conference.

In his first talk, Fr Stephen talked about "rediscovering priestly identity", which he said is necessary if vocations directors are to let go of the pressure to produce numbers and, instead, make sure they are rooted in Christ, supported in fraternity - with one another and with their fellow priests/religious, attentive to the gifts they and their colleagues have, and are committed to forming disciples.

He acknowledged the reality that being a vocations director today is not a full-time post, but one of a number of ministries a priest is asked to carry. Numbers, he said, are not important; they are

not the criterion that should be used to judge the effectiveness of the director. Life comes through the Holy Spirit, working in and through the director and the men who are discerning their vocation.

A priest is someone who is called to be a mediator, a shepherd, and to act "in persona Christi" (in the name of Christ), but sometimes he is reduced to being more of a functionary, and there is a confusion around who he really is and what people expect of him. A true priest must be rooted in Christ and apply himself to the mission of the Church which he serves as a spiritual Father.

A priest needs the prayers and support of the people he serves. He also needs the prayers and support of other priests, his colleagues who will genuinely rejoice in the gifts he has received so that he can better serve God's people, and who will encourage him in his ministry. Spending time with brother priests is good not just for himself, but also for his people, particularly for any (young) man who may see priests out together and enjoying one another's company.

St Paul's letter to the Ephesians, Chapter 4, says that some are called to be apostles, others to be prophets, evangelists, shepherds, or teachers, each one using the gifts

they have received to build up the Church, united under Jesus Christ. No one person has all the gifts; no one priest or vocations director has all the gifts. We can, however, rejoice in the gifts the other person has as we work together, each one different but complementary. The Holy Spirit doesn't remove our differences, instead, He creates communion and unity from our diversity.

If parishioners expect their priest to do everything for them, the priest can end up feeling needed. This mindset turns people into consumers in a way that leaves the priest feeling consumed, overwhelmed by his people's expectations of him. What needs to happen is that the people are formed into disciples, intentional disciples, people who are fully

converted to Christ, to the Church, and to the Church's mission to spread the Good News.

In conclusion, Fr Stephen encouraged priests to support one another through regular contact; to be the man, the priest, God has called him to be, using his God-given gifts. He asked us to create disciples, because vocations ordinarily emerge where people encounter Christ, follow Him, and discover that their lives are given for mission.

A man who has been formed as a disciple of Christ in his own parish community, will find it no surprise when he feels called by God to serve the Church as a priest.

In the next edition of 'The Net', we will read what Fr Stephen Langridge had to say about 'The Anatomy (or Ecology) of a Vocation.'

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

10:00 am Eucharistic Adoration & Confession
Reconciliation Chapel

10:15 am A PARISH TESTIMONY
by Geraldine O'Donnell
St John's Centre

11:30 am TALK:
Fr. Patrick Cahill
St John's Centre

12:15 pm TALK:
Fr. Jaimie Tweddig
St John's Centre

1:00 pm LUNCH

1:45 pm TALK:
Fr. Leon Pereira O.P. (Coadjutor) & Fr. Marius O'Reilly
St John's Centre

2:30 pm ROSARY
with Fr. Mark Quinn & The Children's Rosary
Basilica

3:00 pm HOLY MASS
Celebrated by Fr. James Devine
Basilica

3:45 pm 15 - MINUTE MEDITATION
with Fr. Philip Kemmy
Basilica

4:00 pm EUCHARISTIC HEALING
with Fr. John Keane
Basilica

FIRST SATURDAYS Conference

Saturday, 28th November 2026
KNOCK SHRINE

Chaired by Christine O'Hara

"Whether the world has war or peace depends on the practice of this devotion." - Sr Lucia in 1931

www.FirstSaturdays.ie

What does God want you to be?

If you think you may have a vocation to serve as a priest of the diocese of Derry, please contact your local priest or the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan
T: (028) 79386259 or
E: pgoh2111@gmail.com

A PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD

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

(Based on the words of Pope Leo XIV)

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

THE FIVE FIRST SATURDAYS DEVOTION

4 PRACTICES, 1 INTENTION

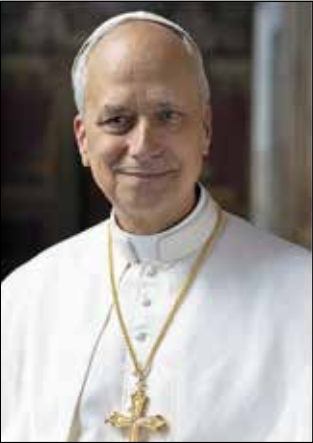
- 1 Rosary (5 Decades)
- 2 Holy Communion
- 3 Meditation (15 Mins)
- 4 Confession (20 Days Before or After 1st Saturday)

Intention

To make reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

"whether there is peace or war in the world depends on the practice of this devotion"
- Sr Lucia of Fatima

Pope's monthly intention



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

Mental Health Ministry:
Let us pray that the mental health ministry be established throughout the Church, helping to overcome the stigma and discrimination of persons with mental illnesses.

Prayer for Priests
Heavenly Father, I ask you to bless our bishops and priests and to confirm them in their vocation of service.
As they stand before us as ministers of Your Sacraments, may they be channels of the love and compassion of the Good Shepherd, who came not be served but to serve.

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

- Remember in prayer:**
- Fr Colum Clerkin (Oct 1st)
 - Fr Roland Colhoun (2nd)
 - Fr Michael Collins (3rd)
 - All Priests (4th)
 - Fr Patrick Crilly (5th)
 - Fr Brendan Crowley (6th)
 - All priests (7th)
 - All priests (8th)
 - All priests (9th)
 - All priests (10th)
 - Fr James Devine (11th)
 - Fr Peter Devlin (12th)
 - Fr Fintan Diggin (13th)
 - Fr Brendan Doherty (14th)
 - All priests (15th)
 - Fr Shaun Doherty (16th)
 - All priests (17th)
 - All priests (18th)
 - Fr Michael Doherty (19th)
 - Fr Patrick Doherty (20th)
 - Mgr Andrew Dolan (21st)
 - Fr Brian Donnelly (22nd)
 - Msgr Joseph Donnelly (23rd)
 - All priests (24th)
 - All priests (25th)
 - All priests (26th)
 - All priests (27th)
 - All priests (28th)
 - Fr Jack Farrell (29th)
 - All priests (30th)
 - Fr John Farren (31st)

Vocations Holy Hours

DIOCESAN Vocations Holy Hours will take place in St Columb's Church, Chapel Road, Waterside, from 8-9pm, following the 7.30pm Mass on October 20, November 3, and December 1.

Parish Post-its

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

Aghyaran

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30pm Vigil, and 11am on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays of the month.

Ardstraw East
(Newtownstewart)

Zoom Catechism: All are welcome to join Catechism by Zoom on Mondays, from 7.30-8.15pm. Email: ardstraweast@derrydiocese.org to get the link. Learn how to answer hard questions.
Pope John Paul II Award – Sessions for Pope John Paul II Award participants take place on Thursdays at 6.30pm, in the Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.
Holy Hour: 6.30pm, Thursdays, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.
Weekend Mass Times: 11.30am, St Eugene's Glenock.

Badoney Lower
(Gortin-Rouskey)

Adoration: Adoration takes places in St Patrick's Gortin, after the 12 noon Mass until 5pm on Tuesdays, and in St Mary's, Rouskey, after 7.30pm Mass on Wednesdays, with an opportunity for Confession, until 9pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 7.30pm Vigil, St Patrick's, Gortin; 10am, St Mary's, Rouskey.

Badoney Upper
(Plumbridge-Cranagh)

Adoration & Confession: Adoration and Confessions take place in St Patrick's Cranagh after the 7.30pm Wednesday evening Mass, until 9pm, and after the 12 noon Mass on Saturdays in Plumbridge.
Confessions: Confessions are available on Saturdays at 12 noon in Sacred Heart Church, Plumbridge, and before the 7.30pm Saturday Vigil Mass in St Patrick's Church, Cranagh.
Weekend Mass Times: 7.30pm Vigil, St Patrick's Cranagh; 10am, Sacred Heart Plumbridge.

Ballinascreen

St Pio Mass: Mass in honour of St Pio of Pietrelcina is celebrated on the first Monday of each month at 7.30pm, in Holy Rosary Church. The Novena prayers and Rosary are recited at 7.10pm.
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Holy Rosary Church on the First Mondays from 12 noon until 7.30pm.
Confessions: Holy Rosary Church every Saturday at 5.30pm, before the Vigil

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

Ballymagroarty

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Holy Family Church, Ballymagroarty, every Sunday, from 1.30 - 6pm.
Padre Pio Prayer: The Holy Family Padre Pio Prayer Group meets on the first Tuesday each month at Holy Family Chapel, Ballymagroarty, Derry. It starts with the Rosary at 6.45pm, followed by Mass at 7.15pm, and Novena to St Pio directly afterwards. There will be a first-class relic available for veneration.
Legion of Mary: The Legion meets on Wednesday evenings at 5.45pm. Anyone willing to do Our Lady's work is asked to call Patricia on 028 71417867.
Confessions: Saturdays from 10.30-11.30am & 5.15-5.50pm; Tues & Thurs 6.45-7.10pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 6pm Vigil; and 9.30am, 11am, and 12.30pm on Sunday.

Banagher

Adoration & Chaplet: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Divine Mercy Chaplet take place in St Mary's Church, Altinure, Thursdays, 10.30-11.30am; St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, on Fridays, 10-11am.
Confessions: St Mary's Church, Altinure, Thursday 10.30am; St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, Friday 10am & Saturday 6.30pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 7pm Vigil and 9.15am on alternate Sundays in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, 10.30am in St Mary's Church, Altinure, and 12 noon on alternate Sundays in St Peter's & St Paul's Church, Foreglen.

Bellaghy

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in The St Carlo Acutis Adoration Chapel on Fridays from 10am-8pm, with the Rosary for Vocations at 7.30pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 5.30pm Vigil livestreamed to Bellaghy from St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Greenlough; Sunday, 9.45am in Ballyscullion, and 11am in Bellaghy, live-streamed to Greenlough.

Buncrana

Fr Hegarty's Rock Mass: Bishop Michael Router will be celebrating Mass at Fr

Hegarty's Rock on Sunday, October 11, at 2pm.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament now takes place in St Mary's Oratory every Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, 6am-10pm, Fridays, 6am-10pm, and on Sundays 2-10pm.
Rosary: The Rosary is prayed every Monday-Thursday at 9.30am in St Mary's Oratory, prior to 10am Mass.
Guided Holy Hour: A Guided Holy Hour of Adoration in Honour of the Holy Face of Jesus takes place on Sundays, 6-7pm in St Mary's Oratory. All welcome.
Rosary for Priests: Three Rosaries are prayed each Tuesday, between 1-2pm, in the Oratory for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

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

Al-Anon: The Al-Anon Group, for anyone whose life is or has been affected by someone else's drinking, meets in St Teresa's Room on Thursdays at 6:45pm.
Weekend Mass Times: St Mary's Oratory – Vigil 4.30pm, 8.30am and 12.30pm; St Mary's Cockhill – 11am; Star of the Sea, Desertegney – 9.45am.

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

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

Burt, Inch & Fahan

Adoration: Adoration in St Mura's Parish Church, Fahan, takes place each Friday after 10am Mass.
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30pm Vigil, 10.15am, St Aengus' Burt; 9am, Our Lady of Lourdes, Inch; 11.30am, St Mura's, Fahan.

Cappagh
(Killyclogher)

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesday from 8-9pm in Christ the King, Strathroy, concluding with Night Prayer, and on Sunday from 6-7pm, in Christ the King, with Devotions and Benediction.
Rosary: The Rosary is prayed in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher, Monday-Saturday at 9.10am.
Legion of Mary: Legion of Mary meets every Monday after 10am Mass in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher. New members always welcome. Anyone wishing to welcome the Pilgrim Statute of Our

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

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

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

Confessions: Confessions are heard on Saturdays from 6.15-6.45pm in Christ The King, Strathroy.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 7pm Vigil, 12 noon, Christ The King, Strathroy; 9 & 11.15am, St Mary's, Killyclogher.

Carndonagh

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

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

Castlederg & Ardstraw West

October Rosary: The Rosary will be prayed at St Patrick's Church, Castlederg, each Tuesday of October at 2pm, led by the Legion of Mary, and at St Mary's Church, Dregish, each Wednesday of October at 11am, with tea and a chat afterwards in the hall.
Adoration: Adoration takes place following 10am Mass in St Patrick's Church on Fridays, until 12 noon.
Weekend Mass Times: 6.15pm Vigil and 11am, Castlederg; 9.30am Dregish; and 12.30pm Drumnabey.

Claudy

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

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

Divine Office & Chaplet:

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

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

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

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

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

Clonleigh (Lifford)

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30pm Vigil, 11am.

Clonmany

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary pray the Rosary for peace on Wednesday evenings at 8.30pm at the Grotto beside St Mary's Church. All are welcome.

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

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: St Mary's Church, Clonmany, Vigil 6.30pm (Rosary at 6.10pm); Sunday 11.30am; St Michael's Church, Urris, Sunday, 10am.

Coleraine

Society of St Joseph: The Society of St Joseph for the support of religious vocations meets on the last Monday of each month at St John's

Church Sacristy, after the 10am morning Mass, and is open to everyone. New members are welcome at any of the meetings, which support praying for and assisting to support the vocation to priesthood and the religious life.

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

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

Creggan

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

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

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

Bereavement Support: Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support. The Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support

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

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

Confession: Monday - Friday 5-5.30pm, Saturday 10.30am & 5.30-6.20pm. **Weekend Mass Times:** 6.30pm Vigil; 10.30am; 12.15pm.

Culdaff

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

Desertmartin

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

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

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

Donagheady
(Aughabrack & Dunamanagh)

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Mary's, Aughabrack, on First Fridays, after 10am Mass until 12 noon.
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30pm Vigil, St Patrick's, and 10.30am, St Mary's.

Donaghmore
(Killygordon)

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

Drumquin

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

Drumragh (Omagh)

Day of Prayer: The annual Day of Prayer, Praise & Healing will take place on Sunday, November 15, in the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh. Starting with registration at 9.30am and ending with the celebration of Mass

Parish Post-its

and Healing Service in the afternoon. The guest speaker is Fr John Keane, and the theme for the day is ‘People of God’s Delight’ (Ps 149.4). The Day is organised by Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group, which celebrates its 50th anniversary (1976-2026).

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

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

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Sacred Heart Church on Wednesdays following 10am Mass until 6.30pm.

First Saturdays Devotion: First Saturday Devotions take place in Sacred Heart Church, beginning at 9.10am with a 15-minute meditation, followed by the praying of the Rosary, then the celebration of Mass at 10am, with Confessions afterwards. The intention is to make reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary.

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

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30pm Vigil, 10am and 12.30pm, Sacred Heart Church; 10.30am, St Mary’s Drumragh.

Dungiven

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed on Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 9.30am, in St Patrick’s Church.

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

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

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

Errigal

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

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

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

Faughanvale

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

Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Faughanvale Branch meets in St Mary’s Church on the second Monday of the month (not Jan July, August) following morning Mass. They pray for

and sponsor vocations to the priesthood. New members are needed. The meeting only takes less than an hour.

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

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

Granaghan (Swatragh)

Weekend Mass Times: 4pm, Saturday, and 11am Sunday.

Greencastle

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

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

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

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

Greenlough

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30pm Vigil, live-streamed to Bellaghy; 11am, live-streamed from Bellaghy.

Iskaheen, Drung & Muff

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

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

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed before all weekday Masses.

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

Confessions: Confessions are available in Iskaheen on Saturdays, 9.45-10am, and in Muff on Saturdays, 6pm, and after 6.30pm Vigil Mass

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30pm Vigil, 11.30am, Sacred Heart Church, Muff; 5pm Vigil, 10.15am, St

Columba’s, Drung; 9am, St Patrick’s, Iskaheen.

Kilrea & Desertoghill

Coffee Morning: The Parish Pastoral Council is hosting an Autumn Coffee Morning in the Marian Hall on Sunday, October 11, at 10.45am. All welcome.

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

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

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

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

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

Lavey

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Fridays after 9.15am Mass until 5pm.

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

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

Leckpatrick

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

Weekend Mass Times: 8.30am alternate Sundays, St Mary’s Church, Cloughcor, and St Joseph’s Church, Glenmornan; 12.15pm, Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road.

Lifford (Murlog)

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

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

Adoration: 9.30am-12.30pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6pm Vigil; 9.45am.

Limavady

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

welcome. Contact: Kathy on 07538749627.

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

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

Maghera

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

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

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

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

Magilligan

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

Malin

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

Melmount

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 7pm Vigil, 11.30am.

Moville

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

Prayer: The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet will be recited in St Pius X Church,

Church is open.

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30pm Vigil; 9.30am.

Steelstown & Culmore

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

Adoration: Mondays after 10am Mass until 6.50pm.

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

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

Strabane (Camus)

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on

St. Columba's Long Tower

SOLEMN NOVENA OF HEALING

"Make me a channel of your peace"

Celebrating the Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi

DATE	THEME	SPEAKER
SUNDAY 25 OCTOBER	MARY, HELP OF TROUBLED HEARTS "Lord, make me a channel of your peace."	Fr Bernard (Franciscan Friar of the Renewal)
SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER	MARY, HELP OF FAMILIES "Where there is hatred, let me sow love."	Bernie Millar
SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER	MARY, MOTHER OF MERCY "Where there is injury, pardon."	Rev Conor McGrath
SUNDAY 15 NOVEMBER	MARY, WOMAN OF FAITH "Where there is doubt, faith."	Niamh Sharkey
SUNDAY 22 NOVEMBER	MARY, STAR OF HOPE "Where there is despair, hope."	Rev Philip Kemmy
SUNDAY 29 NOVEMBER	MARY, BEARER OF THE LIGHT "Where there is darkness, light."	Sinead Strong
SUNDAY 6 DECEMBER	MARY, CAUSE OF OUR JOY "Where there is sadness, joy."	Rev Declan Shannon
SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER	MARY, QUEEN OF PEACE "Greet that I may seek not so much to be consoled as to console..."	Rev Dr John McKeever
SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER	MARY, OUR LIFE, OUR SWEETNESS AND OUR HOPE "For it is in giving that we receive."	CLOSE OF NOVENA WITH CAROL SERVICE & Nativity Drama

9 Sundays BEFORE CHRISTMAS AT 6PM

Parish Post-its

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Wednesdays from 8.30am Mass until 5.30pm.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 4.30pm Vigil, 11am Sunday.

Templemore – St Eugene's

St Carlo Acutis Day of Prayer: St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, will have a St Carlo Acutis Day of Prayer on Sunday, October 11, from 2pm, which will include Veneration of a First Class Relic of St Carlo gifted to the Cathedral by Carlo's mother, Antonia. The Sacrament of Confession will be available from 2pm until Mass at 7pm, which will be celebrated by Bishop Michael Ruter. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will take place in the Mother Teresa Chapel during the Celebrations. A short film on Carlo's life will be shown in the Conference Room. Everyone is welcome to this special time.

St Carlo International Exhibition: The international exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles designed and created by St Carlo Acutis can be viewed in St Eugene's Cathedral Hall from October

9-16. Entry is free and all are welcome.

Untier of Knots Novena: The Novena to Our Lady, Untier of Knots is underway in the Cathedral, beginning on Thursday, October 1, after the 7.30pm Mass, and continuing for the following eight Thursdays, concluding on November 26. All are welcome to join in prayer and reflection during this special time of grace.

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

Matt Talbot Mass: The Matt Talbot, Freedom from addiction Mass takes place on the first Monday of each month at 7.30pm in St Eugene's Cathedral.

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

Cathedral Club: The Cathedral Club meets after the 10am Mass each Thursday in the Cathedral Hall. Everyone is welcome to this parish social group. Refreshments will be served. Weekend Mass Times: 6.15pm & 7.30pm Vigils; 9.30am, 11am, 12.30pm & 7pm.

Templemore – Long Tower

Annual Healing Novena: The annual Solemn Healing Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, for the nine Sundays before Christmas, will run from October 25 to December 20, starting at 6pm. Celebrating the Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi, this year's theme is 'Make me a channel of your peace'.

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

Mental Health Mass: A monthly Mass for Mental Health, and a mini-Vigil to midnight, takes place on the first Thursdays at 7.30pm. This Mass is to give thanks to God for positive mental health, and to pray for those

struggling with mental health issues and those who care for them. After Mass, Adoration will follow until midnight.

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

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

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

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays after 10am Mass until 7pm.

Holy Hour: There is Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday, from after the 7.30pm Mass until 9pm.

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

Siopa Cholmcille: St Columba's Gift Shop in Aras Cholmcille has a variety of Confirmation/First Holy Communion gifts & cards, candles, Rosary beads, books, occasion cards and other gifts & mementos available. The shop is open after 10am morning Mass during the week. For enquiries, please contact Sheila Doyle/Jim Doherty via (parish office 028-7126230 or Sacristy 028-71261946) who will be happy to help.

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

Three Patrons

Children's Rosary: Children's Rosary takes place in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, on the second Saturday of the month, at 2pm.

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

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

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

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

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

Women's Bible Study: Women's Bible Study takes place on Wednesdays from 7-8pm, in the Upper Room, St Brigid's Church, Carnhill. God Club: God Club is an opportunity for teenagers, aged 13-18, to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room, Carnhill, on Saturdays from 11.30am until 12.30pm, and will resume on September 26. For more information contact 07523223204.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Living Disciples: Living Disciples meet on Tuesdays at 7.30-8.30pm in St Pio House, St Joseph's Church grounds,

for Praise & Worship, friendship and a cup of tea. All welcome.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Urney & Castlefinn

First Saturdays: The First Saturday Devotion and Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament take place in St Columba's Church, Doneyloop, from 12 noon until 1pm on the First

A FOUR-WEEK INTRODUCTORY SERIES

Open Heart, Open to the Word

Allowing scripture to speak to your heart.

Sundays
October 4th, 11th, 18th and 25th
3:30 – 4:30

**Emmaus Room,
Pennyburn Church**

Led by Thornhill Ministries

Saturday of each month.

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

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

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

Waterside & Strathfoyle

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

Eucharistic Adoration: There is Eucharistic Adoration in St Oliver Plunkett Church, Strathfoyle, on Mondays from 11.30am – 12.30pm, and Wednesdays from 6.30-8.30pm; in Immaculate Conception Church on Thursdays, 1-6pm; and in St Columba's Church on Fridays, 1-6pm.

Diocesan Diary

Vocations: Are you 18 years or older and thinking about serving the Church as a priest of the Diocese of Derry? There will be an afternoon talk, with time for Prayer, Discussion, Questions & Answers in Derry on Sunday, October 11. For further details please contact Fr Pat O'Hagan at pgoh2111@gmail.com.

Young Adult Community: The Diocesan Youth Ministry Team are setting up a Young Adult Community for those aged 18-35 years old. Meet ups will take place in Claudy

Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Vocations Society of St Joseph in the parish has nine members, and meets monthly in the Parish Hall after 10am Mass on Wednesdays. They pray for Vocations to the Priesthood and for priests and religious life, and support seminarians. The Rosary is prayed every Thursday at 9.30am for priests.

Confessions: St Columb's – Saturday after 10am Mass, Monday–Friday 7-7.25pm, before evening Mass; Immaculate Conception – Saturdays 5.30-5.55pm, before Vigil Mass; St Oliver Plunkett – Saturdays 5.30-5.55pm, before the Vigil Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: St Columb's, Saturdays, 10am and 7pm Vigil, Sundays, 10am, 12.30pm, 6pm; Immaculate Conception, Saturdays, 6pm Vigil, Sundays, 10.15am & 12.15pm; St Oliver Plunkett, Saturdays, 6pm Vigil and 11.15am; St Mary's Oratory, Sundays, 9.15am.

Pastoral Centre, as a central location in the Diocese, on Tuesdays at 7.30pm, beginning on Tuesday, October 20. Social and faith events will be included in activities, which are open to discussion with the group.

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

Parish *Post-its*

...other Diary Dates

St Carlo Acutis Day of Prayer: St Eugene’s Cathedral, Derry, will have a St Carlo Acutis Day of Prayer on Sunday, October 11, from 2 pm, which will include Veneration of a First Class Relic of St Carlo gifted to the Cathedral by Carlo’s mother, Antonia. The Sacrament of Confession will be available from 2 pm until Mass at 7 pm, which will be celebrated by Bishop Michael Router. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will take place in the Mother Teresa Chapel during the Celebrations. A short film on Carlo’s life will be shown in the Conference Room. Everyone is welcome to this special time.

St Carlo International Exhibition: The international exhibition of Eucharistic Miracles designed and created by St Carlo Acutis can be viewed in St Eugene’s Cathedral Hall from October 9-16. Entry is free and all are welcome.

Girls Get Together: The Home

of the Mother Servant Sisters are hosting a Get Together for Girls on October 17 at Crossroads Parochial House, Killygordon, from 1.30-6.45 pm (5.30 pm for those not attending Mass with the Sisters. There will be faith formation, games, baking, crafts and music. Suggested donation 2 Euro.

Day of Prayer: The annual Day of Prayer, Praise & Healing will take place on Sunday, November 15, in the Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh. Starting with registration at 9.30 am and ending with the celebration of Mass and Healing Service in the afternoon. The guest speaker is Fr John Keane, and the theme for the day is ‘People of God’s Delight’ (Ps 149.4). The Day is organised by Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group, which celebrates its 50th anniversary (1976-2026).

God Club: God Club is an opportunity for teenagers, aged

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

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

Service with Fr John Keane at 4 pm.

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

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

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

meeting with a theme to reflect on. The meeting is in the Search centre at Iona Business Park, Southway.

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

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

Galliagh, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. The Group will also meet in Termonbacca on the last Wednesday of every month, from 12.30-1.30 pm.

Polish Mass: Mass for the Polish community is celebrated in the Church of Christ The King, Strathroy, Omagh, on the first and third Sundays of each month at 10 am, and at 9.30 am every second and fourth Sunday in the Divine Mercy Chapel, at St Mary’s Church, Creggan, in Derry City.

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

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

Men’s Rosary: The Men’s Rosary takes place on the first Saturday of every month at Market Street, Omagh (opposite Primark) and at the side of O’Neill’s Sports Store, near Guildhall Square, at 1 pm. All Welcome!

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

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

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

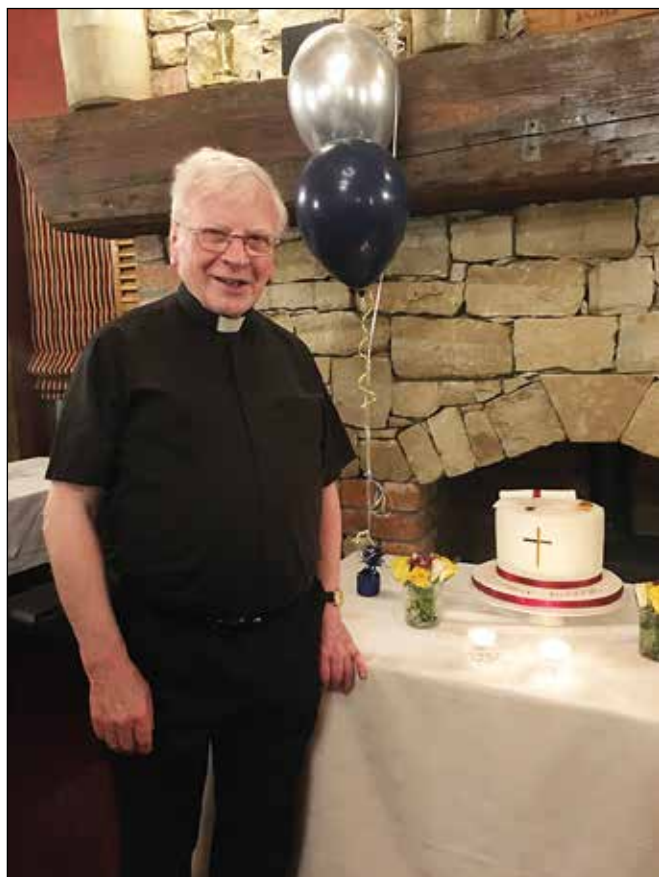
DDS Daily Masses 2025-2026

St Eugene's 17 Jan, 9 Mar, 29 Apr, 19 Jun, 9 Aug, 29 Sep, 19 Nov	Donaghmore 12 Dec 2025, 1 Feb, 24 Mar, 14 May, 4 Jul, 24 Aug, 14 Oct	Claudy 27 Dec 2025, 16 Feb, 8 Apr, 29 May 19 Jul, 8 Sep, 29 Oct	Fahan 11 Jan, 3 Mar, 23 Apr, 13 Jun, 3 Aug, 23 Sep, 13 Nov
St Columba's 18 Jan, 10 Mar, 30 Apr 20 Jun, 10 Aug, 30 Sep, 20 Nov	Termonamongan 13 Dec 2025, 2 Feb, 25 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jul, 25 Aug, 15 Oct,	Banagher 28 Dec 2025, 17 Feb, 9 Apr, 30 May 20 Jul, 9 Sep, 30 Oct	Clonmany 12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Apr, 14 Jun, 4 Aug, 24 Sep, 14 Nov
The Three Patrons 19 Jan, 11 Mar, 1 May, 21 Jun, 11 Aug, 1 Oct, 21 Nov	Langfield 14 Dec 2025, 3 Feb, 26 Mar, 16 May, 6 Jul, 26 Aug, 16 Oct,	Ballinascreen 29 Dec 2025, 18 Feb 10 Apr, 31 May 21 Jul, 10 Sep, 31 Oct	Carndonagh 13 Jan, 5 Mar, 25 Apr, 15 Jun, 5 Aug, 25 Sep, 15 Nov
St Mary's, Creggan 30 Nov 2025, 20 Jan, 12 Mar, 2 May, 22 Jun, 12 Aug, 2 Oct, 22 Nov	Sion Mills 15 Dec 2025, 4 Feb, 27 Mar, 17 May, 7 Jul, 27 Aug, 17 Oct,	Dungiven 30 Dec 2025, 19 Feb, 11 Apr, 1 Jun, 22 Jul, 11 Sep, 1 Nov	Malin 14 Jan, 6 Mar, 26 Apr, 16 Jun, 6 Aug, 26 Sep, 16 Nov
Our Lady of Lourdes 1 Dec 2025, 21 Jan, 13 Mar, 3 May, 23 Jun, 13 Aug, 3 Oct, 23 Nov	Ardstraw East 16 Dec 2025, 5 Feb, 28 Mar, 18 May, 8 Jul, 28 Aug, 18 Oct,	Limavady 31 Dec 2025, 20 Feb, 12 Apr, 2 Jun, 23 Jul, 12 Sep, 2 Nov	Iskaheen 15 Jan, 7 Mar, 27 Apr, 17 Jun, 7 Aug, 27 Sep, 17 Nov
Holy Family 2 Dec, 2025, 22 Jan, 14 Mar, 4 May, 24 Jun, 14 Aug, 4 Oct, 24 Nov	Ardstraw W & C'derg 17 Dec 2025, 6 Feb, 29 Mar, 19 May, 9 Jul, 29 Aug, 19 Oct	Magilligan 1 Jan, 21 Feb, 13 Apr, 3 Jun, 24 Jul, 13 Sep, 3 Nov	Culdaff 16 Jan, 8 Mar, 28 Apr 18 Jun, 8 Aug, 28 Sep, 18 Nov
Culmore 3 Dec 2025, 23 Jan, 15 Mar, 5 May, 25 Jun, 15 Aug, 5 Oct, 25 Nov	Clonleigh 18 Dec 2025, 7 Feb, 30 Mar, 20 May, 10 Jul, 30 Aug, 20 Oct	Coleraine 2 Jan, 22 Feb, 14 Apr, 4 Jun, 25 Jul, 14 Sep, 4 Nov	1ST FRIDAY MASS FOR LIVING MEMBERS 2025 / 2026
Glendermott 4 Dec 2025, 24 Jan, 16 Mar, 6 May, 26 Jun, 16 Aug, 6 Oct, 26 Nov	Drumragh 19 Dec 2025, 8 Feb, 31 Mar, 21 May, 11 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Oct	Garvagh 3 Jan, 23 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Jun, 26 Jul, 15 Sep, 5 Nov	Magilligan 12/5/25
Donagheady 5 Dec 2025, 25 Jan, 17 Mar, 7 May, 27 Jun, 17 Aug, 7 Oct, 27 Nov	Cappagh 20 Dec 2025, 9 Feb, 1 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jul, 1 Sep, 22 Oct	Kilrea 4 Jan, 24 Feb, 16 Apr, 6 Jun, 27 Jul, 16 Sep, 6 Nov	Granaghan 1/2/26
Leckpatrick 6 Dec 2025, 26 Jan, 18 Mar, 8 May, 28 Jun, 18 Aug, 8 Oct, 28 Nov	Greencastle 21 Dec 2025, 10 Feb, 23 May, 13 Jul, 2 Sep, 23 Oct	Greenlough 5 Jan, 25 Feb, 17 Apr, 7 Jun, 28 Jul, 17 Sep, 7 Nov	Termonamongan 2/6/26
Ardmore 7 Dec 2025, 27 Jan, 19 Mar, 9 May, 29 Jun, 19 Aug, 9 Oct	Badoney Lower 22 Dec 2025, 11 Feb, 24 May, 14 Jul, 3 Sep, 24 Oct	Bellaghy 6 Jan, 26 Feb, 18 Apr, 8 Jun, 29 Jul, 18 Sep, 8 Nov	Ardstraw West
Strathfoyle 8 Dec 2025, 28 Jan, 20 Mar, 10 May, 30 Jun, 20 Aug, 10 Oct	Badoney Upper 23 Dec 2025, 12 Feb, 25 May, 15 Jul, 4 Sep, 25 Oct	Lavey 7 Jan, 27 Feb, 19 Apr, 9 Jun, 30 Jul, 19 Sep, 9 Nov	/Castlederg 3/6/26
Camus 9 Dec 2025, 29 Jan, 21 Mar, 11 May, 1 Jul, 21 Aug, 11 Oct	Maghera 24 Dec 2025, 13 Feb, 5 Apr, 26 May, 16 Jul, 5 Sep, 26 Oct	Moville 8 Jan, 28 Feb, 20 Apr, 10 Jun, 31 Jul, 20 Sep, 10 Nov	Cappagh 4/10/26
Urney & Castlefin 10 Dec 2025, 30 Jan, 22 Mar, 12 May, 2 Jul, 22 Aug, 12 Oct	Desertmartin 25 Dec 2025, 14 Feb, 6 Apr, 27 May, 17 Jul ,6 Sep, 27 Oct	Granaghan 9 Jan, 1 Mar, 21 Apr, 11 Jun, 1 Aug, 21 Sep, 11 Nov	Donagheady 5/1/26
Mourne 11 Dec 2025, 31 Jan, 23 Mar, 13 May, 3 Jul, 23 Aug, 13 Oct	Faughanvale 26 Dec 2025, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 28 May, 18 Jul, 7 Sep, 28 Oct	Buncrana 10 Jan, 2 Mar, 22 Apr, 12 Jun, 2 Aug, 22 Sep, 12 Nov	Donaghmore 6/5/26

Forty Hours - October & November

Sun 4 Oct	Holy Rosary	Ballinascreen
Sun 4 Oct	St Eugene’s, Glenock	Newtownstewart
Sun 11 Oct	St Columba’s, Long Tower	Templemore, Derry
Sun 11 Oct	St Mary’s, Dregish	Ardstraw West & Castlederg
Sun 18 Oct	St Mary’s	Maghera
Sun 18 Oct	St Mary’s	Limavady
Sun 25 Oct	St Brigid’s, Carnhill	Three Patrons, Derry
Sun 25 Oct	Christ the King, Strathroy	Cappagh
Sun 8 Nov	St Mary’s, Melmount	Mourne
Sun 8 Nov	Our Lady of Lourdes	Steelstown
Sun 15 Nov	Sacred Heart Church	Omagh
Sun 15 Nov	St Patrick’s	Ardstraw West & Castlederg
Sun 22 Nov	Holy Family Church	Ballymagroarty
Sun 22 Nov	St Mary’s, Sessiaghoneill	Donaghmore

Praise to You, Lord Jesus Christ *Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR*



I have often heard it said: "The best way to make God laugh is to tell Him your plans." How true that is! I have been thinking about that saying a lot over the past month, especially as I prepared for and celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of my Ordination to the Priesthood. During this time, I have been remembering the story of my life and especially of my vocation. And I have been amazed at how often things turned out very differently from what I had hoped for. And yet, every time they turned out so well.

Back to the beginning

Ever since I can remember, I wanted to be a priest. Fr Paddy McGoldrick, a young priest who came to my home parish of Carndonagh, Co Donegal, as a Curate when I was an Altar Server, had a strong influence on this desire. He had just spent a few years in Australia. And he used to tell us great stories of what life was like there. As I listened to him, the ambition of my life became to get to Australia! And it seemed to my child's mind that the only way you could possibly get from Carndonagh to Australia was to become a priest! So, I would become one! It was not what you would call a very spiritual motive. But it got me thinking and acting.

Vocations promotions

A feature of life at that time was the number of priests and religious who came around the schools to talk about their vocation and their mission in the world. I can remember several who came in my years in the Primary School in Carn. I think I signed up for every one of them! They all sounded exciting and wonderful.

Another great feature of those days was the Parish Mission every few years. This was always given

by a couple of Missioners, who carried with them a great aura of excitement. Even though they were only in a parish for a couple of weeks, they were remembered for a very long time afterwards by everyone.

I still vividly remember Fr Paddy Devine and Fr Hugh McLaughlin. I have no idea what they said or did during that Mission. But I do remember them and the effect they had on me that has lasted all my life. I signed up for the Redemptorists because of them.

The Redemptorists

People sometimes ask me why I became a Redemptorist priest. The reason is very simple – the Redemptorists were the only ones who responded to my application. I am still waiting on a response from any of the others.

I began my journey with the Redemptorists when, as a 12-year-old, I went to what was then the Redemptorist Junior Seminary in Limerick. This was a Secondary Boarding School with a special emphasis on the Redemptorist way of life. The five years that I spent there could not have been better for me.

It was not always easy. But the overall impact on my life was excellent. I got a good secondary education. I met some of the best people that I could have met. I enjoyed the travelling from Donegal to Limerick twice a year for the holidays. And I ended those years in 1959, sure that this is what I wanted to do for the rest of my life – be a Redemptorist Missionary. It was no longer simply as a way of getting to Australia. There was a life's vision that made sense to me of giving my life to the spiritual service of others.

Redemptorist Formation

In August of 1959, 18 of us young

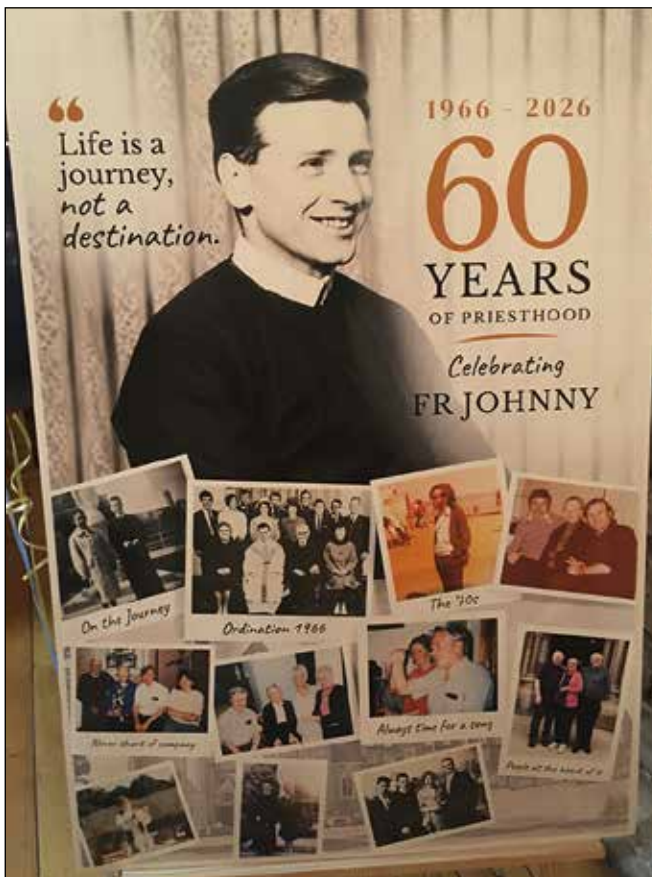
men began our novitiate in Esker, Athenry, Co Galway. It lasted 13 months, the first of these as a time of orientation, to make sure that we were in the right place! This was a spiritual year, during which we practiced the spiritual life of the Redemptorist Missionary. It was a strange time. But it was a most interesting time. We lived together as a Community, along with a Novice Master and alongside a Redemptorist Community of priests and brothers. There was a definite daily timetable, with early mornings and early nights. The days were filled with activities, both spiritual and temporal. A lot of the time we may not have fully understood what we were doing. But I learned that it is often by doing that we come to understand.

Profession

On September 27, 1960, 17 of us young men took our first vows as Redemptorists. This is called Religious Profession. It was a very joyful day, as we were joined by our families for the first time in the year. The next day, we went into the Redemptorist Seminary in Galway called Cluain Mhuire. With our presence there, the numbers of Redemptorist Students rose to exactly 100 for the first time – and for the last time – so far.

Ordination

For the next six years, we were preparing for the priesthood. It is a long time to prepare for anything. But it shows the importance for us of the priesthood, that so much time and attention is taken for it. The studies were far-ranging. The personal and spiritual development activities were essential. And I was learning that the Redemptorists were not only in Australia but in many countries around the world.



Those years were the usual series of ups and downs; highs and lows; health and sickness. There was one period in which there was a serious question as to whether I could continue or not because of sickness. Thank God, I made it through.

Then on September 18, 1966, seven of us were ordained as Redemptorist priests. It was a very exciting time for me and, indeed, for all the others. Immediately afterwards, I spent a week at home in Carndonagh celebrating with my family, friends and neighbours, the wonders of God's love. It was the first time that I was at home for seven years, so the wonder of it all was even more intense. To be a priest was what I had always wanted in life. Now that I had made it, I was determined to give it all I had.

Appointment

After Ordination, the seven of us had still to do a final year of study before our first appointment. When that year was up, four of us were appointed to Brazil, one to the Philippines, and two to stay at home. I was one of the two! I was disappointed that I was not going abroad to the Missions. But I reckoned that I had plenty of time ahead for that.

My first appointment was to St Clement's Retreat House, on the Antrim Road in Belfast. I was asked to go there for six months to replace Fr Vincent Kavanagh, who was given an important appointment that would last only for that time. I was in St Clement's for 13 years. Soon after I arrived there, the Troubles broke out and Vincent did not want to come back.

St Clement's Retreat House

That was probably the best thing that ever happened to me in my

life. In St Clement's, I learned to live very closely with the people I was working for. There were constantly people there on retreat and we shared everything with them. I also learned to work very closely with the laity, who were part of the team and of the staff. Up until then, all those close to me were Redemptorist priests and Brothers. Now I was spending my working and praying time with women and men of all ages. And it was so fresh for me. That has been a major feature of my life ever since.

Marriage Encounter

In St Clement's, I learned to be creative in ministry. St Clement's was a Retreat House for men. We began to open it up to being for married couples, engaged couples, families, as well as other groups of people with particular interests. During those early days there, we heard of Marriage Encounter, a Movement for the renewal of the Sacrament of Marriage and for promoting the vital importance of married couples in the life of the Church and in society. We pioneered the development of this in the North and gradually it spread to many parts of the world. From Marriage Encounter, our ministry spread out to those preparing for Marriage; to single people; to young people; to Religious women and men; to those who were separated and or divorced; and so on. It was a heady time, even though all of this was during the time when the North was being so seriously broken by the violence of the Troubles.

Parish Renewal

It was also from St Clement's that the Parish Renewal Movement was developed and spread. This was an

outcome of all the work that we had been doing with couples and others. It was seen that the natural base for all that we were doing was the Parish Community. This could only happen when priests – and Bishops – could take leadership in a new way – in partnership with the laity and religious of the Church.

For a few years, there was great success as this spread throughout the country and far beyond. It has now morphed into the development of Parish Pastoral Councils. It is still a work-in-hand as we struggle to accept that bishops and priests are called, not so much to 'be in charge' as to be shepherds.

This is your life

What I learned in St Clement's all those years ago has been the inspiration of all that has taken place in my life ever since I left there, in 1981. Life has taken me to many different places at home and abroad. Even though I never was appointed to the Missions, I have seen a lot of the world, not as a tourist but as a missionary. That is how I see myself now in Clonard Monastery, Belfast, as I celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of my Ordination to the priesthood and look forward to whatever happens next.

As I look back on my life at this special time, I have a lot to ask forgiveness for from God and from many people. And I do ask for that. But I have even more to thank God for, and to thank the countless wonderful people that I have met and loved over these years. And I do say 'thank you' from the bottom of my heart. Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group

Day of Prayer, Praise and Healing

Celebrating 50 years 1976 - 2026

Sunday 15th November 2026
Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh BT79 7DH

Registration 9.30am
 Holy Mass and Healing Service in Afternoon

Theme "People of God's Delight" Ps 149.4
 Speaker Fr John Keane

£40 includes morning coffee and lunch.
 Booking by Sunday 1st November essential for catering purposes.
 Please indicate any dietary requirements.

Contact Evelyn 07876 411435
or Kathleen 07596 609041

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the month of October. This month is dedicated to the 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 Mysteries; 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.



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 Our Lady for the Christian victory over the Turks at Lepanto on October 7, 1571. At that time, the Ottoman Turks were a danger to Christianity. Pope Pius asked that all Christians pray the Rosary for victory in battle. The Christians defeated the Turks in a magnificent victory, and it was immediately said that their success came through the intercession of the Blessed Virgin. Pope Pius V then dedicated this date 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 because 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.

Saints of the Month
October 1: St Thérèse of the Child Jesus (the Little Flower)
October 4: St Francis of Assisi
October 15: St Teresa of Avila
October 18: St 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.



Our Lady of Fatima
The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, appeared six times to three shepherd children (Lucia, Francisco and Jacinta) between May 13 and October 13, 1917. It was in the little village of Fatima, in Portugal, that Our Lady appeared. On September 13, 1917, Our Lady appeared for the fifth time to the children and, on this occasion, She promised that when She would return in October, a miracle would happen so that all would believe. Tens of thousands of people gathered on October 13 to await the

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

Our Lady appeared to the children as she had promised. She told them that She was the Lady of the Rosary and asked that everyone would continue to say the Rosary every day. She implored people to change their lives and stop offending God, and She asked that a chapel would be built there in her honour. By now, the rain had stopped but the sky was still dark and grey covered the sun. Our Lady turned the palms of Her hands toward the dark sky and the sun burst through the clouds. Everyone turned their eyes to the sky to witness what has



Rosary Word Scramble

Scrambled word

- lyiahmr _ _ _ _ _ Pray this 10 times
- scors _ _ _ _ _ Jesus carried this
- spmibta _ _ _ _ _ Jesus received this in the river Jordan
- teysmyr _ _ _ _ _ There are 5 of these in the rosary
- herurfato _ _ _ _ _ This prayer is done 6 times
- ererhoyoftbghtela _ _ _ _ _ This prayer is done after each decade
- eecedarsplto _ _ _ _ _ First prayer of the rosary
- ilhyounaeleq _ _ _ _ _ Last prayer of the rosary

Answers: 1. Hail Mary 2. Cross 3. Baptism 4. Mystery 5. Our Father 6. Glory be to the Father 7. Apostle Creed 8. Hail Holy Queen.

become known as the ‘Miracle of the Sun’. The people were able to gaze at the sun without damaging their eyes. The sun whirled and danced in the sky, turning everything that it touched a different colour. It spun wildly like a burning wheel and seemed to detach itself from the sky and fall towards the earth.

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

Welcome to Bishop Michael Router

On September 20, our Diocese welcomed our new Bishop, Michael Router, into the Derry Diocese and said farewell to Bishop Donal McKeown's leadership.

It is a great blessing to have a new bishop who will lead the Diocese, be in charge of all the priests in his area, and make sure that the teachings of Jesus and the Church are shared clearly and truthfully.

The bishop will travel around the

different churches celebrating Mass and administering the sacrament of Confirmation to young people. He will work closely with the Pope in Rome, who is the leader of the Catholic Church, to ensure that our parishes are always guided in the truth of God.

A bishop is easily recognised at different ceremonies for he wears a tall, pointed hat called a mitre, showing his leadership in the Church. This special pointed hat symbolises the tongues of fire from Pentecost Day, and represents the Holy Spirit descending on the apostles in Jerusalem.

The Bishop also carries a long staff called a Crosier, which is shaped like a shepherd's walking hook. This long staff reminds us that the bishop is a shepherd, who is always guiding his people to God.

We wish Bishop Donal a very happy, peaceful, retirement, and extend a warm welcome to Bishop Michael. May God bless them both.



Quiz Time with Lawrence

- How many karats represent the purest form of gold?
- In what country is the site of the ancient city of Babylon located?
- In what 2002 movie does Catherine Zeta Jones sing the song ‘All that Jazz’?
- Which British football manager has won most European Cup/Champions League titles?
- What is officially recognised as the largest town in Ireland?
- What title is currently held by Czech Republic's Linda Nosková?
- What is the most expensive property on a standard Monopoly board?
- What Chinese culinary dish is made from the hardened saliva of a swiftlet?
- Which politician's 2025 autobiography is entitled ‘107 days’?
- What country is the world's leading exporter of sugar/sugar cane?
- Which Hollywood actor famously kept a pet pig called Max?
- In which Irish county would you find the town of Naas?
- What comedian created and played the character ‘Bubbles De Veere’?
- In which iconic area of London is the National Art Gallery situated?
- What was Captain Mainwaring's Christian name in the ‘Dad's Army’ series?
- How many road signs in the UK Highway Code are octagonal in shape?
- What comic strip character was famous for his love of Cow Pies?
- What is the world's largest country to use only one time zone?
- What was Elvis Presley's middle name?
- Who became President of Ireland in 1997?
- In which US state is the city of Baltimore?
- Of which football club is former Shelbourne manager, Damien Duff now first team coach?
- By what name is Robert Prevost better known?
- ‘Al Dente’ is a cooking term usually applied to what type of food?
- From what country does ‘Emmental’ cheese originate?

Quiz Answers: 1, 24; 2, Iraq; 3, Chicago; 4, Bob Paisley (3); 5, Drogheda; 6, Wimbledon Women's Singles champion; 7, Mayfair; 8, Bird's Nest Soup; 9, Kamala Harris; 10, Brazil; 11, George Clooney; 12, Kildare; 13, Matt Lucas; 14, Trafalgar Square; 15, George; 16, One (Stop); 17, Desperate Dan; 18, China; 19, Aaron; 20, Mary McAleese; 21, Maryland; 22, Brentford; 23, Pope Leo; 24, Pasta; 25, Switzerland.

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, Dunamagagh, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,

INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION

DESIGNED AND CREATED BY

ST. CARLO ACUTIS

THE EUCHARISTIC MIRACLES OF THE WORLD

09 – 16 OCTOBER 2026

ST. EUGENE'S CATHEDRAL HALL
Infirmary Road, Derry, BT48 7ER

ALL ARE WELCOME

"Not I, but God."
ST. CARLO ACUTIS

REAL STORIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

DEEPEN YOUR FAITH

INSPIRING FOR ALL AGES

A LEGACY OF LOVE

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