

The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

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See inside...



Celebrating St Columba - Thornhill College



Inspiring Retreat - Long Tower



St Oliver Plunkett Shrine - Newtownstewart



Youth 2000 Fest - Termonbacca



We should consecrate ourselves totally to Mary so that she can mould us more perfectly into the likeness of Christ
- St Louis de Montfort

Fr Thomas Canning celebrating Mass in St Theresa's Church, Sion Mills, on the Feast of St Louis de Montfort, as part of the Legion of Mary Centenary celebrations in the Diocese

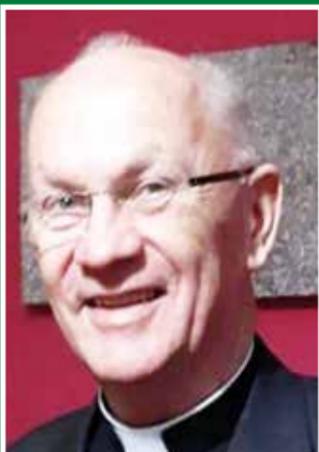


Celebrating Our Lady of Herbs - Omagh

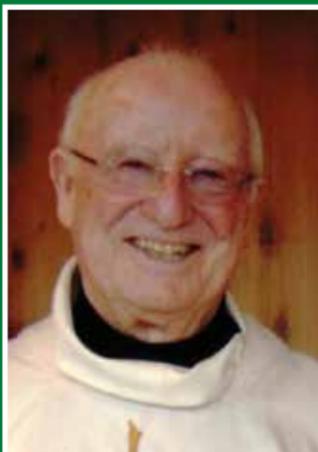


HOPE Camp 2021 - Banagher

People in focus



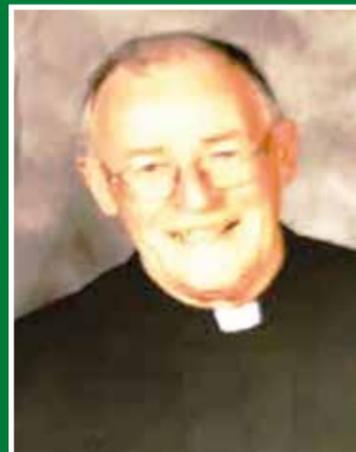
Fr Aidan Mullan RIP



Fr Patsy Mullan RIP



Mary Hamilton RIP



Mgr Ignatius McQuillan RIP



Pat Hume RIP

Also featuring: Youth Ministry News, Young Writers Section, Celebrating Season of Creation, Legion of Mary Centenary feature, Irish Section, Children's Catechism Club and much more...

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Patricia McCormack reflects on Pope Francis' prayer intention for September...

An environmentally sustainable lifestyle

"We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this"



"YOUNG people have done more in two years than the rest of us have done over three decades," said climate activist, Lorna Gold at a recent conference. For over 50 years, scientists have observed and reported on the link between fossil fuels, carbon dioxide emissions and global warming. Environmentalists have highlighted the damage to the natural world. Their reports have been largely ignored.

Our economies and politics have continued to perpetuate the myth that even more production, ever more consumption is necessary, completely ignoring the fact that the Earth has finite resources and that we are also creating huge problems of discarded waste and pollution, destroying important habitats and pushing hundreds of species to extinction.

Frustrated by politicians' lack of urgency in addressing these issues, instead of going to school, 15-year-old Greta

Thunberg sat down outside the Swedish parliament on August 20, 2018, with a simple placard that read 'Striking for Climate'. This solitary act inspired millions of pupils to voice their concern.

Until Covid-19 lockdowns, they came together in weekly 'Fridays for Future' protests as a continual reminder of the emergency, and people of all ages joined them in Global Climate Strikes calling for climate action. They created a stir and grabbed the headlines. Their achievement is acknowledged and praised by Pope Francis, whose encyclical "Laudato Si'" in 2015 was also an urgent plea to everyone on the planet to hear "the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor and to care for our common home".

Greta has Asperger's and considers it a gift which has enabled her to see the climate crisis "in black and white", while others are the strange ones for continuing with "business as usual". We are

causing climate change, we know that it threatens our very existence...so why are we not acting to stop it now?

She is a prophetic voice speaking uncompromising truth to those in power and boldly challenging self interest. Like many young people, she is also wholeheartedly committed and honest in reducing her own carbon footprint. When invited to address rallies of young people, politicians and world leaders in Poland, Brussels, Davos, London and New York, she has consistently stuck to her principles by not flying, eating a vegan diet and wearing second hand clothes from charity shops.

A few minutes answering some simple questions on diet, heating and travel can give a personal carbon footprint score on websites such as :- <https://carbon-calculator.climatehero.me/>

This exercise is worth doing to highlight where to make a start to live more sustainably. It is a sobering and challenging fact that the average personal carbon footprint in Ireland is 100 times greater than that of someone in less well off parts of the world.

We can avoid making choices for a simple and sustainable lifestyle, complaining that the information is confusing, debating the effectiveness of various actions or arguing that others should be doing more. News coverage of flooding, extreme heat waves and wildfires, and the recent

IPCC Report - "Red alert for humanity"- should shake us out of our complacency. We pray that we can have the courage to change.

What will sustain us in our efforts to live simply?

A sense of justice. Loving my neighbour as myself. My neighbour now includes those most impacted by climate change and pollution, who have often contributed the least to cause it. Concern for future generations.

A sense of wonder and belonging. We are part of a magnificent, fascinating web of life. We can experience and appreciate the infinite beauty and love of God in all of nature, choosing to protect and nurture rather than to selfishly exploit.

A sense of togetherness. We can challenge, encourage and support each other to live more sustainably. We are greatly influenced by the people closest to us: A vegetarian son or daughter; the neighbours who don't mow and let the dandelions grow for the bees; a workmate who buys an electric car; the friend who uses public transport; the friend who goes out of their way to buy Fair Trade products; the person who organises tree planting or a beach cleanup; someone who lobbies and campaigns. These, and many others, can all nudge us to think more deeply. We can find like-minded people, do something together and



Patricia McCormack, Culmore, of the Derry Diocesan Laudato Si' Group.

achieve something good. We can even surprise ourselves and enjoy it!

A sense of joy and freedom. A simpler life can bring greater peace and freedom, as many experienced when we were forced to slow down in the past year and we rediscovered the important things in life.

We pray that we will have the courage to change.

(Patricia lives in the Parish of Culmore and is a member of the Derry Diocesan Laudato Si' Group, which can be contacted by email at: laudatosiderry@gmail.com)



St Teresa of Calcutta by Mary McMenamin



St Teresa of Calcutta.

SEPTEMBER 5 has been named the 'International Day of Charity', which also marks the Feast Day of St Mother Teresa of Calcutta. She was an exceptional woman and a living saint, who offered a great example and inspiration

to the world. She is renowned worldwide for her dedication to the poorest of the poor on the streets of Calcutta.

She was born on August 26, 1910, in North Macedonia. When she was 18, Mother Teresa travelled to Ireland and joined the Loreto Order of nuns, who also had missions in India. After spending some time in Ireland with the Order, she then travelled to India, where her mission began. Some years later, Mother Teresa felt 'a call within a call', a message that told her to leave the convent and help the poor by living among them.

After receiving permission, she then spent the rest of her life serving the poor and destitute in Calcutta and founded 'The Missionaries of Charity', a congregation devoted to helping those in

need.

During one of her speeches, Mother Teresa told the crowd, "Hunger today is not only for bread. Hunger today is to be loved". Another quote which I have heard many times is, "Not all of us can do great things, but we can do small things with great love".

Mother Teresa's whole life was influenced by her faith and religion, even though at times she confessed she didn't feel the presence of God.

She often spoke out against abortion and called it the greatest threat to world peace because it "destroys two lives, the life of the child and the conscience of the mother".

She also said: "Let us thank our parents for wanting us, for loving us, for giving us the joy of living. You are priceless to God Himself."

Mother Teresa had a great devotion to Our Lady and to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. She started each day with a Holy Hour and Holy Mass.

She said, "My answer is prayer, what we need is for every parish to come before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament in Holy hours of prayer. The time you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament will help to bring about an everlasting peace on Earth".

I thought I would finish off by sharing some very special words written by St Mother Teresa...

People are often unreasonable, illogical and self centered; Forgive them anyway.

If you are kind, people may accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives; Be kind anyway.

If you are successful, you will win some false friends and some true enemies; Succeed anyway.

If you are honest and frank, people may cheat you; Be honest and frank anyway.

What you spend years building, someone could destroy overnight; Build anyway.

If you find serenity and happiness, they may be jealous; Be happy anyway.

The good you do today, people will often forget tomorrow; Do good anyway.

Give the world the best you have, and it may never be enough;

Give the world the best you've got anyway.

You see, in the final analysis, it is between you and your God; It was never between you and them anyway.

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
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Great sense of hope and joy felt by Derry youths at Y2K Summer Festival

HOPES are high of a Youth 2000 prayer group being established in Derry following a very successful gathering at Termonbacca, for the faith group's summer festival.

The Carmelite Retreat Centre was one of the satellite venues used by Youth 2000 for its festival this year, which was also streamed live on-line from the main venue in Kildare because of the continuing restrictions regarding Covid-19.

Sinead Gaffney, from Cavan, was the main leader at the festival gathering in Termonbacca, which saw the 10 Youth 2000 leaders joined by 30 retreatants over the course of the weekend, and she told 'The Net' that she was delighted at how well it went.

"Although the numbers were restricted, there was a fantastic sense of community," said Sinead, adding: "Over the last two years, the community aspect of worship has been really affected, so my personal feeling was that there was a lot of hope on the horizon."

"The young people who came along from the Derry Diocese had no experience of Youth 2000, and they expressed surprise that there

were so many other young people practising their faith. They said that they felt a great sense of hope and joy from being at the festival.

"Normally it's residential, but we couldn't do that this time with Covid, so I was interested to see how many would get up out of their beds at home to be in at the retreat for 10 am, and I got a great surprise when I opened the door in the morning and saw them all standing there, waiting to get in. The conversation, fellowship and joy were great, and I have big hopes for a group setting up in Derry."

Commenting on the on-line aspect, she said: "We are able to provide some form of retreat on-line but you can't beat an in-person retreat. With a regular number of 30 young people for each day of the retreat, there was a sense of community and it was wonderful to see."

"Termonbacca was a lovely venue, overlooking the River Foyle, and we were blessed with lovely weather, so we were able to go outside for a walk and chat in the fresh air. I was really heartened by it all".

One of the highlights of the weekend, remarked Sinead, was the request from a couple of young people for support in setting up a Youth 2000 Prayer Group in Derry: "I had been praying about this myself during the weekend and had talked to Bishop Donal about it, and I was going to approach the young people before we finished up, but a couple of them came to me first to ask about support to set up a prayer group in Derry, which was great!"

"There were up to 15 young people from the Derry Diocese amongst those taking part in the Festival, some were from the City and others from just over the border, in Donegal. Both the Carmelites and Bishop Donal said that they would do their best to support the setting up of a group there, so the hope now is to set one up in Termonbacca, with the young people saying that they were happy with it as a location for the group."

"We have set up a Whatsapp group including everyone from the Derry Diocese who expressed interest in a prayer group being



established there, and the young people have been texting to say that they were overjoyed by their experience. My mission now is to keep that momentum going so that when we do have the foundations in place, we will be ready to go with the group, which we hope to have up and running now in September".

She added: "With the people from Derry not having had experience of leading a prayer group, we will be supporting them in the early stages. Music ministry is an important part of the experience and one girl has said that she would be happy to

lead this. Maria Doherty, our national music co-ordinator, is from Buncrana, so she will be able to help with this too".

Sinead concluded by recalling that Bishop Donal, in his homily for the closing Mass of the weekend, had said that the Church will be renewed by young people: "He spoke about St Francis of Assisi and Thérèse of Lisieux, and said that it is actually the young people who will renew the Church".

Expressing his support for the establishment of a Youth 2000 Prayer Group in Termonbacca, the prior, Fr Stephen, who had helped

with the celebration of Mass and hearing Confessions over the Festival weekend, told 'The Net': "I know several people who have experienced Youth 2000. It is one of the few movements in Ireland that actually evangelises young people. It involves the young themselves encouraging their peers to follow the Lord in this day and age. So, if they want to use our facilities for their prayer group, they are more than welcome".

For further information about the start date for the prayer group contact Youth 2000 or Termonbacca on 028 71262512.



Youth ministry a priority for Termonbacca's new retreat facilitator

THE Carmelite Fathers at the Iona Retreat House, at Termonbacca, in Derry, have recently appointed a Retreat Facilitator to help develop and bring to fruition its pastoral plans as society emerges from the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Taking on the challenge is the very capable, Aoife O'Neill, who brings with her the experience gained in her pastoral role with 'The Three Patrons' Parish, in the City, and from her time in the Derry Cursillo Secretariat, as well as from her leadership role within the 'Blessed is She' prayer group based at Termonbacca.

Speaking to 'The Net' after her first week in the position, Aoife talked about how her role will involve planning and facilitating retreats: "As well as creating and running our own retreats, we will be accommodating groups that had come for day retreats before the Covid-19 lockdowns, such as parish groups and the Legion of Mary. People can also book in for private retreats. With the current Covid restrictions, we can accommodate 32 for residential

and up to 40 for non-residential." She added: "My particular outreach is to young people; to build up youth ministry, and to the marginalised, as a pastoral response to the mental health crisis in the City."

"We will consider all kinds of retreats to get the Centre used to its maximum potential, and we will be looking at the Carmelite tradition to see how we can make that relatable today".

Hitting the ground running, Aoife started off by leading retreats in the primary schools of the 'Three Patrons' Parish, preparing the children who have now moved into Year 5 for their First Holy Communion this month. With the children unable to make their First Communion as usual in Year 4 because of the Covid-19 restriction, the retreat served as a refresher after the summer break.

"We practised receiving the Host and I talked to them about transubstantiation and the parts of the Mass," said Aoife, who aims to contact all the primary and post primary schools in the

Diocese regarding school retreats throughout the year.

With much foundation work to do initially, Aoife remarked: "It will be trial and error to see what people want".

She added: "We have just had a 'Blessed is She' retreat led by Sisters from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, which was fantastic. People are just glad to be able to come together again and to take that time out and catch their breath. There was a lot of relief amongst the women to be on retreat. Social distancing measures were in place, but they said it still felt like they were coming back to some kind of normality".

The 'Blessed is She' group will resume its Sunday night meetings in October, while Cursillo is back for its friendship gathering on Wednesday nights in Termonbacca, and the Matt Talbot Group meets on Tuesday nights. The Third Order of Discalced Carmelites will also be starting back again soon.

Delighted at the news that Youth 2000 is preparing to start a Prayer

Group in Derry, which is to be based in Termonbacca, Aoife said: "I am really happy about the plans for a Youth 2000 Prayer Group to be set up here. I think the youth of the City and the Diocese need more opportunities to be able to come together with other young people who are trying to live the faith".

Excited about the potential opportunities for the Carmelites to minister to more people through the appointment of a Retreat Facilitator, the prior, Fr Stephen Quinn said: "Aoife will try and encourage as many new people as she can to encounter our Retreat House. We want to attract Catholic groups to come on retreat here and have an encounter with God."

"Aoife will be reaching out to young people, to those who have mental health issues, such as addiction, and to people on the margins of society. All of this ties in with the pastoral developments at Termonbacca".

Remarking that Aoife had a difficult task ahead of her, Fr Stephen continued: "We are

starting from ground level. Termonbacca has had very little online presence, so Aoife will put together a website for the House and reach out via social media, making people aware of what we do here, of the Carmelite spirituality, and encourage some on-line prayer.

"We also want to find out what lay-people are interested in, regarding faith, and look into providing that here at Termonbacca. It's an exciting time and we look forward to welcoming more and more people to our House for some special time with the Lord."



Aoife O'Neill, the newly appointed Retreat Facilitator at the Carmelite Retreat House, Termonbacca, Derry.

Banagher’s inaugural HOPE Camp a ray of hope for return of week of faith, fun and friendship in 2022

A RAY of hope for the return of the week-long faith, fun and friendship HOPE Camps in the Diocese, next summer, has shone with the successful holding of a two-day inaugural camp in the parish of Banagher, as it joined the ‘Help-Our-Parish-Evolve’ initiative.

The Banagher Parish had been gearing up to launch its first HOPE Camp in the summer of 2020, but the hard-working committee had to put its plans on hold due to COVID-19, so the members were delighted to be able to host the inaugural camp for two days in August 2021.

They were able to welcome 65 young people from the parish to the camp, thanks to the strong support of the parish community, through sponsorship, volunteering and organisational help.

Activities enjoyed over the two days included sports, dance, art and crafts, baking and teen gym, and there was a warm Banagher welcome for the guest speaker, Meabh Carlin, who talked about her faith journey, and also for Bishop Donal when he came along on the second day to celebrate Mass, during which the young people took an active part.

Buoyed up by the success of the two-day inaugural Camp, the Banagher HOPE committee is now looking forward to hosting a week-long camp in 2022, and to watching the camp evolve and grow over the next number of years.

“We were delighted to have the chance to demonstrate to our youth how important they are to the parish, and to strengthen their faith and their links to our community,” said the Committee, adding: “We look forward to seeing them all realise their full potential in the future and welcoming them back as volunteers at future camps!”

The very first HOPE Camp was held in the parish of Limavady, and one of the founding members and driving forces with regards its success, Leo McCloskey, welcomed another parish on board.

“The success of the short HOPE Camp in Banagher,” he said, “gave the HOPE movement a welcome

injection of enthusiasm. The neighbouring groups in Claudy and Limavady are already busy planning a week of activities for the summer of 2022. Adding to the excitement is the potential of another camp starting in the Diocese next year.”

Noting that the various groups will meet centrally in September to plan a week of faith, fun and friendship, Leo remarked: “Together, the camps will be planning their faith formation and agreeing a central theme for the week in each camp. As always, the message to the young people will be simple and delivered in a way that is age appropriate.

“HOPE prides itself on the fact that the young people involved in the camp really enjoy the faith formation activities”.

He continued: “When the pandemic eases, the various groups will begin the arduous task of fundraising. The week costs £10 per child, but it costs about £60 per child to run the camp. This is the beauty of HOPE. Raising the money requires groups to organise family friendly fun raising events, which brings the parish together.

“In the various parishes, the groups have been overwhelmed by the generosity of businesses and families who have all bought into the wonderful ethos of HOPE.

“As Bishop Donal put it, ‘HOPE is a wonderful example of ordinary people working together to do extraordinary things.’”

In his homily during the celebration of Mass at the Banagher Camp, Bishop Donal spoke to the young people about the achievements of 13-year-old Olympic skateboarding medallist, Sky Brown, highlighting how, while most teenagers are told just

to have fun, she has had to be “disciplined, give up a lot of things, and do many things that she didn’t want to because she believed that she could become one of the world’s best at her sport”.

He then went on to speak to them about the Sacrament of Confirmation and the prayer for the Holy Spirit to come and “renew the face of the earth”, saying: “God wants to renew the face of the earth through generous, idealistic young hearts”.

Bishop Donal also talked about Sr Clare Crockett, whose story is portrayed in the film, ‘All or Nothing’. He told the young people how the young Derry girl had gone from “wanting to be a film star to being a poor young nun”, who worked with children in Ecuador and died in an earthquake there doing what she had come to love, and ended up “being the star of a film about her choosing not to be a film star!”

The Bishop spoke as well of Blessed Carlo Acutis, the young Italian teenager who died of leukaemia and whose Feast Day is October 12. He highlighted Carlo’s love for Jesus in the Eucharist, and how he had used the internet to spread his faith through documenting Eucharistic miracles around the world on the website he created - miracolieucaristici.org.

Assuring the young people sitting before him that they too were called to be saints, Bishop Donal encouraged them to “dream of becoming a saint”.

“Do something really amazing with your life – become a saint!” he said, adding that that was “even more important than winning a bronze medal in the Olympics!”





Banagher to host mini Mission

THE Banagher Parish is to host a three-day mission from Monday, October 25 to Wednesday, October 27, on the theme 'Faith, Hope & Love'. The Mission will be led by Fr Dominic McGrattan, chaplain of Queen's University.

THIS month, Hollie, Peter, Zara and John, 'The Net' youth contributors from the Co Tyrone, Inishowen, Co Derry and Derry City Deaneries, have again written about issues of interest to them in our Church and the world.

John and Hollie share their thoughts on caring for the environment, as the Season of Creation gets underway and in response to Pope Francis' prayer intention for September – that "we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this."

Zara reflects on Mary, the Mother of God, and Peter writes about World Youth Day and Pope Francis as a great champion of the young.

Hollie also shares her experience of walking a section of the Sli Cholmcille during the summer, which is being developed by the Raphoe Diocese. Hollie was part of a small group of walkers who joined Bishop Donal in walking out the old Derry railway line, along the River Foyle, to meet Bishop Alan McGuckian, of the Raphoe Diocese, as he approached the City with the small group accompanying him on the Colmcille Camino.



Hollie Frystal,
Co Tyrone Deanery.



Oisín Mulhern,
Co Derry Deanery.



Peter Grant,
Inishowen Deanery.



Gemma Gallagher, Derry
City Deanery



John Augustine Joseph,
Derry City Deanery.



Zara Schlindwein,
Derry City Deanery.

People of the future by Peter Grant

POPE Francis has given praise to all young people during the celebration of International Youth Day on August 12, saying that young people across the world can bring about a more just and equal society and world for the poor and needy.

The theme of this year's International Youth Day was 'Transforming Food Systems: Youth Innovation for Human and Planetary Health', highlighting the success of the transformation of food systems with the help of the young people in our world.

However, the UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres stated that these young people cannot carry on this by themselves, saying that they "need allies to make sure

they are engaged, included and understood," during the tough challenges that all young people have faced during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In the Church, we also celebrate World Youth Day highlighting all the good that the young people do to transform our world for the better, and come together to help others.

Pope Francis has always stood up for young people and backed them all the way, showing an example to other world organisations, such as the UN, in thanking and appreciating what all young people have achieved, and on the beginning of many other achievements that they can attain in the future.



Lockdown walks helped us see damage of our actions on environment by Hollie Frystal



DURING the month of September, Pope Francis has shared his universal intention: "An environmentally sustainable lifestyle." The Holy Father prays that "We will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this."

Coinciding with the Season of Creation, we ought to pray in thanksgiving to God the Father who created each and every one of us in His image and likeness, and to ask for the grace to help enrich our relationships with one another and to 'care for our common home' (Laudatio Si).

In his September prayer

intention video, Pope Francis said: "It makes me very happy to see that young people have the courage to undertake projects for environmental and social improvement, since the two go together."

What I found interesting was the Pope saying "the two go together", because this is a clear, constant connection and intention of Pope Francis', deeply rooted in his Papal vocation.

For example, His Holiness chose the name 'Francis' inspired by the Patron Saint of the environment, 'St Francis of Assisi'. He also expresses his deep concern and interest on 'Care for our Common Home' and 'Fraternity and Social Friendship' in his published encyclicals of 'Laudato Si' and 'Fratelli Tutti'.

Additionally, last month Pope Francis requested prayers for his August intention: 'Church on the Way - an invitation to work for a transformation of the Church'. This intention also echoes with the Holy Father's chosen Papal name, as St Francis of Assisi was called by God to "Go rebuild my Church", and as we know Pope Francis is striving to knock down a 'Clerical Church' and rebuild a 'Synodal Church.'

Personally, I believe that Pope Francis is an excellent role model, as he proves to be active, making an effort, determined, knowledgeable and mindful of the

present day situations. He clearly represents that "environmental and social improvements" are needed and do go hand-in-hand.

The natural beauty of God's creation is often overlooked and taken for granted. Although, during the lockdowns I noticed that the majority of people wanted to get outside for fresh air and to go walking. We were faced with the real world, an adventure, and admiration for going outdoors and viewing scenery.

The impact of our mistakes also became visible when we noticed the damage we have been causing to our environment through our actions. Likewise, we have also identified some issues that need attention in order to improve our relationships, especially our responsibility towards those who are most in need and find themselves on the peripheries of society.

To conclude, I agree that we

must pray this month especially "to make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle".

I believe that we are capable of looking after the environment if that requires recycling, reusing products, etc. As well, we ought to make an effort with one another, as brothers and sisters of Christ, to look after and support each other by welcoming, respecting, accepting and understanding people from all walks of life. In particular, at this present moment, we must pray for refugees and asylum seekers, that they will find safety and experience a warm welcome.

On September 11, I will recite the Rosary at 11:30 am on Shalom World. You can find the link on the Derry Diocesan webpage, and we will be praying together for Pope Francis' intention for the month of September



Catholic faith the foundation on which to combat climate change by John Augustine Joseph

IN the past, I wrote an article about climate change and the preservation of our environment and how this relates to the Catholic faith. In it, I emphasised the point that if we order our lives towards God, we will become more capable to combat climate change. However, in today's world, this message (a crucial message) is not even considered.

A few days ago, I was watching a debate for a foreign nation's Parliamentary elections. Unlike other political debates, this debate was not between the politicians representing the various parties, but rather two electors debating a set topic. The topic happened to be climate change.

In the background, politicians sat and listened to the arguments being said back and forth by the electors. On the one side, there was a 19-year-old climate activist and on the other, there was a coal miner, in his late 30s. It could not have been a greater contrast.

The aim was for the politicians to understand what the electorate wanted. What I found interesting about this debate was the arguments put forth by the electors. They both were afraid

of the uncertainty of the future. For the 19-year-old, it was the uncertainty of the climate and the changing environment, and for the coal miner, it was the lack of job security.

One would think that for such an important thing as climate change, people would be willing to put aside their differences and unite to preserve what we have, as many did during WWII. However, even though the two electors agreed that climate change was a problem that had to be addressed, they were unable to unite because they were uncertain, not of what they had in common but of what was to come for them if they did, or did not, react to climate change.

In the many conversations that we have, or listen to, about climate change, we are led to a stalemate between the preservation of Earth for future generations and the destruction of the economy. Now, this dichotomy doesn't do justice to the huge variety of opinions but neither side are willing to answer the main problem.

What is this problem? We do not have a foundation upon which we can combat climate

change. What is this foundation then? I believe this foundation is the Catholic faith. Why is this? Our faith is, by its nature, a very difficult one to live out. As one person remarked, we are not a faith of the respectable, but a faith of saints and sinners. Its purpose is also very simple, to allow a person to know his Creator, God, and thereby be in eternal union with Him, aka, Salvation.

These are not very easy tasks, but in trying to do so, our lives are changed. Everything in a sense becomes a 'good fight' to live out the faith (2 Timothy 4:7). In understanding this, we gain a certainty with which we can then combat climate change effectively and efficiently.

We are at a crucial time, in

which, if we do not do anything about this climate catastrophe now, we will have to face a future that is simply too depressing to even state in words. As I said in my previous article about climate change, this is not just a result of human action but of human indifference, which came as a result of our distancing from God and pursuing mammon instead.

For all that we have seemed to gain, we have lost much, because we neglected to have a strong foundation; that is our faith.

Preserving the earth is a noble task, a Christian task, but trying to preserve it without the help of the Creator is not efficient. I pray that more people will recognise this and act upon it.



The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Creation_of_Adam)

Mary, Mother of God *by Zara Schlindwein*

Motherhood has always been a sacred and noble vocation that can have its challenges, yet be filled with joys as well. It is a mother's grace and wisdom that evokes a child's enthusiasm to bear resemblance to these qualities.

Like every child, Jesus sought to do so. Mary, the Mother of God, plays an important role throughout Christian history. The Holy Trinity always sounds rather male dominated, as there is a Father, a Son and the Holy Spirit. However, it is important to note the essential role of Mary in the Word becoming flesh.

During the era in which she lived, a woman who became pregnant out of wedlock would have been terrified. There were very few options for someone in her situation. Girls would probably have had to leave their homes and their families. And so, Mary would have faced extreme challenges by staying and having the baby, yet she decided to do so anyway.

It is because of her strength and courage that Jesus was born and raised in Palestine, where He would start and complete His mission.

Jewish women in first century Palestine also had very limited legal and economic rights. There were very few times when they would have any sense of financial autonomy. So, it would have been an incredibly difficult environment for Mary to even consider going against the normality of the times. Despite this, she persevered and became the Mother of God.

After Jesus was born, Mary sought to look after and care for Him for the rest of His life. We can see this in the writings about the Nativity, or when they fled from Herod's rage, and when she and Joseph found Jesus in the Temple. In John's Gospel, she is also placed at the Crucifixion; Mary stands with the disciples, and she and John are entrusted to one another's care by the dying

Jesus from the Cross.

Mary is often depicted as the 'Mother of Sorrows'; there are interpretations of her as a woman in tears laid low by grief. John's Gospel even refers to the Crucifixion as a laborious birth; something that Mary would have had to endure as the Mother of Jesus.

She is a perfect symbol of love and light within the Church, being called the 'first believer,' and the patron saint of all humanity. Scripture paints her as the embodiment of God's mercy, who forgives and protects anyone who seeks help, by interceding their prayers.

She is reported to have been a compassionate, solicitous and warm-hearted trailblazer, who loved her Son and stood by Him, no matter what. These qualities can sometimes be overruled by her divine perfection and purity, and this can make her less relatable to people.

Although Mary is represented

as young and obedient, she was a woman with a beautiful faith, who loved God deeply and wasn't afraid to let her trust in God shine throughout her life.

In my opinion, kindness and empathy are some of the most effective and powerful attributes that anyone can possess, whilst being qualities traditionally associated with women. Mary showed great kindness and empathy throughout her entire life, all whilst being the Mother of God. Her strength helped create the foundation on which Christianity was built, and so she should be an inspiration to us all.

So, as I reflect on Mary's courage and selflessness, her story is filled with many reasons to respect and honour her.

Saint Thérèse of Lisieux once said: "The loveliest masterpiece of the heart of God is the heart of a mother." And I believe that is true. May we love and respect our mothers, for they are trailblazers, just like Mary.



Hollie writes about celebrating 1500th anniversary of St Colmcille... Inspired by Columba's life and legacy, Ireland is striving to establish a Celtic Camino in his name!

ON Thursday, July 15, I walked part of Slí Cholmcille, also known as 'St Colmcille's Way', accompanied by my mum and sister as we set off from the old railway line in Derry with Bishop Donal, Martin and Joe, who are members of the Columba Community, and John, my fellow youth writer from the Derry City Deanery.

The pilgrimage was an excellent opportunity to practically live out the concept of 'Synodality', which enabled us to 'walk together' without distraction; to listen, encounter and discern what God is asking of us and where He is calling us to be. We 'walked together' out to meet the Raphoe Diocese walking group led by Bishop Alan McGuckian, at Carrigans, and from there we 'walked together' back to Derry. It was a lovely experience!

Slí Cholmcille begins in Glencolmcille before passing



The Derry walkers meeting at St Columba's Church, Long Tower, before setting off to meet the Donegal group walking the Slí Cholmcille.

through Ardara, Dungloe, Gweedore, Magheraroarty, Tory Island, Ray High Cross, Ards, Gartan, Letterkenny, Raphoe, and Derry, finishing at Shroove.

The Raphoe pilgrims completed the 12 day walk, and on their 11th day the Derry group walked out to meet and welcome them.

I noted three important key

points from my experience. First of all, on pilgrimage we meet different people from all walks of life and experience the most interesting, valuable and unique conversations.

When embarking upon the walk from St Columba's, Long Tower, I remember speaking with Joe about the journey ahead.

Joe said something that struck me when he spoke about the connection between life's journey, the concept of 'Synodality' and Slí Cholmcille. In summary, he said that nowadays we all can be so anxious about getting from 'A to B', rather than enjoying the journey in between.

It's such a plain and simple point which speaks volumes. Personally, I have noticed that I learn a lot more and create stronger friendships whilst on pilgrimage. I suppose there isn't much distraction or the constant demand for attention given to social media. We are faced with real people, real conversations and the space to let conversations bloom, grow and flourish.

Secondly, 'St Colmcille's Way' prompted me to think about our Celtic roots and our future. Before our Synodal Pathway had commenced this year, we discovered that the Catholic Church in Ireland was built upon the strainful but privileged work of many men and women, young and old. Communities who 'walked together' near and far to bring Christ to those who longed to hear the Good News; such as Columbanus, Aédan, Colmán, Finian, Patrick, Bridget and, particularly, our Patron Saint of Derry, St Colmcille, who famously established many monasteries. Notably, his first located in Derry and the large bulk of his exceptional and successful missionary work is associated with his foundation at

Iona.

I have learnt of numerous qualities and values possessed by our Irish saints/peregrini that have been difficult to achieve in today's world. For example, listening to one another and talking to one another. Thankfully, we are striving to implement these practices/exercises into our preparation towards our first ever Irish National Synod on the theme 'Synodality: Communion, Mission and Participation'.

The third point I noted from my experience of Slí Cholmcille, was that St Colmcille is widely commemorated and celebrated by all Christian Churches in Ireland. He is an excellent role model for Christian unity.

At the end of our pilgrimage, we concluded with an ecumenical prayer service, with the prayerful request of St Cholmcille to be at the heart of our intercessions. We are reminded that we are all Christians and children of God. Interestingly, we share the same roots, which I hope will serve as a peaceful reminder of our shared Christian faith and what amazing things we can do, if we 'walk together' and build upon that foundation.



Hollie with Bishop Donal and Bishop Alan McGuckian, Raphoe Diocese.



Hollie was joined by her mother and younger sister on the walk.





Celebrating the Season of Creation

WITH the liturgical Season of Creation underway, from September 1 until the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, October 4, many Christians around the world are taking the opportunity to consider their role in caring for our common home, as encouraged by Pope Francis.

The Holy Father's prayer intention for the month of September is for an environmentally sustainable lifestyle, and a number of people from across the Diocese have shared their thoughts on this here.

The Pope's prayer intention reads as follows...

"We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this."

To help celebrate the Season of Creation, the Irish Catholic Bishops' website has some excellent resources for use in parishes, schools and in the home - www.catholicbishops.ie/2021/07/21/season-of-creation-2021/

The call to live simply so that others can simply live is a practical outworking of our faith *by Bishop Donal*

WHEN 'Laudato Si' was published in 2015, some people criticised it as 'New Age' or an unwarranted attack on the western economic system. Some saw it as a dangerous side issue when there were far more important theological issues for the Church to be concerned with.

However, recent extreme weather conditions in different parts of the world suggest that Pope Francis was very far-seeing. Whatever the origin of the climatic problems, we cannot ignore what is happening.

But Pope Francis is keen that we do not just address this as a practical problem. The Church of Jesus is not merely a gathering of angry social activists.

That is why we now have a 'Season of Creation' each year, which goes from the beginning of September until the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, on October 4. The purpose of this month is to help us develop a theology and a spirituality of 'care for our common home'.

'Laudato Si' follows the simple approach of See, Judge, Act. It begins with an examination of the reality that we face. The process then uses the eyes of faith to assess where we are. And the third element brings us beyond the 'paralysis of analysis' and make

suggestions as to how we might act in the real circumstances of today.

The Pope's encyclical also invites us to take an in-depth look at why we are facing ecological problems. He puts much of it down to two things:

- The value that is placed on everything by a merely scientific and financial outlook. This is a critique of our economic system – and will not be welcome by those who benefit from that system;

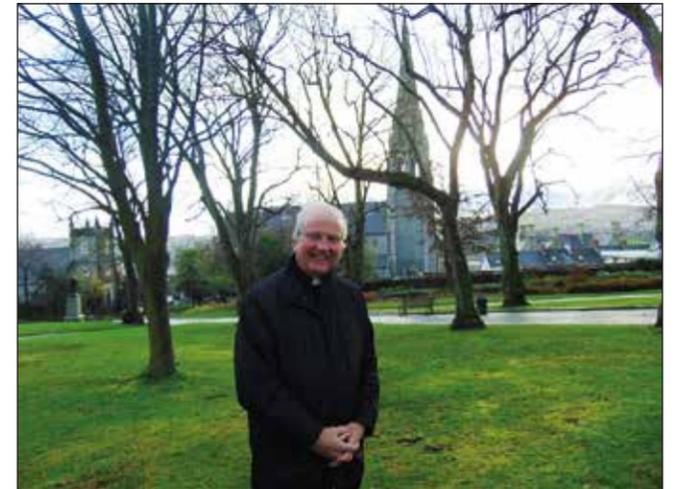
- The consumerist culture of individualism. The market needs me to 'obey my thirst'. This will not be welcome by those who reject any moral guidance and demand 'the right to choose' in every area of life.

This critique of the consumerist system is an invitation to a turning away from a destructive way of behaving.

But Pope Francis is offering a theology and not merely the solution to a social problem. Key elements in our theology of Creation include:

- An awareness that this is God's creation, not ours. We will be accountable for how we have used it well or selfishly;

- A Christian awareness that our actions should serve the Common Good and not just our personal interests. Otherwise, it is always the poor who will suffer the



most. We are our brother's keeper. Whatever we do to the least of Jesus' brothers and sisters, we do to Him.

This all calls for 'an ecological conversion'...an acceptance that we are responsible for the result of our action.

Pope Francis quotes what Pope Benedict XVI said in 2005 – "The external deserts of the world are growing because the internal deserts have become so vast". (Cf Laudato Si, note 152).

Thus, the Pope's prayer intention for has two elements. He asks us to pray that we will, as individuals, families and parishes, make choices that are sustainable. Only thus will our children and grandchildren have a balanced world in which

to live. He knows that the Church will be renewed by young people of faith. He wants us to ensure that their enthusiastic commitment to a healthy environment is rooted in a Christian spirituality and not just in youthful enthusiasm.

I hope that our parishes will develop ways of sharing this theology, responding in both prayerful and practical ways. There is lots of material available to nourish both of these on the Irish bishops' website (www.catholicbishops.ie).

The call to live simply so that others can simply live is a practical outworking of our faith. 'Laudato Si' is about our eternal destiny and not just about the weather!

As young people we are happy to help foster more sustainable living *by Search Youth Group*



AS young people, we know the importance of looking after our environment; you only have to take a glance at the world to see the melting polar ice caps or the rise in forest fires, or the erratic changes in the weather, to see the devastating impact that climate change is having.

The weather is getting more unpredictable and dangerous and this is what motivates us to make

more courageous choices.

We continue to pray for our world and the gift that it is, and the many miracles that happen each day, and we give thanks to God for every day we spend on Earth. Our hope is that those in power will wake up and give climate change the attention that it needs before it is too late.

As young people, we are willing to step forward and volunteer,

and try help make changes in our community, whether that be big or small changes.

We want to foster more sustainable living. We give thanks for this prayer intention. We want our future to be bright and full of opportunities and we want to be heard.

One of the changes that we have seen due to lockdown over the last year is that our beaches and shared

spaces have been cleaner. We are grateful for this and we encourage our communities to maintain this level of cleanliness by disposing appropriately of their wastage.

We want to be able to continue to enjoy the undeniable beauty that this island has to offer, but we can only do this if everyone plays their part.

We give thanks for our community at Search, for our commitment to walking more, recycling, reducing our single use plastics and for reducing our water wastage.

At Search, we echo the importance of 'simple living' and focus our attention on connections and prayer and less on the material world. We feel that this helps motivate us to make "courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle".

Together, we will always continue the conversation around our environment and we hope to inspire others to make the changes needed to create a healthier environment for us all to live in.

Let's stop and reflect on cost of our cravings on the world *by Anne McNamee*

OUR precious planet earth is at risk. It is up to all of us to accept and take responsibility for the way we treat our common home.

God has given us a beautiful world to live in. No two insects, birds, flowers, animals or humankind are the same.

We all strive to have the latest fashion, the latest gizmo and the latest food fad. Let us stop and reflect on what cost these cravings are having on our world.

How many more lives will be lost to air pollution, floods and droughts?

Global warming is out of control, but we can control it. We don't need all the latest gadgets or food fads.

Give us the courage, God, to help save our planet and chose a more sustainable lifestyle.



Anne McNamee, Newtownstewart - photographed during her time in Tanzania helping the OLA Missions.

Pope's prayer intention a call to ecological conversion *by Oliver Barrett*



Oliver Barrett, Leckpatrick Parish

THE publication of 'Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home,' in 2015, represented a significant milestone in the development of Catholic social teaching. It is the first time an entire encyclical is focusing on social teaching related to creation care. In his letter, Pope Francis urges the faithful to take urgent action to bring the earth's ecosystem back from tipping point.

The climate crisis is a direct result of industrialisation and a utilitarian attitude toward the use of the earth's resources. For the last 200 years, humanity has strived for the mechanisation of nature. We no longer see our planet as an open-handed gift from the Creator. This resulted in the prevailing technocratic paradigm which has succeeded

in convincing the modern generation that the earth's resources are infinite. This, in turn, has led to the existence of a 'throw-a-way' culture.

Genesis chapters one and two teach us that there are negative consequences when we disrespect the limitations placed on the fruits of the earth. It is evident that if we continue with the current levels of consumption, it will lead to ecological degradation through a process known as 'rapidification.'

Chapter four of 'Laudato Si' discusses the concept of 'Integral Ecology.' Pope Francis advocates collaboration between politicians, economists, and ecologists to reverse the damage we have caused to our common home. The importance of having an integral approach runs like a red thread

throughout the entire document.

The Pope's prayer intention for September echoes the call in his letter to an 'ecological conversion,' that is, to live more responsible and sustainable lifestyles. This means we have to 'think big and act small' if we are to bring about a lasting change. Recycling is only the beginning, as we are inspired to create the time and space to raise our minds to contemplation of the beauty of God's gift.

A starting point for ecological conversion is to hear the cry of the earth, the cry of the poor and the cry of the children. Young people are constantly reminding us of the negative consequences that our current lifestyles will have for future generations, eg, food security.

Our youth need to have their

hope restored. One way to achieve this is through intergenerational justice. Another important vehicle to bring about change is education. Education affords the opportunity to educate, both young and old, how to care for the gift of creation, eg, through circular models of production. Pope Francis' see-judge-act methodology will be helpful in achieving this aim.

The church makes a major contribution in the climate debate through broadening our concept of sin to include the destruction of the environment. It succeeds in pointing to the root of the crisis which is a moral crisis within humanity.

Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI reminds his readers that the external desertification is

but a symptom of the inner desertification within humanity. In other words, the climate crisis is a symptom of a type of soul sickness within humanity. Our starting point in healing the earth is re-establishing a healthy relationship between creator and creature. We have forgotten that the covenant God made with Noah is with human beings and with non-human life.

All of creation is orientated toward the cosmic Eucharist. Pope Francis has succeeded in pointing the faithful towards helpful models of creation care such as Christ the Good Shepherd and St Francis of Assisi. St Francis' 13th Century 'Canticle of Creatures' is a perfect example of how to live as a responsible citizen within the community of creation.

Parishes need to pick up Diocesan environmental plan and run with it *by Anne Friel*



Anne Friel, Waterside

Derry Diocesan website. This plan was 'communicated with the spirit of loving urgency'. In parishes, we need to pick up this plan now and run with it, perhaps asking our young people to lead on it locally and involve us all.

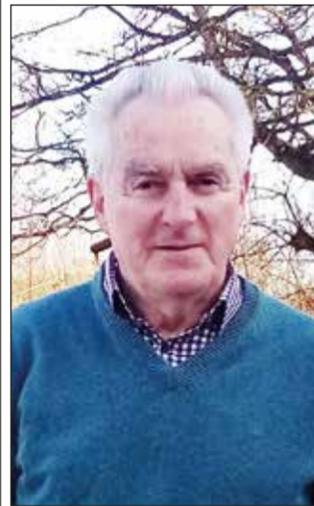
It would be great if these conversations could be brought into church, learning about what we are doing locally and ways that we can do more. Having local church harvest festivals may be a start, thinking about what these would look like in different types of parishes. The Strategy gives practical examples of things that each of us can do to be more environmentally responsible. The importance of linking caring for the environment with social justice was reinforced.

During lockdown, many of us walked a bit more, to enjoy the countryside and help clear our heads. COVID stopped me from going to the shops each day. It made me use up my food leftovers and waste less. I hardly drove my car - going back to a petrol station felt strange! I didn't buy new clothes as I didn't need them - I was going nowhere and being at home made me realise that I had more than enough.

Gradually now, as restrictions are lifted, I am trying to hold on to my new way of living, to slow down a little, to think about what I am doing. This isn't as easy as it sounds! I need to challenge myself on what courageous choices I need to make, as well as pray along with Pope Francis during September.

The Diocesan 'Laudato Si' group consulted on its new Diocesan Environmental Strategy in May 2021. It can be accessed on the

A code red for humanity *by Noel Bradley*



Noel Bradley, Buncrana.

THIS was the big and alarming heading on the front page of the Irish Times recently... 'A code red for humanity'. It was an attempt to alert us again to the danger we are in, with climate destruction. The United Nations has just issued another climate report by 280 scientists, drawn from 14,000 scientific papers. That is a lot of research! The report says climate destruction is caused by humans. It is inevitable now and parts of it irreversible. It is much, much worse than we think.

Pope Francis' universal prayer intention for September asks that "we pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this". Why does he mention "choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle"? The answer is that our present way of living on the planet is not sustainable and so we need to resort to a simpler way of living, one that will not leave a world that is destroyed for those coming after us, our children and their children.

Of course, we would prefer to hear good news than to listen to all this depressing stuff about how we are destroying the planet by our increasing carbon emissions,

methane and other gases, with the resultant global warming, rising sea levels and flooding. Add to all this the frequency of forest fires in Greece, Australia, California and even Ireland, the over fishing, emptying, and polluting of the oceans, the poisoning of coral reefs that give plankton to the oceans and provide the base for the entire marine food web, and also absorbs carbon from the atmosphere.

But, as I say, who wants to hear all this bad news? It seems true that "human kind cannot stand very much reality" (TS Eliot). Yet denying it doesn't make it go away. It is all very real and at our door steps. Will we waken up when Galway and Cork are flooded...or as Inishowen was four years ago this month, on the night of the big flood in 2017? Or when we see thousands of refugees fleeing desertification and famine in Africa and India? Or when food supplies in our supermarkets are depleted and too expensive for the average person to buy?

There is an abundance of scientific data in 'The Uninhabitable Earth' (2019) by Wallace-Wells. He lists the following: heat death, hunger, drowning, wildfires, loss of fresh water, plagues and illnesses, dying oceans, unbreathable air, economic collapse, climate conflict. You may not see it but the children, or the children's children, will see it. We cannot continue the lifestyle that we have been accustomed to and expect for our children because the planet simply cannot sustain it.

Kick the can down the road and stay addicted

World governments did so little after the high expectations of the Paris Climate Agreement in 2015, especially if you compare it to the crisis that is looming. Now there is another UN climate conference, known as COP26, coming up in Scotland in November. The minister for the environment and climate, Eamon Ryan has said that the same energy and momentum that led to the Paris agreement

"did not appear to be present", at the moment.

It seems that humanity, especially those of us in the so called 'developed' countries, who have done most of the damage, who have most of the wealth and power to change things, are the very ones that are most reluctant to change for the over-all good of the planet, because we are addicted to an unsustainable way of life. We could be likened to an alcoholic or drug addict, who knows there is something seriously wrong with him or her but is enjoying his/her lifestyle, and would like to make some necessary changes and promises to do so but keeps putting it off and continues to do damage to himself/herself and others. Will he or she turn back and mend their ways? Will humanity, especially in the northern hemisphere, change its destructive model of development and lifestyle? It has made a lot of promises at big international conferences over the years but there has been very little change in the actual lifestyle of our so-called developed world. Yet there is still time, even if it is late in the day.

I have to admit some positive things as well. The Pope mentions young people in particular and there is a growing concern among them. Youth demonstrations and Greta Thurnberg have been effective. Across cultures, there are thousands of small groups hard at work. Scientists have produced wind and solar energy, new forms of transport and strategies to reduce pollution. But we would be foolish to think that we can leave it all to science to solve.

Small is not only beautiful but helpful

We can't leave it all to the politicians either. We all are responsible and can play our part. Justin Kilcullen, former CEO of Trocaire, offers some small practical ways to help. Since 60% of household energy is expended on household heating, we can reduce

that massively by putting in twelve inches of insulation in the attic. And the SEAI (Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland) will give you a grant of 30% of the cost for doing it! You can set the thermostat on your central heating to 20 degrees and set your water heater to 65 degrees to reduce energy consumption for heating water. You can replace the old lagging jacket on the cistern with a thicker one. You can lessen your bathing and use the shower, turn off radiators in unused rooms, hang out washing and use the tumble dryer as a last resort, use public transport instead of car as much as possible, use timber frames instead of cement in building your house if you intend to build. The list goes on.

A deeper conversion needed

While we may see the need for change, it will not be enough to move us to action. Our hearts too need conversion. We can look again and pray with Christ over his standards and values. He was detached from wealth, honour and pride. He called his followers to the same kind of lifestyle, even to real and not just spiritual poverty (detachment from wealth), if it serves God's purpose.

There is nothing in the Gospels to encourage us to live an affluent, consumerist life! That is what most of us are doing. This is what has to change and that means different choices about almost everything we do. It is an enormous ask of our whole modern lifestyle and it could be depressing but, as Pope Francis says, "may our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope".

It is not just our problem. God too is deeply concerned about our choices and the Spirit too has been groaning in one great act of giving birth...as we wait for our bodies to be set free. (Rom 8:22-24)

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Going back to basics *by Ashlene Canning*

OUR first ever lockdown in March 2020 delivered an unexpected gift to many of us: The gift of appreciation. We began to appreciate the things in life which were taken so much for granted. The natural beauty of the world around us, home baking, gardening, learning a new skill, reading, local walks, growing food and, of course, a deeper prayer life.

These were only some of the things that I began to appreciate more. As society seems to be returning to some form of normality, I ask myself the question...Will we keep up our newfound hobbies and interests? Many of which did not cost a lot and were so little hassle to actually do!

My husband, Nicky and I began growing our own vegetables over 11 years ago, when we moved into our current home. It began as a little challenge; a couple of rows of balls of flour, a row of carrots and

parsnips, salad leaf, 10 heads of broccoli and cauliflower.

We both had the same mindset regarding our new growing project. And that was "sure we'll never know if we can grow anything if we don't try". Amazingly, all the seeds that we sowed that year grew into the loveliest vegetables we had ever tasted. They were our pride and joy!

Each year, we found ourselves really looking forward to spring, when we could start sowing seeds, and watch them germinate and grow. This was something our children took part in too, from an early age. They have sowed many hundreds of seeds, watched them grow, harvested them and brought them home to be prepared and cooked as part of our family meals. As the years moved on, Oscar, Darcey and Tilly grew...and our vegetable patch did too. An abundance of fresh homegrown

veg for neighbours, friends and family, and, of course, the priest too!

During our first lockdown, a family friend had a polytunnel that he hadn't got the time to make use of, so he very kindly gifted it to us. In return, his family reap the rewards of deliciously fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, salad leaf and anything else that we can grow.

Our neighbours, both Catholic and Protestant, muck in when needed. If the tractor needs looking at, we have a man to call on. If we're a few hands short in dropping the spuds, we have lots of help. When manure is needed, Rachel down the road keeps lots of horses and is our go-to person!

Our ancestors had no choice but to live frugally, this was in a time when commercial living wasn't 'a thing'. Communities are built on the basics of life and not on how brilliant or big our house and

car are, or how great our holiday abroad is, year after year!

Nicky and I started our homegrown vegetable journey with a few seeds in our back garden as an experiment, but we never expected it to become part of our daily lives and that of our children. By as much as growing a herb in a pot, you are creating newness and life, and who knows where it could take you!

As parents of three gifts from God, we are bringing our lives back to basics and vow to never get caught up in the commercial rollercoaster which the life of pre-Covid had become.

Society has settled with a life which is 'made to order'. Our veg might not look absolutely perfect on the outside; many would cast the misshaped and deformed veg aside...without realising that it's perfect on the inside!



Ashlene's son, Oscar happy with the fruits of his labour in Newtownstewart



Ashlene Canning's daughter, Darcey, helping to dig up the carrots.

Through care for environment can we show youth that our Church still has a message for the world today? *by Martin Harran*

THE crisis created by global warming and its impact on our environment is clearly the greatest risk to the survival of mankind. Even the dreadful pandemic we have just come through pales into insignificance compared to the potential effects of global warming.

Pope Francis has pointed out numerous times, especially in his wonderful 'Laudato si' encyclical, that care for our environment is not anything new to Catholic teaching, that right back to Genesis, man wasn't simply given dominion over everything in the world, he was given stewardship, which implies caring responsibilities.

Over the centuries, however, the full concept of that stewardship

was allowed to fade into the background because of what was seen as the Earth's endless bounty. That is clearly no longer the case.

As the Pope has pointed out, we have two particular areas of responsibility here. The first and most immediate one is responsibility for the poor throughout our world, who are already suffering from the relentless destruction of resources in their habitat to feed the insatiable consumerism of the developed world.

Our second area of responsibility is the world we are leaving to our children, our grandchildren and the generations after them.

As we begin our 'Synodal

Pathway' to help us understand better the role of our Church in the modern world, and how we can best deliver the Good News to a secular world that seems to have little appetite for it, our responsibilities as stewards of our environment should be one of the anchor points for the journey we are undertaking.

In doing that, we must avoid the temptation of falling into the trap of thinking it is just simply about things like retrofitting our churches, or reducing the level of heating, or practical things like that which feel good but really have only limited impact.

Our journey is one of discernment and that discernment applies to

our environmental responsibilities as much as other issues; just as in those other areas, we need to think long and hard about the problems, discuss them openly to bring out our true responsibilities and find ways we can fulfil them

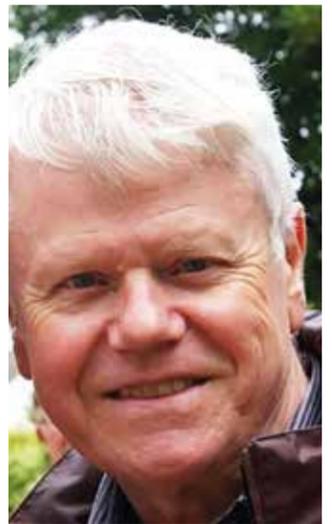
Among the many issues and challenges facing our Church, one that is very close to the heart of many parents and grandparents is the near-total disengagement with our young people - our generation's dreadful failure in handing on our Faith to the next generation.

As Pope Francis points out in his September intentions, young people are resolutely committed to environmental issues; is this an area where we can perhaps find

common ground with our young people and show them that our Church still has a message for the world today?

Just under three years ago, the whole world listened as Greta Thunberg, a 15-year-old Swedish girl, stood up and told us just how dreadful a mess we are making of dealing with global warming and the legacy we are leaving to her and other young people.

As part of our 'Synodal Pathway' journey, is it possible that in this area of care for our environment, we, the older generation in the Church, can allow the younger generation to stand up and tell us what we should be doing?



Martin Harran, Urney & Castletfin.

Many young people are turning away from 'throw away' culture and could teach us all by their activism *by Roisin Rice*



Roisin Rice, St Mary's College, Derry.

BEING courageous is difficult, it means swimming against the tide, making a stand that goes against the norms of society and putting oneself at the forefront of a cause that is not universally accepted.

No one can deny that we all have a collective responsibility to act now so that we protect the planet that was gifted to us by God, however, even in these strangest of times, it is difficult to do this and takes great courage.

We have a duty to protect the most precious gift that God bestowed upon us, the Earth. It is our moral responsibility to take the stewardship of our planet seriously, so that it is sustainable for generations to come. Made in the image and likeness of God, we are His precious children. He gave us a beautiful planet filled with everything we need to thrive, but we, as a human race, have cast aside this wonderful gift by adopting what Pope Francis calls a "predatory attitude" towards the planet.

The difficulty comes in turning away from the consumer driven and materialistic lifestyles that we are bombarded with every day through many different forms of media. In his homily at Mass in Santa Maria, in November 2018, Pope Francis speaks of the disease that he calls consumerism: "It's a terrible disease nowadays, consumerism. I'm not saying all of us do it, no. But consumerism - excessive spending to buy more than we need - is a lack of austerity in life."

It takes courage to turn ones back on consumerism and begin to lead a lifestyle that is environmentally sustainable. We need to go back to basics and move away from fast fashion, shopping and all that living an excessive lifestyle entails. If we do not act, the consequences

will be catastrophic. Nothing else matters if we do not have our home to live in.

This quote from John Hollow Horn Bear, of the Oglala Lakota, states: "Some day the earth will weep, she will beg for her life, she will cry with tears of blood. You will make a choice, if you help her or let her die and when she dies, you too will die."

In this month's prayer intention, our Holy Father acknowledges that it is our young people who are leading the way in the call to action regarding climate change and sustainable living. They are courageous, brave, and rightly so, outspoken when it comes to matters of the environment and living sustainably. When Pope Francis met possibly the most famous young environmental

activist, Greta Thunberg, in Saint Peter's Square in 2019, he blessed her and thanked her for standing up for the climate.

As an educator, I know how passionately our young people feel about increasing awareness of the personal impact each person has on the environment, and of how it is a responsibility of our faith to treat Creation just as we would treat a person, made in the image and likeness of God.

Many of our young people are turning away from the 'throw away' culture, and they could teach us all by their activism. They are the future builders who are using 'Depop' to transform fast fashion into sustainable clothing, and the ones who are ditching the single-use plastics in favour of more sustainable and environmentally

friendly materials. They are the ones that we need to help preserve the planet for generations to come.

Ultimately, not taking care of our environment goes against the central message of Jesus, "Love one another as I have loved you."

Pope Francis is correct in his appeal for us to rejoice in the passion and commitment of our young people to create a sustainable future.

Courage is needed, as we recall the words of Psalm 89:11... "The heavens are yours; the earth also is yours; the world and all that is in it, you have founded them."

As we enter into the Season of Creation this September, let us all make courageous decisions to live simply, avoid consumerism and take individual responsibility for the environment.

Pray for light and courage to do what we can to save life on planet earth

by Sr Ronnie Rafferty OP

"We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this". (Pope Francis)

POPE Francis' leadership on these issues is having a great impact in Ireland and in the world, in general, thank God. For the first time, the Vatican has promoted a world changing platform involving all the possible actors and agents in making a difference to the planetary climate crisis.

One outcome in Ireland is that Trocaire has invited us to a Webinar on September 7, at 7.30 pm, with the title, 'Never waste a crisis', exploring the Covid-19 crisis in the context of business and human rights and environmental

activism, with reflections from 'Laudato Si' and 'Fratelli Tutti'.

Pope Francis asks us to go deeper as we apply two great criteria to our large and small choices: solidarity and subsidiarity. "This calls for the kind of reflection known as discernment of spirits. Discernment means to think through our decisions and actions, not just by rational calculations but by listening for His Spirit, recognizing in prayer God's motives, invitations, and will. There is a principle worth remembering in these times: ideas are debated but reality is discerned".

From time to time, we get a wakeup call and this happened to me when I came across the Shakertown Pledge. The commitments in this document, drawn up by retreat leaders 50

years ago, are totally relevant to the present planetary crisis. They called us among other things to commit to a simpler lifestyle.

Point number one of the pledge: "I am a global citizen". That is where we start. We belong to a precious planet and we can no longer simply limit our involvement to pointing the finger at other people or countries as the guilty ones. We all have to do our bit, as the prayer of Pope Francis suggests.

The big question always when we are presented with a problem is what we can do about it. But first we need to understand what is at stake. We need to look at what the scientists are saying. Greta Thunberg exemplifies the clear understanding that young people have of this problem, as they have studied climate change since

childhood and are not influenced by those whose sole aim is to make ever greater profits without caring what consequences their choices have on the planet and its resources. Fossil fuels could have been replaced half a century ago by wind, sun and renewable green sources. But this development was pushed off the table until now. Any wonder that the Pope invites us to rejoice in the committed young people round the world.

Next, after understanding and discernment, we move to taking steps within our possibilities. The list of such steps can be really long! I might suggest a few. Zero plastic waste sounds utopian, but one small item came to my notice. My sister gifted me with a Shampoo Bar in solid soap form that comes in a cardboard box. It is just as

effective as liquid shampoo that comes in hard plastic containers.

Using public transport is another step to be recommended. Every single petrol-driven car that we take off the road is a step forward towards cleaner air, as we reduce the amount of carbon monoxide going into the atmosphere. Zero waste is another great direction to take. No wasting of food, clothing, or energy (electricity, gas).

On the positive side, planting trees is now a popular option in Irish parishes and must be lauded and supported. Not everyone can plant their own vegetables but a healthy planet means healthy people. At least we can encourage those who do so.

And last but not least, we can pray for light and courage to do what we can to save life on planet earth.



Sr Ronnie Rafferty OP, Garvagh.

(After 48 years in Argentina, Sr Ronnie has returned to Ireland and has been elected onto the Congregational Council in Dublin for the next four years.)

Restoring our common home

by Jane Mellett - Trocaire



Jane Mellett, Trocaire

THIS month, Pope Francis calls all of us to embrace the Season of Creation, highlighting the potential good that the world's 1.3 billion Catholics can bring about if we answer the call to care more deeply for our common home.

The Season of Creation begins each year on September 1, the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and runs until October 4, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, the Patron Saint of Ecology. It has its origins in the Orthodox Church, which in 1989 proclaimed September 1 as a day of prayer for creation.

Subsequently, the World Council of Churches extended the celebration until October 4. Many Christians around the world embraced this idea and, in 2015, Pope Francis officially declared September 1 the World Day of Prayer for Creation in the Catholic calendar. This means that the world's 2.2 billion Christians now celebrate the Season of Creation as an ecumenical occasion worldwide.

The theme for this year's season is 'Restoring Our Common Home' and is an opportunity for

Christians to come together in prayer, reflection and action for our common home.

In recent months, we have seen the devastating floods which have caused much destruction in Europe, killing more than 200 people, leaving hundreds missing and thousands of homes destroyed in one of the worst natural disasters to hit the region in decades. In the USA, record temperatures have literally burned entire towns to the ground, forcing people into emergency shelters. In Madagascar, 400,000 people are experiencing a severe famine as global warming has caused a devastating four-year drought.

Many of the communities we work with overseas have been feeling the devastating effects of the climate crisis for decades, as it has threatened their food and water sources, their livelihoods and their homes.

In August, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released its most harrowing report to date, which was described by the UN Secretary General as a "code red for humanity". The IPCC report was clear, there is now no doubt

that human activity is causing our planet to warm, the impacts are being felt across all regions and all systems, and it will get worse.

The changing climate is causing parts of the world to become uninhabitable for human beings. However, the report also offered some hope...if governments take immediate action now, we can steer onto a different path: "Strong and sustained reductions in emissions of carbon dioxide (CO2) and other greenhouse gases would limit climate change."

Faith communities have a vital role to play in addressing this crisis for, as we read in 'Laudato Si', Pope Francis' encyclical on care for our common home, at the heart of the environmental crisis is a deep spiritual crisis. We must restore our relationship with God's creation.

'Laudato Si' calls faith communities to respond: "Living our vocation to be protectors of God's handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or a secondary aspect of our Christian experience." (LS, 217).

'Laudato Si' asks many serious and challenging questions, such as "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?" (LS, 160).

Young people are awake to this crisis, are deeply concerned about their futures and are taking action. As church we have a responsibility to join in solidarity with them and offer a rich spirituality, such as that professed in 'Laudato Si'.

The upcoming Season of Creation (September 1- October 4) gives us the perfect opportunity to respond in prayer, reflection and action for our common home. Extensive resources are now available for parish communities in Ireland to help us celebrate this season and can be found at www.catholicbishops.ie (search Season of

Creation) and also on the Trocaire website <https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/working-in-ireland/parishes/season-of-creation/> With beautiful prayer services and liturgy notes, multimedia reflections and practical tips, there is something there for everyone.

One action we are encouraging this year is Tree Planting. Every parish community, family or school could explore their church grounds or surrounding areas and see what might be possible in terms of restoring Irish Native Trees to a local area. We have teamed up with 'Easy Treesie' and produced a colourful resource, which includes information on the practicalities of tree planting, as well as prayers of blessing for a tree planting ceremony. This is one symbolic action we can all engage in this autumn to help restore our common home.

The Vatican are also inviting Catholics to urgently unite and demand bold action to protect God's creation by signing the "Healthy People, Healthy Planet" petition. This petition is aimed at the next UN Climate Change Conference (COP26), due to take place in Glasgow in November. At this conference, world leaders must come together and make decisions which will have repercussions for many generations to come. It is a critical moment for our common home.

Pope Francis will attend this UN Conference and we are asked to help create the momentum that is needed for real change. So, this Season of Creation, we would urge everyone to help promote the Healthy Planet Healthy People petition by going to www.healthyplanetandpeople.org, adding your name and encouraging family and friends to do the same. This is one way we can lift up the voices of the most

vulnerable, respond to the cry of the earth, and take a stand for future generations. Celebrating the Season of Creation and signing this petition are two actions that can make a real difference this year.

"All is not lost. Human beings, while capable of the worst, are also capable of rising above themselves,

choosing again what is good and making a new start." (LS, 205). "For we know that things can change..." (LS, 13)

For further information contact: jane.mellett@trocaire.org

(Jane Mellett is the Laudato Si officer with Trocaire)

Trocaire

The young and future generations are depending on us

by Anne Kelly

IN this the sixth year of Pope Francis' 'Laudato Si' on 'Care For Our Common Home', the call for us to respond is more urgent than ever. If we had not the opportunity to read this lengthy reflection, the Pope's prayer intention is clear:

"We pray that we all will make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this". (Pope Francis)

Our negligence in the past can be forgiven due to our lack of knowledge and limited information. With access to the media and modern technology today, the environmental crisis could hardly escape our notice.

It is not my intention to add despair, but I believe we can rise to the challenge and join our prayers with Pope Francis.

We are the caretakers of the earth and Pope Francis wants us



Anne Kelly, Omagh.

to take this role responsibly. Our individual lifestyle choices will make the earth a cleaner and healthier home for all of God's creation.

The young and future generations are depending on us. We must not let them down.

"Do not abandon yourselves to despair, we are the Easter people and Hallelujah is our song". (Pope St John Paul)

Thornhill College celebrates 1500th anniversary of St Columba *by Teresa Hodgins*

WE were delighted to become involved in the Colmcille 1500 anniversary celebrations. In June 2021, the RE department invited the school community to partake in a connected learning project which would celebrate and highlight the life and legacy of the inspirational St Columba/Colmcille.

Since March 2020, school life has been very challenging on so many levels. So, for many students and staff, it was a welcome opportunity for the school community to connect our subjects and departments with a shared theme and to feed back to the wider community.

The brief to departments was simple, 'How would you celebrate the life and legacy of St Columba in your subject area?' The response was so positive and, before we knew it, the school community became a hive of creativity and activity inspired by the life and legacy of St Columba.

We began our celebrations on the feast day of St Columba, June 9, with the planting of an Oak tree at the front of the grounds of our beautiful school. Our principal, Ms Mallet, placed the tree in an area where the eye can see both Derry and Donegal, which serves as a reminder of the link between these two counties in the life of St Columba.

Fr Clerkin, our school chaplain, led us in a beautiful prayer ceremony and our students, Bethany and Aoife played the harp and read the St Columba prayer in Irish to close our ceremony. Classes were suspended, so the school

community could join Bishop Donal for a special Mass celebrated in the Long Tower Church, in Derry, to commemorate the Feast Day of St Columba. After which, the whole school community was treated to an Oak leaf shortbread, baked by the wonderful school cafeteria staff. A great start to our celebrations.

Our thanks to our wonderful staff crafters, who crocheted Oak leaves and made an oak leaf wreath for our display in the Oratory. The RE department loved this project and we set about involving all of our classes in some creative activity. With advice from the Art Department, the Year 9 and Year 11 RE classes created beautiful clay models in the shapes of doves and oak leaves. They formed a beautiful centre piece for our display in the Oratory. Year 11 girls also learned the technique of 'decoupage' and upcycled old jam jars and made beautiful vases, which they filled with flowers and placed in the Oratory in praise of St Columba. Year 11 also created beautiful stained glass windows in the form of Celtic Crosses, which looked fabulous on the Oratory windows as the light shone through them and illuminated our Celtic History. Year 8, 9 and 10 RE classes created bunting, oak leaf prayers and colourful doves, which were used to decorate the Oratory for our exhibition.

The Irish department was instrumental in bringing alive our Celtic heritage by reciting, singing and transposing prayers and songs to St Columba. They also completed some Celtic lettering.

They form a beautiful part of our connected learning project movie. No cultural project would be complete without our Irish dancers. Aoife, Clodagh, Caela and Maebh, from Year 9, danced on a glorious sunny afternoon around our Mercy prayer garden, which is planted out in yellow roses in the shape of a Celtic Cross. This was such a joy to watch.

History had much to contribute to the life of St Columba. They chose to work with Year 8 and Year 9 and they designed a Celtic Cross. They also looked at the history of the development of Celtic religious books and did some mindfulness mosaic colouring of some images from the Book of Kells. Some of the students also tried their hand at calligraphy and wrote their names using beautifully decorative ancient fonts.

There is a saying which states, 'Geography can take you anywhere' and this is certainly true for our talented and intrepid geographers. The Geography department had such an imaginative task. They combined the modern technologies of satellite and used 'Google Earth' to recreate the ancient footsteps of St Columba, by devising a Sli Colmcille, or a trail, which charts the route Colmcille made from Ireland to Scotland. The students followed the trail from Thornhill College to Gleann Cholm Cille, Tory Island, Gartan, Derry, the Sperrins, Argyll, Iona, Tarbat Ness, the Outer Hebrides and finished back at Thornhill College, Derry. What a wonderful and creative activity this was for the students, and the

video which shows the trail is truly amazing. Kudos Geography!

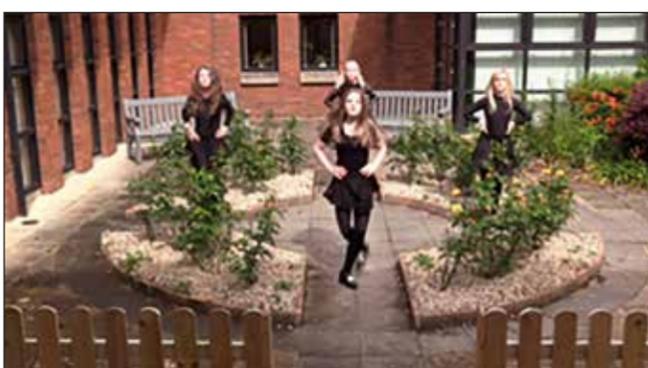
Our Mathematicians are equally creative. The maths department used its subject specific skills to create beautiful Oak Leaf Tessellations. From these, they created an Oak Leaf Tessellation Tree for the Oratory. It looks as stunning as it is precise. St Columba would be very proud of how his legacy inspires our modern mathematicians.

Home Economics studied the diet and food at the time of St Columba and designed some menu plans around their findings. No cabbage and bacon in sight!

At the end of the week, we had a beautiful display in the Oratory of the fruits of our connected learning project. We have created a lovely short film, which will be entered for the Derry/Donnegal school's competition later in the year. Leah Whitman, in Year 9, designed a stunning portrait of St Columba, which was placed beneath the St Columba Tree in the Oratory.

Thank you to St Columba for bringing us respite from our difficulties and for inspiring us as a school community to study and share in his spiritual and cultural legacy; a legacy which remains very close to our hearts here in Derry.

*'Be Lord Jesus, a bright flame before me,
A guiding star above me,
A smooth path below me;
Today, tonight and forever. Amen.
St Colmcille pray for us.*



Greatest threat to Catholic education comes from lack of identity within – Bishop Donal



Bishop Donal

THE new school year got underway with Bishop Donal leading prayer online for school staff around the Diocese and talking about what makes Catholic education different from other sectors.

“Unless we have some idea what we stand for,” said Bishop Donal, “we have nothing to communicate that justifies us being a separate sector”.

He added: “The greatest threat to Catholic education in Northern Ireland and around the world comes not from outside opposition from lack of identity within”.

Asking why they were glad to see their pupils back, the Bishop posed a number of questions for

them to consider: “Is it because you love them and are prepared to do everything to help them, whatever their challenges?”

“Is it because you have very high expectations for what they can achieve, and refuse to label anybody as a waste of space?”

“Is it because you know the value of community and how the school is only a small part of where and what forms our young people?”

“Is it because you believe that a one-dimensional, market-driven worldview is not the best that they can hope for?”

“Is it because you believe in the power of forgiveness and mercy to help people get up off their knees?”

“If you can say ‘yes’ to at least some of those questions”, he continued, “then you are getting off to a great start”.

He continued: “Good schools can break the mould of low expectations and broken spirits. That can come from the class teacher and the caretaker, from the classroom assistant and the canteen staff. The content you teach is useful but only a small part of what you hand on”.

Commenting that life has been “tough and disorganised and disrupted for so many families”, Bishop Donal encouraged school staff to welcome the young people back with hope and a welcome.

“Jesus knew that children, and

the child inside all of us, are fragile and need to be loved”, he said, adding: “Help them be beautiful on the inside and not just on the outside. Help them believe they can be good and not just good at things. In a throwaway culture, help them to believe in their dignity of their bodies. In an age of instant gratification, help them to grow up and learn discipline. In a moral culture of ‘why not’, help them ask ‘why’. In a world of frail role models, give them example that will help them blossom. In a hyper-critical world, help them believe in a God who believes in them.

“And nourish yourselves with a belief that the world can be a

wonderful place, because there are many great people about whom we hear little”.

He concluded: “Handing on faith is not just talking about bits of religious belief. It is about sharing a rich worldview, laced with imagination, which gives meaning to everything and helps them process the pain of being human.

“Our schools will flourish when we can help the whole school community experience a rich way of being human, of processing the past and of facing the future. You are doing a sacred job in your school. Be proud of what you do because it is of eternal beauty and value”.



Diocesan Youth Ministry news



which got off to a great start last year despite the restrictions of the Covid-19 regulations, is once again open for applications.

The online youth programme will be starting again at the end of September and can be accessed on @derryyouth Instagram.

The Pope John Paul II Award programme also overcame the challenges of pandemic and the application process for it will also be opening this month.

The team welcomes volunteers to help with parishes and or the Diocese, and those interested are asked to email lizzie.rea@derrydiocese.org

THE Diocesan Youth Ministry team are in action again after the summer break and are looking forward to interacting with our young people throughout the year ahead.

The Derry Youth Scholarship,

Polish community celebrate Our Lady of Herbs

AFTER celebrating Mass with the Polish community in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, on the Feast of the Assumption, Fr Ignacy Saniuta blessed fruits, herbs and flowers that the community had brought along to celebrate Our Lady of Herbs.

The blessing ceremony was in keeping with an ancient tradition in Poland, where Our Lady is seen as the patron and keeper of the earth and all of its abundance.

To celebrate the Feast Day, housewives would bring a bouquet of herbs, flowers and grain that was collected from their garden, the fields and orchards.

Afterwards, people took the flowers and herbs home and placed them behind holy pictures to protect the home against fire and lightening, and farmers would crush the blessed flowers into their seed bags to ensure a good harvest.



DERRY YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

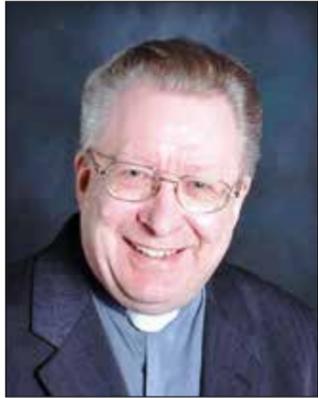
TO APPLY MESSAGE @DERRYOUTH INSTAGRAM OR EMAIL LIZZIE.REA@DERRYDIOCESE.ORG

JOIN US AT 4PM ON THURSDAY LIVE ON @DERRYOUTH INSTAGRAM

TO TALK ALL THINGS DERRY YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

Inspiring Long Tower Retreat Fr Aidan's parting gift to the parish

Photography by Ivor Doherty



Fr Pat Collins.

be heard more clearly by those who had listened to Fr Collins' talks.

A well-known speaker, retreat leader, author of many books on spirituality, and exorcist, Fr Collins is a member of the New Springtime Community, which was formed in 2009 with the mission "to actively respond to the great commission of Jesus and the Catholic Church's call for a New Evangelisation".

The 6.30 and 10 o'clock morning Masses and evening talks were very well attended, with the 30-45 year old age-group particularly noticeable, and the general feedback was that the energy and quality of the talks by Fr Collins had "stirred people up".

One man said that he felt as if he had been wakened up as he listened to Fr Collins quoting Pope Francis about letting the Holy Spirit get to work in parishes, and urging people to "get up off their backsides and get out and evangelise" those they meet by bringing the Lord into their conversation.

In order to be able to do this, Fr Collins encouraged them to get

into a one-to-one relationship with Jesus through prayer.

The retreat took place during a very sad time for the parish, with Long Tower administrator, Fr Aidan Mullan having passed away just days prior to the opening ceremony on Sunday, September 12, and his funeral the next day in his home town of Omagh.

However, Liam Curran, from St Johnston, who is a member of the Knights of the Blessed Sacrament in the Long Tower, felt the timing was a blessing: "People had been feeling very down and there was a great sense of loss with the death of Fr Mullan, but by the end of the retreat I could see that people were really buzzing and happy, so it helped to lift spirits a bit."

"The talks were amazing," said Liam, adding: "Fr Collins had a great way of speaking and people reacted very positively. The things that he has experienced in his ministry are something else and I think it did people good to hear this."

"Throughout the retreat, you could see that people wanted to pray and that they enjoyed the



Fr Pat Collins speaking at the opening of the Long Tower Parish Retreat.

Masses and Adoration. Anyone that I spoke to afterwards said that the talks had made them aware that they weren't doing enough and that, as Fr Collins had said, they needed to get off their backsides and do something.

"My overall feeling is that this retreat was just a great blessing for the parish. It took away the sense of sadness that was hanging in the air with Fr Mullan's death and gave people hope".

Bishop Donal expressed similar

sentiments, saying: "It was a remarkable gift of Providence that the parish retreat in the Long Tower should begin on the eve of Fr Aidan Mullan's funeral. This retreat was his parting gift to the parish."

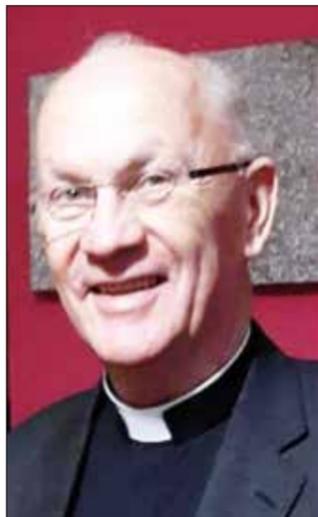
"As a far-sighted pastor, he knew that a boost of prayer and energy would be needed to re-launch the mission of the parish after lockdowns. He had heard Fr Pat Collins preach in the Cathedral and Fr Aidan knew that this

was the sort of emphasis on evangelisation, and on the Holy Spirit, that is necessary. The sad reality was that Fr Aidan was not there in body to celebrate the Retreat, and then plan the follow-up.

"I am grateful to Fr Pat Collins and to all those who organised the Retreat. Please God, its effects will be part of Fr Aidan's generous ministry that will continue to bear fruit for Christ long into the future".



Tributes flow as Diocese mourns loss of gentle pastor and his wise counsel



The late Fr Aidan Mullan

AMONGST the many tributes paid to the late Fr Aidan Mullan, who was administrator for St Columba's Long Tower when he became ill, was that from Fr Joseph Varghese on behalf of the Syro-Malabar Community in the Diocese.

"It is always sad and painful to have to say our earthly farewells to one who has been so special and deeply loved," said Fr Joseph, adding: "We who have known him, and witnessed the kindness, love and example he displayed towards everyone he met, have been so privileged".

The Syro-Malabar chaplain and Dungiven Parish curate noted that, during his many years

ministering in the Waterside, the Co Tyrone native had been an amazing support to the Indian Community in the area: "Long before any Indian priest arrived in Derry, Fr Aidan was interested in their welfare and very active in supporting their spiritual need. He provided them with guidance and the sense of hope. He was readily available when help was needed in whatever capacity.

"From his ordination to the priesthood on May 30, 1976, he has been a minister for all people, irrespective of class or creed. His door was always open to all callers and he gave so selflessly of his time to those who needed help in understanding their own lives, those who needed support and consolation in dealing with a variety of issues, those needing reassurance as they sought to follow the ways of Jesus in their own lives".

Fr Joseph went on to say that he, personally, had "benefitted greatly from witnessing his determination to allow everyone he encountered to experience the love and compassion of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, while never passing judgement.

"It is my belief that anyone who met Fr Aidan was greatly enriched by the experience and we are all so much poorer for his passing. We thank God for allowing us to get to know the goodness of Fr Aidan

Mullan. May he rest in peace".

Other tributes were paid by Archbishop Eamon Martin, who said: "I will always remember Fr Mullan's kindness and support, firstly as a teacher and mentor in St Columba's College, where he encouraged my vocation to priesthood, and later as a brother priest, colleague and friend".

A tribute from St Columba's College to their former vice president recalled how Fr Aidan, a "distinguished student and inspirational teacher for almost two decades", had also given "sagacious service to the College community as a Trustee Governor".

Fr Aidan passed away peacefully on Thursday, September 9, at Omagh Hospital and Primary Care Unit. Parishioners from the Long Tower deeply saddened by his death greatly appreciated the opportunity to pay their last respects when his remains were reposed in St Columba's Church for a period over the weekend, before removal from there to repose in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, where his Requiem Mass was celebrated on Monday, September 13, by Bishop Donal.

The homily was delivered by Fr Micheal McGavigan, who began by saying that, just over 71 years ago, Fr Aidan's parents, Gerald and Brigid, had brought him to Sacred Heart Church to receive the Sacrament of Baptism, beginning a journey during which he learnt "how to pray, to make the sign of the cross, how to kneel down and say his prayers, to go to confession and to receive Jesus in Holy Communion".

He continued: "Day by day and year by year, he came to know Christ Jesus. He learned to love, to forgive and to live in the model of his Lord and Saviour. As scripture says of the child Jesus, he increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man".

Following his education with the Christian Brothers, in Omagh, and at St Columba's College, Derry, and then Maynooth, where he read mathematics and theology, Fr Aidan was ordained by Bishop Edward Daly in Sacred Heart Church, where, said Fr Micheal,



Fr Aidan's Requiem Mass was celebrated in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh.

he "promised to care for the Lord's flock as a priest; to exercise his ministry worthily and wisely, preaching the Gospel and teaching the faith; to celebrate faithfully and reverently, in accord with the Church's traditions, the mysteries of Christ, especially the Mass and Confession; to implore God's mercy upon the people entrusted to his care by observing to pray without ceasing; to be united more closely to Christ every day".

Fruitful

"The concrete realisation of that promise made in love and obedience to God's will", added Fr Micheal, "was a lifetime of fruitful, life-affirming and life-giving service lived out first as a hospital and US Naval chaplain in the Waterside; a long and distinguished career as teacher and later Vice President of, St Columba's; Parish Priest of the Waterside and Dungiven; ministry in The Three Patrons, and most recently, Administrator of the Longtower.

"The Church has been for all the years of Aidan's life, a sign of God's faithful love. It is from within the Church, which Aidan served so faithfully as a priest, that he drew his extraordinary energy, bringing to fulfilment the good work begun in him".

He went on to describe Fr Aidan as "a stalwart of Catholic Education", serving on the Board of CCMS for many years, and "a much-respected teacher, who inspired generations of students to explore the wider world and consider how they would contribute to it and shape its values and character".

"Aidan was a fixer, semper ante

manum, (always ahead of the posse) gifted with mental agility, political nous, common sense and an uncompromising work ethic," remarked Fr Micheal, adding: "He was always thinking, always planning, always plotting the advantage for whatever endeavour was entrusted to his care.

"He had a deep understanding of and compassion for the human condition with all its possibilities and limitations. Those he cared for pastorally in parish, school and various chaplaincies felt listened-to, valued, and supported".

Highlighting that Fr Aidan had a particular concern for those who were sick and dying, Fr Micheal said: "Even when he himself no longer benefitted from good health and was facing the prospect of death, he never failed to answer the call to the hospital or to the sick bed. He knew well the comfort and consolation Christ's presence brings and he benefitted from that in his final days".

He also noted that Fr Aidan's counsel had been sought by priests and people alike, and that he had been a trusted confidant of successive bishops and senior priests in the Diocese, and a close friend and trusted mentor to him as well.

Concluding, Fr Micheal said: "For of all the great lessons that Aidan taught in life, the one he understood best was one he first learned as a child from the Christian Brothers here in Omagh, 'Why did God make Aidan?' God made Aidan to know him, to love him, and to serve him in this world and to be happy with him in the next".

Speaking at the end of the ceremony, Bishop Donal remarked that Fr Aidan's was the first funeral of a serving priest for many years in the Diocese, adding: "The death of a priest in ministry is a form of bereavement. The relationship between a pastor and his parish is very distinctive. Because priests live single lives, the parish becomes a sort of surrogate family. As in every family, parishioners put up with idiosyncrasies and failings. And they so often prefer to see the strengths rather than the weaknesses. Fr Aidan loved the people for whose eternal salvation he had some responsibility".

He went on to say that, unlike a few generations ago, when parishes were clearly defined geographical areas, there is now an increasing awareness that belonging to a parish is "a choice rather than a part of your destiny", which "challenges all in parish ministry to make space for all - and especially for those who may feel left out of other groups and associations".

"Today, I thank God for wise pastors who were able to hand on the content of the faith in Jesus, build community, and love those who limp along, afraid of being left behind," said Bishop Donal, adding: "We commend Fr Aidan Mullan, a priest and an educator to the Lord, and pray that others will take on the sacred task of sharing God's love with people of all ages".

Survived by his brothers, John, Dermot, Brendan and Kevin, and sisters, Rosemary (Connolly) and Monica (Coll), Fr Aidan has been laid to rest in St Mary's Cemetery, Drumragh.



God's plan is mysterious, painful and beautiful in equal measure

by Fr Roland Colhoun

MANY societies put no value on the person with special needs, for example, in Iceland hardly anyone is born with Downs Syndrome. The reason is that 80-85% of expectant mothers are scanned and if a chromosome abnormality is detected, they are nudged towards the abortion theatre. Many other countries are heading in the same sad direction. ('Iceland - The country where Downs Syndrome is disappearing', by Julian Quinones, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/down-syndrome-iceland/>).

I have recently learned about the story of Patricia O'Brien, a little girl from the parish of

Newtownstewart. Patricia was born in the townland of Upper Gallon in 1951. Her condition was Downs Syndrome. She had many limitations in her abilities and she didn't speak much. She lost her sight in her early 30s, but she had good health and lived a full life, going to Glenside Training Centre in Strabane every morning, and returning home to her sister, Rosemary Devine, every evening.

I want to focus on an item of Patricia's bedroom furniture. It was a simple single bed, bought in Robert Spratt's of Newtownstewart. This bed had metal bars on the headboard. The bars were about

half-inch in diameter, ideal for a little hand to get hold of. Patricia used to catch hold of the headboard bars and hoist herself up into a seated position, and then she could get out of bed. It was probably something the designer of the bed had never thought of. But the little girl thought of it. This practical use of her headboard rails was her daily routine, until her sudden death in bed in May 2014. She had lived 62 happy and fruitful years.

Patricia's little bed was put into storage, wrapped up in the attic of the shed behind the house. Four years later, Patricia's great-nephew, Oisín was born. For Oisín's first birthday, in March 2019, his mother Aileen had the idea of a decorative arch, covered with balloons, to put on display at the front door of the house.

Her brother, Kevin, a genius with design, undertook to make the arch. He said to his mother, Rosemary, "Could I use the metal bars of Aunt Patricia's bed to make the arch?" Rosemary readily agreed and Kevin built it, with a telescopic feature so that the height could be adjusted according to need. The decorative arch was ready in time for Oisín's birthday.

I first came across it on First Holy Communion Day 2019, when his

Aunt Shauneen had covered the arch with balloons to decorate the Parish Hall for the children's party. The decorative arch has appeared many times since then. Last year, it surmounted the Sacred Heart picture in Glenock with flowers for the month of June and, this year, it did the same for the statue of Our Lady in May.

Before the current renovation to put new windows in the church, we brought the Glenock statue of Our Lady here, to the Oratory for safekeeping, and I asked Shauneen and Shane to erect the floral arch around the statue. This is the arch's first appearance in the Oratory, and it is beautifying the statue of Our Lady.

The secular world tends to discard things, such as old beds, and people, like unborn babies and persons with special needs, before they get a chance to walk in this world. God has a higher vision.

I would love to have known little Patricia O'Brien from Upper Gallon, but even if you never met her, you can be inspired by her story and the place she holds in her family's heart. Special needs, disabilities and sufferings are all encompassed in the redemptive plan of Jesus the Messiah. Patricia lives on in the community's



Patricia O'Brien, Newtownstewart, 1951-2014.



Fr Roland Colhoun with the family of the late Patricia O'Brien - Rosemary Devine, Ciabhan Kilpatrick and Shauneen Kilpatrick, in Newtownstewart Oratory.

memory.

As her sister Rosemary puts it, "The bed factory didn't realise it, but the headboard was made to become God's arch."

God's plan is mysterious, painful and beautiful in equal measure. Let us trust in the Messiah, Christ Jesus, who makes all things new.

Impressive new St Oliver Plunkett shrine in Newtownstewart Oratory



Fr Roland Colhoun with artist, Terence McNamee and the new picture of St Oliver Plunkett displayed in Newtownstewart Oratory.

ON the 340th anniversary of the death of St Oliver Plunkett, a new picture of the martyr was blessed and commissioned as a new shrine to him in the Parish of Ardstraw East, by Fr Roland Colhoun, during a ceremony in the Oratory of Mary Mother of God.

Saying that this followed the installation of a relic of the bones of the Saint in the Oratory's altar some eight months previous, Fr Roland remarked: "The congregation will pass the picture every day and people can stop to study it and to pray to the Saint. And they will be reminded by the inscription that the martyred Archbishop of Armagh has a permanent presence here, by virtue of his relics".

In his search for the perfect picture of St Oliver Plunkett, Fr Roland recalled how he had found it in the new book 'Oliver Plunkett: Journey to Sainthood', which was published last year to mark the centenary of his Beatification.

Explaining that the picture was a copy of the canonization banner for St Oliver, painted by an Italian artist in 1975 and draped from the balcony of St Peter's Square in Rome for the Canonization ceremony in October 1975, Fr Roland noted that it was "replete with symbolism and numerous details on the martyr's life".

He added: "The book says that after the canonization, the Roman banner was given a home in St Peter's Church in Drogheda, our national shrine to St Oliver

Plunkett. So, last autumn, I began the adventure of acquiring a copy of the banner. After strenuous efforts, I traced the author of the book, Mr Tommy Burns from Drogheda. He very kindly offered to help.

"Since the banner is four metres tall and suspended at a great height, Tommy had to ascend a tall stepladder inside the church and with a steady hand and a digital camera, capture an image of the banner. He sent it to me and, after many consultations, I found a company capable of producing a large copy, Graham Printers of Omagh.

"Meanwhile, I had to design a frame that would do justice to the picture. The wood had to be ash, to match the other furnishings in the Oratory. John McMennamin of Miller Joinery, Victoria Bridge, created my design in ash. He added tulip wood for the inner frame and birch plywood for the display panel. Patrick Collins and Cathal Walsh helped me with transporting the big structure, and Maurice Barclay of Castlederg lacquered the wood, while local artist, Terence McNamee painted the inner frame white and the display panel red to symbolise the blood of the martyr.

"I used Stephen Moore's design of the radiator shelves in the Sacred Heart Room to commission a heat-blocker shelf to sit below the picture of St Oliver. Kevin Kerrigan manufactured the elegant shelf and fitted it with the large picture of the rear wall of the Oratory. Petra

Bradley of Lisnafin acquired the brass plaque for the bottom of the picture. Feature Piece, in Omagh, framed Colette McGirr's work, the two printed A4 pages below the picture, one page with the explanation of the Canonization Banner and the other with the Prayer to St Oliver Plunkett".

Fr Roland also pointed out that there was "no cost whatsoever to the parish because every part of it was donated for the Oratory".

Commenting on the parish's connection with the martyr, he explained: "St Oliver Plunkett was Archbishop of Armagh but that meant he was metropolitan Bishop of the nine most northerly dioceses. And since persecution and penal law made sure there were hardly any bishops in the country, Archbishop Plunkett found himself traversing diocese after diocese to fulfil his mission. Therefore, in 1670 he visited the Diocese of Derry.

"St Eugene's Monastery in Ardstraw had already been destroyed, so there was no reason for Archbishop Oliver to come to this historic area. But because Ardstraw has given the patron to the Diocese, St Eugene, and since St Oliver visited the See of St Eugene, we have some claim on him. And we plan to take maximum advantage of it by praying to the martyr, using his relic for intercession and doing the annual Novena in his honour".

Eangach

Ár nDúchas

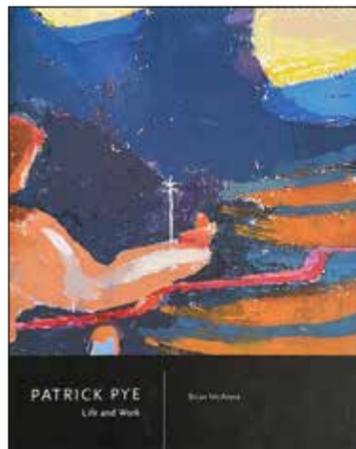
Liodán Cholm Cille

A Naomh Colm Cille, a Oilithreach Calma Chríost, guigh ar ár son.
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Oilithreach Cróga Chríost;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Oilithreach Gaisciúil Chríost;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Oilithreach Muinéach Chríost;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Oilithreach Misniúil Chríost;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Chara na nAingéal;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Chara na mBocht;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Chara na bPeacach;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Chara na nEaslán;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Chara na nGael;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Cheansaitheoir na nDeamhan;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Cheansaitheoir na dTonn;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Cheansaitheoir na nOlc;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Cheansaitheoir an ainchreidimh;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Sholas an Iarthair;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Lóchrann na nOileán;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Fháidh an Tiarna;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Oibrí na Míorúiltí;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Cholún an iomad Eaglaisí;
 A Naomh Colm Cille, a Réalt Eolais Gheal chun na bhFlaitheas.

Patrick Pye



Patrick Pye



Rugadh Patrick Pye i Winchester na Sasana in 1929. Thug a mháthair go hÉirinn é nuair a bhí sé dhá bhliain go leith d'aois. Tógadh é i dTeach Mealóg ar bhruach abhainn na Dothra. Bhí sé ar scoil, mar lóisteoir, i gColáiste Columba i mBaile Átha Cliath, agus b' an snoiodóir cáiliúil Oisín Kelly a bhí mar mhúinteoir ealaíne aige. Chuaigh leabhar ar El Greco go

mór i bhfeidhm air agus é ar an choláiste. Ní raibh sé ach 16 bliain d'aois nuair a glacadh le cuid dá phictiúirí don 'Irish Exhibition of Living Art'.

Tionchar an Chreidimh

Bhain a mháthair le cúlra Eaglais na hÉireann, ach d'fhág sí sin ar leataobh agus rinne neamh-shuim de chúrsaí creidimh. I ndiaidh bhás a mháthar thiontaigh Patrick ina Chaitliceach. Bhí tábhacht ar leith ag an chreideamh ina chuid ealaíne. I mbróisiúr dá chuid scríobh sé:

'The work of Patrick Pye, in its graphic clarity, lives more in the early tradition of Christian Art than in the so-called Academic tradition of visual representation.'

Is minic téamaí creidimh ina shaothar ealaíne, agus téamaí ón Bhíobla go háirithe. Rinne sé cuid mhór píosaí mar choimisiúin eaglasta. Mar shampla, dhearaigh sé gloine daite don ailtire Liam McCormick, a rinne eaglaisí nua-aimseartha sa ré iar-Vatacáin II i nDeoise Dhoire. Is mar líníocht le haghaidh gloine daite a rinne sé 'Jacob's Dream' sa chéad áit. Rinne sé mar eitseáil (eagrán teoranta) é ina dhiaidh sin.

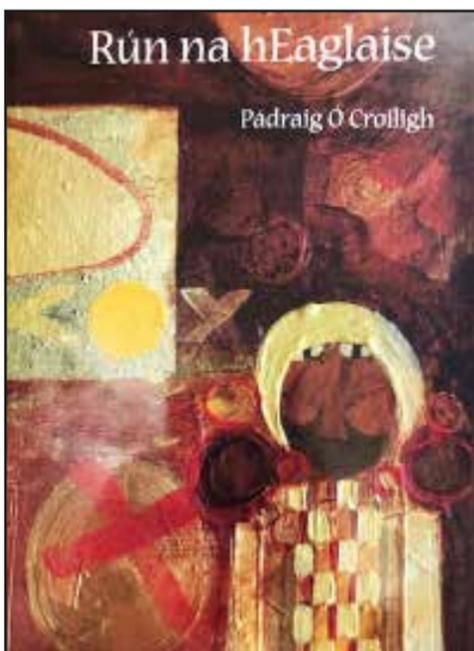
Ba bhreá leis triail a bhaint as modhanna oibre nua, agus as meáin éagsúla: ola ar línéadach, nó fiú ola ar chopar — thiocfadh crithlonrú an mhíotail fríd dhath na péinte; rud a thug beocht ar leith don saothar.



Fealsúnacht na hEalaíne

B'aoibhinn leis machnamh ar an ealaín agus ar na córais smaointeoireachta a bhí taobh thiar de stíleanna éagsúla ealaíne. Ní hiontas ar bith é gur chuir sé spéis i saothar El Greco. Scríobh sé féin leabhar ar El Greco: 'The Time Gatherer', agus rinne sé cur síos ar inspioráid an ealaíontóra agus ar an saol samhlaíochta agus spioradálta

a bhí taobh thiar dá shaothar. Ba spéis leis firinne an ealaíontóra, a bhí le lorg chan tríd an intleacht ach tríd an tsamhlaíocht. Tá macalla ansin de Naomh Colm Cille, a bhí ina fhile, ina ealaíontóir, agus ina fhealsamh. Sa réamhrá a scríobh Patrick Pye dá leabhar 'Apples and Angels' dúirt sé: 'Art does not tell us what to believe; it tells us what it feels like to believe.' Léirigh sé a dhearcadh ar an ealaín san iris 'Introspect' (1975-1977).



Leigheas Chríost

Sa sean-am i ndiaidh Shacraimint na nEaslán bhainfeadh an sagart an ola de na lámha agus den éadán láithreach le píosa olann, ach ní dhéantar sin anois. Rud naofa í an ola, agus is den tsacraimint í. Ligimis di sú isteach tríd an chraiceann, agus ligimis do Chríost an duine seo a leigheas.

Caithfidimid a admháil, áfach, nach ionann leigheas dúinne agus don duine tinn, agus do Chríost. B'fhéidir gurb é an leigheas is fearr a fhóireann don othar ná go bhfaighidh sé bás agus go

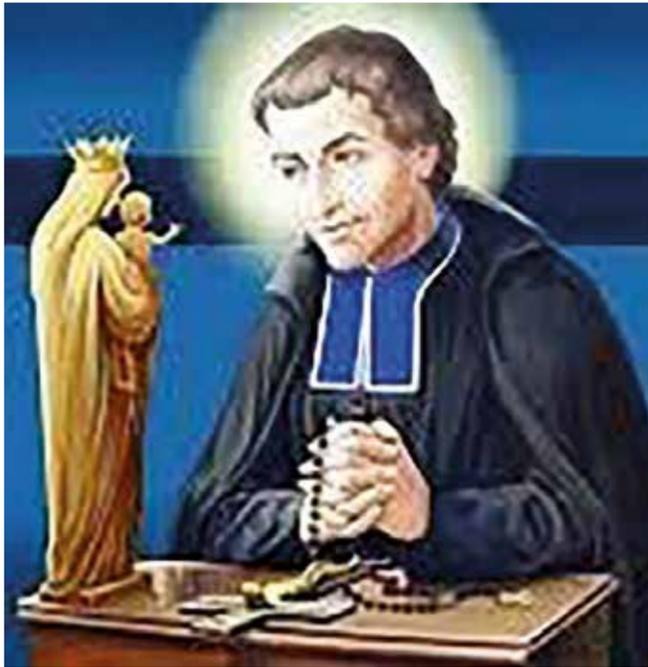
rachaidh sé le Críost chuig na Flaithis. Ba chóir dúinn a bheith réidh le ligean leis an duine tinn, más é sin an rud atá i ndán dó. Ní easpa dóchais é sin, nó tá ár ndóchas i nDia agus in Íosa Chríost, agus ní thig sacraimint a cheiliúradh gan dóchas Chríost a cheiliúradh ag an am chéanna. Ach más é an nós atá ann go bhfaigheann níos mó daoine bás i ndiaidh Shacraimint na nEaslán a ghlacadh, thig linn a rá nach bhfuil ár nósanna cúraim mar is ceart. Ba cheart go mbeadh biseach ag teacht ar dhaoine i ndiaidh Shacraimint na nEaslán

níos minice ná an bás.

Bhí am ann agus gan mórán otharlann faoin áit, agus fuair furmhór na ndaoine bás sa bhaile. Anois faigheann furmhór na ndaoine bás in otharlann, agus glactar leis gur rud í Sacraimint na nEaslán a tharlaíonn san otharlann. Is mór an trua é sin, mar léiríonn sé an mhíthuiscint sin go fóill a cheanglaíonn Sacraimint na nEaslán leis an bhás. Ba chóir do dhaoine a bheith ag glacadh Sacraimint na nEaslán sa bhaile, i measc na clainne agus a gcairde

thart orthu, agus é mar chuid den saol coitianta.

B'fhéidir, go fóill, go bhfeiceann daoine Sacraimint na nEaslán mar ullmhúchán don bhás, in ionad breathnú air mar ábhar dóchais i gCríost. B'fhéidir nár mhaith leo an sagart a thabhairt chucu ar eagla scanradh a chur ar an duine tinn. Nár mhillteanach an rud é ligean don nós a theacht ar an saol arís go raibh sacraimint ar bith ceangailte leis an eagla, agus chomh tábhachtach agus chomh háthasach agus atá teacht Chríost in am an riachtanais.



DURING this Centenary year for the Legion of Mary, the spiritual director for legionaries in the Derry Diocese, Fr Thomas Canning has been celebrating Masses on key dates, including the birthday of founder, Servant of God, Frank Duff, the Feast of St Louis Marie de Montfort, who had a major influence on the life of Frank Duff, the anniversary of the death of the Ven Edel Quinn, the first Legion of Mary Envoy, and the birth of Servant of God, Alfie Lambe, the second Legion of Mary Envoy.

And on September 21, Bishop Donal will be celebrating a Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, for all legionaries in the Diocese to mark the founding of the Legion in Dublin on September 7, 1921.

Before this, on September 13, a special Novena got underway led by Fr Thomas, which will run for nine Mondays and finish on November 8 with the celebration of Mass to mark the anniversary of the death of Frank Duff on November 7, 1980.

Here, he writes about the contribution of St Louis Marie de Montfort and the Venerable Edel Quinn to the founding and spread of the Legion.

Edel did her best every day to unite herself with Our Lady and thus serve Jesus



EDEL Quinn was born in Kanturk, Co Cork, in 1907, the eldest of five children. At a very young age, she had great devotion to Our Lady. She was

soon recruited into the Legion of Mary after she had left school. By that time, the family had moved to Dublin, which was the first place, not only in the whole of Ireland but in the whole world, where the Legion of Mary had started.

Legionaries were always to work in pairs. Edel and her co-worker, whenever possible, would visit some Church to pray before starting their Legion work. That work included the visitation of the elderly who lived alone, and calling on families for the purpose of encouraging them to have the Sacred Heart enthroned in their homes.

Edel deepened her faith by reading a lot of spiritual books. She not only just read them, she studied them with great diligence. For example, she studied the

We should consecrate ourselves totally to Mary so that she can mould us more perfectly into the likeness of Christ – St Louis de Montfort

ST Louis Marie de Montfort was the Saint whom Frank Duff was so inspired by whenever he set up the Legion of Mary. He had been greatly renowned for his writings especially about Our Lady.

Louis was born in Montfort, a small town in France, in 1673, the eldest of a large family. The religious atmosphere in the home, caused by the handing on of faith on the part of his parents, is what made him so deeply religious from the outset.

He started learning to say the Rosary at five years of age, and it was only in adulthood that he began to eventually realise that it was a very powerful instrument in his struggle with Satan, as he tried to save the souls of many.

He once said: "The Rosary is a priceless treasure which is inspired by God".

At the age of 20, Louis commenced his studies for the priesthood. He made the journey to the seminary by foot. He walked 200 miles to Paris to enter the seminary there, with his Rosary beads in his hand and praying that prayer. He had wanted to do it the pilgrim way, as was the case in many of the other journeys he made throughout his life. He was ordained in 1700.

As time went on, he made great strides in holiness. He prayed intently for long hours. He read so many books about devotion to Our Blessed Lady. He wrote many works. Whenever he wrote or preached, he always loved to refer to Jesus as the Eternal Wisdom... "To know Jesus Christ is to know enough, to know everything and not know Him is

irrespective of the amount of difficulties that were explained to her. She left in 1936 to go and establish the Legion in the East and Central Africa. Even though the difficulties there were numerous, she met every challenge with unwavering faith and courage.

In spite of very poor health and the terrible travelling conditions, Edel travelled many thousands of miles throughout the high plateaus of Kenya, throughout the sun-scorched arid land of Uganda, and down through the jungle territory of Southern Africa.

Her mission was to talk to people about God and about the Blessed Virgin Mary being the spiritual mother of all men and women. She also had the role of training people to be apostles and setting

up Legion of Mary organisations. Edel's work resulted in many conversions among pagans. Many Catholics who felt that they had lapsed were brought back to their religion. During the eight years that she spent there, Edel set up a huge number of Legion of Mary organisations.



Some of the Legionaries who attended Mass on the Feast of St Louis Marie de Montfort in St Teresa's Church, Sion Mills, celebrated by Fr Thomas Canning.

to know nothing".

His sermons on the Passion of Jesus were spoken with such reverence and conviction that his hearers knew that he had such a passionate love for Jesus. And his most effective sermon was his whole life.

To St Louis, there were four ways to obtain this love for Jesus as Eternal Wisdom: To have an ardent desire for Divine Wisdom, which would only be possible if we faithfully keep the commandments of God; persevering in prayer; following Jesus by taking up our crosses – and he regarded the Cross as the greatest mystery of Eternal Wisdom... "True Wisdom has fixed His Abode in the Cross so firmly that you will not find Him in the World save the cross"; a true devotion to Our Blessed Lady, for we cannot have Our Lord without Our Lady, nor Our Lady without Our Lord. No one but Mary has had the power to conceive and

give birth to Eternal Wisdom.

In the autumn of 1712, "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary", which was his best known book, was launched. In the book, he emphasised the fact that a tender and true devotion to the Blessed Virgin was the greatest means of all for obtaining and keeping Divine Wisdom. There, he tells us that we should consecrate ourselves totally to Mary so that she can mould us more perfectly into the likeness of Christ; in other words, we should consecrate ourselves to Jesus through Mary.

In consecrating ourselves to Mary, one must give one's whole self in order to belong more fully to Christ. This we can do even more by trying to live it out in our daily lives.

St Louis de Montfort died on April 28, 1716, holding the Crucifix in one hand and a statue of Our Lady in the other hand. Even though he died so young, at

the age of 43, he evangelised seven dioceses, made many pilgrimages by foot and touched so many hearts.

On July 20, 1947, Pope Pius XI canonised him. In his address, the Pope said of St Louis: "The greatest force behind all his apostolic ministry, and his great secret for attracting and winning souls for Jesus, was his devotion to Mary".

His memory still lives on. His Treatise on the "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary" has not ceased to exercise a true marvellous influence on souls who try to implement its teachings.

One such soul was Frank Duff. Frank implemented that teaching a lot in his handbook. St Louis Marie de Montfort obviously played such a major influence in his life, and that was all probably due to the intense study of his work, "True Devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary".

the Eucharist", she wrote.

Her devotion to Mary found great expression in the way she consecrated herself to Our Lady. She did her best every day to unite herself with Our Lady and thus serve Jesus. Mary's Rosary seemed to be always in her hand.

All during her eight years, Frank Duff kept in touch with her by letter. Edel was required to keep all the work which she had done in writing. A colossal amount of reports, which could only be hand-written at the time, were constantly sent home to Dublin.

Edel died in Nairobi on May 12, 1944. In 1957, the Archbishop of Nairobi initiated the process for her beatification, and on December 15, 1994, Pope John Paul II declared Edel Quinn 'Venerable'.

Legion of Mary — 100 years

by Fr Oliver Crilly



ON Tuesday morning, September 7, 2021, we had a special Mass in St Mary's, Castlefinn, to mark 100 years from the founding moment of the Legion of Mary in 1921. We decided to take the prayers and readings from the Mass of Mary, Mother of the Church. Later we realised how appropriate that was: Pope Paul VI invited Frank Duff to attend the fourth and final session of the Second Vatican Council as a lay auditor. As Frank Duff was shown into St Peter's Basilica, Cardinal Heenan of Westminster was speaking. He paused and welcomed Frank Duff. The 2,500 bishops from all over the world rose and gave him a standing ovation. Later in that fourth session, Pope Paul VI proclaimed the title of Mary, Mother of the Church.



Life of Frank Duff

Frank Duff was born in Phibsborough, in Dublin, in 1889. The whole of Ireland was under British rule at that time, and a lot of the things that happened in Frank Duff's life, and in the early years of the Legion of Mary, happened in very difficult times: the First World War, the 1916 Rebellion, the War of Independence, and then the Civil War. It wasn't a time that you would say was a very hopeful time for a great spiritual initiative.

He joined the Civil Service in 1908, and again, of course, that was the British Civil Service in Ireland. At that point, his work was with the Irish Land Commission. After the War of Independence when the Treaty was signed, he became part of the Civil Service of the new Irish Free State, and in 1924 he was moved to the new Department of

Finance. He was a very high level Civil Servant throughout the rest of his career.

In 1913, which was a difficult year in Dublin with the Strikes, he was introduced to the St Vincent de Paul Society, and through that he got an extraordinary insight into the poverty and suffering in Dublin.

I never met Frank Duff, but when I went to work in Dublin I met Leon Ó Broin who was a good friend of his. Leon spoke to me about the formative influence the St Vincent de Paul had on Frank. The origins of the St. Vincent de Paul Society were not just about physical poverty. Frederick Ozanam and his friends were very much concerned with spiritual poverty.

In 1919, Frank was introduced to Louis Marie Grignion de Montfort's book on True Devotion to Our Lady. He already had a great devotion to Our Lady, but that book, 'The True Devotion to Our Lady', had a huge influence on him.

Founding of Legion of Mary

Then we come to the great moment that we are celebrating today. Like many great moments, it didn't happen according to a wonderful plan that was worked out far in advance. It happened through God's providence.

Frank Duff and a number of St Vincent de Paul members, supported by members of the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association, had a meeting to plan hospital visitation in some Dublin hospitals. At that time, the St Vincent de Paul was only open to men, but a number of women were present — possibly making tea for the meeting. When these young women heard the discussion, they became very excited, and asked if they could become involved in the hospital visitation.

Frank was very open to the idea and a meeting was arranged for September 7, 1921, at Myra House in Francis Street, in Dublin. Frank was there, and Fr Michael Toher, and the women undertook to organise visits to the women's wards in the South Dublin Union Hospital. The meeting began with the Rosary, and they formed the group into an Association, which initially was called 'The Association of Our Lady of Mercy', but soon afterwards was named 'The Legion of Mary'. Elizabeth Kirwan, who was an office cleaner, was appointed its first President.

Legion of Mary Projects

From the beginning there was an energy about the Legion, fuelled partly by the urgent needs of society at the time. That energy led to several significant projects:

1922: Frank Duff set up the Sancta Maria hostel at 76 Harcourt Street to house the women he

rescued from a life of prostitution in the 'Monto' — the red light district in the North inner city, frequented by the British army. It was the area between Seán McDermott Street and Mountjoy Square. Frank Duff had no fear of vested interests or criminal violence.

1927: He established The Morning Star Hostel for homeless men.

1930: He set up the Regina Coeli Hostel for homeless women. Among the first occupants were an unmarried mother and her child. At that time in Ireland, many children were taken away from unmarried mothers, but Frank Duff was adamant that the place for that child was with its mother.

Another project of the Legion was to set up an Irish language branch, called 'An Réalt' — The Star.

Geographical Spread

The Legion of Mary began in Dublin, and first spread within Ireland. But it wasn't long before its value was recognised further afield.

The first outreaches included branches in: Scotland - 1928; England - 1929; India (also under British rule at that time) - 1931... Frank Duff took an absolute stand against any form of racial segregation; China, which was a very significant outreach - Fr Aedan McGrath, who later spent a number of years in prison, used the Legion to spread the Gospel to places he could never reach alone.

After the Eucharistic Congress in Dublin in 1932, the Legion developed and spread even more quickly.

Legion Initiatives

Frank Duff was ahead of his time in many ways, and he was always open to new initiatives - at a time when initiatives by lay people, especially in the Archdiocese of Dublin, were frowned upon!

The initiatives of the Legion of Mary included:

1. Legion Envoys, where people took time to go, perhaps for a few years, to foreign countries to work for the Legion and to spread the Gospel. The best-known envoy is probably Edel Quinn, who worked in East and Central Africa. She was held in high regard by people like Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, who played a major role in the Second Vatican Council. Another famous envoy was Alfie Lambe, who worked in South America.

2. The Legion of Mary Handbook, first produced in 1928. Millions of copies were printed and it was translated into 100 languages. The underlying theology of the Handbook is the Church as the Body of Christ. Frank Duff believed that Christ the Head needed his members.

The Second Vatican Council highlighted the Church as the Body of Christ, and the Pilgrim People of God.

3. The Mercier Society - an interdenominational group.

4. The Pillar of Fire Society, to build relationships with Jews during the Second World War.

5. Patrician Groups, where people met in a group, a lay person gave a paper on a prepared topic, followed by a discussion, with a summing up and final prayer by a priest. The lay people and the priest worked together in prayer and discernment, and both were valued.

Conclusion

Pope Paul VI greatly admired Frank Duff and the work of the Legion of Mary. He said that Frank had the gift of involving ordinary people - 'the little people' - of the Church. He invited him to the fourth and final session of Vatican II, and during that session he proclaimed the title of Our Lady as 'Mary, Mother of the Church' (in An Leabhar Breac, completed in 1408, it appears as 'Muir, Máthair na hEaglaise neamhaí agus talúnda').

Frank gave a talk in 1980, just one year after the euphoria of the visit of Pope John Paul II to Ireland. Most observers would have said the Irish Church was flourishing, but Frank Duff surprised his audience by saying: "The Church in Ireland is in the grips of winter, but one day spring will come".

I was at Frank Duff's funeral Mass in 1980 in the big St Andrew's Church, in Westland Row. I'm sure there was a fantastic homily, and I'm sure many beautiful and wonderful things were said about Frank during the Mass, but I don't remember a single word of all that. What I do vividly remember is coming out of the Church at the end of the Mass. As we walked down the steps, I looked across the road. The railway bridge (crossed now by the Dart) was above on our right, and on our left Westland Row stretched down to Fenian Street and the back of Trinity College.

All along the pavement facing Westland Row Church, there were hundreds of poor people. They would have been referred to as down and outs. They didn't feel free to enter the Church because they weren't dressed well enough. They didn't expect to be respected. But they came to Frank Duff's funeral because they were respected by Frank Duff.

I don't think anything that was said in the church that day could begin to match the wonderful statement that the poor people of Dublin made, because they knew what Frank Duff and the Legion of Mary had done for them.



Our Lady Queen of Peace Praesidium, Killygordon, with Fr Frank Lynch, who celebrated the Legion Centenary Mass in St Patrick's Church, Crosroads.

Mater Dei Curia celebrates centenary

by Mary McMenamin

THE Mater Dei Curia is a 100th anniversary of the Legion of Mary on September 7, with our spiritual director, Fr Thomas Canning, who is a great blessing for us, celebrating Mass on a number of key dates associated with the Legion.

Many parishes around the world are marking this special event. In our parish of Castlefin, Fr Oliver Crilly celebrated Mass on September 7, and you can watch this and listen to his wonderful homily on YouTube, under Daily Mass from St Mary's Church.

I would like to conclude by asking Our Lady of all Graces to protect all of us and keep us enclosed in her Immaculate Heart and lead us to the Heart of Her Son, Jesus.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight that we welcome new members with an open heart. You can do this by contacting any Legion of Mary branch.

This year we celebrated the



Fr Oliver Crilly and some of those who attended the Legion of Mary Centenary Mass in Castlefin.



Our Lady of Guadalupe Praesidium, Castlefin.

Inishowen Curia president found Our Lady drew her closer to Jesus



Rose Duffy

THE Inishowen Curia includes praesidia in Bunclara – Queen of the Most Holy Rosary, Malin –

Star of the Sea, Clonmany – Our Lady of Grace, Carndonagh – Mother of Divine Grace, Drung – Mother of the Church, Iskaheen – Our Lady of Knock, and Merville – Star of the Sea and Queen of the Universe, and its president is Bunclara parishioner, Rose Duffy.

A legionary now for 15 years, Rose was treasurer before she took over the role of president for the Inishowen Curia just a year before the arrival of Covid-19 and lockdown, which left the Legion, like so many other groups, unable to meet or carry out its work in the community.

She first became aware of the Legion in her home parish of Muff, when she was about 19 years old.

“I saw a Legion of Mary notice

up in Muff Church, looking for people to join,” recalled Rose, adding: “I was always very close to Our Lady and had great faith in her intercession, so it was the mention of Our Lady that struck me, but I didn’t join at that time.

“My father had a great devotion to Our Lady. We always had a May altar at home when we were growing up and the Rosary was said every evening, which we had to come in for and that was hard on a summer’s evening.

“When I got married, I moved to Bunclara and it wasn’t until later years, after rearing three of a family, that I had the free time to join the Legion there. A friend of mine was a member and asked me if I would like to come along to a meeting, and I did.

“It is good to be able to be involved in something like the Legion since having more time on my hands, and I have found it very fulfilling. It is also comforting that no matter what changes in the world, the Legion stays the same”.

She continued: “It is a great thing to do. You don’t be bothered much about things as maybe you would have before. You put your trust in Our Lady and she draws you closer to Jesus. I would have been very close to Our Lady and now I find that through the Legion she is drawing me closer to Jesus”.

Commenting on the work of the Legion, Rose said: “We promote the Rosary and go around the homes with the statue of Our Lady. We take the statue into the schools as well, during the month

of May, which leads to the children asking for it to come to their homes, and we also visit Beech Hill Nursing Home, Nazareth House Residential Home and the Nursing Unit in Bunclara.

“We weren’t able to do this or meet during Covid, but we rang each other to keep in touch and said the Legion prayer at 6 pm every Monday in our own homes”.

Set up over 20 years ago, the Bunclara Praesidium now has seven legionaries and new members are always welcome. They meet on Monday evenings at 6 pm in the St Teresa Room, and their spiritual director is Fr Brian McGoldrick, and look forward to getting together when the current restrictions are lifted.

Parish of Ardstraw East celebrates Legion of Mary Centenary

by Fr Roland Colhoun



Newtownstewart Forty Hours Adoration for Legion of Mary Centenary.

ONE hundred years have passed since the founding of the Legion of Mary in Dublin on September 7, 1921. To mark the centenary, the parish of Newtownstewart had a triple celebration.

Firstly, the members of the praesidium arranged a beautiful Legion altar on the sanctuary of the parish Oratory, which was in place for a week.

Secondly, we undertook Forty Hours of continuous Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This was the parish’s second year to do a complete forty hours, and in Newtownstewart, forty means forty! Exposition began at 3 o’clock on Friday afternoon, September 3, and continued for two days and two nights, ending with Mass on Sunday morning, September 5.

The period of Adoration was interrupted only for a wedding at noon on the Saturday and for the Vigil Mass that evening. There were volunteers for every one of the forty hours. Parishioners and

Legionaries rose to the spiritual challenge, and people came from neighbouring parishes and praesidia to join in. Even throughout the nights, many people knelt in silent prayer.

Thirdly, we celebrated Mass in honour of Our Lady on the following Tuesday evening, the date of the centenary itself, in the Oratory of Mary Mother of God.

In my sermon, I explained the meaning of the Legion’s apostolate. Its purpose is the glory of God through the holiness of its members, developed by prayer and active co-operation in Mary’s and the Church’s work. I added some insights from my own experience of the Legion since my first year in seminary.

After Mass, Paul McAree from Belfast, who works for EWTN, took a group photo. We praise God for the great opportunity to celebrate one hundred years of the Legionary generosity and dedication.



Legion of Mary Centenary Mass in Mary Mother of God Oratory, Newtownstewart.

Moville’s resurrected Star of the Sea praesidium thriving



MOVILLE parishioner, Kathleen McAleer is a member of the Star of the Sea Praesidium, one of two in the Co Donegal parish, the other being Queen of the Universe.

Kathleen explained that this praesidium had once lapsed and was resurrected again about five years ago, with Fr John

McLaughlin as their spiritual director.

While it was later in life that Kathleen became more aware of the Legion of Mary, she said that she had grown up in a family home where the Rosary was devoutly prayed.

She recalled: “I born and raised on the family farm in Malin Head

and I don’t think the Legion had groups in the countryside then. My father sold the farm and moved to Moville, where he had bought another farm. He had a great faith and never left the house in the morning before he had said the Rosary.

“The Rosary had priority in our home. I remember a picture of The Holy Family in our home and we knelt down every evening to say the Rosary. So I grew up praying the Rosary and still have a great devotion to it and to Our Lady. No matter where I go, I always say the Rosary”.

“I was introduced to the Legion through Kathleen Moyne, who has been in a legionary for 35 years and was president of the Curia for six years,” said Kathleen, adding: “She approached me and a neighbour about joining the Star

of the Sea Praesidium which they were trying to start up again. We started off with three members and now have six, and another new member is expected to join.

“We have not been able to meet due to Covid, but when we did, we met in Fr John’s house. I was very keen to keep going during lockdown but we couldn’t and I have missed it. It is lovely to meet the people and very rewarding to see what they get from the visits; some might not see anyone from one week to the next”.

While they did not meet during Covid, Kathleen said that the members committed themselves to saying the prayers that they normally prayed during the Praesidium meetings, and she is looking forward to getting back to pray as a group.

Rosary on the Coast for Life & Faith



THE Rosary on the Coast for Life & Faith will take place this year on Sunday, October 10, at 2.30 pm, when people around the globe will be united in this prayer.

The faithful are invited to join in the praying of the Rosary from wherever is convenient, such as grottos, churches, homes etc, while observing social distancing and regulations regarding gatherings.



For more information regarding the Coastal Rosary, and to register a Rosary location, no matter how small, go to www.coastalrosaryireland.com

My time as a legionary has brought me many blessings *by Margaret Harte*



Margaret Harte

FRANK Duff (1889-1980) founded the Legion of Mary on September 7, 1921, in Myra House, Dublin. There were 15 members present around a simple table, with a statue of Our Lady, lighted candles and flowers, and now the organisation is in all the Continents.

The two main objectives of the Legion are the holiness of its members and carrying out apostolic works, with the permission of the parish priest, for example home visitations, promoting prayer and the Rosary with the Pilgrim Statue of Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal, visitation of hospitals, nursing homes and prisons, and Peringratio Pro Christo (PPC), which involves volunteers giving up a week of their holidays to go to other places, such as within the United Kingdom, Finland, Russia and Israel, or to the Legion House in Lourdes (the Permanence).

The parish group is known as the Praesidium and it holds a weekly meeting, which consists of praying the Rosary and Legion prayers, spiritual reading and reports on work. This fuels the work in hand.

The spirituality of the Legion of Mary is based on St Louis de Marie

Montfort's treatise on the 'True Devotion to The Blessed Virgin'. Frank Duff based the Legion handbook on this work. However, he dismissed it on first reading, but on the advice of a friend re-read it, in fact, several times, and he saw the light, as it were.

The main theme of this is 'To Jesus through Mary', and Mary is at the heart of all Legion activity and is beloved by all Legion members. Pope John Paul II was hugely influenced by St Louis de Montfort and adopted 'Totus Tuus' as his motto.

The annual 'Acies' Ceremony is the principal function of the Legion Year and is held on March 25, or a date near to that. During this, Legionaries renew their dedication to Our Lady by placing their hand on the Vexillum (the standard) and reciting... "I am all yours, My Queen and My Mother, and all I have is yours".

The Vexillum features a dove representing the Holy Spirit, the Miraculous Medal and a globe. After six months' probation, the Legionary makes a promise to the Holy Spirit. Legionaries have found the Miraculous Medal to be very powerful in their work, especially with PPC.

St Louis Marie de Montfort recommended total consecration to Our Lady, which is a 33-day programme of prayer, preferably ending on one of the feast days of Our Lady. He also said of the Holy Spirit: "When the Holy Spirit finds His spouse in a soul, He flies to that soul to communicate Himself to it, to fill it with His presence in proportion as He discovers therein the presence and fullness of His spouse".

In 1936, Edel Quinn was sent to establish the Legion of Mary

in Eastern Central Africa. She died in 1944. She has the title 'Venerable' and is in the second stage to sainthood. Frank Duff is at the first stage and has the title, Servant of God. Alfie Lambe was an envoy to South America and also has the title 'Servant of God'. There are prayer leaflets for their beatification.

You may become an auxiliary member by reciting the Rosary and the Legion prayers daily. The prayer leaflet, known as the Tessera, is available from any local branch of the Legion, as are the beatification prayer leaflets.

Frank Duff was invited to attend Vatican II as a lay observer. He was truly inspired by the Holy Spirit and was ahead of his time as regards his understanding of the role of the laity in the Church. He got a standing ovation from all the bishops of the world present at Vatican II.

The Legion hopes to recruit many new members during this Centenary Year. I was in Our Lady of Mercy Praesidium, Strabane, before I got married, when Strabane and Murlog was the one parish, and returned to it when I retired, so I have spent about 25 years as a legionary so far.

Blessings

Being in the Legion has brought me many blessings and I really enjoy the work; taking the Statue of Our Lady and promoting the Rosary, and visiting nursing homes. From 1996 to 2016, I went to work every year at the Permanence of the Legion of Mary in Lourdes for 5-7 days. This involved household duties such as working in the reception area and going out on contact work to camping sites. I also had the

Prayer for the Beatification of the Servant of God Frank Duff

God our Father,

You inspired your servant Frank Duff with a profound insight into the mystery of your Church, the Body of Christ, and of the place of Mary the Mother of Jesus in this mystery.

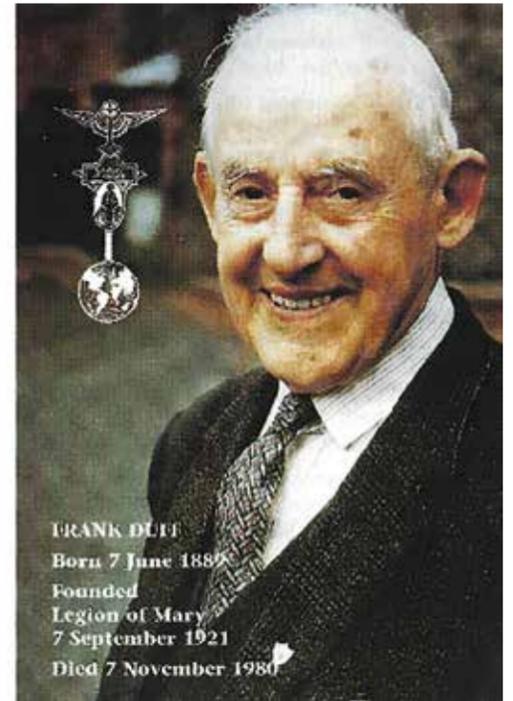
In his immense desire to share this insight with others and in filial dependence on Mary he formed her Legion to be a sign of her maternal love for the world and a means of enlisting all her children in the Church's evangelising work.

We thank you Father for the graces conferred on him and for the benefits accruing to the Church from his courageous and shining faith.

With confidence we beg you that through his intercession you grant the petition we lay before you . . .

We ask too that if it be in accordance with your will, the holiness of his life may be acknowledged by the Church for the glory of your Name, through Christ Our Lord, Amen.

With ecclesiastical approval



FRANK DUFF
Born 7 June 1889
Founded
Legion of Mary
7 September 1921
Died 7 November 1980

privilege of carrying the banner in the Eucharistic Procession in Lourdes and the Vexillum in the torch-light procession.

Our Lady is a real Mother to us. She cares for us. I feel close to Her and ask for Her intercession all the time. I recently read 'The Life and Glories of St Joseph' by Edward Healy Thompson and found it amazing to read about the wonderful person St Joseph was, as well as about Our Lady's wonderful gifts and virtues.

I have also read 'The Spirituality of St Sr Faustina - A road to communion with God', by two Sisters from Sr Faustina's convent, Sr M Elzvieta Siepak and Sr M Nazaria Dlublak OLM (Our Lady of Mercy), on Our Lady's appearance to Sr Faustina several times.

For Sr Faustina, Mary was above all the model of complete

entrustment to God, that is to say, fulfilling His Will and showing Mercy to people. She was the model of all virtues. Mary taught her, above all, to discover God in her own soul. Our Lady was her instructress in the interior life of the soul with Jesus.

The Virgin Mary encouraged her to carry out the Will of God faithfully; that is most pleasing to His Holy eyes.

Our Lady said to Sr Faustina another time: "You practice the three virtues that are dearest to me and most pleasing to God. The first is humility, humility and, once, again, humility. The second virtue is purity and the third is love of God. As my daughter, you must especially radiate these virtues."

Mary, as the mistress of the interior life, gave Sr Faustina advice not only regarding her personal perfection but also what

was closely connected with it; the Apostolic Mission.

Sr Faustina's first apostolic task was to proclaim the Mystery of Divine Mercy to the world, and her second consisted of imploring God's Mercy for the whole world. In this mission, the Blessed Mother strengthened her by pointing to Herself as the model of the hidden life and constant intercessory prayer.

At a later stage, Our Lady no longer asked for prayer but demanded it. The imitation of Mary and the fulfilment of Her commands quickly bore the expected fruits in Sr Faustina's life.

"The more I imitate the Mother of God", she wrote, "the more deeply I get to know God". The faithful imitation of Mary sanctified her soul and led to the intimate union with Jesus.

Remembering life-long Castleberg legionary Philomena Doherty



Philomena Doherty

priest, Fr Paul Fraser commented on how appropriate it was for the 82-year-old to return to God during Mary's month.

Recalling someone's comment that Philomena had "walked hand in hand with Mary throughout her life", Fr Paul added "and we have no doubt that Mary has now walked with her into eternal life".

Fr Paul went on to note that Philomena had served with the Legion for nearly 50 years, sometimes giving up her holidays to go on peregrinatio (pilgrimage): "She went to Scotland and did her Legion work in the Archdiocese of Glasgow. This type of Lay Missionary work probably gave her a great affection for the foreign missions, and it is hardly surprising that Philomena also was an active member of the Apostolic Workers".

Born on April 18, 1939, Philomena was baptised in St Patrick's Church the next day and lived with her family in Dartans, until they moved closer to the town in 1963. She went

to primary school in Castleberg and was confirmed in St Patrick's, Aghyaran, on April 24, 1951, before going on to train in shorthand typing at the Technical College.

"By all accounts, Philomena was a very bright and promising student, but in those challenging times the main goal was to get a job," remarked Fr Paul, adding: "Philomena began her working life in Campbell's Grocery Shop and then went on to work in Armstrong's Newsagents for the next 45 years or so. As an employee, not only was she very bright, but she was also very loyal and dependable, making many friends and winning the respect of everyone she knew".

Philomena moved to live in Burnside Villas when she married Charlie Doherty in St Patrick's Church, Castleberg, on August 17, 1971.

A parishioner who had played a very active role in the life of her parish, Fr Paul noted that as well as her work with the Legion of

Mary, Philomena had been one of the first in the parish to be a lay minister of the Eucharist and was a founding member of the Eucharistic Adoration Apostolate, often travelling to Derry for the monthly meetings.

"She had a deep reverence, not only for the Mother of God", he remarked, "but also for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, and she was unafraid to witness to that".

He added: "Philomena became a reader in the Parish as well; one of the best for sure. Sometimes we don't appreciate the fact that there are two tables in the Church - the table of the Eucharist and the table of the Word. Philomena served faithfully at both tables.

"She was the one who could be trusted to organise readers for the various Masses and she did this job with great diligence, making sure that the table of the Word was given the respect that it deserves".

Outside of her many Church activities, Philomena had also worked with the St John's Ambulance for over 15 years.



Saying that she had known great joy in her life, but also sorrow, especially when her husband, Charlie died in 1984, Fr Paul continued: "But for a woman of faith like Philomena, she continued her good works until her health began to deteriorate from about 2014 onwards. She knew much pain from the affliction of arthritis in the spine, but she carried it with great dignity. While her body may have grown weaker, her faith and her interior life remained strong.

She received the Eucharist joyfully when Fr Colm, and then myself, visited her at home. She was so committed to this Parish right up to the end.

"I feel so privileged to have known Philomena, and it's clear that many others feel the same about her. She may not have had children of her own, but she had many spiritual children here in Castleberg; people whose lives were touched by her faith and who depended on her prayers".

Remembering the late Mary Hamilton... A life of service *by Vera McFadden*



Mary Hamilton, left, with Mary Quigley and Vera McFadden at the Fatima Grotto, Ards Franciscan monastery.

MY friend, Mary Hamilton, went to Heaven in the month of May, which we call the month of Mary. It was also Ascension time, which celebrates when Jesus Himself went to Heaven. Mary would have loved all that, for all her life she had great devotion to Our Lady.

Her funeral Mass was celebrated in St Columba's Church, Long Tower. Mary had loved this holy place and had often told me her childhood memories of it. They had sung and prayed in Gaelic on the Saint's Feast Day when she was a child. She had grown up in the shadow of the Church, in a little hilly street just behind the school.

One of her fondest memories of childhood was of them sitting around their father as he told them adventures of a certain character. Later, she was convinced that the serialised narratives had surely been very ancient traditional tales. She also believed that the great detail in them had led to her own considerable literary talent and her urge to occasionally write poems and songs.

The first time that Mary invited me to her house was to show me the Mystical Rose statue. People were being led to prayer in many ways, by little signs and visions among them. The Holy Spirit was moving powerfully and the laity were gathering together to recite the Rosary in each other's homes. The need for prayer was obvious and, perhaps, the little signs were for encouragement to continue.

People were asking for opportunities for Adoration and

one priest told me that when enough people asked, they got it. The young people needed a lot of guidance and some local youth prayer meetings were established. Later, Heaven acknowledged it all, when there was a call to bring the young people to Medjugorje.

Mary and her husband, Joe, had a young family, and they invited other young people and formed Our Lady of Knock prayer group, which prayed the Rosary, went on pilgrimages including Medjugorje, and performed a special play about the visions at Knock. When these young people grew up, some of them still kept in touch with Mary and Joe.

When the SPReD movement began, Mary joined it and was introduced to Breeda. It was the beginning of a lasting friendship and they really appreciated and enjoyed each other's company. Breeda was one of the readers at Mary's funeral Mass.

Mary and I felt drawn to the monthly healing Mass at Rosstownlough and we also joined the monthly secular Franciscan study group. After a year, we asked if we could establish one in Derry. The Bishop gave us permission and we began in 2001, but we were not canonically established until the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal came here. Coincidentally, Mary and I had already met Fr Fidelis one Sunday at the bus depot, not knowing that in the future he would be our spiritual director.

Mary loved making new acquaintances and enjoyed our

meetings with other fraternities in the northern region. She loved the annual conference in Dublin which lasted three days, where she met lay Franciscans from all over Ireland. She also loved the Franciscan day at Knock, where we always sang in the choir. Knock was her favourite place – hadn't she called the young people's prayer group after it?

Mary visited the sick to raise their spirits. She befriended my older sister who suffered from osteoporosis. She came frequently to have little chats with her and, eventually, got her to go on little excursions out of the house; taking a taxi to the city centre, having a light meal and then exploring the charity shops. A good bargain is uplifting to one's spirit. Often people are more co-operative with a friend than with a relation.

Mary was with me in Moville when I broke my ankle. She was still with me five hours later when they finally decided to examine it in the hospital, and stayed with me until my daughter arrived from Belfast. During my five weeks in hospital, she visited me. When I was in the home in William Street for 12 weeks, she and Bridie Harkin asked the matron if we could have the monthly fraternity meetings there. We were given a room at the back and I was able to attend in my wheelchair.

A retired priest, Fr Willie Rafferty, who was full of the Holy Spirit, gave Mary a lot of help and she helped him too. She was a member of his prayer group in the little oratory in his home and attended the vocational retreats there, and maintained contact with his housekeeper after he died..

Of course, the people who were closest to Mary were the members of her own family. She helped her sisters, her sons and daughters, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. She was always there with a listening ear or to help in any way that she could.

Sometimes when babysitting, she would find an infant's antics hilarious and rejoiced in the successes of her descendants, whether these were Irish dancing prizes or university degrees or good situations in life.

She coped with the crosses of life through prayer and the help of all her family and other friends, many of whom she had helped, and she knew that Our Lady and Her Son were always there. As she often said, "The Rosary draws people together". She helped all that she could, from the youngest grandchild to the geriatric.

"I came not to be served but serve"...As I, your Lord and Master have washed your feet, so you should wash one another's."

What better way could Mary – or anyone else – have gone through life than in the footprints of the Master?

Best friend I ever had *by Breeda Boyle*

MARY Hamilton was quite simply one of a kind and the best friend I ever had. She was warm, open, kind-hearted and full of wisdom.

She had a ready smile and was always able to see the funny side of any situation no matter how bad.

She also had a deep faith in God and in Our Lady. She was called after Our Lady and she was like her in that she accepted whatever life threw at her, the good, the bad and the in between.

I am so glad that I was thrown into her path. I learned so much from my friend Mary. I learned that everything is God's will.

I know Mary is with me in some way, even though I am sad. And I know that I will see her again and she will probably say, "Now no more waffle Breeda", because she always said that to me.



Memories of Mary bring me great joy *by Bridie Harkin*



I first met Mary many years ago, when we were both young girls and spent summer holidays at

Fahan, in Co Donegal. Mary and I clicked as great friends and got on very well, enjoying many long days sat the beach making sand castles and swimming.

In our late teens, I would have often seen Mary at the dances and always enjoyed catching up and remembering our childhood days at Fahan

I have very fond memories of Mary's generosity to all, and one, in particular, that stands out is of when I was going to a prayer meeting at Rosstownlough and Mary went around the bus sharing biscuits with everybody, so that no one felt left out.

Through the Franciscan Prayer

Meeting Group, I was delighted, once again, to meet up regularly with Mary on a monthly basis. It was she who had extended an invitation to me to attend this prayer group.

About 10 years ago, Mary and I enjoyed a wonderful trip to Iona and I can clearly remember how much Mary loved the trip and was great company to be in.

The last trip we had planned was a pilgrimage to Lourdes, but alas, due to an airline strike, this trip was unfortunately cancelled.

Throughout my life, and on every occasion I met Mary, my memories of our encounters have brought me great joy, and I thank Mary for this.

My memories of Mary are very precious *by Josephine Rigby*

MARY and her husband, Joe, ran a prayer group called 'Our Lady of Knock'. I went with them to Medjugorje about 30 years ago, and I remember we all had to sleep in tents on the ground.

I was going through a very bad time in my life then, but I received a marvelous healing in Medjugorje. The late Fr Willie Rafferty was our spiritual director. God rest all three of them.

We all joined the Secular Franciscan Order that Vera McFadden started. We prayed and also had good times going to Vera's house in Moville. We used to say the Rosary, then some of the group painted pictures and we had something to eat. We went for walks along the beach too, and Vera also took us on runs to visit holy wells.

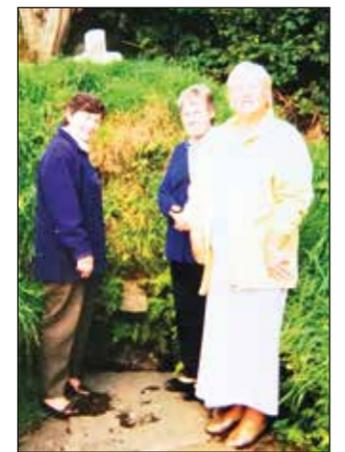
Mary and I loved going to all the charity shops in Derry and Buncrana. She was full of fun and loved meeting new friends. Mary was a great singer and dancer as well, and a good laugh to be with.

She also loved going to Adoration and had very strong faith, which she realized was the most important thing in her life, along with family.

I believe that Almighty God puts people in our paths in life. I am very blessed and thankful for Mary and Vera, and many, many more, in mine. All we have left in life are memories and my memories of Mary are very precious.

Mary was a person of great understanding and she was very up lifting. If someone was feeling not so good, she received the grace to be very kind to them and left

them reassured that they were not alone and feeling good again. May she rest in peace.



Josephine Rigby - pic - Mary Hamilton, on the left, with Lettie Parkhill and Josephine Rigby, at St Brigid's Well, Greencastle.

Mary had great time for everyone *by Mary Thompson*

MARY Hamilton is fondly remembered by myself, husband and daughters. We often met her in my home, at feiseanna, and with my mother.

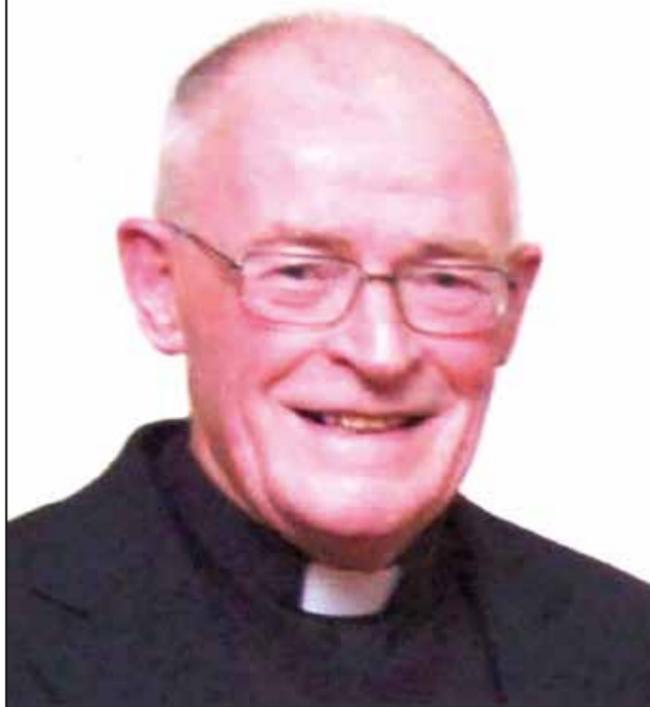
She is remembered by all of us as a warm, open person, who had great time for and interest in everyone, and truly loved her family.

Our condolences go out to her family and all those who loved her. May she rest in peace.



Mgr Ignatius McQuillan remembered as priest, teacher, coach and College president who sought to bring out best in people

The late Mgr Ignatius McQuillan.



WHEN Mgr Ignatius McQuillan passed away peacefully at Cornfield Nursing Home, in Limavady, on Friday, August 20, his remains were returned to the parish church of his 'second home', Ardmore, where he had ministered as curate for 15 years after his retirement from the education sector, and lived as priest-in-residence for a further five years before retiring fully at 80 years of age.

Born in Newtownbutler, Co Fermanagh, in April 1931, 'Iggy', as he was known, was educated there at St Mary's Primary School, before setting off for Derry in September 1942 to continue his studies as a boarder at St Columb's College, and then on to the seminary at Maynooth. He also studied at Oxford University.

Ordained to the priesthood in 1955, he was appointed to the teaching staff of St Columb's

College, teaching French and Religious Education from 1955-1983, when he was appointed as president of the College, in succession to the late Mgr James Coulter. On retiring from this role in 1990, he spent a year working as a Special Advisor on Religious Education, and then began his life ministering to the parishioners of St Mary's Ardmore, until his retirement in 2011. However, he remained a priest in the Ardmore Parish until last year, helping out as his health allowed. In addition, he served as Vicar General to Bishop Seamus Hegarty from 2000 to 2006.

The Requiem Mass was celebrated by Bishop Donal in St Mary's Church on Monday, August 23, during which former College president, Fr John R Walsh delivered the homily, recalling his memories of Mgr Ignatius over a

span off six decades.

Fr John spoke of "the priest-teacher in his prime, master of his subject (French), hard-working, expecting only the best from those in his charge, firm but fair, reassuring, surrounded by a certain aura."

He added: "I remember the sportsman who represented his native County Fermanagh on the Gaelic football field with the nom de guerre Sean Maguire; who shone as a golfer on umpteen courses throughout Ireland and further afield; who pounded the walkways after work each day as a jogging fitness fanatic. I remember the coach and supreme tactician in the Rannafast, McLarnon, MacRory and Hogan Cup Campaigns in the early to mid 60's."

"I remember the man for others who fought for the disadvantaged as headmaster of the college, and who preached forgiveness to teachers and boys alike, day in and day out. The president who brought St Columb's College into the 21st century, the moderniser who changed the curriculum and developed pastoral care, the financial wizard, with his brilliant mathematical brain, who stretched the school's budget to the limit, the leader who demanded high standards from all (he expected a lot from teachers but I don't think it was as much as he was willing to do himself). The man who had a way of overlooking human failings (whose natural humanity helped him in this as did his sense of humour) but who was capable of calling a staff member or pupil to account when he thought it necessary."

He also recalled Mgr Ignatius as "the courageous and generous individual, far-sighted, astute, unsentimental and meticulous, who in 1990, the year after he left St Columb's, chaired the committee Bishop Daly set up to

reshape Catholic education in the Diocese and especially in the City".

And he spoke of his "quiet fidelity and steadfast service as curate in Ardmore", saying: "Fr Iggy knew that the human journey is God-touched, that Christ's priesthood is powerful, and that life given in service has every reason to expect resurrection".

Rejoice

Looking on the occasion as one also to rejoice, Fr John concluded his homily by saying: "I rejoice, above all, in my Christian conviction that at this moment Iggy is more thrillingly alive than he has ever been. Jesus said, 'Whoever believes in me shall never die.' Patrick Ignatius McQuillan is alive! That, good friends, I believe with all my heart. For your strength and consolation, I pray that you do too".

Paying tribute to Mgr Ignatius at the end of the ceremony, Bishop Donal recalled wording he had seen on a poster years ago, "There is nothing as strong as real gentleness and nothing as gentle as real strength", before remarking that young people appreciate a teacher who can combine gentleness and strength.

"Education is an area where great good, or great damage, can be done to young people," he said, adding: "Mgr McQuillan knew the importance of educational structures, but he also believed that teachers don't teach subjects; they teach people. Many will be grateful for his enormous contribution to high quality education for all. He knew that, when education becomes a possession to be hoarded rather than a blessing to be shared, we are all losers".

Thanking God for strong and gentle teachers, Bishop Donal said: "We acknowledge those glimpses of holiness that shine out in so many ordinary people. We commend Mgr McQuillan to

the Lord and pray that the Lord will continue to bless us with inspirational teachers and pastors who strive for holiness".

Ardmore GAC expressed their appreciation of Mgr Ignatius' input to the Club and sadness at his passing, recalling that when he came to Ardmore in 1991 he quickly took an interest in the Club and was an integral part of the coaching team when its underage flourished in the early nineties.

They added: "He was always on hand to impart his experience and wisdom, and his extra coaching sessions with the minor team's defence no doubt helped secure the championship for Ardmore in 1993".

In a tribute from St Columb's College, the principal, Finbar Madden highlighted that during Mgr Ignatius' years as president "St Columb's College underwent rapid change and many of the foundations of the modern-day school were put in place during his tenure. There was a notable widening of the school's curriculum as well as the

introduction of a modern pastoral care system whose principles remain fundamental within the school to this day".

He added: "Immense as Mgr Ignatius' contributions to the school were as priest, teacher and president, he is also fondly remembered as the powerhouse behind the school's successes on the Gaelic pitch, which reached their apogee with triumphs in the MacRory (1965 and 1966) and Hogan Cups (1966). The images of Mgr Ignatius being carried shoulder high by jubilant College boys resonate to this day".

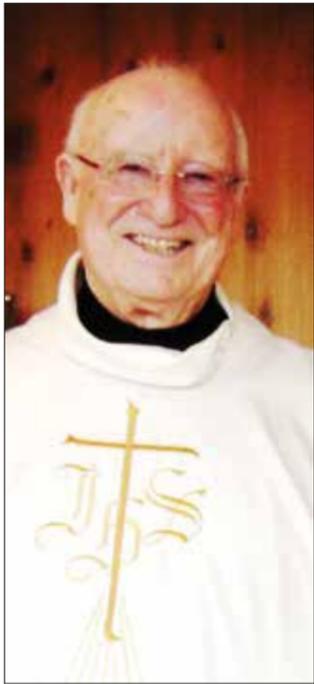
Commenting on his continued interest in the College long after his retirement, Mr Madden remarked that while Mgr Ignatius went on to enjoy "a rich and varied ministry", the College never left him: "He continued to attend functions for as long as his health permitted. Above all, however, it was his vocation as a self-effacing priest and visionary educator that will be his legacy to St Columb's and to the Diocese of Derry".



Mgr McQuillan's Requiem Mass in St Mary's Church, Ardmore.

Mgr McQuillan sharing his thoughts with Co Derry officials and players when they visited Glenderrymott PS with the Sam Maguire Cup

Fr Patsy Mullan greatly missed by Faughanvale community he ministered to for almost 25 years



The late Fr Patsy Mullan.

AFTER 55 years of priesthood, Fr Patrick Mullan was laid to rest amidst the parish community of Faughanvale and Lower Cumber, where he had spent almost half of his priestly years ministering.

The 80-year-old would have been in the parish 25 years next June, and so it was with great sadness that the parishioners received news on September 2 of the passing of the dedicated pastor they had known and loved for so long.

In his homily at Fr Patsy's Requiem Mass, which was celebrated in Star of the Sea Church, by Bishop Donal, the parish priest, Fr Noel McDermott

noted that the Kilrea native had been appointed parish priest of Faughanvale in 1997, following the untimely death of Fr Jack Gallagher.

Having great admiration for the parish priest he had happily ministered alongside when he was appointed to the curacy of Faughanvale, Fr Noel commented on Fr Patsy's unbroken service during his 55 years of priesthood.

Saying that it may be something that is taken for granted but which he found nonetheless remarkable, Fr Noel continued: "He never took a sabbatical, he never took extended leave to do a course, he never took time off except one day each week, the annual priests' retreat, and the annual leave that he was allowed to take".

He went on to speak of the delight of the parish community when Fr Patsy decided to remain amongst them when he retired from active ministry in 2018, after dedicating his life "to making Jesus, the Bread of Life, present and real in the lives of all to whom he ministered".

"The primary purpose of a priest's life is to make Jesus present among the people whom he serves," said Fr Noel, adding: "Fr Mullan made Jesus present each and every day when he offered the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Each and every day! He made Christ present in his unflinching, tireless and compassionate care for the sick, the troubled, the sad, the lost and the forgotten.

"He also did a Holy Hour, the Stations of the Cross, the Rosary

and, as a life-long pioneer, the pioneer prayer every day. So, anyone who asked him to pray for them, he surely did. He was a man of prayer.

"Even after his retirement, he continued to minister to the sick in a very special way, and to all who continued to come to his door seeking prayer and blessing, encouragement and hope, a listening ear and a sympathetic heart. He was available to all, regardless of who or what they were or their religious affiliation. He reached out the hand of friendship to everyone. We thank God for his ministry and his witness to the love and mercy of Jesus Christ."

On a personal note, Fr Noel spoke of how Fr Patsy had been "a true friend", adding: "He was a great colleague to minister alongside. We never had a row or a disagreement, and for me that certainly was a first, and it gives us a glimpse of the extent of Fr Mullan's patience, tolerance and forbearance."

Sacrificial

Born on March 13, 1941, Fr Patsy was the only son of Dan and Mamie Mullan, and Fr Noel pointed out that priesthood was a sacrificial step in that case "as it denies parents of grandchildren".

Highlighting celibacy as a way of "giving rather than lending oneself to God and His Church", he went on to say that Fr Patsy had lived out his vocation "fully, faithfully, joyfully and generously".

"Our prayer today," concluded

Fr Noel, "is that Fr Mullan has been reunited with his beloved parents, Dan and Mamie in the blessed land of Heaven where, for all eternity, they will rejoice in the presence of the Lamb of God, the One to whose gospel and glory Fr Mullan dedicated his life".

During his priesthood, Fr Patsy had served in every deanery in the Derry Diocese. Ordained in 1966, following his studies in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, his first appointment was as chaplain to Nazareth House, Derry. After four years, he undertook curacy in the parish of Pennyburn and, in 1971, was then appointed as curate in the parish of Greencastle, where he served until 1974, when he moved to become curate at Altinure, in the Banagher Parish. In 1981, he was appointed to the curacy at Buncrana, and in 1987 to Dregish. He became parish priest of Faughanvale in 1997, where he decided to remain as curate when he retired as parish priest in 2016, and when he retired as curate two years later, he remained in residence there until his death.

Speaking at the end of the ceremony, Bishop Donal said that the Diocese had buried eight priests and one bishop since the lockdown began, with Fr Patsy being the third in a four-week period.

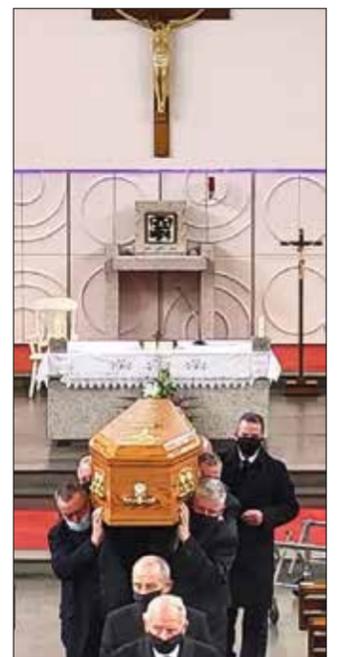
Noting that these nine priests made up "a considerable percentage of the priests in this Diocese", he continued: "They were all older men, born between 1929 and 1944, men who had grown



up in different times, mainly ordained before the changes of Vatican II, ministered throughout the Troubles and did their best to make Jesus known and loved. They have all carried many stories to their graves.

"God works in all sorts of ways in different people. Fr Patsy had a strong sense of being a priest - but the long life of his mother with him will presumably have given him a clear awareness of being a child of God. We are all disciples of Christ, learning throughout our lives to search for God".

Saying that faith does not remove all our problems, Bishop Donal added: "Ordination to priesthood does not remove faults and temptations. Fr Patsy knew that the Word had become flesh and dwelled among us. God comes to us in Word and Sacrament - and in the ordinary People of God. Community is not just the place where we come to know God. The Church as the Body of Christ is part of the God that we come to know.



"Our lonely and often fragmented world still needs those who will dedicate their lives to making God's love and mercy present and active in our society. No number of things and achievements will fill the God-sized hole in every heart".

The Surrender Novena

Written by Fr Don Dolindo Rutolo, a Franciscan priest born in Naples, Italy in 1882, who Padre Pio described as a "saint". The Surrender Novena has brought comfort to many, particularly during the past year.

Day 1 Why do you confuse yourselves by worrying? Leave the care of your affairs to me and everything will be peaceful. I say to you in truth that every act of true, blind, complete surrender to me produces the effect that you desire and resolves all difficult situations.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (x10)

Day 2 Surrender to me does not mean to fret, to be upset, or to lose hope, nor does it mean offering to me a worried prayer asking me to follow you and change your worry into prayer. It is against this surrender, deeply against it, to worry, to be nervous and to desire to think about the consequences of anything. It is like the confusion that children feel when they ask their mother to see to their needs,

and then try to take care of those needs for themselves so that their childlike efforts get in their mother's way. Surrender means to placidly close the eyes of the soul, to turn away from thoughts of tribulation and to put yourself in my care, so that only I act, saying "You take care of it".

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (x10)

Day 3 How many things I do when the soul, in so much spiritual and material need, turns to me, looks at me and says to me; "You take care of it", then closes its eyes and rests. In pain you pray for me to act, but that I act in the way you want. You do not turn to me, instead, you want me to adapt your ideas. You are not sick people who ask the doctor to cure you, but rather sick people who tell the doctor how to. So do not act this way, but pray as I taught you in the Our Father: "Hallowed be thy Name", that is, be glorified in my need. "Thy kingdom come", that is, let all that is in us and in the world be in accord with your kingdom. "Thy will be done on Earth as

it is in Heaven", that is, in our need, decide as you see fit for our temporal and eternal life. If you say to me truly: "Thy will be done", which is the same as saying: "You take care of it", I will intervene with all my omnipotence, and I will resolve the most difficult situations.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (x10)

Day 4 You see evil growing instead of weakening? Do not worry. Close your eyes and say to me with faith: "Thy will be done, You take care of it". I say to you that I will take care of it, and that I will intervene as does a doctor and I will accomplish miracles when they are needed. Do you see that the sick person is getting worse? Do not be upset, but close your eyes and say "You take care of it". I say to you that I will take care of it, and that there is no medicine more powerful than my loving intervention. By my love, I promise this to you.

O Jesus, I surrendered myself to you, take care of everything! (10 times)

Day 5 And when I must lead you on a path different from the one you see, I will prepare you; I

will carry you in my arms; I will let you find yourself, like children who have fallen asleep in their mother's arms, on the other bank of the river. What troubles you and hurts you immensely are your reason, your thoughts and worry, and your desire at all costs to deal with what afflicts you.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (x10)

Day 6 You are sleepless; you want to judge everything, direct everything and see to everything and you surrender to human strength, or worse - to men themselves, trusting in their intervention, - this is what hinders my words and my views. Oh, how much I wish from you this surrender, to help you; and how I suffer when I see you so agitated! Satan tries to do exactly this: to agitate you and to remove you from my protection and to throw you into the jaws of human initiative. So, trust only in me, rest in me, surrender to me in everything.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (x10)

Day 7 I perform miracles in proportion to your full surrender to me and to your not thinking

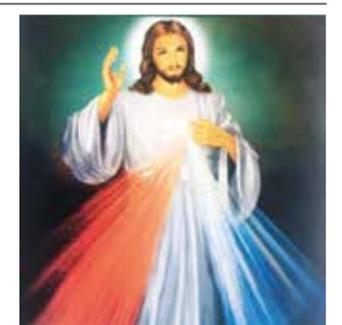
of yourselves. I sow treasure troves of graces when you are in the deepest poverty. No person of reason, no thinker, has ever performed miracles, not even among the saints. He does divine works whosoever surrenders to God. So don't think about it any more, because your mind is acute and for you it is very hard to see evil and to trust in me and to not think of yourself. Do this for all your needs, do this all of you and you will see great continual silent miracles. I will take care of things, I promise this to you.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (x10)

Day 8 Close your eyes and let yourself be carried away on the flowing current of my grace; close your eyes and do not think of the present, turning your thoughts away from the future just as you would from temptation. Repose in me, believing in my goodness, and I promise you by my love that if you say, "You take care of it", I will take care of it all; I will console you, liberate you and guide you.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything! (x10)

Day 9 Pray always in readiness to surrender, and you will receive



from it great peace and great rewards, even when I confer on you the grace of immolation, of repentance and of love. Then what does suffering matter? It seems impossible to you? Close your eyes and say with all your soul, "Jesus, you take care of it". Do not be afraid, I will take care of things and you will bless my name by humbling yourself. A thousand prayers cannot equal one single act of surrender, remember this well. There is no novena more effective than this.

O Jesus, I surrender myself to you, take care of everything!

Mother, I am yours now and forever. Through you and with you I always want to belong completely to Jesus.

September Feast Days “highlight mellow fruitfulness” of God’s Grace *by Bishop Donal*

JOHN Keats, the poet, referred to autumn as the “season of mists and mellow fruitfulness”. September has a rich array of feast days which highlight the mellow fruitfulness that comes from God’s Grace.

In September, we celebrate a number of Irish saints who sowed the harvest for Christ...

- 4th: St MacNissi died in the early 6th century and is a diocesan patron in the diocese of Down and Connor. His hermitage was situated near the modern village of Connor which (along with Downpatrick) is the origin of the diocese’s name.

- 9th: St Ciaran lived in the 6th century and founded a monastery at Clonmacnoise – which gives its name to the diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnoise. Pope John II visited there in 1979.

- 12th: St Ailbe founded a 6th century monastery in Emly (Co Tipperary) and that foundation gives it name to the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly.

- 23rd: Sr Eunan (Adhomhnán) was a monk who came from Donegal, but who lived as a monk on Iona. He wrote a life of St Colmcille, who died about a century before him. He is patron of the Raphoe Diocese.

- 25th: St Finbarr was born in the middle of the 6th century and founded a monastery in what is now Cork. He is patron of that diocese.

Other major feasts include...

- 8th: The Birthday of Our Lady, which falls nine months after the Feast of her Immaculate Conception.

- 15th: Our Lady of Sorrows follows the Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and reflects the message of Simeon that, because of her Son, Mary’s heart would be pierced by a sword. (Lk 2:35)

There are some ancient feasts as well...

- 14th: Exaltation of the Holy Cross. This celebrates the finding of the relics of the True Cross in Jerusalem in 320 by St Helena, the mother of Constantine.

- 21st: St Matthew. He was one of the 12 apostles, a former tax collector who left all to follow Jesus. The first Gospel is traditionally attributed to him.

- 29th: Archangels Michael, Gabriel, Raphael.

- Gabriel brought the news to Mary at the Annunciation.

- Raphael was the guide to Tobias in the Old Testament

- Michael is venerated as the

protector of Christians.

And we are always blessed by saintly figures who showed heroic virtue. These include...

- 3rd: St Gregory the Great, who was Pope during a turbulent time in the Church (590-604)

- 9th: Peter Claver, who was one of the early waves of Jesuit missionaries to Latin America, where he ministered to vast numbers of ill-treated slaves.

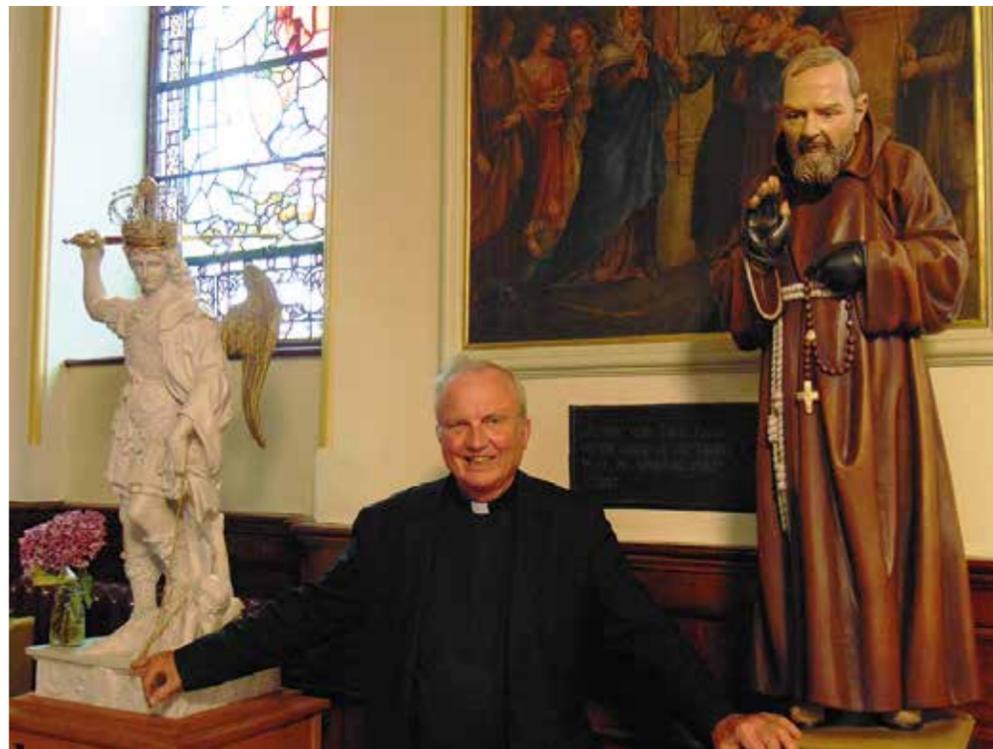
- 13th: St John Chrysostom, whose name means Golden mouthed. He was one of the great theologians of the Greek Church in the 5th century.

- 16th: Cornelius and Cyprian. Sr Cornelius was a pope and St Cyprian was a bishop, who were martyred around 250 in one of the many persecutions.

- 17th: St Robert Bellarmine was a leading churchman during the period of renewal that followed the Council of Trent in the 16th century.

- 20th: Andrew Kim Taegon/ Paul Chong Hasang were among 101 martyrs in Korea 1839-76.

- 23rd: Padre Pio is a saint for modern times. He was a Franciscan friar who lived through two world wars in Italy. He died in 1968 and his tomb at San Giovanni



Rotondo is much visited

- 27th: St Vincent de Paul dedicated his life to working with the poor in 17th century France. The St Vincent de Paul Society was founded much later in 1833 by a university student who was inspired by the example of St Vincent.

- 28th: Lawrence Ruiz & Companions were martyred for their faith in the Japanese city of Nagasaki. That city still had a substantial Christian population when it was destroyed by the second atomic bomb attack on August 9th, 1945.

- 30th: St Jerome was one of the

great scripture scholars in the early church and translated the entire Bible into an accessible Latin version, known as the Vulgate.

God is working in every generation. Can we use these fruits of God’s grace to nourish, inspire and accompany us as we move into the autumn of 2021?

Child’s christening led to mum making bespoke vestments and liturgical items



MOTHER of four, Stephanie Monaghan has been using her talents in textiles to design and make vestments and liturgical items for five years now, and each of her creations reflects something of her own faith and love for the Mass in their beauty.

Married to Maghnus Monaghan, the St Eugene’s Cathedral choir director, the 34-year-old works from her studio at their home in Lifford, Co Donegal, and enjoys

the time she spends there in the evenings after an active day with the children, prayerfully reflecting as she focuses on her latest creation.

“Knowing that whatever I am working on is to be used during the celebration of Mass encourages me to strive to make it the best that I can. I want to try and give each garment a small glimpse of heavenly beauty to reflect what is beautiful in the celebration of the Mass,” said Stephanie.

Originally from Dublin, she studied for a Degree in Theology and Sociology and then spent time working in school faith programmes, before deciding to study for a Higher Diploma in Fashion Design and Dress Making.

This led to her working as a pattern cutter for a High Street clothing company in Dublin for a few years, until her eldest daughter was born five years ago, and it was at her little girl’s christening that Stephanie was first requested to use her talents to make a vestment.

She recalled: “The priest who baptised my daughter asked if I could make a vestment set for him. As I worked in patterns, I said to him that I could if he gave me a vestment to work from. After that, he asked me to make another one



in a different colour and then asked me if I would make an altar frontal, and it just grew from there, with word spreading to other priests.

“Requests have grown organically and I haven’t looked back. I have made things that can be found spread throughout the country and even further afield. I design and tailor to a particular Church or religious order and can use the symbols or images as part of the design.”

Not long after the birth of their first child, the couple moved to live in St Johnston, Co Donegal, as Maghnus had taken up the role of choir director at Derry’s St Eugene’s Cathedral, and Stephanie discovered the Fashion & Textile



Stephanie Monaghan at work in her Lifford Studio.

Design Centre on Shipquay Street, in Derry.

“The Centre offers help to up and coming designers, who can use their machines etc, and I found it a great support regarding suppliers and getting started up,” she remarked, adding: “It is also a good

way of meeting other designers as it can be lonely working on your own, and it was also helpful as I was new to the area.”

As well as vestment sets, Stephanie designs and hand makes chasubles, stoles, altar frontals, tabernacle veils and habits. Each

item is bespoke, meaning it is designed and created on request.

Stephanie has a website - www.stephaniemonaghan.ie - and she can be contacted via email - stephanie.m.monaghan@gmail.com - or phone - (00353) 85 7151116.

Priestly life lessons from St John Mary Vianney *by Fr Stephen Quinn OCD*

JOHN Baptist Mary Vianney was born in 1786 on the very precipice of one of the hinge points of history. A hinge point in history can be understood as a moment when the course of human affairs swings away in a different direction than it has heretofore. When one of those hinge points comes, the world is utterly changed and can never really go back to the way things were before.

The French Revolution broke out in May 1789 at the Meeting of the Estates General. It was based on the values of the so-called 'Enlightenment' of the 18th Century, that began with a new notion of what it was to be human; a purely rationalised picture, that exalted political and legal 'rights of man' and sought to reorder society according to liberty, equality and fraternity. Spontaneously, the Revolution interpreted the Church, and the faith of that Church, as an obstacle in its way. The Revolution was so ambitious and confident that it believed that it could literally start French society over again. To the rewrite of history and the reconstruction of human nature proposed by the Revolution, the Church would not give its imprimatur.

Within the first year of the Revolution, the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience were banned, only clergy who signed on to the ideology of the Revolution could practice legally, and all relationships with Rome were sheared through. Into this heady atmosphere, John Vianney was born and raised. His parents were firm adherents to the old faith and would walk many miles each Sunday to hear the Mass and receive the Sacraments in isolated barns, from priests who refused to sign up to the government diktats and who ministered while all the time on the run.

Seeing these priests minister with such pastoral care, and at such a high cost to themselves, was the first inspiration that John felt to become a priest, himself. Issues had come to such a crisis that John's whole instruction in the faith was received in a cloak and dagger way from two nuns who had been forcibly expelled from their communities by the government. Even his First Communion was affected; he received the Blessed Sacrament in a neighbour's kitchen, with blankets pulled down over the windows to hide everything from the prying eyes of the world.

The environment of John Vianney's youth sets up a contemporaneous link with us in the first decades of the 21st Century. We live at a time when governments pay less and less respect to matters of religion and faith and, subsequently, government agencies are becoming forces for the advancement of the standards of atheistic and secularist ideologies. The Church's voice is greeted with the stony silence

of contempt and its theology is dismissed as archaic, regressive, chauvinistic, and standing in the way of progress.

Many people in the pews worry and fret about this danger, but John Vianney demonstrates that all is far from lost as political power attempts to suffocate the faith. Persecution has always had a dynamic effect on Christians. We wake from the slumber of the disciples and remember all of a sudden what, up to then, we had forgotten. The amnesia about Who it was who has come amongst us fades, and precisely what He offers to us returns to the forefront of our consciousness. We consciously and deliberately choose Him again for ourselves.

Christians like John Vianney are enabled to rise to the heights because of the persecution. As raw power puts before Christians a choice, we recognise that all these political ideologies have nothing to offer us but rationalisations of misery. Only One has overcome the world and with Him will overcome all who put their faith in Him.

One almost insurmountable barrier stood between John Vianney and his inspired desire to become a priest. John came from a peasant family who worked hand-to-mouth tending flocks and herds. He had received very little tutelage of any kind other than catechism lessons. When he told his father of his desire to become a priest, his father had done nothing about it and had kept him working the land as a hired hand. John, in this dire situation, received one of those 'chances' of grace. A local priest, by the name of Fr Bellay, opened a 'presbytery school' in his house and taught the children of poor families without any kind of charge. The school covered the syllabus necessary for priestly education and an unexpected opportunity opened up to John.

One can only imagine the mortification of John sitting down and doing his lessons with children much his junior, and it was not plain sailing by any measurement. John did not have the aptitude of a student and limped through much of the educational process. He found the Latin language a particular trial; a potential disaster to his hopes at a time when the sacraments were conducted in Latin and the Seminary formation was all done through that ancient tongue. He navigated the obstacle as best he could and managed to enter the minor seminary in 1809,

and then the major seminary in 1810. While in seminary, his poor Latin made it virtually impossible to keep up with his classmates and he languished fixedly at the bottom of his class. At times, it was only his manifest good will and devotion that stayed the hand of his superiors from dismissing him. In the end, the Vicar General had to set aside his lack of learning in order to permit John Vianney to proceed to ordination. He was ordained a priest on August 12, 1815, and he said his first Mass the following day.

Cross

The arduous and gruelling journey that John Vianney had to make to priesthood is a sign to all Christians, who come after him, that no vocation is a way to convenience and to ease. Christ completely meant it when he said that his disciples must pick up their cross and follow him, and that it is a narrow road that leads to life. Somewhere along the line, religious people have fallen into the trap of reading life in a very different way from the one that Christ has left to us. Somehow, we have come to believe that when everything is peaceful and straightforward then we are on the authentic road that God has set for us, and that He is blessing us. No greater lie has entered the mind of a Christian. For it is only when we have to walk in the dark, and put our feet down where there seems no path forward, that it happens that we are truly walking behind Him who carries the Cross. We are forced to put our feet down where He has already gone ahead of us.

As befitting a person who graduated at the very bottom of his class, John was sent off on an assignment that nobody else wanted. It was such a dead-end assignment that he got himself terribly lost attempting to find the town of Ars-en-Dombe. It was a small town of 230 souls, who did not get out the red carpet for the arrival of a new parish priest. Many of the parishioners had given themselves over to the spirit of the age and lived in ignorance of Christ, and in indifference to the sacramental life of the Church.

The new Curé de Ars could see it all for himself in high definition on Sunday. His Church remained empty, while many of his would-be parishioners just continued to work as if it were just any other day, or gave themselves over to the hedonistic pastimes of drinking and dancing. It is hard to imagine a more contemporary story for a priest in 2021. John was almost a modern priest, who had the heartache of confronting so many gaps in the pews of his church and the grief of witnessing his little flock give their lives over to any new gimmick that came down the road at them.

How many Ars are there presently in this Diocese? How many parishioners live in

ignorance of their own dignity and integrity given to them by their Heavenly Father? How many of them have not the first clue as to what is offered to them under the ordinary and 'boring' forms of the sacraments? The new Curé did not give into a spirit of fatalism and melancholia, but set himself the mission of converting every one of those 230 souls. Do we in this generation dare to set our eyes on anything less?

Old human institutions periodically go through spasms of concern as to their own relevance and how best to translate their ancient practices into products more congenial to contemporary tastes. In order to make that translation, humans seem to think first in terms of structure: tinker with the system, put the right people in the right posts, and oil the gears of the machine, then all things will be well. No matter how glossy the message that is produced, something just does not seem quite right, and the tinkering seems far too much akin to moving the deck chairs around the Titanic.

And this, I would suggest, has been the human response of the Church in Ireland to the challenges that have arisen since the Second Vatican Council and the call of Pope Saint Paul VI for a new evangelisation of modern peoples. Somewhere along the line, we started interpreting that call as an invitation to establish new structures, design new roles for lay-people, to micro-manage the radical call of the Gospel, and to expect little or nothing from our interlocutors.

Needless to say, this was not the method employed by the Curé as he began his ministry in Ars. There were no new committees, no new jobs, and no new structures set up in Ars. With his great task in front of him of converting every soul in his parish to Christ, going at it with jobs and committees would have struck him as trying to pick up hot mercury with a fork. In order to bring about an interior and spiritual change in his flock then John was bound to use interior and spiritual implements, or he would have been doomed to failure. His choice of an interior and spiritual method was simply to be what he was ordained to be...a servant of the People of God, a man of prayer, a minister of the Sacraments, and to do the interior and spiritual tasks of a priest of God with heroic commitment.

John had such an insight into the interior secret of being a priest. He summed it all up so beautifully with the line, "the priesthood is the love of the heart of Jesus." One old priest once sagely advised a younger priest, "The task is very simple: love your people", and that advice demonstrates that the old priest understood his mission exactly right. Love is the key that opens an interior and spiritual relationship between the pastor

and his flock.

Love

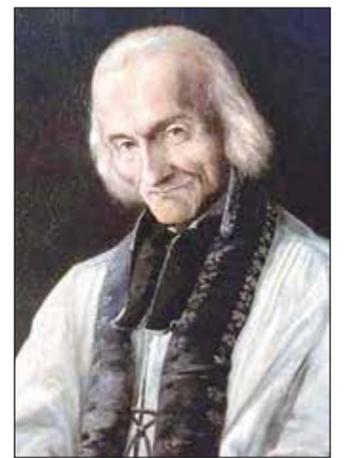
John Vianney would not have stopped with simply loving the people of Ars. He would push on a little further than even that priest. He would argue that it cannot be any old love that we are talking about in the interaction of pastor and flock. The priest has to love his people with the same type of loving that the Lord, Himself, has for them. This type of loving alone facilitates the interior and spiritual change that the Church sorely needs. Therefore, the love of Christ must be the way the priest carries himself, in his thinking, in his words, in his actions, in the celebration of the Sacraments, and his preaching of the Word.

In theological terms, we believe that at the ordination ceremony the priest is changed ontologically to act in the Person of Christ for the Church. The ontological change plays out on all levels of the priest's life, but particularly on a moral and spiritual level. On that moral and spiritual level, the ontological change is expressed in a love that can lay itself down on behalf of the flock.

John Vianney leads us further into the mystery... "the priest is not a priest for himself; he does not give himself absolution; he does not administer the sacraments to himself. He is not for himself, he is for you." In this quotation, John is speaking to his own parishioners, he is telling them how much he loves them, he has come to serve them as his Master served before him, and that now his destiny is inextricably mixed up with theirs.

Ancient Christian faith affirms that when we love another person, we begin to reflect their likeness in ourselves. If the priest is to love his flock, then a profound affinity, a real spiritual, moral, and human sympathy must be shared between both pastor and people. That affinity begins with seemingly superficial issues and goes the whole way to the heart of living. When John Vianney arrived in Ars that first day, in his luggage there were two priest's cassocks; a poor one for everyday use and a better one to be kept for special occasions such as First Communion or Confirmations. Eventually, the poor one was so patched that it appeared to be made up of different colours.

The parochial house was as simple as he could make it, his garden was like a meadow of long grass, the windows were disjointed, there were cracks in the walls, it was sparsely furnished, and a bowl and a spoon were all the crockery that could be found. Over his life and as his reputation proceeded him, he was given numerous donations, but he would joke of his 'shuttle pockets' as that money was all destined for the poor, to pay the rents of poor farmers and shopkeepers, and various good causes.



St John Vianney.

Already we are picking up the intent of the Curé, that in his giving away of all material goods, in his being the poorest one in his parish, he made a firm declaration that he was at one with his parishioners, he was one of them. One spoon and a single bowl might be pushing things to an extremity, but all priests must ask of themselves, before the example John Vianney sets them, does their material well-being get in the way of their loving, does it speak to the people of the poor Christ, and their mission to give all for their people?

John Vianney's commitment to the Sacrament of Confession was total. By the end of his life, he was spending 12 hours of every winter day in the Confessional box, and in summer as much as 16 hours. You might well ask could not his time be organised in a more fruitful work, but that is to underestimate the Sacrament of Confession. Nowhere else in the Church does the priest meet people where they are really at than in the Sacrament of Confession. The confessor meets them there in the Confessional in the worst places of their existence and he gets a peek at the real person, who is so carefully hidden away behind their own manicured mask.

No other place in the Church gives the priest such privileged access to authentic humanity. And John Vianney took full advantage of his privilege. In John's hearing of confessions, he simply attempted to bring Christ's everything to bear upon his penitents' nothingness, to fill them up on the true medicine that could heal their ailments, Jesus Christ. In the confessional, the Curé did not speak in empty piosities but with a homespun wisdom that had built up through experience. He spoke to people of carrying out the responsibilities of their own individual vocation to the utmost, of seeing God not in great penances and long prayers but coming in the small details of real life, of knowing the beauty and value of the married state and child rearing, and he spoke to them in a genial and fatherly manner, seeking to draw out only the best.

When people participated in the Sacrament, he demanded of them only one thing, the truth. One day towards the end of his life, a woman came into the box asking for a

'relic' from the Curé, hoping for a hair or button of his, but the Curé sent her away with a flea in her ear for so frivolous a claim, warning her what must matter to her is that she start to make her very own relics by becoming a saint herself. And right there you have the heart of the Sacrament of Confession; it is the sacrament of conversion, when a person comes in their own nothingness and becomes empowered by the loving mercy of Jesus to be the man or woman that the Father has had in His mind. If then the mission of each priest is to convert every parishioner, how can this be done without the Sacrament of Conversion, and if it has such power, how much energy, precedence, and time does each priest devote to that Sacrament?

Eucharist

Again, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, John looks to the interior and the spiritual heart of

the celebration. As he celebrated Mass, John was not particularly interested in making the Mass more attractive or in creating jobs to affirm people's roles. Rather, he knew all too well that at Mass, both he and the people of Ars, encountered a mystery that they did not create themselves but that in fact created and recreated them. Christ communicates all of Himself at the Mass, He offers His body and blood for the life of the world, He draws all the yearnings, the prayers, the sufferings, the pains, the hopes and, in fact, the whole of human existence into the Divine life.

The Curé was acutely aware that through the Mass, the Blessed Trinity made a genuine offer of friendship to the parishioners of Ars and offered a transformation in love. An eyewitness to the Curé's Mass observed that after the consecration, he would shine

with happiness. He would pause with the sacred host in his hands and, considering the host, would have a sweet smile, and that observer concluded that he was seeing the Lord with the eyes of the body. He would say himself of the experience, "After the consecration, when I hold in my hands the holy body of Our Lord, and when I am in my hours of discouragement, seeing myself only worthy of hell, I say to myself, 'If at least I can take Him with me! Hell would be sweet with Him. It would not cost me to remain all eternity suffering if we were together...It would no longer be hell. The flames of love would extinguish those of justice.'"

Consider what John has just said, that in the Mass there is an intimate presence that can transform our isolation into friendship, discouragement into hope, indifference into love, and that can transform even Hell into

Heaven. John, in his celebration of that intimate presence of the Mass, wanted his parishioners to encounter this mystery for themselves. In fact, if they didn't encounter such a mystery for themselves then they had missed out on something so essential that it brought their whole participation into question. Standing, kneeling, contributing to the plate, or even reciting the prayers were just not enough, they had to be aware that He had come close to them, offering a little portion of Heaven itself.

When the Curé spoke to his flock about the mystery of the Mass, he focused on four things: to make his people understand the importance of the transforming power of the Lord's Day, teaching them that the Mass is the mystery of the Lord's Sacrifice not just remembered but experienced again; to throw away from

themselves the great lie that Jesus only could be symbolically present to His people; and to embrace that just as He became flesh and dwelt amongst us again; and, more than anything, that those invited to share this living presence must develop in themselves a desire to frequently really engage with this mystery and to communicate with it in the most intense fashion. Since the translation of the Mass into the vernacular, there has been an emphasis on making the Mass intelligible. Maybe there is weakness to this focus, in that there is a mystery at Mass that will never let itself be translated into simple words and concepts? Instead, the onus must be on the Mystery and encounter.

It is interesting to look at some of the numbers that are involved in St John Vianney's life. When

he began his ministry in Ars-en-Dombe, he was given pastoral charge of 230 souls, by the end of his life every person in Ars went to Mass, and the holy Curé heard the confessions of 300 people daily. He heard more confessions a day than there were people in the town. The fame of his sanctity had spread all over France and trains brought pilgrims to wait days on end to go to confession. They came because they knew what he was and what it was that they truly needed. John Vianney's success came in simply being what people needed him to be: their priest; their pastor; the one who would lay down his life for them; and the one who, no matter what else, gave them Christ. People in the 21st Century need nothing more than their priest, their pastor, the one who will lay down his life for them, and the one who will always give Christ to them.

Pat Hume gave her heart to God and to us all – Fr Paul Farren



The Late Pat Hume

"A rooted liberating faith enables people to imagine the unimaginable". This thought was shared by Bishop Donal when he welcomed all those who were joining the family of the late Pat Hume for the celebration of her Requiem Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral, on Monday, September 6.

Acknowledging the great partnership of John and Pat Hume, not only in marriage, but also in the political process that brought peace to their home city and the troubled North, Bishop Donal spoke of how "transforming leadership comes from great hearted people".

He went on to remark that the couple had often come to St Eugene's "to seek strength and to praise the God who can do great things".

The widespread shock and sadness felt at the news of Pat's death, just a month after the first anniversary of John's passing had been marked with Mass in the Cathedral, was somewhat alleviated by the thought of such a close couple being together again.

Delivering the homily, the administrator of St Eugene's, Fr Paul Farren gave thanks for "the wonderful gift" of Pat, saying: "We never wanted her to leave this world because it was always brighter and more joyful when she was here. But today we pray that she has heard John calling 'Pat'

again and that he has brought her to the heart of God where they are united forever".

Referring to the Beatitudes mentioned in the Gospel reading, Fr Paul remarked that Pat was pure of heart: "Pat had the purest heart of anybody I have ever met. Pat saw God in everybody that she met and her joy at seeing God was written over her face in her most wonderful smile and totally engaged and interested eyes. Pat was a most humble and beautiful person. Much has been said about John and Pat and their unity in peacemaking. It is all true and if John brought the brilliant mind to the peacemaking then Pat brought the pure heart".

He continued: "Pat's pure heart was formed by two things, I believe, by her faith and by her call to be a mother. It was Pat's faith which was a practical and living, contemplative and silent faith, nourished by the Eucharist here at Mass every day and with quiet prayer that enabled her to put the realities of life in the eternal context of God's love. This certainly was how Pat got through the tough days in her life.

"It was her faith that enabled her to see God in everybody she met... If you went to Pat with a problem, your suffering became her suffering...Your problem became hers to find a solution to and she found solutions in her astute, wise, compassionate and quiet way that always avoided any type of fuss or focus on herself.

"The empathy that Pat had was unique and incredible and that is why her work with Mrs Daphne Trimble, after the Good Friday Agreement, with those who are victims was so important to her. That is why she found it abhorrent that anybody or any government would believe that a line could be drawn under the pain and suffering of people. Her commitment to truth and to justice was consistent

and unquestionable. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right: they shall be satisfied".

Saying that Pat did everything with a mother's heart, Fr Paul added: "She lived the vocation of motherhood in her home, in her community here in Derry and on the world stage. The vocation of a mother is the most important vocation in the world because the vocation of a mother is to give life, to give joy; it is to serve and to always put others first. Pat did all of these things in a most powerful, gentle, loving, profound and simple way".

Peace

Addressing Therese, Aine, Aidan, John and Mo, he said: "Your mother created an oasis of love and security, trust and joy for you in the midst of much turmoil and danger in your young lives. When your home was being attacked, because your parents were committed to peace, your mother held you and protected you and never allowed you to lose confidence in the truth that peace is always more noble and stronger than violence".

Supposing that Pat's greatest example of mothering was in how she had cared for John, in his long illness, in the last years of his life, Fr Paul remarked: "With John she was forever patient, forever loving, forever gentle and an example to us all.

"We thought that God should have spared her years after John, when she could have focused on herself but, in hindsight, Pat could never have focused on herself. She always lived for others and that was even revealed in the generous manner of her death".

"It was no wonder that it was her heart that was worn out, because she truly gave her heart to God and to us all," he concluded.

Giving an eulogy for his mother, who was born in 1938, Aidan Hume said; "Like many of her generation she was the first in her

family to go to University, turning down a place in pharmacy at Queen's for teacher training in St Mary's in Belfast. Mum chose her career well – she loved teaching and was great at it".

He added: "Dad would often say that he was a parcel and Mum delivered him. But that only tells a small part of the story. Mum was at his right hand throughout his entire life – his best friend, his closest confidante, his loving wife, his trusted adviser, his political antennae.

"For us, she was the calm at the centre of chaotic times, able to impart a sense of safety and love, which sustained us when the world around us was full of uncertainties. No matter how crazy or difficult the situation, she was unflappable".

Saying that his mother "loved to laugh and her laughter was infectious", Aidan went on to speak about how she found great solace in nature and loved walking. "She'd climb from Burt chapel to Grianan with us when we were teenagers" he recalled, "and somehow after a walk and a chat, any problems we were having that day would seem less important".

He continued: "Mum always focused on the positives in life – always smiling, always happy. She was deeply spiritual and had an incredible faith, but it was a private faith. She tried to guide us and let us discover it for ourselves, rather than imposing it upon us.

"As a mother, one of the greatest gifts she gave us was the fundamental knowledge that we were loved – unconditionally- and this love has carried us all through different circumstances in our own lives. Her grandchildren knew she was special – she adored them all and made sure they knew it. Her two great grand-children also gave her great joy".

Describing his mother as "a people person", Aidan said: "She had an incredible ability to



establish a special connection with everyone she met and to find a way to brighten up the lives of everyone around her.

"We cannot find the words to

express what an amazing person she was. Whilst we are all sad today, we are all beyond grateful for the life of this incredible woman, our mother, our friend, our guide and our mentor".

Being Eucharist *by Fr John McLaughlin ssc*

KUSHNER and Friedman on Marquez (A Hundred Years of Solitude)...“Marquez tells of a village where people were afflicted with a strange plague of forgetfulness, a kind of contagious amnesia. Starting with the older inhabitants and working its way through the population, the plague causes people to forget the names of even the most common everyday objects. One young man, still unaffected, tries to limit the damage by putting labels on everything - ‘This is a table’, ‘This is a window’, ‘This is a cow; it has to be milked every morning’. And at the entrance to the town, in the main road, he puts up two larger signs. One reads, ‘The name of our village is Macondo’, and the larger one reads, ‘God Still Exists’. The message I get from that story is that we can and probably will forget most of what we have learned in life - the history, the chemical formulas, the address and phone number of the first house we lived in when we got married - all that forgetting will do us no harm. But if we forget whom we belong to, and if we forget that there is a God, something profoundly human in us will be lost”. (Quoted by Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* p32)

I loved to read all I could from Gabriel Garcia Marquez over the years, after discovering Macondo and its world. He brought me many pleasures and led often into deeper insights.

Of course, for many of us the Eucharist is the place and the Person in which we discover ourselves and Jesus as Our Saviour and what the Eucharistic Community can and must be to us. Hence, my theme for this article.

On one of the occasions I was concerning myself with the Eucharistic Ministers in the parish where I worked, I had sent for Romualdo with a view to an invitation that he become a Eucharistic Minister. The seven chapels all had some Ministers and Romualdo had been assisting the very active Patricio Leiva in the Carmen chapel. But he had a reputation amongst the older members from the area. He had been a very active member of the JAP, who had been the ‘fixers’ in the time of the Allende Government. He had the reputation of being a hard man and a womanizer.

When I welcomed him into the room, we did, of course, know each other. And I proposed that he become a Eucharistic Minister. Romualdo said nothing for a moment. Then, he went on his knees and blessed himself and spoke aloud his prayer of unworthiness and thanks directly to God. I knew this was no theatrical posture and respected his humility on this new calling and vocation opening up for him. In all the meetings over the years and the annual interviews

that I had, as they renewed their credentials, no one ever impressed me more than this man. Years - twelve - later, I was back serving in that parish and he was an invalid. I had the privilege of attending to him and celebrating his funeral Mass (and later his wife’s) at which I told that story.

In that same community of Carmen, in one of those years, we were to celebrate at parish level the naming of the Jesuit Alberto Hurtado as a Blessed of the Church. Based on the long list of the social works for the Poor of Padre Alberto, we decided that the Mass would have the theme “The Bread of Life for the life of the World” (John 6). So, we had a full open space in the gymnasium there to hear testimonies from the work in the community of the Food Kitchens, the Free Legal Aid, the AA centre, the Workers Apostolate of the time and the youth and catechetical movements. Everyone knew of the Jesuits’ sponsored works under the name of Padre Hurtado in the length and breadth of Chile, and the ceremony needed little commentary beyond the testimonies given that morning.

Sometimes it was not just that comfortable to preside over a Eucharistic Communion...where disunion was surfacing. In that very same setting, I once had to listen to a strong diatribe from a member of the community over my own leadership. This happened immediately after the Communion as we sat in silent prayer during a Sunday Mass. I just had to sit and listen and not engage in any polemic as I finished the celebration. And, in another parish, where I had publicly demanded that one of the catechists step down for a period of suspension, some of her young followers showed their disapproval at the Mass of the following Sunday. The members of the youth choir stayed silent and stood standing in the front, holding their guitars. That was rather inhibiting and lasted for two Sundays, during which one of them, uncomfortable about the whole thing, came to me like Nicodemus in the Night and the protest petered out. As the Chilean saying goes, sometimes no era ningun vaso de leche: it was no glass of milk, no cinch!

The Eucharist in Holy Week was always prepared in a special meeting and decisions made about aspects like the Processions on Palm Sunday, Good Friday Way of the Cross, Washing of the Feet, Holy Saturday Reading and, perhaps, infant or Adult RCIA (Catecumenado) style baptisms. And, each year, there would be an evaluation in the Pastoral Council Meeting in the following month. In one of those years in Valparaiso, on the hills where we lived, there had been an aerial accident. A small plane of the Fire and

Forestry service had been trying to quench a scrub fire at that dry time of year and it was blown into the path of an overhead cable on the gully. Before the horrified eyes of a large group of onlookers, the plane caught fire and plunged to earth leaving its pilot dead and his body unrecoverable. So, on the occasion of the Holy Thursday Mass on that hill, the members of the chapel invited along representatives of the Forestry and the Firefighting services and we knelt down before them and washed their feet just as Jesus would have done. One does not forget these celebrations of Being Eucharist!

Funeral Mass

During the days of the Pinochet regime, there were atrocities and human rights abuses in many areas. One personal experience, in the Santiago Parish of San Luis, happened in about the year 1983, when a young man was shot at point blank range by an arrogant young member of the police group called the CNI. The people of the area knew of other such arbitrary shootings on the part of this young captain (he was later stood-down for his offenses, I heard). So, there was a lot of anger that Sunday night just around the corner from the chapel, as I led the prayer over the body. The Funeral Mass had a full chapel and people were really charged up. It was a huge challenge to me, not many years in the country, to express something of that anger in words, without being inflammatory. Even without the strong probability of informers (sapos!) being there, it was not the right way to offer the Eucharist with my people at that time.

So, the Eucharist was never a repeat of the Sunday or the day before. In the case of funerals, there was always a challenge to speak to and from the grief of a family or community. When a long-serving Dutch priest, Antonio Gieselen, of our neighboring and former parish of San Esteban, died after a very short bout of pneumonia, we all felt it at deanery level. Antonio had neglected himself in the harsh winter and tried to soldier on through meetings and celebrations. At a thronged funeral Mass in the largest chapel there, the Vicar from the Zone, Columban Fr Michael Hoban, founder of the parish, responded to the grief of the communities. Inviting just one word from them on Padre Antonio, there was a symphony of praise and thanks, grief and respect, friendship and homage from all angles of the packed congregation...even as Fr Mike managed to slip in a lighter tone about the humanity of that much loved pastor.

In the parish of San Matias, in the eastern locality of Puente Alto, we also laid out in the chapel of Esperanza the large frame of



Sagrada Familia mural.

Columban Regional Superior, Fr Michael Cody, who had been pastor there and very present and pastoral over a few short years. Again, with the same Fr Hoban leading the celebration for his friend, co-national, and fellow seminarian, there were still moments to rejoice and even laugh with one another, despite the loss we all so deeply felt.

One of my own tasks in some of those missionary settings was to undertake the provision of a permanent chapel to a community which, for nearly four years, had to celebrate Mass in the local health centre of San Damian. There, surrounded by propaganda on health hazards and injections for the newly born etc, with Fr Jim Tormey of the Dublin Diocese, we tried to hold off the swarming children around the improvised altar and speak out some meaningful words each Sunday. So that on the lead-up to acquiring sites and occupying them, we also had open-air blessings and even the Palm Sunday Mass surrounded by building materials.

The whole community of Cabreria, on Placeres Hill, were alive with expectation as we first occupied a hillside location for a wooden building coming nearly free from the same Padre Hurtado Jesuit foundation. More than a year later, and nearer the entrance to the estate, a larger and flat surface was made available to us by the housing authority and we built the Holy Family Church. On the front upper level of that building, we had obtained the services of an artist, Maria Martner, who worked in coloured natural stone (not mosaic) and patiently built up her scene of the Holy Family, aided by some of the younger members of that chapel. Maria had done work on the house of Chilean poet, Pablo Neruda and he had written some poetry in homage to her talent. This we used when later on the

local bishop came up to bless that frontispiece. I was not sure that he approved when, before his prayer, I invited Jacqueline from the community to read from Neruda, who was a Communist...and his homage to Maria Martner!

Some years later, in the Irish Times, Breda O'Brien, not for the first time, occupied her column to quote from a Pope. It was from Pope John Paul II and his pastoral Letter on the Eucharist, *Ecclesia en Eucharistia*. And being the philosopher that he was, he opened up for us a Cosmic Vision of the Eucharist...

“When I think of the Eucharist, and look at my life as a priest, as a Bishop and as the Successor of Peter, I naturally recall the many times and places in which I was able to celebrate it. I remember the parish church of Niegowic, where I had my first pastoral assignment, the collegiate church of Saint Florian in Krakow, Wawel Cathedral, Saint Peter’s Basilica and so many basilicas and churches in Rome and throughout the world. I have been able to celebrate Holy Mass in chapels built along mountain paths, on lakeshores and seacoasts; I have celebrated it on altars built in stadiums and in city squares...This varied scenario of celebrations of the Eucharist has given me a powerful experience of its universal and, so to speak, cosmic character. Yes, cosmic! Because even when it is celebrated on the humble altar of a country church, the Eucharist is always in some way celebrated on the altar of the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation. The Son of God became man in order to restore all creation, in one supreme act of praise, to the One who made it from nothing. He, the Eternal High Priest who by the blood of his Cross entered the eternal sanctuary, thus gives back to the Creator and Father all creation

redeemed. He does so through the priestly ministry of the Church, to the glory of the Most Holy Trinity. Truly this is the *mysterium fidei* which is accomplished in the Eucharist: the world which came forth from the hands of God the Creator now returns to him redeemed by Christ”.

Bone pastor, panis vere,
Iesu, nostri miserere...
Come then, good Shepherd,
bread divine,

Still show to us thy mercy sign;
Oh, feed us, still keep us thine;
So we may see thy glories shine
in fields of immortality.

O thou, the wisest, mightiest,
best,

Our present food, our future
rest,

Come, make us each thy chosen
guest,

Co-heirs of thine, and
comrades blest

With saints whose dwelling is
with thee.

(Given in Rome, at Saint Peter’s,
on 17 April, Holy Thursday, in the
year 2003, the Twenty-fifth of my
Pontificate, the Year of the Rosary.
John Paul II)

Memorable

There was, of course, any number of memorable celebrations of the Eucharist during these years of priesthood. By chance, I was on a visit to Italy with Dublin priests, Peadar Murney, Peter Kilroy and Maurice O Shea, and set out on some car drives. We arrived at the Irish College just in time for the ordination of the new Pope John Paul I, who had been Cardinal of Venice. With people like Cardinal T O Fiach (just in from Bobbio where St Columban died and filming with the BBC on that), and Archbishop Ryan of Dublin present, there was a huge excitement and we were able to be in St Peter’s for the occasion.

Some four weeks later, I was on the 7 am Mass in Glasnevin Church of Our Lady of Dolours.

Saint Columba the scribe *by Vera McFadden*

SOMETIMES we associate the word 'scribe' with those men in the temple who always criticised Jesus and forget that it simply means 'writer'. St Columba was a gifted writer. He may have been shown how to make his first letters at home at an early age, just as some of us learned to recognise and spell some words from packets before we went to school. He was fostered at an early age, for this was the custom in those days.

The family usually fostered the children to someone who was gifted at the trade or profession which they hoped their child would follow. Columba's parents knew that God intended Columba to be a priest, so he was fostered to Cronaghan, a priest who lived not too far away. It was from Cronaghan that our saint had his first lessons in handwriting.

Later he went to other schools and developed his skills and knowledge. During these studies, he took a break to learn about music and how to play the musical instruments – the lute, etc.

Columba loved transcribing the Psalms, the Gospels and parts of Scripture, and he allocated sometime to this work. He wrote on vellum, which is made from the hide of a calf. As the monks fasted on Wednesdays and Fridays and ate very frugally all the time, they would only have been eating veal at Christmas or Easter. So, it was only at these times that the hides were available.

They wrote with quills, which were long feathers. The coloured inks that they used were taken from nature - lichen, seaweeds, etc. The little containers in which these were crushed were found

in excavations at Nendrum and other places. At Nendrum, the archaeologists decided that the spot where these were found was the site of the scriptorium; the cell where the writing was done.

At Iona, a natural rise a short distance from the abbey is called 'Torr an Aba'. I always wanted to see the top of it but because of my disability was unable to climb up. So, I felt very frustrated when two of my friends made it to the top and I could not safely climb the steeper final slope.

Later, however, I saw the top in a photograph in a book which my son-in-law gave to me. The writer mentioned that it was the traditional site of Columba's cell. This spot was later examined by an archaeologist and much later, when carbon dating had been discovered, it was found that

pieces of timber which he had kept dated to St Columba's period. It was decided that they were the remains of the table where he had worked.

Where was the scriptorium in Columba's Derry? An archaeological examination at St Augustine's Church unearthed material dating to the early Christian period. Monasteries covered a sizeable area with the individual cells, the workshops, and clearings where crops were grown or animals pastured, as well as the oak grove. Ainmire had given the entire island to Columba, and there was also a nearby village in St Columba's time. So, there must be plenty of archaeological evidence waiting to be discovered whenever circumstances permit.

Once, when St Columba's Church was being enlarged, a small rectangular structure was found under the floor. This was examined and turned out to be the remains of the Dubh Regles, St Columba's little church. There was no carbon dating or geophysics in those days, but whatever it was, it was obviously ancient.

Sites

A professor of archaeology once told me that early Christian Church sites were usually halfway up a slope, as at Dunree, Templemoyle, the church built by St Canice near Limavady, and many others. St Columba's Church, Long Tower, is on such a site. We know where the island was but, because it is now a built-up area, it is almost impossible to locate the individual sites.

Wherever his cell was, Columba was writing in it the day that Our

Lord appeared to him. The monks had established almsgiving at a certain fixed hour every day. One day Columba was transcribing when the almoner came to tell him that a beggar, who had been late three days in succession, had sent a message to him - Charity should not be measured by the hour but by the need. As soon as he heard this, Columba left his precious writing and hurried out. He overtook him at the western gate. There he discovered that it was Jesus Who had come. He knelt and asked for forgiveness and they talked for a while. What a privileged experience, better than writing any day. For some reason, I believe that the western gate was where the thorn tree is today. During the penal days, Mass was said there and it was also said at Ballymagroarty, near the present Groarty House. Both were ancient sites.

For several reasons, I do not believe the story of Columba copying St Finian's book and refusing to hand over the copy. Finian was a very holy man and he had taught many of the great saints of Ireland, including Columba. Ninian was a great saint who belonged to a generation before Columba, but historians say that Ninian was not a real name. Could it have been 'An Finian' - THE Finian? He was a very famous teacher and a holy man. Columba would have had great respect for him. There were no printing presses in those days and the copying of the scriptures was important for evangelising and the education of clerical students. Both Finian and Columba were aware of that.

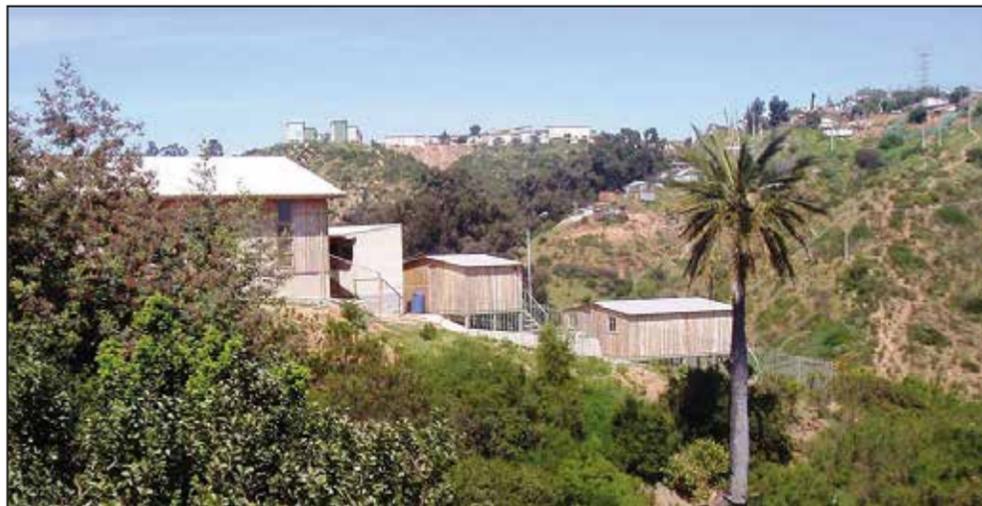
The most ancient manuscript in Ireland, and perhaps even in Europe, a book of psalms inscribed by St Columba, is called the Cathach. It has this name because the O'Donnell clan carried it as a talisman into battle. Columba's handwriting was very neat and gives the impression that he wrote rapidly. The psalter is now in the Irish Academy in Dublin.

St Columba left Ireland to teach the Word of God in other places. In Iona, he transcribed parts of Scripture probably every day. Adamnan referred to the books that our saint had produced, some of which were miraculously dry after lying in water for a considerable time.

Once, the Holy Spirit made Columba aware of a seriously ill woman in Ireland. He stood and, facing in her direction, made the sign of the Cross in the air with an open book of Scripture. The woman was immediately well.

Columba also wrote poetry and prayers, one of the best known is a prayer to Our Lady. Columba did some transcribing on his last day on earth. On that morning, he had gone round the island with Diarmuid to bless it, when he came back he went up Tor Aba (Abbot's mound) where he blessed the monastery and prophesied that this place would be honoured by people from all over the world. Then he went to his cell to resume his writing. He was writing the 23rd Psalm and stopped work at the line, "They that seek the Lord will lack nothing that is for their good". Then he wrote the words, "Let Baithin write the rest".

continued from page 28



Capilla Virgeneregrina.

The radio news as I rushed out to the car took me like a tsunami, as it announced the death of the new Pope. Somehow, in a very shocked condition, I stumbled desolate through the Mass looking down at people like Michael Synnott, Maura Thornberry and others whom I knew, and tried to gather the confidence to announce what I had just heard without breaking down. It took me a couple of weeks to get beyond the conspiracy theory and accept that it was a natural sudden death. The book commissioned by the Vatican from John Cornwell, 'A Thief in the night', was a welcome and stimulating read on that!

In those days of Liberation Theology in Latin America, there could be a lot of twists put on the celebrations of the Eucharist; fasts and protests etc in Santiago under Pinochet. On a journey home, I stopped off in Central America and visited Ecuador, where I met Fr Paddy McIntyre, Salvador (and the Romero history and chapel of his death), and Managua. There, on one Saturday evening at the Padre Elias centre, the Eucharist was a rather militarist celebration of the returning group of young Sandinistas, los cachorros, as they were fondly titled. It really was strong stuff!

In Cachao, Chiloe, in the south of Chile, there was a wonderful Month of Nazareth with the Jesus Caritas movement, where we had upwards of ten nationalities in the group and manual work on the local church etc, before the evening Eucharist usually led by the well known Chilean priests, Mariano Puga and Alvaro Gonzales. The former died in the last year, a revered worker-priest and advocate of the poor, in a multitudinous funeral in Santiago. I could write a book on this man, in addition to the many already being written! In that group, three were in a process of deep discernment about an 'Ad Gentes' mission starting from their Diocese. Back in Chile a couple of years ago, it was a pleasure to link up with Robert Guzman and Sergio Lorenzini, back now in Santiago Diocese having served for twenty or so years in Mozambique and Sergio, in the townships of South Africa

Finally, while on an extended course in Bethlehem with Tantor, an ecumenical foundation, I was invited to lead the Mass of our group in the grotto of the Nativity. A deep and lasting joy that brought me!

I must, finally, finish with one of the 'ordinary' celebrations of

the Eucharist. On Wednesday evenings, to keep up the presence, I celebrated a Mass in that little chapel of the Virgen Peregrina, on a hill in Valparaiso. The attendance was usually very sparse, apart from the odd anniversary that some family was celebrating with a special Mass. Two young boys from the street (dos mocosos they'd be called!) often drifted by and I made it a challenge to try to keep them from just drifting out again. That meant sitting them down and talking out the message of the Gospel in some form. I thought then, and still do, that it was the same Eucharist no matter the ambient, the 'Cosmic dimension' of Pope John Paul always held me! On a final recall of that scene, and just opposite the chapel, I was having a little chat with these lads' younger cousins, getting them used to my accent in Spanish, which was still a novelty to them. One said, "Padre, porque ud habla tan raro?" ("Why do you talk that way?") His even younger companion came in to support him, saying, "Es que los curas hablan asi, pero no todos" ("Sure priests speak that way anyway...but not them all!") That profound little observation set me thinking...who were the others?



Round Tower at Colmille Heritage Centre.



Clerical changes are challenging for all concerned – Bishop Donal



WITH a number of priests on the move following the announcement of the Clerical Changes for the Diocese, Bishop Donal has asked for prayer for all involved.

“Making changes is a challenging time in the year for all concerned – parishioners, clergy and the bishop,” remarked the Bishop, adding: “I have to discern what the needs are of parishes and how we can best place clergy to serve the mission of the Diocese”.

Grateful for the willingness of priests to take on new assignments, he said: “This year we are blessed that Frs Peter O’Kane and James Devine are returning to the Diocese after a number of years discerning their vocation with religious congregations.

“However, the next years will be

challenging as we move towards a more synodal way of being diocese with new ministries but fewer ordained clergy - at least in the short term.

“But we face the future with confidence that the Holy Spirit will guide us - if we are willing to discern where we are being called, and where the Gospel message is most needed.

“I ask people to pray for priests as they take up new postings and for parishes as they seek to adapt to new clergy”.

Effective from September 18, the changes are as follows:

Rev Neil Farren, PP Ardmore, to be PP Coleraine (Dunboe, Macosquin and Aghadowey).

Rev Dr James McGrory, PP Coleraine, to be PP Ardmore.

Rev Patrick Baker, CC Limavady, to be Administrator, Longtower.

Rev Chris McDermott, CC Drumragh (Omagh) and CC Langfield, to be CC Limavady.

Rev Malachy Gallagher, CC Glendermott and CC Strathfoyle, to be CC Melmount and CC Sion Mills.

Rev Peter O’Kane, to return from the Irish Dominican Province to be CC Drumragh (Omagh) and CC Langfield.

Rev James Devine, to return from the Marian Fathers of the Immaculate Conception to be CC

Holy Family, Ballymagroarty.

Rev Ignacy Saniuta, on loan from Diocese of Vitebsk and CC Drumragh (Omagh) and CC Langfield, to be CC St Eugene’s Cathedral, as well as continuing his ministry to the Polish community in the Diocese of Derry.

Rev Roni Zacharias, on loan from the Archeparchy of Changanacherry, to be CC

Glendermott and CC Strathfoyle.

Rev John P Forbes, Priest-in-Residence Badoney Lower to retire.

Rev Christopher Ferguson, Priest-in-Residence Three Patrons, has requested and been granted leave of absence from ministry from October 16, 2021 until August 31, 2022.

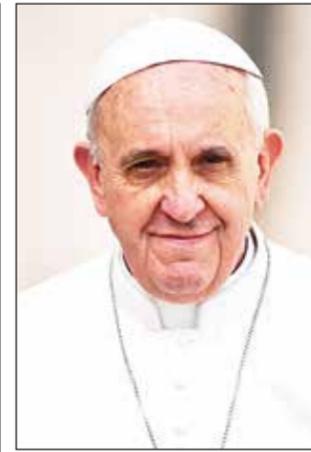
Pray for VOCATIONS IN HIS PRESENCE

Every Thursday
3:30 P ET | 8:30 P BST

WATCH LIVE ON
SW PRAYER

Submit your prayer requests on swprayer.org

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Pope’s monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during September for:

An environmentally sustainable lifestyle:
We pray that we will all make courageous choices for a simple and environmentally sustainable lifestyle, rejoicing in our young people who are resolutely committed to this.

Prayer for Priests

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

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

Give them the grace they need to respond generously to you, and the courage to proclaim your

Word of justice, love and truth.
Bless, in a special way,
Your servant

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

Remember in prayer:

Fr Pat O’Hagan (Sept 1st)
Fr David O’Kane (2nd)
Fr Patrick O’Kane (3rd)
Fr Peter O’Kane (4th)
All priests (5th)
Fr Arthur O’Reilly (6th)
All priests (7th)
All priests (8th)
Fr Michael Porter (9th)
All priests (10th)
Fr Ignacy Saniuta (11th)
Fr John Ryder (12th)
Fr Gerard Sweeney (13th)
Fr Joseph Varghese (14th)
Fr John Walsh (15th)
Fr Alex Anderson (16th)
Fr Patrick Arkinson (17th)
Fr Patrick Baker (18th)
Fr Declan Boland (19th)
Fr Eugene Boland (20th)
Fr Francis Bradley (21st)
Fr Manus Bradley (22nd)
All priests (23rd)
Fr Brian Brady (24th)
All priests (25th)
Fr Thomas Canning (26th)
Fr Michael Canny (27th)
Fr John Cargan (28th)
All priests (29th)
All priests (30th)

“I am too old to go to Mass” by Fr Johnny Doherty, CSsR

I heard those words, “I am too old to go to Mass”, a few years ago from a 15-year-old boy in a school setting. He was not trying to be smart or funny or even challenging. He was one of the nicest young men you could meet. He had many lovely qualities that shone out in the short time that we were together. He was simply saying how he and so many other young people of his age see things today.

Things have changed

People, today, are much more vocal about their lack of faith than in previous generations. The fact is that faith is not easy for any of us. We can tend to make it easy by identifying it with particular actions or rituals or duties. Faith, however, is a whole way of life that is always challenging us in how we have settled; and, in that challenge, drawing us into constant change. This is the part that is difficult.

While we try to find ways of drawing our young people into this wonderful life of faith, it is even more important that we are constantly renewing our own faith, both individually and as a faith community. That is the purpose of celebrating Mass each

Sunday, so that, week by week, we can make a fresh start on our journey of faith.

Renewing the centre of our faith

The centre of our faith is Jesus Christ, living in us and among us today, calling us to holiness as his sisters and brothers. The way to holiness is simply to be people of the will of God. Our knowledge of Christ present in us and with us brings us into knowing that we are always standing on holy ground. The most sacred part of that ground is each human person we meet. Nothing should ever be more important in the practice of our faith than the dignity we give to each person, including ourselves, and the help we can give to one another to live out that dignity as the beloved of God.

People’s reactions

In the Gospels, we find several reactions to Jesus which are still found in today’s world. Firstly, some people were very slow to understand, so Jesus repeated His Word to them in every way He could think of. Secondly, there were people who laughed at Him, made fun of Him, for daring to proclaim His power. Thirdly, there were His own relatives and

neighbours, who were curious about Him but who rejected Him because He was too ordinary. He was just one of them and they refused to believe.

In the Scriptures, fear is shown as the greatest enemy of faith, hope and love. Fear of what it will cost us to follow Christ fully is probably the main one that gets in our way. But there is also the fear of what others will say about us; fear of failure; fear of the unknown when we realise we have to change and grow.

As we renew our faith in Christ through this month of September, we pray that the Spirit of God will set us and the whole Church free to rejoice in the wonderful love of God for us and for all of humanity and creation.

Week by week in September...

Week 1 (5th - 11th): God does all things well

“He (Jesus) makes the deaf hear and the dumb speak.”

In the Gospels, we can hear a real sense of awe among the people who witnessed the miracles of Jesus. It wasn’t just for the fact that He cured people, but also it was because of the wonderful gentleness and

compassion that He showed towards those who were suffering. We will know that we have been touched by Him this week if we let our ears be opened to hear the needs of those in our homes and community and respond to them. Equally, we will know His touch if we let our tongues be loosened to speak to one another words of love, of praise, of comfort, of encouragement.

Week 2 (12th – 18th): The Triumph of the Cross

Jesus said, “If you want to be a follower of mine, renounce yourself, take up your cross, and follow me.”

In this one sentence from Jesus there are two things that most of us don’t want to do. Our world teaches us to ‘be yourself’. Jesus teaches us to ‘renounce yourself’. This doesn’t mean to put yourself down but to let go of your own self-importance and find your true self in being loved and in loving. And then He tells us to take up our cross. The cross we need to take up is that of the consequences of putting others first in love. It is the cross of moving out of our own small world of self-preoccupation and living for others in our marriage,

our family, and our community.

Week 3 (19th - 25th): Christ, the Son of God

Jesus said to his disciples: “If anyone wants to be first he/she must make himself/herself least of all and servant of all.”

Whoever said that religion is the opium of the people obviously never read the Gospels, because if opium was nearly as difficult to take as some of the things that Jesus said, there would be very few people taking it! And yet, the truth is that only His way works.

We all want to be first in so many different ways. We can see people in every sphere of life going around puffed up with their self-importance. It is the opposite to the way of Jesus and can never lead to lasting happiness. This week again, we are invited to practice putting other people first, especially in our families and communities, and know the joy that this brings.

Week 4 (26th – October 2nd): God’s Spirit in the world

Jesus said to his disciples: “Anyone who is not against us is for us”.

One of the temptations for us, as human beings, is to try to control everything. We do

it in the close relationships of marriage and family life and our faith community. When we try to exercise control in these areas we set limits to the wonderful possibilities that are there for us.

The greatest effort of faith is always to give control back to God and live the ways God wants us to live. This has huge implications for marriage and family life, in that God’s way is one of love and affection; of joy and gladness; of peace and forgiveness. It also has very big implications for our faith community, which is called to grow in such a way that there is room for everyone.



Fr Johnny Doherty

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

Hello children. Welcome to the month of September. The summer holidays are over and we are all ready to begin the new school year. This month is dedicated to the Seven Sorrows (or Dolours) of Mary. The Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, which is celebrated on September 15, recognises the sadness experienced by Mary, the Mother of Jesus.



The Seven Sorrows are:

- 1) The Prophecy of Simeon
- 2) The Flight into Egypt
- 3) Jesus Lost in the Temple
- 4) Meeting Jesus on His way to the Cross
- 5) Standing at the foot of the Cross
- 6) Jesus being taken down from the Cross
- 7) The Burial of Jesus

Saints of the Month - September

- Saint Mother Theresa – Sept 5
- Saint Matthew – Sept 21
- Saint Pio – Sept 23
- Saint Jerome – Sept 30



Feast of the Holy Cross

The Feast of the Holy Cross is celebrated on September 15. This feast recalls three historical events: (1) The finding of the True Cross by Saint Helena, who was the mother of the Emperor Constantine; (2) The dedication of the churches built by the Emperor Constantine on the site of the Holy Sepulchre and

Mount Calvary; (3) The restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem by the emperor, Heraclius II. Although this feast recalls these historical events, we also celebrate the True Cross as the means of our salvation.

Jesus suffered death on a cross to save us from our sins. Crucifixion was the Roman death penalty given as a punishment to the most dangerous criminals. The Cross is important for us because, on the Cross, Jesus silently suffered a horrific death for our sins in order to win our salvation.

Jesus tells us in scripture that anyone who wants to follow Him must take up his cross daily and follow Him (Luke 9:23, CCC 1435). This means more than simply giving something up. It means uniting ourselves to the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Sometimes things happen in our lives which make us feel sad and cause us great hurt. We should offer up the pain we experience with the sufferings that Jesus endured on the Cross for the sins of the world, and remember that in God we place our trust.



Traditions

September 29 – Feast of the Archangels or Michaelmas

The days between the feast day of the Archangels and October 2 (Feast of the Guardian Angels) are known by children as 'the angel days'.

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.

The Archangels: There are nine choirs (classes) of angels and the archangels are one of them. The Bible names three of them, which we celebrate on September 29 – Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

The Archangel Gabriel: The word angel means 'messenger' and Gabriel is the archangel who brought very

important news from God. We first hear about Gabriel in the Old Testament in the Book of Daniel but it is in the New Testament that we learn most about him. Gabriel came to Zechariah to tell him about the arrival of John the Baptist and to Mary for Her consent to become the Mother of God. Tradition has it that Gabriel will sound the trumpet on the day of Judgement, calling all people. His name means 'God is my strength'.

The Archangel Raphael: Raphael appears in one book only, in the Old Testament – the Book of Tobit. This is a beautiful story of guidance, healing and love. Tradition claims that in the Gospel of John, where Jesus healed the man at the pool, it was Raphael who stirred the healing waters.

The Archangel Michael: In the Old Testament, Michael is described as standing guard with God's people. In the New Testament, the Book of Revelation tells how Michael cast the fallen angels out of Heaven. These are the angels who thought they were like God. Michael's name means 'who is like God'. He is thought of as the great protector. Michael is often shown dressed in armour and fighting Satan, who is the head of the 'fallen' angels.

Prayer to St Michael

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust in hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen



Prayer to St. Michael the Archangel

St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray, and do thou, O Prince of the heavenly hosts, by the power of God, thrust into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen

Archangels

Unscramble each of the clue words.

Copy the letters in the numbered cells to other cells with the same number.

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ICMEHLA	<input type="text"/>	5	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>										
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Answers: Angel, Michael, Raphael, Gabriel, Messenger, Servant, Protector, Shepherd, Angels of the Lord, O, Bless the Lord

Quiz Time with Lawrence

- 1 The Golden Gate bridge spans the channel between San Francisco Bay and which other major body of water?
- 2 The Peacock is celebrated as the national bird of which country?
- 3 Who shot Martin Luther King?
- 4 What does EA stand for in the computer gaming company EA Sports?
- 5 Apart from Royalty, who was the only female whose image has appeared on English banknotes?
- 6 Which country will host the 2018 World Cup?
- 7 Lurgan native and former Celtic manager, Neil Lennon managed which English club?
- 8 Which snooker player has won the world professional title most often?
- 9 Which two teams scored over 100 goals in the Premier League in the 2013/14 season?
- 10 Who had the 1987 Christmas No. 1 with "Always on My Mind"?
- 11 Which 2015 movie examines the relationship between physicist Stephen Hawking and his wife?
- 12 Pauline McLynn played which fictional TV housekeeper between 1995 and 1998?
- 13 Which book, written by Coleen Mc Cullough and

published in 1977, was later adapted to become an award-winning TV series?

- 14 The musical "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" is based on a novel by which author?
- 15 Which river, flowing through Laois, Kildare, Kilkenny, Carlow, Wexford and Waterford, is the second longest in Ireland?
- 16 Which world-renowned rock singer/guitarist died in 1986 aged just 37?
- 17 What year was the Irish Punt withdrawn from circulation?
- 18 In which Irish county would you find the Rock of Cashel?
- 19 Where in Ireland was the great international tenor Count John Mc Cormack born?

True or False

- 20 The most expensive car registration in the world today shows only the number 1.
- 21 Paul Mc Cartney's middle name is James.
- 22 The state of Florida is bigger than the whole of England.
- 23 The Great Wall of China is the only man-made object visible from space.
- 24 "March of the Volunteers" is the national anthem of Japan.

Quiz Answers: 1 The Pacific Ocean. 2 India. 3 James Earl Ray. 4 Electronic Arts. 5 Florence Nightingale. 6 Russia. 7 Bolton Wanderers. 8 Stephen Hendry (seven times). 9 Manchester City and Liverpool. 10 The Pet Shop Boys. 11 "The Theory of Everything". 12 Mrs Doyle in Fr Ted. 13 The Thorn Birds. 14 Roald Dahl. 15 The Barrow. 16 Phil Lynott. 17 2002. 18 Tipperary. 19 Athlone in Co. Westmeath. 20 True. (It is registered in the UAE). 21 False, his middle name is Paul, James is his Christian name. 22 True. 23 False. (It is barely visible from lower orbit). 24 False, it's China

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

Let Your Light Shine!

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

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



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