



The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 110. SEPTEMBER 2025

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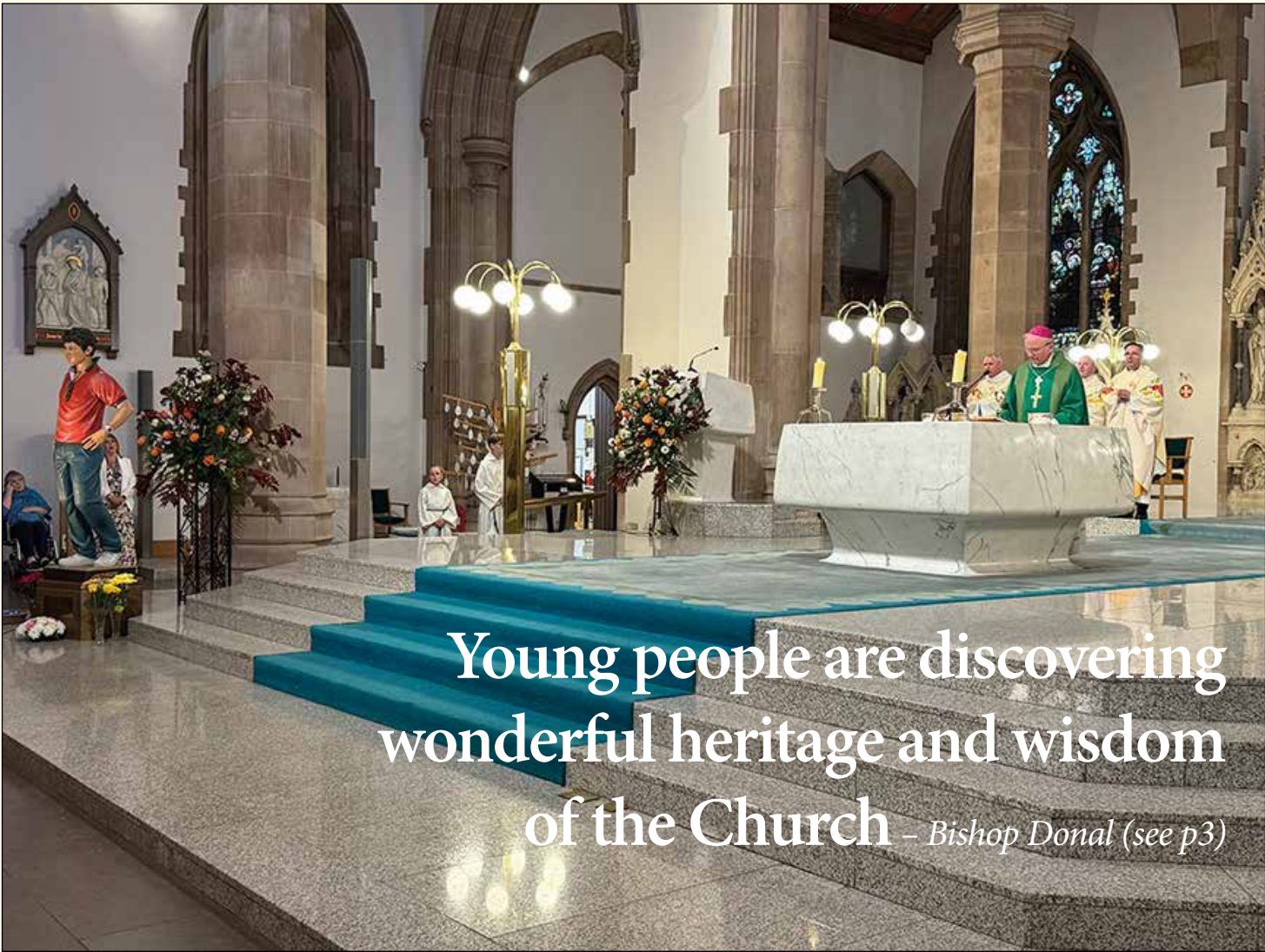
Anam Og Summer Fun - Termonbacca.



HOPE Summer Camp - Limavady.



Frassati Fraternity Hike - Glenshane Mass Rock



Young people are discovering wonderful heritage and wisdom of the Church – Bishop Donal (see p3)

Bishop Donal celebrating Thanksgiving Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral following canonization of young saints.



Farewell to Fr Kevin Doherty - Clonmany.



Welcoming new parish priest - Culdaff.




Young Derry Pilgrims of Hope - Rome.




St Carlo Acutis joy - St Eugene's Cathedral


People in focus



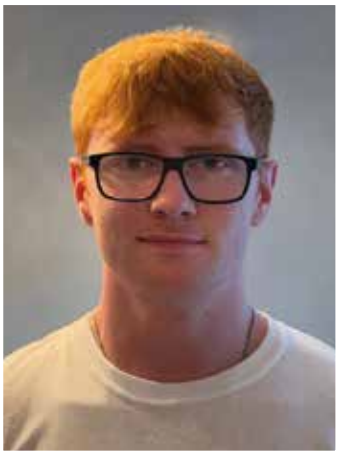
Cara McLaughlin, St Eugene's-Manchester




Dervla Martin, Fintona-Omagh



Fr John McDevitt, Clonmany & Culdaff PP



Luke Murphy, Dungiven



The late Aisling O'Neill, Feeny, Banagher

Also featuring: HOPE Camps Claudy-Craigbane, Banagher, Dungiven & Limavady; Young Writers share thoughts; Derry Youth Rome Pilgrimage feature; Teachers with Derry connection at Rome Jubilee; Sad Clonmany farewell for Fr Kevin Doherty; Warm Clonmany & Culdaff welcome for Fr John McDevitt, PP; Hearts on Fire Conference feature; Children's Catechism Club – C3; Irish section; Vocations News; Diary Dates; Quiz... and much more...

Contents

Living in harmony with all creation will allow us to savour life to the full
– Reflection by Fr Francis Bradley.....

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese.....

Thanksgiving Mass for young saints and Year of Hope...
*Young people are discovering wonderful heritage and wisdom of the Church – Bishop Donal.....

HOPE Camp 2025...
*Over 300 Limavady campers enjoyed amazing fun and faith-filled week by Leo McCloskey
*Dungiven delight at third successful Camp thanks to efforts of many by Mary McGill
*Donations of funds, time and talents continue to make HOPE Camp Claudy-Craigbane an amazing parish gift by Mary O'Donnell
*Joy and laughter during Banagher Camp a fond reminder of spirit of dedicated volunteer Aisling O'Neill by Charlotte Deery.....

*Remembering Aisling O'Neill
– a life lived cherishing every moment as a gift.....

Anam Og Youth Group looks forward to faith gatherings after summer of fun
by Aoife O'Neill.....

Young Writers share thoughts on...
*Augustine as a relatable saint to learn from
*The example of St Therese in accepting God's Will
*Human potential and embracing our God-given gifts
*Jesus never turns us away in spite of human faults
*Promoting Christ-like efforts to support those oppressed
*The Good Samaritan
*Pilgrimage to Rome for Youth Jubilee.....

Jubilant youth return hope-filled from Rome...
*It has always been a joy to journey with young people – Bishop Donal
*Rome was amazing – streets full of smiles, songs and soul - Daragh Ellis
*We all felt a strong connection with our faith and one another – James Heron
*Jubilee of Youth not just an event but reminder that faith is alive in us - Rebecca Patton
*Pilgrim of Hope in Rome not only privilege but calling to live that same hope in my life and community – Cadhla Shivers
*Rome pilgrimage restored my faith in way I didn't know I needed - Rosie Byrne
*Rome full of hope with thousands of young walking through Holy Doors and silence shared in Adoration - Aine McCallion.....

Young Dungiven man sets up fraternity for some Pier Giorgio-style hiking with spiritual aspect.....
Greatest risk in life...to waste it outside of God's plan - Pope Leo XIV.....

Irish section by Déaglán Ó Laithbheartaigh
*Walter Cizek agus Deonú Dé (Walter Cizek and God's Providence).....

Rome Jubilee of Teachers...
*Teachers with Derry connection share amazing experience of Rome Jubilee pilgrimage.....

Sad Clonmany farewell for Fr Kevin Doherty as he returns to Dublin Diocese.....
Fr John McDevitt installed as parish priest of Clonmany & Culdaff...p20-21
Blessing of Bikes at Burt.....

Hearts on Fire Conference...
*Only people of prayer and community attuned to where Spirit is moving – Bishop Donal
*Hearts on Fire challenged us to evangelise ...to make Jesus known and loved – Anne Friel
*Revitalisation of hope and mission for Conference attendees - Finbar Madden
*Conference a wonderful reminder of richness of Catholic tradition – Fr Peter Madden
*Great opportunity for ideas on parish renewal and mission – Maire Gormley
*Conference set our hearts on fire - Anne-Marie Hickey.....

The Derry Discussion 1828
by Dr Seán Beattie.....
Prayer in My Pocket...or Heart
by Kieron Kehoe.....
Prayer to St Joseph.....

Ruach...Breath of the Spirit
*The Heart and the Spirit
by Fr Eamonn Kelly.....
*Omagh Charismatic Day of Prayer, Praise & Healing.....
*Dungiven Charismatic Prayer Group to mark Golden Jubilee.....
Vocations News...
*Encouraging time of prayer and discussion with Vocations Team.....
*Prayer Evenings for Vocations.....
*Prayer for Priests.....
*Pope's Monthly Prayer Intention.....

Parish Post-its.....
Diocesan Diary.....
...other Diary Dates.....

Termonbacca News...
* Carmelites launch weekly St Therese prayer hour
Derry Diocesan Society Daily Masses.....
Forty Hours 2025.....

'Do you know who I am?'
by Fr Johnny Doherty.....
Faith in action: Making choices as a Catholic parent by Sinéad Strong.....

Children's Catechism Club – C3
by Veronica Harley.....
Quiz Time with Lawrence.....

Save the Date! Christ the King Eucharistic Procession.....

Living in harmony with all creation will allow us to savour life to the full

by Fr Francis Bradley

THE Pope's prayer intention for September is: "For our relationship with Creation. Let us pray that, inspired by St Francis, we might experience our interdependence with all creatures who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect."

As the poet John Keats explained in his ode to Autumn, in September, in the Northern Hemisphere, we are in the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness. The weather has given us a subtle reminder that we are well and truly in the midst of the season of Autumn. In Irish, September is known as 'Meán Fómhair' (the middle of the harvest) and October will be known as 'Deireadh Fómhair' (the end of the harvest).

After what has been a comparatively very beautiful summer, with the evenings drawing in a little and the school buses once again on the

roads, we are conscious that change is in the air. Pope Leo's intentions are, as ever, timely and appropriate.

We know in our heart of hearts that everything is interconnected. We cannot blithely disregard, disrespect or dishonour creation and think that we will escape the consequences. Even if only out of a sense of self-preservation, we need to see ourselves as part of creation if we are to enjoy life to the full and bequeath something lovely to those generations coming after us. For, put more positively, it is only when we see ourselves as part of creation, the God-appointed stewards responsible for its care and development, that we will truly enjoy the life and beauty, the joy and hope teeming in its rhythms and melodies. It is when we listen to creation, when we see its patterns, smell its fragrances, taste its produce

and feel its at once roughed strength and tender frailty that we know how blessed we have been by God the Creator.

God's gentle approach, which as the Prophet puts it, would "neither break the crushed reed nor quench the wavering flame", should be ours. St Francis is the great icon of how to live in concert with creation – he saw everything on the earth and in the cosmos connected. His great 'Canticle of the Creatures' sees creation as a seamless fabric on which we, as human beings, live our lives. We are to live in tune with Brother Sun and Sister Moon, Brother Wind and Sister Water, Brother Fire and Sister Mother Earth. In this way, the harmony we enjoy will allow us to savour life to the full.

The humility (the word derived from the Latin 'humus' meaning the earth) which characterised St Francis and

Fr Francis Bradley, PP Buncrana and Burt, Inch & Fahan.

should characterise all of us, to a greater extent, means that we need to be grounded, modest, meek and without pride, living simply so that all of creation can simply live.

In our love of nature, in our respect for nature, we are

fulfilling the first of the 10 great Commandments; we are loving and respecting God, Who is the source and destiny of all of creation. To Him be highest glory and praise forever!

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

Aghyaran: Thursdays, 10.30am–12 noon.
Ardstraw West & Castlederg: Fridays, 10.30am–12 noon, St Patrick's Church.
Badoney Lower: Tuesdays, after 12.30 pm Mass until 5 pm, St Patrick's Gortin.
Badoney Upper: Wednesdays, after 7.30 pm evening Mass until 9 pm, St Patrick's Cranagh.
Ballinascreen: First Mondays, from 12 noon–7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.
Banagher: Thursdays, 10.30–11.30 am, St Mary's Church, Altinure, and Fridays, 10–11 am, St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.
Bellaghy: Every Friday, from 10 am until recitation of Rosary at 7.30 pm, in St Mary's Church.
Buncrana: Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am–10pm, Fridays, 6 am–10 pm and Sundays, 2–10 pm, St Mary's Oratory.


Cappagh: Wednesdays, 8–9pm, concluding with Night Prayer, and Sundays, 3.30–6.30 pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.
Claudy: Tuesdays, after 10am Mass until 8 pm, St Patrick's Church, Claudy, and Wednesdays, after 10 Mass until 8 pm, St Joseph's Church, Craigbane.
Clonmany: Tuesdays, 7.30–8.30 pm, the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin; Wednesdays, 3–4 pm, St Columbcille Village, Cleagh; Fridays, 3–6 pm (Rosary at 5.40 pm), St Michael's Church, Urris.
Coleraine: Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2–4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.
Creggan: Sundays 1.30 pm–6 pm; Mondays 10.30 am - 7 pm; Tue - Sat 10.30 am - 12 pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.
Donaghedy: First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St Mary's Church, Aughabrack.
Donaghmore: Tuesdays,

10.30 am–7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.
Drumquin: Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.
Drumragh: Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.
Dungiven: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9am–6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am–8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.
Errigal: Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.
Fahan: Fridays after 10am Mass, St Mura's Parish Church.
Greencastle (Tyrone): Thursdays, 6–10 pm, St Patrick's Church.
Greenlough: Thursdays, 9am–5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.
Iskaheen: Tuesdays, from after 10 am Mass until 2 pm, St Patrick's Church.
Kilrea: Mondays, 12 noon - 7pm, St Mary's Drumagarnier.

Concludes with Benediction.
Lavey: Fridays, after 9.30 am Mass until 5 pm.
Leckpatrick: Wednesdays from 8.15 am–5 pm.
Lifford (Murlog): 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
Limavady: Sundays from 3–5 pm in Christ the King (with Confessions).
Magilligan: Wednesdays, 3–7 pm; First Sundays, 3–6 pm, St Aidan's Church.
Melmount: Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.
Moville: Mondays, 2–9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6–9 pm, St Pius X Church.
Newtownstewart: Thursdays, 6.30–7.30 pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.
Sion Mills: Adoration takes place in the side chapel (Oratory) and will be available every day during the Church's opening hours, moving to the main body of the chapel on Fridays, from 11am–6.50 pm, ending with Benediction before 7 pm Mass.
Steelstown: Mondays, from after 10 am Mass until 6.50pm.

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

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




The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

If you have a story that you would like to share or an event you would like covered by The Net, just drop an email to editorthenet15@gmail.com or ring/text 07809292852



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Supporting us:

The mission of 'The NET' is to share the fruits of the faith in homes, parishes and schools across the Diocese of Derry, and be a source of hope and encouragement in living our Catholic faith each day.
'The NET' is a Lay Apostolate that has the blessing of our Bishop, Most Rev Donal McKeown.
With no fixed charge to read this publication, donations would be most welcome to help cover costs. Annual accounts will be available to view on request.

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The ministry of

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

Celebrating canonisations of Sts Carlo and Pier Giorgio during Jubilee of Hope that calls all to be missionaries of hope, Bishop Donal noted how today’s young are finding new roots...

Young people are discovering wonderful heritage and wisdom of the Church



THE Canonisations of St Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati were celebrated in the Diocese with a Mass of Thanksgiving in a packed St Eugene’s Cathedral on the night of Sunday, September 7.

The main celebrant of the Mass, Bishop Donal said that it was great to see so many come to spend time in Adoration in the St Mother Teresa Chapel, venerate the first-class St Carlo relic and avail of the Sacrament of Reconciliation from 3 pm up until Mass time.

Joined on the altar by Fr Paul Farren, Fr Shaun Doherty, Fr Brian Brady and Fr Gerard Mongan, the bishop told the large congregation of all ages, particularly young people, including pupils from a number of schools in the City and Diocese, that the Mass was also a celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope.

During his homily, Bishop Donal remarked that, as autumn drew in, “We are hearing passages from St Luke’s Gospel as Jesus approaches His death and resurrection in Jerusalem. The apostles don’t want to hear about suffering and the Cross. But Jesus reminds them, and us, that sin is too serious and damaging.

“Only the death of God’s Son on the Cross can take away the monstrous sins of the world. Only by taking up our cross and following Him can we share in His Resurrection. That tough message has been at the heart of the Gospel for 2,000 years. Pampering ourselves leads nowhere.”

Referring to the canonisations earlier in the day in Rome “of two young saints who knew about the Cross and took it seriously,” he

said: “Here, we remember Carlo Acutis, the young Italian boy who was born in 1991 and died in 2006. The other saint was Pier Giorgio Frassati, who died 100 years ago aged 24. Both grew up in families where faith practice was patchy. Both had a passionate love of the Eucharist and of the poor. Pier Giorgio’s father was a newspaper editor, and Carlo was big into computing as a means of sharing his faith. And both of them died within about 10 days of receiving a diagnosis of serious illness. They knew the crazy generosity of God before they had to face an early and painful death. But they fit into a pattern of the wise foolishness of God.

“In every generation, renewal has come from radical young saints. From Sts Francis and Clare in Assisi to Sr Clare Crockett, God has called unexpected followers who understand the Cross to breathe new life into His Church. Sometimes parents are understandably worried about handing on faith to their young people. But Church history tells us that young people can often be the ones who call parents to faith. And these new saints would ask us to be sure that we leave space for uncomfortable young voices in discerning the way forward.”

“We live in an age of much fragmentation and fear of the future,” continued Bishop Donal, “The secular agenda promised us heaven on earth if only we ditched any belief in a God. But that one-dimensional worldview has contributed to a world where mental stress and addiction appear to be widespread. On a world stage, the moral powerful seem to assume that only might is right – whether in business or in politics. And many of us feel helpless. We all know there is a huge social pressure which tells us to escape and says that there is nothing but now and me.

Inspire

“In that crushing message of meaninglessness, there are new young people who are discovering the wonderful heritage and wisdom of the church – great thinkers, artists and musicians, spiritual wisdom and heroic saints of all ages who inspire

them. They are finding new roots. We saw the huge crowds in Rome when the Jubilee Year pilgrimage of young people took place. Rome had planned for 500,000. But over twice that number turned up. These two young saints would tell us, despite the sin that marks every generation, to be humbly proud of the wisdom that we have been given. Divinely inspired human intelligence and art are even wiser than artificial intelligence.”

He went on to note: “St Carlo had remarkable insight into who Jesus was and why He became one of us. As a teenager, Carlo wrote – ‘The Word of God was made flesh and came down from Heaven to restore the mercy we lost through Original Sin and which we continue to lose each time we sin today..Jesus chose Calvary, He chose the Cross. He chose humiliation. He chose the Passion.’

“Carlo was also aware of the reality of sin and the need for regular Confession of sin. He compared the soul to a hot air balloon. Sin weighs us down. He wrote that, if we want to be free to soar, we need to shed the dead weight of sin if we want to ascend to Heaven. Carlo knew that he was called to be the original that God had created, not a photocopy of someone else.”

“It is not surprising,” added Bishop Donal, “that St Carlo saw the link between Calvary and the Eucharist. There is a temptation to see Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament mainly as worshiping Jesus enthroned in glory in Heaven. But at the Last Supper, Jesus left the Eucharist as a memorial of His Passion, His body broken and His blood shed.

“As it says in today’s Gospel, it is only through the Cross that we walk with Jesus. St Carlo wrote – ‘The sacrifice of the Cross and the Eucharist coincide’. Just as Jesus suffered the agony in the garden of Gethsemane, Carlo could say ‘Even though the Cross cannot be fully understood, it must be welcomed with gratitude and love’.

“It is wonderful that there is a rediscovery of silent Adoration. But St Carlo would remind us that the spirituality of the laity drives us to confront poverty and all those who bear heavy crosses. Carlo knew that a rich sacramental life is part of becoming holy. Often, we pray to be freed from pain, as if we were entitled to an easy life. But Jesus and Carlo know that the Cross is a source of grace, not of disgrace.”

He concluded: “Today these new saints remind us that the Church is not a building. Buildings are useful only if they build the holy People of God and help them to walk the Calvary Road to Resurrection. Faith is not something to be viewed as a nice relic of a past. Faith cries out to be lived where people are today. The challenges were different in Penal times and during the Troubles. But despite the different challenges today, Jesus still wants to speak to the hearts of the people of a digital age.

“Mercy and hope are still needed in this generation. This is a time of grace, when we can love our contemporaries enough to offer them love, mercy and truth. Taking up the Cross in every generation takes courage. Saints Carlo and Pier Giorgio pray for us.”



HOPE Camp 2025...

Over 300 Limavady campers enjoyed amazing fun and faith-filled week *by Leo McCloskey*

A beacon of faith, fun, and friendship, HOPE Limavady is a cherished local institution. This year, 330 young people aged between 10 and 15 enjoyed the week-long fun and faith-filled programme.

This is a demographic reticent to participate in faith-based activities, yet this is the highlight of their summer. Due to a record number of applications, over 100 children were placed on a waiting list. So, what's all the fuss about? What makes this camp the envy of parishes across Ireland? Organisers face the annual challenge of keeping the camp fresh and engaging.

This year's keynote speakers were Barry and Margaret Mizen from the Mizen Foundation. Their powerful story of coming to terms with the brutal murder of their son, Jimmy was deeply moving. Their message of peace, hope, and forgiveness resonated strongly with the young people of Limavady.

Faith-based activities included Adoration with Fr Harkin, Confessions, and Mass with Mgr McCanny. The reverence and respect shown by the children during these moments was truly inspiring.

The camp was supported by over 60 local volunteers, aged between 16 and 60, all of whom generously gave their time to ensure the week's success. Many young volunteers even gave up

shifts at their summer jobs to help. Limavady is fortunate to have such a kind-hearted and dedicated community.

Funding remains a challenge, as grant support for church-based groups is increasingly difficult to secure. Thankfully, the overwhelming generosity of local businesses and the wider community made the camp possible. A last-minute sponsorship appeal ensured all expenses were covered.

The range of activities offered was extensive. It is hard to think of a sport, cultural event, or team-building exercise that the children didn't experience. The highlight was the trip day. Over 250 visited The Lake, in Kilrea, 100 went to Oakfire Adventures, and the rest enjoyed Extreme Jump. All of this was provided for just £20, including the much-loved HOPE sports top. When the sun shines in Limavady, you won't have to look far to spot someone proudly wearing one.

The true measure of success is sustainability. HOPE Limavady has now run for 12 consecutive years, and each year the experience continues to improve. A new generation of leaders is emerging, ready to carry the camp forward into the future.

HOPE Summer Camp is the intellectual property of Limavady Parish and cannot be adopted in other parishes without the approval of Limavady Parish.



HOPE Camp 2025...

Dungiven delight at third successful Camp thanks of efforts of many *by Mary McGill*



DUNGIVEN Parish is delighted to announce that we have, once again, hosted a very successful summer camp, welcoming 150 young people aged 11 to 14 from right across the Parish. The ethos of our camp is to promote Fun, Faith, and Friendship, and this year we are proud to say that this was achieved tenfold.

The camp began with our HOPE Mass in St Patrick's Chapel, Dungiven, where we welcomed our 150 registered young people and their families. It was wonderful to see familiar faces from previous camps as well as many new attendees. Our young people played an active role in the Mass, assisting with the readings, prayers of the faithful, offertory gifts, and music. This special Mass also gave us the opportunity to introduce our Parish Summer Camp to our new Parish Priest, Fr Gerry Sweeney, who has consistently highlighted the vital role young people play in the life of our parish and the future of our faith community. It was very fitting that he celebrated this opening Mass with us.

Throughout the week, the young people had the chance to take part in a wide variety of activities, such as team games, creative workshops and challenges that pushed them to try something new. Highlights included cookery, arts & crafts, circus skills, kite designing, drumming, dance, clay art, archery, combat sports, and Ninja assault. A trip to Creggan Country Park brought the excitement of both water and land-based adventures, such as pier jumping, kayaking, inflatable water courses, team games, and orienteering. The week concluded with a memorable visit to Gortin Outdoor Activity Centre, where the young people enjoyed combat archery, a gorge walk, team games, and a delicious meal together in a local restaurant.

Faith remained at the heart of our camp. On Monday, we welcomed Fr Malachy Gallagher (formerly of Strabane/Sion Mills Parish), who shared a powerful message reminding our young people that no matter how uncertain life may feel, with God's love, we will always find our way. He also spoke about the inspiring

life of Sr Clare Crockett, who discovered her true path through faith. We were also blessed to hear from Mary O'Kane, Chair of Dungiven Pastoral Council, who shared her personal journey of faith and reflected on the importance of Faith, Hope, and Love. Her words encouraged us to nurture our relationship with God and our parish community, so that we can face even the toughest challenges with strength and grace.

During the week, the young people also had the opportunity to participate in Confession, with the kind support of several neighbouring priests. Fr Gerry later addressed the camp, thanking the young people for their participation and, most importantly, for embracing all aspects of faith formation throughout the week. We are truly grateful to Fr Malachy, Mary, Fr Gerry, Fr Seamus, and our neighbouring parish priests for their support, guidance, and encouragement.

HOPE Camp would not be possible without the dedication of our hard-working committee, who meet throughout the year to plan and prepare. Each member brings valuable skills and experience to ensure that the young people are offered opportunities they would not otherwise have. We also owe a huge debt of gratitude to our volunteers, who generously give their time to ensure that the camp runs smoothly and safely for all.

We would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to our parishioners and to our generous sponsors - the McCloskey Family and Errigal Contracts - whose continued support makes this camp possible. Thanks also to everyone who attended and supported our fundraising events, including our Big Breakfast and Quiz Night. Your generosity allows our young people to enjoy this wonderful opportunity to grow in faith while having fun and building friendships.

With our third HOPE Camp now successfully completed and the programme continuing to grow, we look forward with excitement to what HOPE Camp 2026 will bring.



HOPE Camp 2025...

Donations of funds, time and talents continue to make HOPE Camp Claudy-Craigbane an amazing parish gift *by Mary O'Donnell*



Cara McCloskey receiving the Spirit of Aisling O'Neill Cup from Aisling's mother, Briege.

THIS year's HOPE Camp brought together 140 young people from the Claudy and Craigbane areas, and 47 volunteers, for another unforgettable week of activities in mid-July, aimed at continuing to help the parish evolve through the community spirit generated from fundraising efforts and the friendships formed between the 10-15-year-old campers and the young team of volunteers who led them.

Launched by parish priest, Fr David O'Kane at a special ceremony in St Patrick's Church, Claudy, the young people and their

families were moved and inspired by the words of guest speaker, Geraldine Mullan, who has been channeling her grief from the tragic drowning of her husband, John (49), son, Tomas (14) and daughter, Amelia (6) in Lough Foyle five years ago, into creating ways of bringing hope to others through the Mullan Hope Centre in Moville.

Speaking on the 'love' theme of the HOPE 2025 Camp, the Galway-born clinical nurse specialist shared her experiences of how love can fuel hope even in the darkest of times, and how hope

gives light to life. She encouraged the young people "to be there for one another", saying: "The most important thing you can be is a friend."

The week of fun, faith and friendship centred on a packed programme of activities that included opportunities for Adoration and Eucharistic Healing led by Fr Sean O'Donnell, and Confession offered by a number of neighbouring priests, as well as a talk on Derry-born Servant of God, Sr Clare Crockett by Fr Stephen Quinn of the Discalced Carmelites, Termonbacca.

The young people also enjoyed getting creative through art & crafts, which included Rosary-bead making, and making TikTok videos, and more physical activities like jiving and ceili dancing, mini-Olympics, tug-of-war, a water fight, golf, Gaelic, and various other ball games. One of the main highlights of the week was the trip to the popular Lake Kilrea water park, with the BBQ, pancakes and ice-cream going down a treat too.

The programme came to a close with Mass celebrated by Fr David, and the announcements of the 'Team of the Week' winner

of the Camp's St Dominic Savio Perpetual Cup, and the winner of the newly introduced Volunteer Cup in memory of the greatly missed Aisling O'Neill, from the neighbouring Banagher Parish, who had been such a dedicated and lively committee member and volunteer. While Team 12 won the St Dominic Savio Cup, the Spirit of Aisling O'Neill Cup was awarded to young volunteer leader, Cara McCloskey.

This great week of fun was made possible by the generosity of many, in terms of funding, time and sharing of talents. The sponsorship of local businesses through 'Friends of Hope', and particularly the sponsors of this year's Camp jersey - Pristine Competitions, Fyth, Accounts by Paul, and Graft Coffee - was very much appreciated in helping to keep the Camp registration fee to the excellent value of £20! The continued free First Aid service by Coastal Core was also greatly welcomed.

After some recovery time and encouraged by the very positive feedback, the dedicated members of the organising team will begin planning for Camp 2026.



Team 12 winners of the St Dominic Savio Cup.



Camp launch guest speaker, Geraldine Mullan, Moville Mullan Hope Centre



HOPE Camp 2025...

Joy and laughter during Banagher Camp a fond reminder of spirit of dedicated volunteer Aisling O'Neill by Charlotte Deeny



Former Banagher committee member and volunteer, the late Aisling O'Neill at a previous camp with Charlotte.

THE first week of August saw Banagher Parish hold its HOPE summer camp, in which over 160 youth aged between 10 and 15 years old attended, and over 35 volunteers gave generously of their time and skills to make the camp an enjoyable experience for all.

This week of HOPE was just as successful, faith-filled and enjoyable for all involved as it has been in previous years. However, much to the disappointment of the young people, volunteers and committee, the first day of the camp had to be cancelled due to the unfortunate timing of Storm Floris! Yet, this did not put a dampener on the week, as the Tuesday started off with an inspirational talk from James Tourish about the young, soon-to-be-saint, Carlo Acitis. The day then continued with a jam-packed schedule of fun activities during a trip out to the Foyle Area.

The week continued with a day at Owenbeg, where the young people took part in a range of activities, including arts and crafts, Zumba, various sports games, as well as a lot of old favourites. Taking a break from the sun and activities, everyone had the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Confession in the afternoon. The time of Confession was

introduced by Fr Dermot McGirr, with an insightful talk explaining the importance of this special Sacrament and making the young people feel at ease about receiving it.

The day ended with Emma Redmond reading out the inspirational talk that was written by Danielle Magennis, who was due to attend the camp on the Monday that was cancelled. However, the young people still gained a lot from listening to Danielle's faith story and the impact that Sr Clare Crockett has had on her relationship with God.

On Thursday, the young people enjoyed themselves on the second trip of the week. This time it was to the outdoor waterpark and adventure centre, Splash NI in Moneymore. Before they went to Splash, the children spent some time in Eucharistic Adoration. During this time, they had the opportunity to spend some time praying and reflecting in the

presence of Jesus, which was a peaceful and powerful start to the day.

The week ended on home turf at the Banagher GAA Club with Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal, an All-Ireland sports day, prize giving and BBQ. This day was the perfect end to an amazing week of HOPE camp for all who attended, whether they were a child or an adult.

There were many highlights throughout the week, but one that stood out the most was the friendships that were made or strengthened by the enjoyable time spent together, during the times of great fun and prayerful reflection. During the whole of HOPE camp, we made sure to keep the memory alive of our dear friend and committee member, Aisling O'Neill, who sadly passed away in June. The spirit of Aisling was very much present throughout the week in the joy and laughter of the young people.



“I would like to think that people have witnessed that I lived with greater authenticity, candour and gratitude, and that I cultivated a true lust for life.”

Remembering Aisling O'Neill – a life lived cherishing every moment as a gift



HOPE Camps are known for the fun, laughter and community spirit generated not just through the week-long, faith-based programme each summer, but in the planning meetings and fundraisers in the lead-up to it.

Originating in the Parish of Limavady, the Camp was then established in the Claudy Parish and amongst its first enthusiastic volunteers there was the lively Aisling O'Neill from the neighbouring village of Feeny, in the Banagher Parish, bringing her experience of the Michaela Camp.

Such was her interest and dedication that it wasn't long until Aisling was invited to join the HOPE Claudy-Craigbane organising committee, and anything she could do for the Camp she did with a willing and happy heart. And, when her home parish then made moves to set up HOPE Camp she was delighted and joined its committee as well.

Aisling's cancer diagnosis drew prayerful support from the many who loved her dearly in both Camps and beyond, and there was deep sadness when news eventually came of her passing away. For her Requiem Mass in St Joseph's Church, Fincarn, on Monday, June 16, some four weeks before the launch of the first of the summer 2025 HOPE Camps, committee members and volunteers from both the Banagher and Claudy-Craigbane Camps

came together to form a guard of honour as her coffin was brought in and out of the chapel.

Wanting to keep the memory of her great energy and joy for life alive, and to honour all that she gave to both Camps, each introduced a new Camp Cup to be presented to the volunteer who best emulated the indomitable spirit of Aisling.

To paint a fuller picture of the life and character of the 35-year-old, the following is part of the homily delivered at her Requiem Mass by Fr Dermot McGirr...

“We're reflecting on the life and character of Aisling today and how that's touched us, how it's been unique, and how it's been inspired by her belief and her self-belief, and how it's been memorable and treasured by us. We are praying for Aisling as we entrust her precious soul to our loving God and Father, that she may rest in the gentlest of peace and love in his eternal home, a fulfilment of the faith, hope and trust that Aisling lived unafraid. The Lord Jesus loves us and He wants us to be with Him in a new life in Heaven when our life here on earth comes to an end, and we are asking for that blessing for Aisling...”

“Aisling Clare was born on April 30, 1990, into the loving family of Gerard and Breige O'Neill, here in Feeny, with her sisters and brothers – Colleen, Aileen, Gearóid and Michéal. Now, Aisling knew pain

from an early young age, but she accepted that. She didn't show pain and she didn't want to be 'poor Aisling'. Her stance was that she was carrying this with her – she fought through it, aided by the qualities of courage, energy and strength that she had at her very core.

Teacher

“Young Aisling was hardly in St Canice's Primary School next door when she decided she wanted to be a teacher, and so every year she wanted a new blackboard from Santa! She sat the family down to play school, pointing at them like a teacher going round the room and scribbling words she couldn't spell yet on the blackboard. This carried over to babysitting her cousins. Aisling came over with a lesson plan on a section of a Harry Potter novel, and after the passage was read there were three questions that had to be answered correctly.

“Aisling was studious. After St Patrick's, Dungiven, she did four courses in Limavady Tech: Sports studies, hair and beauty, child care and being a classroom assistant. During Covid, she gained a degree in child-care through the Open University and two years ago enrolled in a PGCE teacher training course in the University of Cumbria, working quietly morning and evening, doing placements in England and lately in Gortnaghey School. Last year she graduated and I'm sure you've seen the excited photo of her at her graduation. You couldn't tell Aisling that she couldn't do something. If she wanted something, she'd get there. She had focus, spirit and determination.

“With illness, Aisling couldn't take a teaching post, but in ways she has been a teacher all her life. In a room or club, she helped children flourish because she cared about them. She could look at children and, because of her own experiences, she had an understanding of where they were and what they needed. She saw them as individuals and their own people who might respond to their own approach. She advocated for them and spoke up for them out of a sense of justice. Children were her primary focus. She believed in speaking the truth and she expected it in return. Truth was important for colleagues, family, friends and medical personnel too.

“Since she was a child, Aisling wanted to play camogie, and she did play and she loved it; loved Irish dancing too. She volunteered in Banagher Club, coaching camogie over there and out in schools. She loved going to Owenbeg in her Derry gear and doing whatever jobs were needed done, from serving teas to selling programmes. It meant a lot to her to be part of the GAA, and having an interest in Irish music, language and culture was an expression of her commitment. Even when studying over in Lancaster, she flew over for home Derry games. She had a solid sense of community here and in the Banagher club. The very motto of the club – ‘Ní neart go misneach’ (‘No strength like courage’) – were words she very much took to heart.

“Aisling also volunteered with the Hope Camp run in the parish. Hope Camp was a way to express her faith and share her experience with children. It was all about

them; she focused on kids and she did her best for them.

“She had a deep unwavering faith, rooted in the Church. She had a strong affinity for Our Lady. In years past, she looked after her Granda McGrellis and near the end of his life they met in faith. The gift of faith was given her by her grandparents and parents, and she absorbed it and attended to it. She would pray, and prayed with family. She wasn't afraid. She had unwavering trust in God's plan and that was powerful.

Family

“Aisling deeply loved her family. She was committed to family; not only her immediate family but also to her uncles and aunts - she was proud to be an O'Neill and a McGrellis. She was the best of both families. Beyond blood ties, she cherished her GAA family and school family as well. Everyone was treated the same. In her personal life, Aisling collected things but she also collected people. Friends she made were friends for life. And her dog, Ollie, she loved dearly.

“In befriending all of you, Aisling showed her good sense of humour and she wanted to be remembered for that. No matter what the circumstances, when big things were being asked of her, there wasn't a moment when that humour wasn't there. Aisling could banter and her wit was quick; she couldn't be outwitted. She didn't want to be unkind, but she did want to have fun with people. She had mischief in her. She liked having the last word and she also had a look and her eye-roll. She was an artistic person and designed her own tattoos with love. A qualified

makeup artist and nail technician, she offered advice to anyone she met. She set up her own makeup equipment in her hospice room. She only used the best of stuff and it went everywhere.

“Now, in this past year, Aisling was diagnosed with cancer and attended the Cancer Centre and Ward 50, Altnagelvin Hospital. The illness diagnosis was difficult. But she took it, she sat with it, and said, ‘OK, what do we do now?’ It's not the cancer and disease people will remember most, it will be her response to it, her determination and the sheer courage of her. Over the last nine weeks or so, Aisling came to the Foyle Hospice, and her family are grateful to the Hospice nursing staff for all their kind and dedicated care and attention to her; caring for her so gently and generously, making her comfortable as she came to the end of her journey. She passed away in the warmth and tender embrace of her loving family.

“Aisling was sad to be leaving because she loved her family and her life. Hers was a life of gratitude; there were no regrets. Aisling wanted people to know that her life was a gift. She worked hard. She had her dreams. There were things she wasn't supposed to be able to do, but she achieved them. And she knew she was loved and did love. She was only 35, but she packed her life to the full. ‘People will say I lost my battle’, she said, ‘but I fought my battle and there are things I won, things I got to do.’

Faith

“She touched everybody with her character. She never strayed from faith, from love, never sank



continued from page 8

to levels of despair and faced that with love and dignity. And she couldn't have done what she did without the family she had. They wanted her to have her best life and she did. She lived the way on her journey, lived her challenges with great courage and grace, and she encourages us to match it. She was small but mighty, and a message of hers is that we be grateful for the time we've been gifted on this earth; every moment is a gift."

Comforted by her own strong faith and that of Aisling, and the experiences shared by so many during the days of the wake and since, Aisling's mother, Breige told 'The Net': "While none of what happened would have been what we would have chosen, we were blessed to have had the time we had with Aisling before she died, to prepare ourselves somehow. We were able to have the conversation with her about death and how we live without her. We knew that we might lose the physical Aisling, but not her energy or love; the love lives on."

Quoting Scottish poet, Thomas Campbell, from his poem, 'Hallowed Ground' – "To live in hearts we leave behind is not to die" – Breige remarked: "We feel that Aisling lives on in each of us."

Commenting on Aisling's strong faith, she said: "A priest friend told us that he had never met anyone more ready to die. She was very close to God and Mother Mary, and loved Knock Shrine and also Padre Pio. I think that strong faith that she had is helping us now. We are doing so much better than we thought we would, believing that she is living her best life in another realm."

"We all feel that we have received wee signs since Aisling passed away. She told us that while we might not see her that she would still be there, and she left us letters reminding us of that; one of them to be opened around her Month's Mind Mass and the other one later. I think she may have hoped to write more but she passed away sooner than thought."

"We watched Aisling so bravely face everything that came her way," added Breige, "She took life by the horns. Even on the direst of days, she got up and did her hair and put on her make-up, and out she would come for a bite to eat."

"She squeezed everything out of every bit of life that she had, and we would be dishonouring her now if we were to waste time. She willed to live until she died. Even on a dark day when we don't feel like getting up, we get up, just as she did."

Inspirational

Recalling that Aisling had never known life without pain, Breige said: "She never wallowed in it. She was just so inspirational. While you would have days where you didn't want to do something because you weren't up to it, Aisling always found a reason to do it."

Attending hospital since she was six months old, when she was diagnosed as having a scoliosis of

her spine, Aisling had surgery for this aged three and again when she was 14. She then developed juvenile chronic arthritis when she was four and had just started school, so she had to be home tutored for a while.

"Her knees and ankles were worst affected, although she had it in her wrists, hands and jaw too," said Breige, adding: "As her condition worsened, we had been told that there was a possibility she would need the use of a wheelchair by the time she was a teenager. Aisling, however, had other ideas and a few years later was out playing camogie!"

"Her surgery at 14 went well, but post-surgery Aisling was sick and vomited relentlessly for two weeks. This was the beginning of her gastro and bowel problems, which had a big impact on her as she had continuous pain, especially after eating. She had gallstones, for which she had emergency surgery, appendicitis, so more surgery, diverticulitis and a narrowing in her bowel."

"Her pain was continuous until she was diagnosed with Breast Cancer, at which time she was blessed with a Padre Pio relic and told that she would not have this pain again, and neither she did. She squeezed a lifetime of eating out into the last 14 months of her life, even up to the Sunday before she passed, when we were out for dinner that evening after the Foyle Hospice Walk. That day was a gift to her and to us. So many people that she wanted to see where able to come that day and see her on a happy occasion. She was able to see them without sickness getting in the way."

Sharing a special experience within the family during Aisling's wake, involving her Aunt Anne, who had a great fear of dogs, Breige said: "Aisling had a wee dog, called 'Ollie', that she cherished. Concerned at my sister, Anne's fear of dogs, she would have encouraged her to face it, saying this fear would limit her. Well, during the second night of Aisling's wake, Anne said to me that Ollie kept looking at her, as if trying to communicate with her. I laughed, but she was serious. On the Sunday morning, I came in from Mass and went to put the kettle on, and the next thing I see is Anne sitting on the floor with Ollie! My brother, Peter then came in and when he saw the scene he had to video it, saying, "That's Aisling's first miracle!" After that, she started taking other dogs in the family for walks and now has no fear of passing a dog. It really is

incredible.

"There have been other little things happening as well. People have been coming to us with stories about asking for favours through Aisling's intercession and getting them. A friend waiting for surgery was told that it could be a couple of years, and the next thing she got a call to say that she was getting it in a couple of weeks, and now the surgery has been done."

Special

Recalling a particularly special experience for herself, Breige said: "On the Saturday night after Aisling had died, I was distraught. I was lying in bed really missing her. I was thinking about how was I going to get through this. I didn't know where I was going to get comfort from, and then I felt like the weight of an arm around my shoulders. It was just the most comforting thing and really settled me. Now, we just try to find the joy in every day. I am so grateful for the faith that we have, as it has made a difficult journey easier."

"In her belongings, we found a little notebook in which she had written loads of positive thinking quotes that she had come upon. During Covid, she loved to write and use colour markers. It's great that we have this book now with quotes that meant something to her, in her handwriting, which we have been opening randomly and finding what we read helps on that particular day. It is not easy, but it is good knowing that we don't have to worry now about her being sick or in pain."

The recognition of Aisling's contribution to the HOPE Camps, both in her home parish and in the neighbouring Claudy Parish, has been greatly appreciated by the family.

"Aisling just loved young people," said Breige, "and she loved helping them. She wanted them to be the best that they could be, and encouraged them to do more than what was expected of them."

The following powerful message of hope from Aisling was printed at the end of the booklet for her Requiem Mass...

"I hope no one will say I have 'lost my battle'. To say I have lost anything would undo all my hard work building and sustaining a life that I loved and valued and squeezed all the goodness out of. I would like to think that people have witnessed that I lived with greater authenticity, candour and gratitude, and that I cultivated a true lust for life." (From 'Glittering a Turd' by Kristin Hallenga.)



Anam Óg Youth Group looks forward to faith gatherings after summer of fun *by Aoife O'Neill*

THIS summer, we enjoyed another very successful activity scheme, where young people were able to learn more about our Catholic faith while having a lot of fun, playing games and making new friends.

We had 30 young people come along, aged 8-17 years, and many new friendships were forged.

The theme this year was 'Loved for who I am', and each day we explored our true identity as Children of God and also God's love for us.

Brother Elliott led the teaching each day and the children took part in discussions on identity lies, facing temptations, and re-enacting some Gospel scenes.

Together, they learned how to pray with the Scriptures through Lectio Divina, spent time in prayer, and enjoyed a teaching about what really happens at Mass.

We would like to say thanks to all the volunteers who made the week possible, and also to all the families who entrusted us with your young people. We pray that this week has helped to root them in the truth, that they are unique, precious and

beloved by God.

During the school year, our Anam Óg faith group, for young people aged 8-14 years, continues to meet on the first and third Sunday of each month in Termonbacca.

The aim of the group is to journey together in fun and friendship, while exploring matters of the faith, making time for prayer and accompanying our youth through these important years.

Following Confirmation, it is easy for young people to drift away from faith and God. These years can be very difficult for

young people as they try to figure out who they are and what they believe, in a world that makes little or no room for God. We hope to provide a place where they can come and hear the truth about God and the Catholic Church; where they can meet friends and enjoy some wholesome fun.

We welcome any young person from anywhere in the Diocese to come and join with us. If you are interested in finding out more, or signing up, please contact me on 028 71-262512 or email termonbaccaderry@ocd.ie.



Young Writers share thoughts...

THIS month, Seán writes about the importance of embracing and developing our God-given gifts so that our light shines brightly for those around us.

With her name meaning ‘little flower’ in Irish, Bláthnaid, shares how a conversation about her name and its connection with St Therese led to an enlightening conversation about the Saint’s life and her acceptance of God’s Will.

Meanwhile, struck by the conversion story of Augustine of Hippo, Harry recommends him as a relatable saint to study and learn from.

Reflecting on the Bible’s parables of redemption, James notes that these acts of love convey Christ’s Mercy, and Luke considers some of the many lessons of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Writing about his school’s consistent efforts to shine a spotlight on challenging global issues, Evan highlights how this creates a compassionate community and reflects the teaching of Christ.

Niamh shares her experience of a life-time as a pilgrim in Rome for the Youth Jubilee, with a number of youths from the Derry Diocese and other dioceses in Ireland, and around the world. Some of the other young pilgrims from the Diocese also share their treasured memories of this very special time in their lives in a special feature.



What would Jesus do? by Evan

“I renew my heartfelt appeal to allow the entry of sufficient humanitarian aid and to put an end to the hostilities, the heartbreaking price of which is paid by children, the elderly, the sick.” - Pope Leo XIV

ON Thursday, June 19, my school, St Joseph’s Boys, hosted its second coffee morning, entitled ‘Olive Branch for Gaza to support Uisce for Gaza, an initiative aimed at providing essential resources to the region. The event witnessed a remarkable turnout and participation from the community, including attendees from various backgrounds and walks of life. Notably, Bishop Dónal graced the occasion with his presence, alongside several political representatives from different parties, showcasing a united front in humanitarian efforts. The successful gathering not only fostered community spirit but also raised significant awareness and funds for those in need in Gaza.

I hold an immense sense of pride in my school’s unwavering commitment to championing the Palestinian cause. St Joseph’s consistently demonstrates moral courage by advocating for justice and humanitarian efforts, often shining a spotlight

on pressing global issues. Their initiative not only raises awareness about the challenges faced by the Palestinian people but also mobilizes support for humanitarian aid initiatives.

Through educational programmes, fundraising efforts, and community engagement, St Joseph’s positions itself as a leader in promoting understanding and compassion, embodying the values of empathy and social responsibility that are vital in today’s world. The essence of our Catholic Ethos is a profound and transformative force that manifests itself through our commitment to promoting Christ-like efforts. This involves not only advocating for those on the periphery of society, but actively seeking to uplift and support marginalized and oppressed individuals.

We prioritize the needs of the most vulnerable, including women, children, the sick, and the elderly, ensuring that their voices are heard and their dignity is upheld. By embodying these values, we create a compassionate community that fosters justice, love, and service, reflecting the core teachings of Christ in our daily actions and interactions. As we hear in Matthew’s Gospel: “I



tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.”

In moments filled with darkness, despair, and turmoil, let us embody the compassion and active love exemplified by Jesus, serving as His “arms and legs” in a world plagued by suffering. We are called to bring awareness to the ongoing genocide and ethnic cleansing occurring in the lands where our Lord once walked and talked. By standing up for justice and advocating for the oppressed, we not only honour His teachings but also strive to create hope and healing amidst the chaos, ensuring that our actions inspire others to join this vital cause for humanitarian relief and

solidarity.

The heartbreaking images that flood our television screens and social media platforms of innocent children trapped beneath piles of rubble serve as a reminder of the urgent need for change. This ongoing suffering cannot continue; it is vital that we strive for an enduring peace that addresses the root causes of conflict. Additionally, unrestricted humanitarian aid must be allowed to reach those in desperate need, providing crucial support and resources for recovery and healing.

In times like this, let’s ask ourselves, “What would Jesus do?”

St Therese an excellent example of accepting God’s Will by Bláthnaid

I was on a retreat this summer, when a conversation about my name led to a discussion about how surprising it was that I hadn’t heard of St Therese of Lisieux until the age of 15.

My name, Bláthnaid, means ‘little flower’ in Irish, which is a common title associated with St Therese. This conversation led to a more fulsome discussion about the Saint - her life, her miracles and our own individual experiences of her. It was very much a moment that allowed me to see how God works through His people, and how important it can be to connect with other Catholics, despite how nervous we might feel about doing so.

Although St Therese is arguably one of the most popular saints, my first encountering of her wasn’t until the age of 15, when I went to a local priest to receive the Anointing of the Sick. This was a difficult time for me, as I had some health concerns and wasn’t quite sure how to react to them; I didn’t understand why this was happening to me. In hindsight, it was probably my first experience of true suffering and realising what it meant to ‘carry your cross.’

Although confused, I still

understood that this was a Sacrament that I should be thankful for. After receiving the blessing, the priest introduced me to St Therese and gave me a small statue of her to take home with me. He spoke about her life and suffering with me, and advised that she would be a great help going forward, teaching me to unite my suffering to Christ and grow in companionship with Him.

Four years later, it still makes me smile to think about how God waited until the right time to introduce me to St Therese, ensuring that I would not only learn of her, but also from her. After she was highlighted to me by that priest, I began reading more about her and started to see how my illness enabled me to better understand God – His Mercy, Love, Compassion and Will.

Perhaps, I was now just more aware of her, but I began to notice St Therese everywhere. For example, the Chapel that I spent most of my Sunday mornings in as a child has a massive statue of her on the back wall. It is on the opposite side of the entryway that we didn’t tend to go through, but is now one of my favourite places

to pray. God has a perfect plan and He will teach us things, or introduce us to people, in His own timing, when He knows it is right.

Mission

There is a great analogy in the first chapter of her autobiography, ‘Story of A Soul’, which compares God’s Will and plans for His people with a flower garden: “I understood that if all the lowly flowers wished to be roses, nature would lose its springtime beauty, and the fields would no longer be enamelled with lovely hues. And, so it is in the world of souls, Our Lord’s living garden. He has been pleased to create great Saints, who may be compared to the lily and the rose, but He has also created lesser ones, who must be content to be daisies or simple violets flowering at His feet, and whose mission it is to gladden His Divine Eyes when He deigns to look down on them. And the more gladly they do His Will, the greater is the perfection.”

That is one of my favourite messages of St Therese; it reminds me that although we may not all be designed to be the most well-known or remarkable people, we are still of the upmost importance

to God. What may seem small or insignificant to us, is of great significance to Him. St Therese took great delight in doing the little things right, and accepted that the plans that the Lord had in store for her were of a higher priority than any she could think of herself. God is infinitely vast and all-knowing, He created us in His image and likeness and He has great plans in store for us, we just have to place all our Trust in Him.

St Therese of Lisieux is a Patroness of Missionaries, although her illness prevented her from going on a Mission trip. She is an excellent example of accepting God’s Will and living out Mercy, Love and Compassion in her daily life, in every small way that she could. She highlights that whilst we may not always be able to understand, we can always choose to love, because He first loved us.

St Therese of Lisieux’s Feast Day is celebrated annually on October 1, and if you are struggling to carry your cross, or to understand God’s Will at the moment, I highly suggest that you ask for her intercession.

“Love is the Cross, and the Cross is Love.” (St Therese of Lisieux)

Young Writers share thoughts...

Augustine – a relatable saint to learn from *by Harry*

ST Augustine, born in Thagaste (Africa) in 354 AD, was very smart as a young boy. He studied Greek, Latin, Literature and Rhetoric but, despite all this, in his Confessions, he described himself as “a great sinner for such a young boy”.

He even recalls and loathes how he had become friends with ‘hooligans’ and stole pears from a pear tree (could be worse). He also says that he didn’t even enjoy or want the pear, and had better ones at home, but that he did it for the sake of stealing. So, he recalls his great sinfulness in his youth.

As Augustine was approaching adulthood, he went to Carthage to study at the age of 17. This was a bad time for him. He says that it was a ‘cauldron of Lust’. He fell in with the Manichees, a dualist religion which he later went on to refute as bishop.

Augustine got fed up with his home town and moved away to Rome, which was the capital of the empire at the time, to teach, as he felt that it would be better for him. But God had different plans.

Augustine met St Ambrose of Milan, who had deeply moved him and, after hearing him, he left the Manichees and moved towards Christianity. He converted and was baptised by St Ambrose and went on to become



a bishop, despite him not wanting such a position.

He wrote the first ever autobiography, ‘Confessions’ and other works, such as De trinitate (on the Trinity), and De civitate Dei (The City of God).

As my parish priest, Fr Joe would say, “God writes straight with

crooked lines”. This is definitely the story with St Augustine and we can learn from him as he is so relatable. He searched for purpose and fulfilment in the shadows of the world, but only found it in God. “Our hearts are restless until they rest in thee, O Lord.”

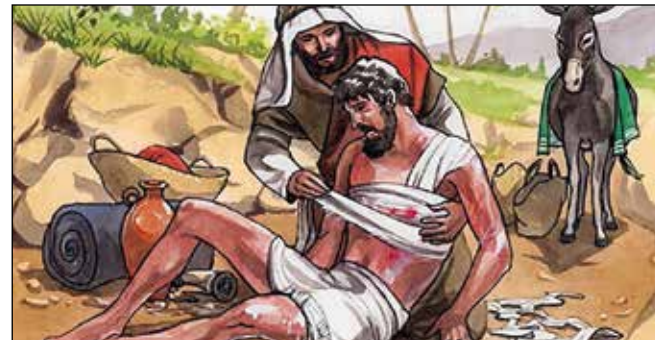
Sancte Augustine, Ora pro nobis!

The Good Samaritan *by Luke*

THE Good Samaritan is one of the best-known parables in the Bible, for good reason. It is a simple story about a great act of kindness done by a stranger, and despite its simplicity it contains a multitude of lessons. I have written about it before, though it was not the focus of that article. It can be found in Luke 10:25-37, and while I imagine most of you are very familiar with it, I will briefly summarise.

One day, a man is travelling when he is attacked by a group of robbers, who steal everything that he carries with him and leave him to die on the side of the road. People that you would expect to help an injured man in distress, such as a priest and a Levite, pass him and look away, pretending not to see him. Eventually, one person does stop to help the injured traveller. He was a Samaritan.

Without context, that may not mean much to the modern reader, but with historical context we understand that Samaritans were similar in many ways to the Jews, however, due to some religious differences there was a certain amount of tension between them. In short, a tension between the two groups. In short, a Samaritan helping a Jew when a priest did not is surprising to say the least. The Samaritan took the injured man to a nearby inn and paid for the innkeeper to look after him.



One can imagine that after being ignored by both a priest and a Levite who came before the Samaritan, the injured man had begun to lose hope. If they did not help him, why would a Samaritan, someone who holds beliefs that conflict with his own?

It is quite clearly illustrated in this parable that the man's judgements about the Samaritan are incorrect. He was a better person than either of the other two, despite what one might assume. This shows that no matter what we may think of another person, we are all human, and while that does mean we are all sinners capable of doing wrong, it also means we are all capable of doing good too. It is an important reminder to trust our neighbours, no matter how far removed or different they may be.

It is likely that it wouldn't be easy for the Samaritan to choose to help the injured man. Even ignoring the practical difficulty of transporting him to the inn

and the financial cost of ensuring he is taken care of, there could have been a worry of doing something wrong and suffering the repercussions, despite his good intentions. That aspect of the situation is likely why Good Samaritan laws take this name. These are laws which protect anybody who helps another person in an emergency, with noble intentions. For example, if someone performs CPR poorly, saving a person's life but unnecessarily breaking a few ribs in the process, they are protected from legal repercussions. It is a law that encourages people to help others by removing one of the factors that might deter someone. It is one tangible example of how this parable has affected and improved lives in the modern day.

This parable's many lessons are one that I feel are important to be reminded of. To conclude with the same words this parable concludes with, “Go and do likewise”.

In spite of our human faults Jesus will never turn us away *by James*

TO understand scripture, is to know Jesus. As Catholics, we are, indeed, a very lucky bunch, as not only do we have the one, true Catholic and apostolic Church that Christ left us with, to be safeguarded by Peter and his successors, but also sacred scripture, the words, stories and recollections of Jesus in the Gospels, as well as so much more wisdom and moral teaching that can be found in Paul's letters and throughout biblical texts.

The Bible, and its contents, does not only consist of mere words and stories; it is also the living word of God that has been passed down through the generations in homes and in Churches. It informs us, in an accessible way, of Christ's commandments and instructions to us, but also of His stories of love and mercy. Prayer should accompany the reading of sacred scripture, so that God and man may talk together so that we, as the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, No 25, reads, ‘Speak to Him when we pray; we hear Him when we read the divine saying’.

Indeed, in this article, I shall reflect particularly on the ‘cycle

of redemption’, a series of biblical parables that tell of Christ's mercy and forgiving nature, focusing on one of the most prominent themes found within the life of Jesus and His earthly ministry, His willingness to accept us despite our faults, and while still recognising our faults, loving us for who we are, and asking us to pick up our cross daily (Luke 9:23) - a powerful message indeed.

The Lost Sheep

The first of the Bible's parables of redemption, the Parable of the Lost Sheep, is an unforgettable story that many will likely remember from their early childhood. Found both in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, Jesus speaks to the Pharisees, saying: “Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it?” Christ then speaks of the rejoicing of the individual, to their friends, family and neighbours, that the sheep has been found. Furthermore, it is stated that “there will be more joy in Heaven over one sinner

who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance.” In this parable, Christ's pursuit of sinners and rejoicing when they are found is demonstrated.

The Prodigal Son

The second parable of the cycle conveys a similar theme found within the first, that of joy and satisfaction of something that was lost, and then found. In this parable, we hear of a young man who asks for a share of his father's wealth and estate, and upon receiving it, he goes to a far-away land, spending money recklessly and squandering what he has. Having done this, his poor situation compels him to become a swineherd, looking after pigs, until he is so hungry and lowly that he begins to envy the food even the pigs eat, remembering that the servants that his father employs have food to spare. The story, like the one before it, tells of great rejoicing when the son came back, with the father ordering for the fattest calf to be killed so that they could have a great feast for the homecoming.

Reading this, what must be

commented on is the line of when the son was returning, reading: “While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion and ran and embraced him and kissed him.” This would indicate, as the father saw him from afar, that he was watching out for his son, and his eventual return. There is something special about this, as just how the father in this story waits and watches for his son to come back, so does God for us. Whether it is to the confessional after not approaching the sacrament of reconciliation in a long time, going to Mass after not having gone in ages, or speaking to God in prayer, the Lord is always there, waiting for us to return to him, after mistake, sin or even rejecting him.

The Lost Coin

The final parable in this cycle of redemption is told by Jesus telling the story of a woman with 10 drachma coins, and upon losing one, she lights a lamp, sweeps the house and diligently seeks what she lost. Christ then says that ‘there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner



repenting.’

The context of these parables being told is also significant, as it is by the comments of the Pharisees, muttering “this man welcomes sinners and eats with them”, that provokes Jesus to give these stories. It reminds us that Christ did not die for the righteous, but the lowly and sinners, which all of we are.

There is something distinctly human and loving about these parables, they convey the mercy of Christ. His answer to the Pharisees? Luke 5:30-31, Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Young Writers share thoughts...

Embrace the light within and become one with God *by Seán*

A subject I have lightly analysed previously is the topic of personal potential, human abilities and attributes within us that we can develop and nourish. However, some skilled and God-gifted individuals choose to neglect the great talents that stir within our being. To abandon our personal abilities is to refuse a gift of God.

I was inspired many years ago to fortify my humanity by a few verses from Chapter 11 of the Book of Luke. When I refer to 'my humanity', I imply the indomitable values which define each and every one of us as human.

Jesus compares us to a lamp – in his time, a highly valuable and expensive source of light that provided visibility during the night, when darkness falls upon us like a blindfold. In the Holy Land, during the first century, the most common form of lighting in homes was the Herodian oil lamp. Oil in any form has never been cheap at any time in human history and, therefore, to Christ, and those He surrounded himself

with, lamps were a thing of great value.

In Luke 11:33, Christ said, "No-one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead, he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light." The light of human ingenuity, our gift of adaptability, curiosity, and inventiveness, is not something to stash away and ignore. Unfortunately, much talent is lost to the world on account of a lack of motivation. Some people's lamp lights with a spark and then fades away, leaving nothing but the memory of what may have been. A number of factors can lead to one's abandonment of ability, often something as simple as personal preference.

Christ continued in Luke 11:34 by saying: "Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body is full of light. But when they are bad, your body is also full of darkness." When the lamp is concealed, its light is repressed and forbidden from flourishing. That darkness,

with the potential to consume us, is the temptation of simplicity. Often, the route of least effort seems most appealing. When our perception of our life is unclear, when our eyes fill with darkness, we ourselves force that light to be covered, and permit shadow to be cast upon us.

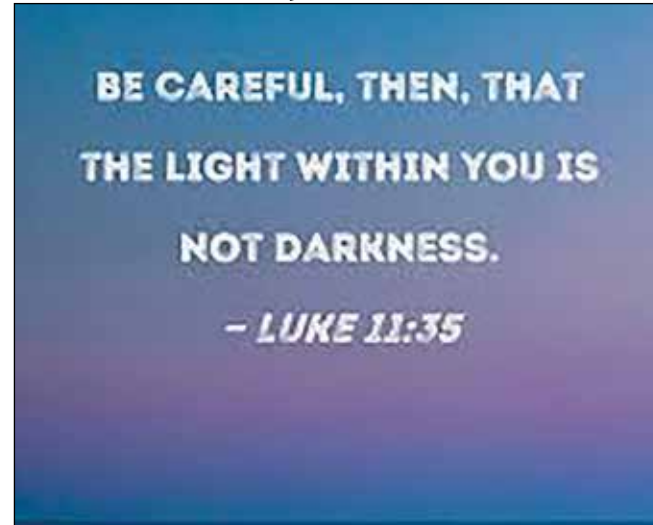
Shine

We, alone, can lift the bowl from the lamp and place it back on its stand, allowing the room to be freed of that brooding shadow. In Luke 11:35-36, Christ said: "See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."

We all have talent and ability of some sort, some more than others, but every single one of us is a capable artwork of God. Therefore, honour Him by allowing your ability to shine like the lamp, for our actions define our humanity and our worthiness, not our inaction

and idleness. Christ came with a mission and bountiful ability, dedicating His life to lighting a lamp for us to gaze at in the darkness. The apostle, Luke, who recorded this small parable saw reason to use his ability to gift us an account of Christ's wonders. In Luke 1:3-4, he wrote, "Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

I organised my late teenage years into a relentless period of spiritual, mental, and physical development, using my God-given abilities to build each as best I could. Each developed at different rates, with different methods. The process remains incomplete and always will. I will never reach my greatest Christian potential, but this does not deter me from trying my hardest to light my lamp, like Christ commanded. My own



abilities had to be pulled out of the darkness gradually, realising my own potential. I see the lamp of Christ and many of those around me in the world shining brightly, and from them I learned to light my own.

I find that Christ offers a window through which the warm, golden, flickering of the lamp becomes very visible; the opportunity to move onwards towards greater faith and that of those around

us. In Luke 4:18-19, Christ said: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because He has anointed me to preach the good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour." It is not virtuous to neglect the light within you – embrace it and become one with God.

Rome Youth Jubilee pilgrimage a powerful experience *by Niamh*

WHEN I found out I was going to Rome for the Jubilee of Youth in 2025, I honestly couldn't believe it. I had always heard about pilgrimages, but I never thought I'd get the chance to go on one while I was still in school. It felt amazing to know I'd get to be in Rome with so many other young Catholics from all over the world.

One of the most special parts was visiting the four basilicas and going through the Holy Doors: St Peter's, St John Lateran, St Mary Major, and St Paul Outside the Walls. Every time we walked through a Holy Door, our group sang 'Céad Míle Fáilte', which is really important to us as Irish pilgrims. Singing it made me feel proud of where we come from, and also reminded me that our faith is bigger than just Ireland, it is part of something worldwide.

We also went to the Irish College in Rome, where we got to hear Bishop Robert Barron and Sr Mary Grace from the Sisters of Life. Bishop Barron talked about the path God wants us to be on, and Sr Mary Grace spoke about the joy of following Christ and her journey to becoming close to God. I thought these talks were really inspiring, because they made me realise that holiness isn't just for saints, it is something we are all called to.

One of the most powerful moments was hearing Mass at the

Vatican with all the other youth pilgrims. Looking around and seeing the different flags from every country was amazing. It showed how the Church really is universal. Singing and praying with everyone made me feel like part of a huge family of faith. But the part that stayed with me the most was at Tor Vergata, when Pope Leo led us in Adoration. Even though there were thousands of us, kneeling together in silence before the Blessed Sacrament was so moving. It didn't matter where we were from or what language we spoke, we were all united in prayer. When the Pope encouraged us to be brave in our faith, I felt like he was speaking directly to me.

Being surrounded by so many young Catholics also gave me a new confidence. At home, it can sometimes feel lonely to be a young person trying to live out your faith. But in Rome, I realised that there are countless others my age who believe the same things and are walking the same journey. Meeting new people from so many different countries, sharing stories, and even just smiling at one another as fellow pilgrims, showed me that I am not alone. It made me braver about speaking to others and more open to friendship, and I think that confidence will stay with me even now that I am back home.

This trip wasn't just about sightseeing or meeting new people. It was about getting closer to God and realising that faith is something alive, not just something private. Walking through the Holy Doors, singing our Irish song, hearing talks, celebrating Mass at the Vatican, and adoring Jesus with the Pope,

all reminded me that being Catholic is about journeying together towards Christ.

Most of all, I know this pilgrimage has strengthened my faith in a lasting way. Having such a powerful experience will stay with me always, and I believe it has given me a foundation that will guide me throughout my life.



Rome Youth Jubilee

Feeling blessed to have accompanied youth from the Diocese on three pilgrimages this summer – Lourdes, Fatima and Rome - Bishop Donal comments...

It has always been a joy to journey with young people



PILGRIM comes from the Latin word for 'stranger'. And for thousands of years people have travelled as strangers to foreign places. There is something attractive in going to special places that take us out of our normal daily routine.

In many religions, there have been holy wells and sacred mountains. Our rich Catholic tradition has long had pilgrimages to holy sites associated with Jesus, such as Jerusalem. Rome was always seen as a holy place, because of the tombs of the apostles and martyrs. From about the 9th century, pilgrims came from all parts to visit what was believed to be the tomb of the Apostles James in Compostela.

In more recent centuries, there have been new pilgrimage sites associated with apparitions of Our Lady, places such as Lourdes,

Knock and Fatima.

And this summer, Derry Youth Ministry organised groups to visit Fatima and Rome, and these followed the youth team that forms part of the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. So, the poor bishop had to go on all three pilgrimages in five weeks!

It has always been a joy to journey with young people. They want to explore, to sing and laugh – and they are full of questions.

Our Youth Team in Lourdes consists of groups of 17-year-olds, who are led by their teachers from their schools. They have their own times of prayer, but also help with pushing wheelchairs. Without the energy and good humour of the students, some elderly or frail pilgrims could not get round the town and Sanctuary of Lourdes. And they also have time to hear the story of Our Lady's

appearance to the teenaged St Bernadette in 1858.

Our group in Fatima followed a different pace. Unlike the bustle and crowds of Lourdes, Fatima is a place of quiet and prayerful calm. There is the focus of the 1917 apparitions to three small children was on prayer – especially the Rosary – and penance.

And Rome is a different world! Our group was there as part of the Jubilee Year gathering of young people – about one million of them! We had organised visits to the four Jubilee Holy Doors, plus a series of catechesis sessions for up to 900 young Irish people from all over the country. The week culminated in a journey out to the outskirts of Rome for a Saturday evening vigil with Pope Leo XIV.

What did I notice in all of these pilgrimages?

Firstly, our young people were so open to the mystery of God at work – in the Lourdes work with the sick, in the Fatima mystery of silence and prayer, and in the huge, enthusiastic crowds of young Catholics, chanting and singing with Pope Leo. Pilgrimage places invite us to enter into the great Catholic world of art, history and wonder and awe in God's presence. These are experiences of Church that we do not have at home.

Secondly, international pilgrimage sites give great experience of the universality, the catholicity of Church. Rome was filled with flags from all over the world, while in Fatima and Lourdes, the Rosary is prayed each night in so many languages – from Irish to Chinese and Korean. There, flags and banners are badges of identity and a source of conversation. Unlike sometimes at home, flags are not a sign of protest or anger!

Thirdly, I believe that such pilgrimages create both a bond between the pilgrims and pride in being Irish. In Rome one evening, as we queued to get into St Peter's Square, we asked the crowd behind us where they were from. 'The Dominican Republic,' came the reply. And, when we said that we were from Ireland, the immediate response was 'Clare Crockett!' Our newfound friends were even able to speak with Fr Gerard Mongan, who knows the Sr Clare family and story so well.

I said that 'pilgrim' come from the Latin word for stranger. From our pilgrimages this year, and in other years, I learned that, in the Catholic world, by the grace of God, Catholics can be at home everywhere! The challenge for our local churches is to be sure that visitors to our shores feel at home here too!



Rome pilgrimage restored my faith in way I didn't know I needed *by Rosie Byrne*



WHEN I first heard that I had been chosen to travel to Rome on pilgrimage in this Jubilee Year of Hope, I felt both honoured and slightly overwhelmed. I had no idea what to expect. I had been asked because of my involvement in the Pope John Paul II Award, where I read at Mass and helped out after Mass on a Sunday. I never expected the trip to have such a big impact on me.

Rome is such an incredible city, but what stood out for me wasn't just the beauty or the history, it was what the experience did for my faith. Each Mass we went to brought me a sense of peace that I hadn't felt in a long time. Walking through the Holy Doors as part of the Pilgrimage of Hope was one of those moments I'll never forget. It wasn't just symbolic, it felt like I was stepping into something new, choosing to carry hope forward in my own life.

One of the most powerful parts

of the trip was being surrounded by so many young people who share the same faith. It is easy to feel like you are a bit on your own when it comes to faith, especially at my age. But standing in the middle of so many young people, from Ireland and all over the world, made me realise that I will never really be alone. It was so reassuring and is something that I will never forget.

The walk to Adoration was probably one of my favourite memories. There were people from every corner of the world, all walking together. We sang as we walked - different languages, different voices, a beautiful sound of faith. The energy was incredible and completely unifying. By the time we arrived and gathered in front of the Pope for the ceremony, it felt like the perfect culmination of that journey. Seeing him there, leading us all together in prayer, was surreal. It made me realise

just how big and connected the Catholic Church really is.

And then, of course, there were the people I met. I made some amazing friends on this trip; people that I probably never would have crossed paths with otherwise. We shared stories about our lives and our faith. Even the priests who travelled with us were so approachable and friendly; it really showed me that they are journeying alongside us, not just leading from a distance.

Looking back, there wasn't just one 'highlight' moment. It was more a mix of all the little things, like singing together, praying in these stunning basilicas, and just

feeling part of something bigger than myself.

The pilgrimage to Rome restored my faith in a way that I didn't know I needed. It reminded me that my faith isn't just mine – it is part of a huge community. I came home feeling lighter, more hopeful, and extremely grateful.

What started as an opportunity through an Award, has ended up being a turning point in my journey of faith. I feel so privileged to have been part of this once-in-a-lifetime experience, and I know that I will carry the memories and the people I met with me for the rest of my life.

Rome Youth Jubilee

Jubilee of Youth not just an event but reminder that faith is alive in us *by Rebecca Patton*

I will never forget the moment I first stepped into St Peter's Square. The air was heavy with August heat, yet alive with music, flags, and voices rising in dozens of languages. I had imagined this gathering for months, but nothing could have prepared me for the reality of being among so many young people from around the world, all drawn to Rome for the same reason: Faith; Friendship; and the Jubilee of Youth.

Walking through the Holy Door

of St Peter's Basilica was the most powerful part of the pilgrimage for me. The crowd moved slowly, almost in silence and, when it was finally my turn, I felt the weight of centuries pressing into that single step. It wasn't just a doorway, it felt like a passage into something greater, a reminder that our faith is alive and carried forward by people like us.

Rome, itself, became part of the celebration. I laughed with strangers over shared gelato

and sang with new friends on many walks down streets. The Mass with Pope Francis was overwhelming. When he told us that young people are "bearers of hope," I felt as though he was speaking directly to me.

Surrounded by thousands of voices, I suddenly realized that hope is not a quiet, private thing, it is something that we share, something that grows louder when we live it together.

As I write this, back home, I

still carry the echoes of Rome, the chants, the laughter, the prayers under the Roman sky. The Jubilee of Youth was not just an event, but a reminder that faith is alive, and that it lives in us, the young, who are called to bring light wherever we go.

This pilgrimage was so eye opening and has strengthened my faith in a way that I never imagined possible.



Rome full of hope with thousands of young walking through Holy Doors and silence shared in Adoration *by Aine McCallion*



I was very lucky to be given the opportunity to attend the Jubilee of Youth that took place in Rome from July 28 to August 3. I had never been to Rome and this was definitely an amazing time to visit; it was alive with young pilgrims from all across the globe.

Rome is layered in history; where the great Saints gave their lives to promote the Church and stood firm in their faith, and the legacy of Saint Peter that can be traced the whole way to Pope Leo

XIV, who joined us at multiple events throughout the week. And at the centre is the Vatican, which came alive at the opening Mass and was packed with young people; a sea of flags representing the distances travelled to experience this together.

While the entire week was an amazing experience, a few moments felt especially significant. One of the most memorable was Eucharistic Adoration with the Pope,

surrounded by about a million other young people. The journey to the Adoration site was an incredible experience in itself, as thousands of pilgrims walked together singing and proudly carrying their country flags. However, what really stood out about the experience was, despite the size of the crowd, the silence that was present during Adoration, as we all joined together in prayer.

Another highlight was our visit to the catacombs of San Sebastian. To me it highlighted the faith and courage of the early Christians, how they sacrificed their lives to bury their dead with dignity. As you walked through the tunnels, you could see the ancient Christian frescoes, including symbols like the fish, an anchor and visual depictions from the Bible, signalling one's faith to other Christians. It was a reminder of how their hope in the resurrection had to be hidden underground, whereas a million young people came freely to celebrate that same hope in a very

different world, with the same set of beliefs, thousands of years later.

And finally, being given the opportunity to step through the Holy Doors, which only open every 25 years, was especially significant. The thought of millions who have done the same before me since the first opening by Pope Martin V in 1423, struck me, as well as the symbolism of walking to God's Mercy, as we are reminded of Jesus' statement, "I am the gate: whoever enters through me will be saved" (John 10:9).

The Papal Bull for the Jubilee Year, 'Spes non confundit' (hope does not disappoint), echoed through the week. The journey was anything but disappointing, it was full of hope present in the thousands of young people, the crowds walking through the holy doors, the hope of our Christian ancestors present in the catacombs, and the hope present in the silence shared during Eucharistic adoration. It was an amazing experience that I will remember for a life-time.



Rome Youth Jubilee

We all felt a strong connection to our faith and one another by James Heron

WHEN we were told about the opportunity to be a part of the Jubilee of Youth in Rome through our school, I knew this would be a fantastic experience for anyone who attended.

Our organiser for this event was Lizzie, who works closely with our school, St Colm's High School, Draperstown, through the Pope John Paul II Award, so we knew that we were in great hands.

Prior to the trip, meetings were held to go through the itinerary, as well as outings to places such as Knock, to give those in the Derry Diocese the opportunity to get to know each other before hand.

Along with the Diocese of Armagh and Dromore, we arrived in Rome, beginning our pilgrimage with prayer and song. We were able to visit the various Holy Doors throughout the week. Seeing the breathtaking sites of the city, especially the Vatican, was such a special moment, and spending it with thousands of people in the Square from the opening ceremony was truly amazing.

The streets being filled with young people from all over the world, and hearing their stories,

opened my mind furthermore and really strengthened the faith of us all.

As well as our trips to the Irish college, seeing landmarks like the Colosseum and many pizza parlours, the pilgrimage finished with a spectacular, long walk to the Tor Vergata, which gave all of us a great awareness of the vast amount of people who had joined in this event. When we arrived, there were over a million people there with us, a truly incredible amount in attendance.

Once Pope Leo had arrived and the ceremony began, the atmosphere was relaxing and peaceful despite the amount of people. We all felt a strong connection with our faith and one another, which was a beautiful thing to share with the friends I have made.

All in all, our pilgrimage to Rome was a magnificent experience, all headed by Lizzie, our bishops, local priests and first aiders, who kept us hydrated with many electrolytes.

This pilgrimage was so impactful for us all and I feel so grateful for the memories and friends that I will never forget.



James with Cadhla Shivers, also from Ballinascreen Parish

Pilgrim of Hope in Rome not only privilege but calling to live that same hope in my life and community by Cadhla Shivers

I recently had the privilege of travelling to Rome for the Jubilee of Youth; a celebration that brought together thousands of young Catholics from across the world under the inspiring theme of 'Pilgrims of Hope'. It was an experience I will never forget.

From the very first day, I made friends for life and was struck by the sense of unity among the young people I met. I quickly bonded with those from the Derry Diocese who shared the journey with me.

Rome, itself, provided a breathtaking backdrop for our journey. We explored sites filled with history and meaning: the ancient catacombs; the Colosseum; the Trevi Fountain; and the Pantheon. Each place reminded me of the generations of Christians who had walked these same paths before us.

A particularly moving moment was the Jubilee Vigil at Tor Vergata, where Pope Leo XIV engaged in dialogue with young people from around the world. His words inspired us all. Later, during Adoration, the experience

was incredibly peaceful. I felt a profound spiritual calm that I will never forget. I also had the incredible opportunity to walk through the Holy Doors, which are only opened every 25 years; a truly once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The heat was intense and the crowds at times seemed endless, but nothing could take away from the atmosphere of celebration. I am especially grateful to the Derry Diocese and to my school, St Colm's High School in Draperstown, who both played a huge part in making this unmissable trip possible. Their support allowed me to join this journey of faith and discovery, and I will always treasure the opportunity they gave me.

We also attended the Irish Catechesis. It was so uplifting to gather with other young people from across Ireland for prayer, reflection, and teaching. It gave us all a chance to deepen our understanding of faith while celebrating our shared heritage and identity as Irish pilgrims.

The music at the Masses

and ceremonies was another unforgettable part of the pilgrimage. It was moving whenever a familiar melody from home, 'Lady of Knock', was played. We also had the opportunity to hear from inspiring guest speakers, including Robert Barron and Sr Mary Grace, who answered our questions. We even enjoyed a lively concert with the

Irish pilgrims.

The Jubilee of Youth reminded me that we are not alone as young people of faith. We are part of something much bigger, a worldwide Church full of life, joy and hope. To be a Pilgrim of Hope in Rome was not only a privilege but also a calling to live out that same hope in my own life and community.



Rome was amazing - streets full of smiles, songs and soul

by Daragh Ellis



McKeown alongside my uncle, Fr Francis Bradley and Fr Gerard Morgan, kept the Irish flag flying high. I represented Tyrone along with Conchúr Darcy, and we met super people along the way.

At St Peter's Basilica, we caught a glimpse of Pope Leo, which really made the week. The world youth just sitting, chatting, taking selfies, sharing gelato.

What struck me most? It wasn't just the history or the architecture, though those are fantastic, it was how the city made people feel. It was the shared energy, the random connections, the glow of excitement on everyone's faces.

When night fell and we prepared for the vigil, with over one million people, we realised the significance of the occasion: prayer vigil with Pope Leo.

We were very privileged to be part of this important occasion. We have made friends for life and were part of the Pilgrims of Hope 2025.

ROME totally blew me away! The vibe was electric, like at a football match, minus the football. Singing. Dancing. Laughing. Every street corner, every piazza - it was one big, city-wide party, and we were right in the middle of it.

From the Colosseum to Piazza Navona, the whole place felt alive. We would round a corner and suddenly a group of people would burst into song - or someone would start dancing.

Our group, led by my Bishop



As worldwide Church celebrates canonization of Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati...

Young Dungiven man sets up fraternity for some Pier Giorgio-style hiking with spiritual aspect



THE faith witness and evangelisation fruits from the short lives of the newly canonized, St Carlo Acutis and St Pier Giorgio Frassati have certainly grabbed the attention of young people in the Derry Diocese.

First, Youth of Acutis was set up by 19-year-old James Tourish, from Derry, and now one of its members, 20-year-old Luke Murphy, from Dungiven, has set up a Fraternity of Pier Giorgio Frassati.

Canonised in Rome by Pope Leo XIV on Sunday, September 7, along with fellow Italian, Carlo Acutis, Pier Giorgio was known for his love of sports, mountain climbing, and charity, and it was during a hike in the Alps over the summer that Luke was struck by the idea of setting up the fraternity modelled on Pier's life of brotherhood, prayer, hiking, social activities and charitable works.

"I had been hiking in the Alps in August and I just thought it would be class if I could get a group of young men, into their faith, geared up to do some Pier Giorgio style hiking with friends, which had a spiritual aspect to it,"

said Luke.

Aware of one other similar group in Dublin, he added: "I kept thinking about this and mentioned it in a gathering with Bishop Donal, who was encouraging. I think that is what I needed to get on with it, and that evening I set up a WhatsApp group. The response has been pretty intense already, with 12 members at this stage. Pretty much everyone I spoke to was up for it.

"I have some old friends curious about the faith and they came on the first hike through Glenshane Forest to the Mass Rock on Sunday, August 31. This is a walk I do frequently and six of the 12 were able to join in on the first hike."

Commenting on the experience, he said "When we set out, the group splintered into guys walking in twos. Afterwards, some of them were saying that they had great conversation with this guy and that guy. We were walking for about an hour in the same direction, which gave us time to speak. In one of the conversations that I had, we talked about our struggles with the faith.

"My dad is a personal trainer, so as well as the hikes, I hope to have sessions in his gym, which we could do more frequently than the hiking and will offer an opportunity to talk with one another while working out."

Sharing his own faith story, the young plumber said: "I wasn't brought up practicing the Catholic faith. I received

my childhood sacraments, but we didn't go to Mass otherwise. About two years ago, I had a very strong experience and since that things have been happening very quickly. It is a very positive roller-coaster.

"I had been quite nihilistic for a long time. I really wrestled with nihilism and purpose. I once heard a good argument for the existence of God and Christ, but it was just chewing gum; something to think about. Then, one day I saw a Renaissance picture of the Crucifixion and it actually moved me to tears. I suddenly realised in that moment that this blood was spilt for me."

He continued: "My dad had already had a strong conversion around this time, and had started going back to Mass and Confession, and he dragged me with him. He suggested that we pray the Rosary during Lent together. At first, I dragged my heels about doing this, but I knew that it was a good thing to do and eventually I was wanting to pray the Rosary on my own as well. By the end of the 40 days, my faith was a lot stronger from praying it. It has been a great experience. When I think back on the last two years, it is crazy how fast things have happened."

Support

Sensing a need for opportunities for young men to come together for support on their faith and life journey, Luke said: "I am reading a book which has some good insight into St John and Mary after the Crucifixion. Mary was

handed over to John not because She needed him, but She allowed herself to need his support as John needed a reason to be a strong man. The book is called 'Praying for priests: An urgent call for the salvation of souls', by Kathleen Beckman.

"At the moment, young men are a bit scattered. I think it would help to get young men, who are interested in their faith, organised so as to create a society in which feminine love will, in time, be able to properly flower; some gardening needs to be done before love can flower. The men need to hone themselves before feminine love enters and then family. It is the natural order and my hope is that the Fraternity will offer a way for that to happen."

Recalling his first encounter with the story of Pier Giorgio Frassati, who died 100 years ago at the age of 24, Luke said: "I am also a member of Youth of Acutis, and we invited Fr Conor McDonough OP to give a talk in the Cathedral Hall. He spoke about Blessed Carlo Acutis and Blessed Pier Giorgio Frassati, and that was my first exposure to him. I had heard that he was going to be canonised, but that was it.

"He was a great witness. He saw God's reflection in the world around him and tried to enjoy that through hiking, and I definitely can relate to that. I hike a lot and enjoy camping. It is a very easy analogy for the spiritual life. Standing at the top of a mountain, you look down and see lush, fertile valleys below you, and then look above you and see



only birds of prey, as well as the shrubs that can exist in that harsh environment. It takes so much effort to exist up at that level and yet there is such beauty. The Christian's journey is the same; it is the difficult march up 'Calvary', but an incredible beauty awaits to be revealed."

He added: "A lot of my friends not in their faith are becoming more curious about it. I sense something stirring. They are asking how do I start going back to Mass and how do I go about going to Confession.

"Hopefully, this group will be a way of helping guys teetering on the edge to progress further along the way back. If their families are not practicing their faith, or they have a religious granny who isn't well catechised, and they feel too intimidated to just go to Mass or speak to the priest, then this group offers another way.

"The idea is to try and be a group of brothers. We will go on



hikes every 4-6 weeks, if possible. The group is centred around faith and there will be a Rosary prayed at some point during our hikes, which will take place all over the North West area."

The group is for 18-30-year-old males, and those interested can get in contact with Luke on 07774718299, or via Facebook – FraternityofPiergiorgiofrassati, or Instagram – f.p.g.f._

Greatest risk in life...to waste it outside of God's plan – Pope Leo XIV

IN his canonization Mass homily for Saints Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati on Sunday, September 7, in St Peter's Square, Pope Leo XIV spoke about the greatest risk in life being "to waste it outside of God's plan."

In saying, "Whoever does not carry the cross and follow Me cannot be My disciple," and "none of you can become My disciple if you do not give up all your possessions," the Holy Father highlighted that Jesus "calls us to abandon ourselves without hesitation to the adventure that He offers us, with the intelligence and strength that comes from His Spirit, that we can receive to the extent that we empty ourselves of the things and ideas to which we are attached, in order to listen to His Word."

"Many young people, over the centuries, have had to face this crossroad in their lives," he noted,

adding: "Think of St Francis of Assisi...he was young and rich, thirsty for glory and fame. That is why he went to war, hoping to be knighted and adorned with honours. But Jesus appeared to him along the way and asked him to reflect on what he was doing. Coming to his senses, he asked God a simple question: 'Lord, what do you want me to do?' From there, he changed his life and began to write a different story: the wonderful story of holiness that we all know, stripping himself of everything to follow the Lord, living in poverty and preferring the love of his brothers and sisters, especially the weakest and smallest, to his father's gold, silver and precious fabrics.

"How many similar saints we could recall! Sometimes we portray them as great figures, forgetting that for them it all began when, while still young, they said 'yes' to God and gave

themselves to Him completely, keeping nothing for themselves. St Augustine recounts that, in the 'tortuous and tangled knot' of his life, a voice deep within him said: 'I want you'. God gave him a new direction, a new path, a new reason, in which nothing of his life was lost."

He went on to consider St Pier Giorgio and St Carlo: "A young man from the early 20th century and a teenager from our own day, both in love with Jesus and ready to give everything for Him."

Charity

"Pier Giorgio," he noted, "encountered the Lord through school and church groups - Catholic Action, the Conferences of St Vincent, the FUCI (Italian Catholic University Federation), the Dominican Third Order - and he bore witness to God with his joy of living and of being a Christian in prayer, friendship

and charity.

"Even today, Pier Giorgio's life is a beacon for lay spirituality. For him, faith was not a private devotion, but it was driven by the power of the Gospel and his membership in ecclesial associations. He was also generously committed to society, contributed to political life and devoted himself ardently to the service of the poor."

He continued: "Carlo, for his part, encountered Jesus in his family, thanks to his parents, Andrea and Antonia, who are here today with his two siblings, Francesca and Michele, and then at school, and above all in the sacraments celebrated in the parish community. He grew up naturally integrating prayer, sport, study and charity into his days as a child and young man."

"Both Pier Giorgio and Carlo," remarked the Pope, "cultivated their love for God and for their



brothers and sisters through simple acts, available to everyone: daily Mass, prayer, and especially Eucharistic Adoration. Another essential practice for them was frequent Confession.

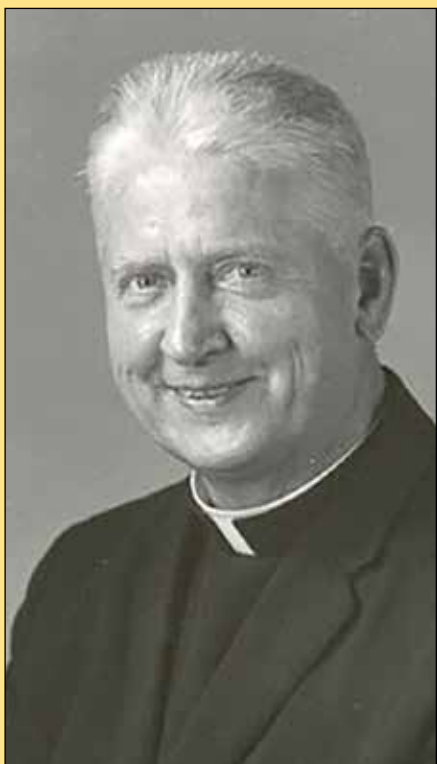
"Finally, both had a great devotion to the saints and to the Virgin Mary, and they practiced charity generously. Even when illness struck them and cut short their young lives, not even this

stopped them nor prevented them from loving, offering themselves to God, blessing Him and praying to Him for themselves and for everyone."

He concluded: "Dear friends, Saints Pier Giorgio Frassati and Carlo Acutis are an invitation to all of us, especially young people, not to squander our lives, but to direct them upwards and make them masterpieces."

Eangach

Walter Cizek agus Deonú Dé



An tAth. Cizek níos moille ina shoal

Beirimid buíochas leat,
a Thiarna Dia na gcumhacht,
atá agus a bhí riamh ann,
gur ghlac tu ort do mhórchumhacht agus do réim.

Dá mhéad é fraoch na gciníocha
tháinig uair d'fheirge
agus lá bhreithiúnas na marbh,
agus an lá a dtabharfá a luach saothair do
do sheirbhíshigh,
idir fháithe agus naoimh, agus bheag agus mhór
a mbíonn ómós acu do d'ainm.

Is anois a ligeadh an réim le slánú
agus le cumhacht is le ríocht ár nDé,
agus le hardcheannas a Chríosta
ó teilgeadh síos cúiseoir ár gcomhbhráithre
a bhíonn á gcúiseamh i láthair Dé oíche
agus lá.

Ach rug siad bua air trí fhuil an Uain
agus trí bhriathar a bhfianaise,
ó ba bheag leo a mbeo go bás.
Bíodh ollghairdeas oraibh a neamha
agus oraibhse, a mhuintir neimhe!

An tAth. Walter Cizek:

"Dúinne, bhí a thoil le fáil i ngach uair
de gach lá: na daoine, na háiteanna, na
coinníollacha atá curtha aige sa bhealach
romhainn ag an am sin. Ba iad sin na nithe
a bhí tábhachtach dúinne agus do Dhia, dar
leis, agus is orthu a bhí sé ag iarraidh orainn
díriú agus gníomh a dhéanamh"

Ó thaobh cúrsaí leabhar agus creidimh de, ceann de na cinní is fearr a rinne mé le blianta beaga anuas ab ea é cóip den leabhar *With God in Russia* a léamh. Chuala mé an tEaspag Robert Barron – a bhfuil cáil air ar líne – ag caint fá shaol an duine iontach seo, an tAth. Walter Cizek, a chaith seal i ngéibheann san Aontas Shóivéadach. Cheannaigh mé an leabhar. Ní hamháin go bhfuil scéal ar leith fá bheatha duine i gceist, ach ní raibh mé ag súil lena leithéid de cheachtanna creidimh a d'foghlaím mé mar gheall air. Dar liom féin, b'fhiú an rud é dúinn uilig eolas a chur ar an Ath. Walter agus ar roinnt de na nithe atá foghlaim óna eiseamláir.

In 1904, rugadh an Walter Cizek in Shenandoah, baile beag mianadóireachta in Pennsylvania, sna Stáit Aontaithe. Bhí sé ina mhac le beirt inimirceach as an Pholainn. Gasúr ceandána a bhí ann. Ní hamháin sin, ach cineál de mhaistín a bhí ann ina óige – *trodaí na sráide* – mar a deir sé féin é, a thosódh troieanna ar mhaithe leis an trodaíocht féin. Ní raibh suim ar bith aige sa scolaíocht agus ba mhinic a thit sé amach lena athair (ceandána fosta!). Bhí iontas orthu nuair a dúirt Walter lá amháin gur mhaith leis a bheith ina shagart. Scríobh sé go gcaithfidh go raibh sé mar thoradh ar dea-éiseamláir chráifeach a mháthra. I ndiaidh an iontais, agus díchreidimh a athar, chuaigh sé chun na cliarscoile in Hyde Park NY, le bheith ina Íosánach.

Ar an chliarscoil, bhí ar Walter corraíocht a dhéanamh lena nádúr 'ceandána' nuair a bhíodh sé ag iarraidh rudaí a dhéanamh ar a dhóigh féin. Is dócha go raibh Dia ag obair go mór sa tréimhse seo – bhí ar Walter é féin a sháru – agus bhí sé á ullmhú do na nithe a bhí roimhe sa todhcháí. Lá amháin, léadh amach litir ón Phápa Pius XI do nóibhisigh na cliarscoile, ina raibh sé ag achainí ar Íosánaigh óga a bheith ina misinéirí sa Rúis, tír ina raibh géarleanúint mhór á dhéanamh ar na Críostaithe. Chuaigh seo go mór i bhfeidhm air láithreach agus thug sé é féin mar mhisinéir. As sin amach, ní raibh rud ar bith eile ann ar mhian leis a dhéanamh níos mó ná "dul chuig an Rúis".

Chuaigh chun na Róimhe ansin lena chuid staidéir a chríochnú. Agus é ag an *Russicum* (coláiste Rúiseach na hEaglaise) bhuaill sé le beirt eile ansin a raibh an mian céanna acu agus a bhí aige, a d'éirigh ina ndlúthchairde. I ndiaidh dóibh a bheith oirnithe mar shagairt sa Róimh, cuireadh ag obair iad sa Pholainn. Bhí Walter – an tAth Cizek anois – i bparóiste Albertyn (sa Bhealarúis inniu). In 1939, bhris

an Dara Chogadh Domhanda amach nuair a d'ionsaigh an Ghearmáin agus an Rúis an Pholainn – ba iad na Rúisigh a ghlac Albertyn. Thapaigh an triúir acu an deis agus chuaigh siad isteach sa Rúis faoi rún le hainmneacha bréige, ag ligint orthu gur oibrithe deonacha iad.

Bhí creideamh agus muinín ag baint leis seo. Bhí a fhios acu go mbeadh deacrachtaí rompu. Bhí an tír beagnach gan sagairt agus bhí na húdaráis trom ar shagairt agus ar chreidimh. Ach ba sa Rúis a fuair an tAth. Cizek amach an rud a bhí i ndán dó ag Dia. Ar dtús chuaigh an triúir go ceantar na hÚráile agus chuaigh siad don lománaíocht, iad gléasta mar ghnáthdhaoine agus ag obair i measc na n-imirceach seo. Obair chrua a bhí ann, agus dainséarach. De réir a chéile, áfach, fuair na húdaráis amach fúthu agus gabhadh iad. Cuireadh an tAth. Cizek i bpríosún Lubianka in Moscó – príosún a bhfuil droch-chlú air inar cuireadh príosúnaigh pholaitiúla. Bhí leithisliú lom, céasadh agus ceistiúchán ag baint leis an am a chaith sé ann. Faoi thionchar ó dhrugaí a chuir na húdaráis i ndeoch a tugadh dó, thug siad air a admháil gur "spíodóir na Vatacáine" a bhí ann, agus daoradh chuig na campaí géibhinn é – na campaí *Gulag*.

D'oibrigh an tAth. Cizek sna campaí géibhinn ó 1942 go 1955 nuair a 'scaoileadh saor' é. Anois, bhí sé ábalta a bheith ag obair shaoránach de chuid an Aontais Shóivéadach, ach bhí faireachas á dhéanamh air de shíor. Nuair a bhunaigh sé paróiste in Norilsk, níor thaitin leis na húdaráis é seo, agus bogadh go Krasnoyarsk é, agus nuair a rinne sé an rud céanna arís, bogadh arís é. Bhí air obair mar mheicneoir gluaisteán ansin i gceantar iargúlta. Nuair a bhí sé saor, bhí sé ábalta scríobh chuig a dheirfiúracha i Meiriceá. Shíl siadsan (agus ord na Íosánach) go raibh sé marbh go dtí sin, agus scríobh siad ar ais chuige. Chuir seo tús le próiseas a raibh sé mar thoradh air gur cuireadh abhaile é mar chuid de mhaltartú príosúnach idir na Stáit Aontaithe agus an Aontas Sóivéadach. Nuair a tháinig sé abhaile, mar aon le mac léinn Meiriceánach Marvin Makinen, nuacht náisiúnta a bhí ann.

Chaith sé an chuid eile dá shaol ag scaipeadh na gceachtanna spioradálta a d'foghlaím sé ón am a chaith sé i mbraighdeanas, agus ag tabhairt chomhairle agus cúrsaí spioradálta do na hÍosánaigh eile. Scríobh sé an dá leabhar *With God in Russia* agus *He Leadeth Me* inar leagadh amach a scéal agus a spioradáltacht (níorbh áil leis seo a dhéanamh ar dtús, ach iarradh air!).



An tAth. Cizek agus a dheirfiúracha

Silim féin nach mór léargas nó dhó ón am a chaith sé sna campaí a phlé.

Tá ceachtanna le foghlaim óna mhinistreachta, ó na rudaí ar fad atá déanta aige le freastal ar a thréad sa – na daoine san Aontas Sóivéadach a bhí fágtha gan cúram ó sagart. Chuaigh sé chuig na háiteanna ba scoite agus ba chrua lena dhéanamh, fiú amháin. Ar dtús, nuair a tháinig sé mar oibrí deonach, chuaigh sé agus a chairde sa tóir ar chríostaithe gan tréadaí. Scríobh Cizek fá na seandaoine seo as an Úcráin agus an Bhealarúis a cuireadh go sléibhte na hÚráile, a raibh meas acu ar shagairt agus a raibh creideamh seanbhunaithe acu. Ach fosta, rinne an triúir iarracht cúrsaí creidimh a phlé lena gcomhoibrithe, go cúramach. I ndiaidh dó a bheith ceaptha ag na húdaráis, agus curtha chuig an Gulag, bhíodh sé ag obair mar shagart a d'fhreastail ar na príosúnaigh eile – d'éist sé faoistíní, bhaist sé daoine, thug sé an eocairist do dhaoine. Bhí tuiscint ar leith aige ar thábhacht an aifrinn mar gheall ar na heispéiris a bhí aige sna campaí. Bhí orthu bealaigh a aimsiú leis an aifreann a rá go rúnda, go ciúin agus in uaireanta, go gasta. Uaireanta, bhí ar na daoine a bhí i láthair ligint orthu nach raibh i gceist ach go raibh grúpa daoine ina seasamh i mbun comhrá. Bhí orthu úsáid a bhaint as arán agus fion smugláilte ar mhaithe leis an aifreann a cheiliúradh. Ní raibh seo furasta. Ach, chonaic Cizek an tábhacht a bhí aige seo do na príosúnaigh – bhí siad in ndrocháit gan dóchas, ach is é seo an rud a thug dóchas dóibh.

I leabhair Cizek, cuirtear béim ar leith ar Dheonú Dé, agus ar an mothú a bhí aige gurb é Dia a bhí ag stiúradh achán rud. Ar dtús, ní raibh a fhios aige cad é a bhí i ndán dó, nó cad é a tharlódh dó. Nuair a gabhadh é, bhí air géilleadh do thoil Dé i ngach rud – ní raibh sé ábalta a bheith ag brath air féin a thuilleadh. De réir a chéile, thuig sé nach raibh le déanamh aige ach na rudaí a thug Dia dó le déanamh ó lá go lá. Bhí suntas ar leith ag baint leis seo i dtimpeallacht na sclábhaíochta, gan saoirse nó rogha ag duine ar bith.

Bhí eachtra amháin ann a sheasann amach – bhí éirí amach ann sa champa. D'ainneoin iarrachtaí na bpríosúnach, cuireadh faoi chois é. Thug na gardaí ar an slua siúl amach chuig talamh bán, agus cuireadh ar a nglúine iad. Bhí na gunnaí dírithe orthu agus ba léir go raibh na gardaí ag dul iad a chur chun báis. Ar chúis inteacht, níor thugadh an t-ordú. Bhí meas nua ag Cizek ar lámh Dé, a stiúranann eachtraí an tsaoil.

Ar an dóigh chéanna, cuirtear béim ar leith ar láithreachta Dé agus ar chumhacht na paidreoireachta. Bhí uaireanta ann nach raibh sé ábalta ach a bheith ag brath ar Dhia, agus méadaíodh an tuiscint agus an mothú a bhí aige go raibh Dia i láthair i gcónaí, agus nach dtig le haon rud é sin a scriosadh. I leithisliú Lubianka, chuaigh sé go domhain sa phaidreoireacht, rud a bhí ina 'oiliúint' don mhinistreachta a bheas aige ina dhiaidh. Is é a dúirt sé fá chumhacht na paidreoireachta: *"Is mó cumhacht na paidreoireachta ná gach iarracht a dhéanann duine le brí a aimsiú ina shaol. Tá an chumhacht seo ar fáil do chách; thig léi claochlú a dhéanamh i laigeachtaí, lochtanna agus fulaingtí duine"*. In uaireanta nach dtugtar saoirse, nó dínit do dhuine, is féidir le caidreamh an duine le Dia an saoirse agus an dínit sin a sholáthar.

Tá an próiseas ar siúl fá choinne a chanónaithe mar Naomh san Ealgais, agus anois, tugtar "Searbhónta Dé" air. A Shearbhónta Dé, Walter Cizek, guigh orainn!



Walter Cizek óg

Teachers Rome Jubilee

Teachers with Derry connection share amazing experience of Rome Jubilee pilgrimage



Pope Leo XIV with Bishop Paul Connell, Ardagh & Clonmacnois, Archbishop William Nolan, Glasgow, and teachers from Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales (Photograph by Vatican Media).

WHEN a delegation of young teachers from Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales met with Pope Leo XIV in Rome in early July, as part of the Jubilee Year of Hope celebrations, amongst them were two with connections to the Derry Diocese.



Cara McLaughlin

Derry-born, Cara McLaughlin, a primary school teacher in Manchester, was representing the Diocese of Salford and Emmaus Trust, while Dervla Martin, of Fintona in the Clogher Diocese, a teacher in St Mary's PS, Killyclogher, was representing the Derry Diocese.

Describing the Rome pilgrimage as the most wonderful experience of their lives, both shared some memories with 'The Net'.

Former St Eugene's parishioner, Cara, who is the RE lead and Early Years teacher in St Kentigerns PS, recalled her reaction when the principal told her of the opportunity for teachers to go on pilgrimage together to Rome as

Pilgrims of Hope.

She said: "My name was sent off, along with that of another teacher, Mr Dreniw, in an application to represent the Diocese of Salford. I had been to Lourdes and Fatima but not Rome, so I was delighted as I had always wanted to go to there and visit the Vatican.

"At the time, I wondered about the chances of both of us being selected, so it was amazing when we were! We were told that the aim of the pilgrimage was to reflect on and renew our spiritual purpose as teachers in a Catholic school."

Coming from the home city of well-known Derry girl, Servant of God, Sr Clare Crockett, who had felt a strong call in her dramatic conversion to make sure everyone she met knew that God loved them, Cara's focus on faith in the classroom was already being strengthened through the Home of the Mother Servant Sister's story.

The 29-year-old shared how she felt Sr Clare had had a hand in her securing the teaching post, recalling: "I did my PGCE in the year Covid first happened, so placements were stopped and everything went online. Afterwards, it was quite difficult to find a teaching post because I hadn't completed a second placement due to learning being switched to remote and online and schools were still in the midst of lockdown. However, during my NPQ year in a private day care nursery in March 2021, I saw St

Kentigerns' advertisement for a teacher post and that there was a school walk-around.

"When the head teacher, Mrs Muldoon, whose parents are from Mayo, walked me around the school, I discovered there were two teachers from Co Derry – Mrs Mort and Miss Stafford – and another teacher, Mrs Holland, from Belfast. So, I felt really at home and wanted a job there! I applied for it and got an interview. My mummy told me to take a Sr Clare prayer card with me to the interview, which I did and ended up getting the job! I now have a picture of Sr Clare on the class display board, and when I heard that I was going to Rome, I said that I was bringing Sr Clare too, as she has been with me since."

During a preparatory Zoom call before going to Rome, they were told the disappointing news that, with the Pope away from the Vatican on a summer break, the usual outdoor Mass in St Peter's Square would not be happening during their visit. However, spirits were lifted again when it was announced that they would instead have a private audience with the Holy Father!

"As soon as the Zoom call was over," said Cara, "I was that excited about getting this opportunity that I called my parents and told them, and they couldn't believe that a wee teacher from Derry was getting to meet the Pope.

Sr Clare

"A day or so later, my mammy and daddy rang me to say wouldn't it be amazing if I could take something about Sr Clare when going to see the Pope. So, I was sent about 100 Sr Clare prayer cards and a plaque of Sr Clare with her big smile. I was to leave the prayer cards around Rome, or give them to the other pilgrims with me, to spread word about Sr Clare, and I gifted the Pope the plaque and one of the prayer cards too.

"When I went up to meet him, I said, 'Hi, my name is Cara. I would like to gift you this plaque of a nun from back home, who

passed away and will hopefully be made a saint'. He asked where home was and I said 'Derry', and he just smiled and accepted the gift. He is so lovely and really down to earth. He had so much time for you. It was an amazing experience; indescribable really, just so calming and peaceful. It really was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. A wee Derry girl in England and I got chosen."

Sharing other special memories of the pilgrimage, Cara said: "It was special to be there for the Year of Hope and to walk through the Holy Doors, which are only open every 25 years during a jubilee. And, it was very touching to be able to visit the tomb of Pope Francis, in the Basilica of St Mary Major, as he was the Pope who profoundly shaped our time. We also had the opportunity to celebrate Mass and go to Confession in the Basilica.

"We visited St Paul's and went up the Holy Stairs, near the Basilica of St John Lateran, on our knees. We also went to Pompeii and walked around its ancient streets and ruins, and to Palazzola, a former Cistercian monastery in the hills, overlooking a lake. And, there was a trip to the gardens at Castle Gandolfo, the Pope's summer residence."

As well as seeing all the beautiful sights, there were plenty of opportunities for the young teachers, who stayed in the Irish College, in Rome, during the eight-day pilgrimage, to meet and share about their faith journeys and responsibilities as teachers in Catholic schools.

"It was a very packed timetable," said Cara, "We had Mass daily and ended with Night Prayer together. Everyone had an opportunity to be involved, whether writing the Prayers of the Faithful, reading or leading the singing.

"We also spent time in our groups reflecting on how we were getting on during the pilgrimage. The experience re-energised me. It is a trip that I will never forget as a teacher and will help to keep the spark lit."

Omagh-based teacher, Dervla, who met Cara in Rome, is in



Teachers Rome Jubilee



Dervla Martin

her second year of a temporary, full-time post in St Mary's PS, Killyclogher. Like Cara, the opportunity to go to Rome for the Jubilee of Teachers came through the school, and she was the only one representing the Derry Diocese.

The 25-year-old created a booklet of memories of the whole experience not just for herself, but to share better within the school community that had been very supportive.

Reflecting on the experience, Dervla said: "A stand-out moment for me in Rome was definitely shaking hands with the Pope. I thought that we would see him from afar, so it was so surreal to actually meet and talk with him. I was never starstruck before, but I was definitely starstruck then."

"We greeted each other with 'Good morning' and then my mind went blank as I was starstruck, so it was short and sweet. He was such a calm

presence, so peaceful and very laid back. There was a sense that he had all the time in the world for you."

Eye-opening

She added: "Meeting teachers from other parts of the British Isles was also great. We were provided with lots of opportunities to speak to each other and some conversations were very eye-opening. Everybody shared ways they got Catholic education across to their pupils."

"Some schools have a lot of support compared to others. There was one teacher who really stood out, where RE is not prioritised in her school and she was struggling trying to share Catholic education there. My school and the Diocese are so supportive. Even when I was in Rome, they were contacting me for updates on how I was getting on, but she was entirely on her own."

Dervla continued: "It definitely was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to meet in this way as teachers, and to visit the places that we did and get the opportunity to walk through the Holy Doors. It really was wonderful and we learnt so much."

Another stand-out experience for Dervla was praying at the tomb of the then soon-to-be canonised Carlo Acutis in Assisi: "I hadn't realized that it would be his actual body waxed over. It was

very sad to see someone so young lying there. It was so surreal."

Saying that the pilgrimage and encounters had highlighted how important the Catholic faith is, Dervla shared her experience as a P1 teacher: "The children are so interested in religion. They find it fascinating and take great comfort from it. For example, if it is raining, some feel frustrated and find it hard to understand that we can't go outside. When I tell them that maybe God wants us to do something inside instead, that settles them."

Bringing back with her from Rome the message of the importance of Religious Education in school, she remarked: "Sometimes the curriculum is very busy and so other subjects can easily be prioritised over RE."

"The impact of RE on young people is immense. In my classroom, I have made a lovely prayer space. Some people today do not get to experience God in their own home, so it is us teachers who bring God to them

and help them discover Him."

In addressing the teachers, Pope Leo XIV told them: "Children will look up to you as models of faith, particularly in how you teach and live. I hope that, each day, you will nurture your relationship with Christ, who gives us the pattern of all authentic, so that, in turn, you may guide and encourage those entrusted to your care to follow Christ in their own lives."

On returning home, the Holy Father asked them to "please remember that a pilgrimage does not end, it shifts its focus to the daily 'pilgrimage of discipleship.'"

He added: "We are all pilgrims and we are always pilgrims, walking as we seek to follow the Lord, and as we seek the path that is truly ours in life. That's certainly not easy, but with the help of the Lord, the intercession of the saints, and by encouraging one another, you can be certain that, as long as you remain faithful, trusting always in God's mercy, the experience of this pilgrimage will continue to bear fruit throughout your lives."



Sad Clonmany farewell for Fr Kevin Doherty as he returns to Dublin Diocese



A sad farewell was bid to Fr Kevin Doherty by those who gathered in St Mary's Church, Clonmany, for his final Sunday Mass there on August 24, before returning to ministry in the Dublin Diocese.

The rapport was evident between Fr Kevin and the many parishioners of all ages who patiently waited in line after Mass to shake his hand, and share words of appreciation for all that he had done for them over the past two years and a hope that they would meet again.

Speaking of his leaving at the end of Mass, he recalled the words of Scripture that he had chosen for his ordination card, to inspire him in his ministry: "Always be

ready to give a defense to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that you have." (1 Peter 3:15)

"In my short time here," he said, "I hope that I have given some evidence of the hope that I have straight from God, that I am loved beyond all my imagination by God. It helps me get up all the time and keep going. I hope some of that love is here through my time with you in this wonderful parish."

Gathered in the hall afterwards for refreshments, a heartfelt thank you was expressed to Fr Kevin on behalf of the parishioners by John Diver, of the Parish Pastoral Council, for leading them with faith, kindness and dedication.

"You have comforted us in so many ways," remarked John, "your words and prayers have touched us deeply. We are grateful for all the time and energy that you put into your ministry here, especially in our schools. As you return to your Diocese in Dublin, know that you will be remembered with fondness in this parish."

Gifts were presented by children on behalf of the parish, one of which was a t-shirt with the name 'Clonmany' emblazoned across the front of it, along with the

words, 'Probably the best parish in the world.'

Delighted with the gifts, Fr Kevin expressed his deep appreciation, adding: "I loved my time in Clonmany, and being back in Inishowen with its wonderful traditions. You adopted me and many invited me into their homes."

"It is a wonderful parish – the schools and people are just so wonderful. I'm sad that I'm leaving, but it is not my idea. I am thankful for the two years that I have had sowing a seed. It has been a blessing for me. You have confirmed for me where my roots are and, sometime, I hope to come back."



Moving from city suburb to scenic Inishowen coast...

Fr John McDevitt installed as parish priest of Clonmany & Culdaff

BISHOP Donal has installed Fr John McDevitt as parish priest of the parishes of Clonmany and Culdaff, in Inishowen.

The former parish priest of Steelstown & Culmore now resides in Ballyliffin, within the Clonmany Parish, which includes St Mary's Church in Clonmany village, St Michael's Church in the beautiful setting of Urris, and the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin. He is assisted by Fr Karl Haan, CC, who resides in Culdaff.

The Clonmany induction ceremony took place in St Mary's Church on Saturday, August 30, during which Bishop Donal spoke on the Irish Bishops' document 'Why Sunday matters.'

Highlighting that the short document focussed on three words which came from Pope Francis, "namely weekly Mass as communion, participation and mission," he continued: "In age of social fragmentation and much loneliness, we are asked to gather each weekend around the altar to build community, despite our diversity of experience and background. In the Body of Christ, the Church, there is a variety of gifts and talents. And what binds us together is that we are connected to Jesus. In an age where many feel powerless, Jesus wants us all to be able to participate.

"The congregation are not merely consumers of religious services, to pray and pay. We gather around the Cross of Jesus, where each person is known by name. Mass is not meant to be a spectator sport, something

that we can equally well view on a screen, over a cup of coffee. Participation means having communion with one another and with Christ, so that we can all take part in different ways. It involves hearing the Word of God and receiving Holy Communion. It involves being a community where there is transparency and accountability as to how parish resources are used.

"And, finally, this Jubilee year we are called to be missionaries of hope, especially those who feel battered by life or have lost their way."

Bishop Donal also spoke on the reality that "very many people have little understanding of Jesus or what He stood for."

He continued: "There are plenty of people who have no interest in Church and have rejected Christ for a variety of reasons. But there are many who are crying out to know about love and mercy in the mess and pain of their lives. Life is tough for many young people who wonder whether their life has any meaning or hope.

"These were the sorts of people – lepers, sinners, the outcasts – that Jesus seemed to have most time for. He gathers us here, not just to fulfil our duty or meet nice people, but to get the courage and grace to go out to those who feel most excluded and unwanted in our community. That is a tough ask – but facing the brokenness of the world was never easy."

Mission

Relating all to the mission of their new parish priest, Bishop Donal said: "Sometimes we can

think that the priest has only to say Mass, do funerals and visit the sick. But, as we have heard, his real mission is to build a community that is centred on the Eucharist, to find ways of promoting widespread participation in the life of the faith community, and to give us all courage to be missionaries of hope.

"That is a tough task. But renewal involves more than arguing over Mass times. It will involve prayerful listening to one another, building structures that do not allow for silly little power games or ego trips, and supporting a parish that looks outward with joy rather than inward with resentment. That is the task of every parish in 2025.

"This community has a marvellous track record of coming together to achieve things – the festival, the golf and the community facilities. As a parish are we ready for Christ's agenda? This is the time for decisions."

The following Saturday night, September 6, Bishop Donal returned to Inishowen for the installation of Fr John as parish priest of Culdaff. Speaking to the congregation of St Mary's, Bocan, Bishop Donal noted that Fr John was the 21st parish priest of Culdaff.

He remarked: "You will know much better than I do that faith has deep roots in this beautiful part of Inishowen. Those who lived in some of the poorer land centuries ago had to take up their Cross, but they also brought with them a deep spiritual tradition that we see in the Mass Rocks that I am sure preceded St Mary's

Church. We give thanks for a long line of faith practice that has lived on in the shrines of people's homes and hearts."

He went on to point out, however, that they were not "merely celebrating a distinguished history, nor even a fine and well-used building".

"Faith," he said, "is not something to be viewed as a nice relic of a past. Faith cries out to be lived where people are today. The challenges were different in Penal times. Despite the different circumstances today, Jesus still wants to speak to the hearts of the people of a digital age. Mercy and hope are still needed in this generation."

In word of encouragement, Bishop Donal said: "Never doubt that you are welcome here and, in every church, no matter how tired and dusty you may feel. Even if others don't make you feel at ease, the Jesus of the Cross always looks down on you with a smile and with open arms."

Celebrating the Mass on the eve of the canonisation of Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati, he highlighted the important role of young people in the Church, saying: "These new saints would ask us to be sure that we leave space for young people in discerning the way forward."

He concluded: "In this simple ceremony of installing a new PP, we give thanks for the saints of the past and pray that God will raise up a new generation of 21st century heroes and saints who believe in God and in people."

(Clonmany photographs by Brendan Diver)





Over 100 riders turn out for Blessing of Bikes at Burt

THE 13th year of the Blessing of Bikes at St Agenesis Church, Burt, attracted over 100 riders and their bikes, despite the bad weather.

Led by Fr Gerry Sweeney, who was helped on the day by Fr Paddy Baker, the day began with a Mass in St Patrick's Church, Dungiven.

The assembled bikers then made their way to St Agenesis Church, Burt, for the short prayer service and blessing. The bikers from

Dungiven then led the way safely to Burt.

After the blessing, the bikers made their way to the RNLI Station, Ned's Point, Buncrana, where they presented the station and crew with a donation to support the RNLI in their life saving work.

Thanks are extended to all who supported the day.



Hearts on Fire Conference



Only people of prayer and community attuned to where Spirit is moving – Bishop Donal

THE last few decades have been challenging for the Church in Ireland and in many western countries. Even in Church, some people have been handing on miserable narratives about an awful future for the People of God.

But, in some parts of the world, there are great signs of new life – and a renewed emphasis on developing a structured approach to bringing Good News to our world. The Jubilee Year of Hope has called for a renewed commitment to be Missionaries of Hope.

The Diocese of Down & Connor organised a two-day

gathering called 'Hearts on Fire Conference'. The main keynote speaker was the founder of the Divine Renovation project, Scottish-born, Fr James Mallon. He has developed a systematic way of actively evangelising his local community.

It was a marvellous experience for us to be there with 300+ others, hearing testimonies, praying together and seeing where the Holy Spirit is at work in renewing the face of the earth.

God is at work. Only a people of prayer and community will be attuned to where the Spirit is moving. That is what a synodal church is about.

Hearts on Fire challenged us to evangelise...to make Jesus known and loved by Anne Friel

THERE were roughly 400 delegates from 19 Irish Dioceses at the Hearts on Fire Conference, as well as from Canada, America and Europe. Bishop Donal was accompanied by 12 representatives from Derry Diocese.

Bishop Alan McGuckian described how the Diocesan conference development team used one of the gifts of Synodality, 'Conversations in the Spirit', that he had been practising daily with others for 30 days at the Universal Synod in Rome, when designing the programme. The fruit of these conversations was an energy-filled conference with a focus on mission, baptism and evangelisation.

The two days were underpinned by prayer, with continuous Eucharistic Adoration. The centrality of prayer in all we do was a theme throughout the sessions.

The gathering was not about giving definite answers on how to make Jesus known and loved. The strength of the two days for me was being able to hear current thinking from Catholic leaders and, parish priests and lay people sharing how they had used particular programmes to support faith development within their parish community; what they had learned and how this focused approach helped deepen engagement with their Catholic faith. The local experience was central, showing how intentional efforts can foster spiritual growth and draw more people into a journey of discipleship.

Archbishop Eamon Martin's opening presentation on 'Dilexit nos', Pope Francis's encyclical on the human and divine love of the heart of Jesus Christ, was appropriate for a conference held just before the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Archbishop Martin spoke of the meaning and use of the word 'heart', that it is not just the physical beating heart, but is our very soul and spirit. In 'Dilexit nos' (God loves us), Pope Francis states that "contemporary devotion to the Sacred Heart needs to combine personal spiritual experience and communal missionary commitment" (DN91). This opened the doors to a conference that provided a space for listening and dialogue.

Fr James Mallon, from Divine Renovation, Halifax, Nova Scotia, picked up this theme of God being at the core of our being. He spoke of capturing, in our own lives and in our parishes, that visceral love of the father for the Prodigal Son, that 'splanchna'. He gave examples of new people coming to his parish in Halifax each week and not being ready to welcome them. He challenged us on whether our parishes are places of

welcome and spoke of 'hospitality, homilies and hymns' as being key. He spoke of the power of the Holy Spirit, underlining that the Church exists to evangelise, saying: "When evangelisation is the focus and people encounter Jesus, parishes grow." He spoke of parish leaders, saying: "When parish leaders serve out of the best of leadership principles, parishes thrive." More on this can be found in his book, 'Divine Renovation: Bringing Your Parish from Maintenance to Mission'.

Intentional

Fr Mallon told us that our primary focus should be to "intentionally evangelise" – to teach and speak about evangelisation, link it into homilies and make what we are doing accessible to people outside our parish. He uses Alpha to invite people into his parish, although he said that this was just one resource available. In encouragement, he said that this is hard to do well. He referred to Pope Francis in 'Evangelii Gaudium' (EG 27) dreaming of a "missionary option, that is a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things...can be suitably channelled for the evangelisation of today's world and not for her self-preservation." God is always doing something new, we as ordinary people just need to say 'yes'.

In a later workshop, Fr Gerry Campbell, from Our Lady Queen of Peace Pastoral Area, Co Louth, and a member of his Pastoral Council told their story of evangelisation and parish renewal. Fr Gerry had been coached as part of a Divine Renovation programme.

Michelle Moran, a founder member of the Sion Catholic Community for Evangelisation from Leeds, spoke passionately about what evangelisation looks like in our parishes. She asked if we are communities of welcome? She said that parishes exist to reach out to those who are not part of them. They should not be 'closed clubs.' She underlined the importance of being 'soaked' in prayer, when "prayer ascends, power [of God] descends [on us]." She quoted Pope Francis, that evangelisation is done on one's knees, it is not a job. She highlighted the importance of discernment, not falling into activism or 'programme-itis' which will result in exhaustion. She spoke of the importance of self-care. We must cultivate the contemplative dimension of evangelisation.

Fr Philip Kemmy, parish priest of Newtowncunningham and Killea, Raphoe Diocese, spoke of their parish praying for a 'new

Pentecost' at Mass each day. He was conscious of his love of catechesis, but that we need to be able to have the words to speak about the basics of our faith. He spoke along with Bridie, one of the parishioners, as well as with Tanya Rodgeron from Catholic Christian Outreach. This programme of intentional accompaniment supported Fr Kemmy and parishioners to work through a series of sessions, starting with 'Discovery' discussing the kerygma, helping parishioners to speak about their faith. This was a really interesting breakout session, where we heard how this worked on the ground over the last year, how people grew to know each other more in the parish community, and how more people got involved not just in this programme but in other areas of parish life, including running Alpha.

Spirit

Fr Billy Swann spoke about waiting for the Spirit and the importance of discerning the way forward. It is important to begin by evangelising yourself, knowing that Jesus loves me and then, allowing people to tell their story and encourage them to share what they love with others. He spoke of the centrality of liturgy, increasing our zeal and drive to share the Gospel, as well as having culturally-engaged Catholicism; engaging with the major issues of our time where the light of the Gospel is needed. He challenged us to find innovative ways to evangelise.

Fr Eamonn Conway spoke about continuing the Synodal Journey as Pilgrims of Hope. He described the synodal path as being a vehicle to expand the work of the Second Vatican Council. He listed four key stages on this synodal path:

1. The uniqueness of each person's baptismal calling – we could do a lot more to celebrate this, to help each of us to discern our gifts.
2. To rebuild community. This can be an antidote to the lack of a sense of meaning in our lives. How do we signpost relationship with Christ? How do we enlarge the space of our tent?
3. Being a model and witness in a fractured world – through humility.
4. Personal conversion and the conversion of our structures – do we choose change or let change overtake us?

There was a wealth of practical resources available both through workshops, where Programme leaders spoke on programmes such as Sycamore and Alpha, and parish priests and lay people described their experience of using programmes such as



Anne Friel

intentional accompaniment (CCI), conversations at break times over a cup of tea, as well as books and literature available from two bookstalls – Messenger and Redemptorist Publications.

Some of the practical next steps that I heard could be taken:

- All our work must start with and be supported by prayer – individual prayer and parish prayer. Be clear with parishioners what we are praying for.
- Think about how people meet Jesus in our parish. How welcoming are our buildings? How can we go deeper, be more contemplative and further develop a culture of encounter?
- What is our vision of Parish? What is our culture? Start with a small team and build on this. Engage the parish.

- How do we make this easier when often there is little time to reflect? Programmes can be used, perhaps roughly plan out a year and pre-prepare what we do, eg, during Lent, throughout the year. Do not suffer from 'programme-itis'!
- Identify the charisms that people have in our parish. What is happening in our parish – are there new shoots? Create opportunities to evangelise and catechise. Be outward as well as inward facing, for example, support parishioners to develop different ministries. Talk about each person's calling through their Baptism to be Priest, Prophet and King. Is this understood and what does it mean for each of us?

We were left with some things to think about. There was a heartfelt recognition of the goodness and dedication of our priests and people, as well as the deep faithfulness of the lay community. How can we clearly and convincingly express the heart of the Gospel message we proclaim? And how can we grow as communities committed to ongoing learning and spiritual development? How do we live in this 'creative tension' of trying new things when each day we can feel that we have enough to be doing?

This conference gave us a space to listen and food to think about within the context of the Catholic Church in Ireland. It challenged us to evangelise, to make Jesus known and loved.

Breakout sessions

***Divine Renovation. Sailing the waves of Renewal.** Fr James Mallon, Dr Hannah Vaughan-Spruce, Paul Lang, Fr Gerry Campbell. Divinerenovation.org/ launch-point provides a group experience for priests and 3-4 parish leaders to explore what it means to become a healthy, mission-focused parish.

It is an on-line, self-led course that can be done at your own time and pace over 90 minutes. You will 'unpack the current reality of your parish, explore the journey to becoming a healthy parish focused on mission and discern next steps – and discover how Divine Renovation can accompany you at no cost.'

***Alpha – Catholic Context: What is it? How does it work? Why should we do it?** Michael Roche. Alpha.org/catholics

***Sycamore for Parishes.** Dr Susan Longhurst. www.sycamore.fm - also see derrydiocese.org

***FOCUS.** Sean Flack. Fellowship of Catholic University Students. FOCUS.org

***Called & Gifted: 'Be who you were meant to be and you will set the world of fire.'** Fr Michael Hall and Mark McEvoy. calledandgifted@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

***Catholic Christian Outreach-creating disciples for Christ.** Tanya Rodgeron, CCO, Fr Philip Kemmy, Raphoe Diocese.

Each of these programmes is a way of initially finding out more and how it would work in your parish. They provide parish coaches to support Parish Priests and parishioners to implement the programme.



Michael Roche



Dr. Susan Longhurst

Hearts on Fire Conference

Great opportunity for ideas on parish renewal and mission by Maire Gormley

THE Conference was a great opportunity to be able to link in with, and listen to, speakers of a high calibre on ideas for Parish Renewal and Mission.

These sorts of events don't seem to take place too often in this end of the world, so I think it is important to participate and attend when they do. I thought the whole conference was excellent - venue, location, structure, and speakers.

It was so well organised and paced. There was time for listening, reflecting, praying and discussing, as well as gathering ideas and hearing about the work that other parishes are doing and initiatives they are trying.

It gave me great hope in



Maire Gormley

seeing that there are many ways to 'do' missionary work in our parishes and dioceses; it is not a one-size-fits-all situation.

The Diocese of Down & Connor is to be congratulated on a job very well done, and many thanks to them for opening the invitation far and wide.

Conference a wonderful reminder of richness of Catholic tradition by Fr Peter Madden

THE Hearts on Fire Conference in Belfast was a two-day presentation by some of the leaders of the pastoral and catechetical programmes available to parishes, as they navigate a world where the idea of a personal God is constantly being questioned, and rejected, yet people still search for something to give meaning to their lives; where the need for a personal belief system has never been more urgent.

Notwithstanding the issues the Catholic Church has had to face within its own ranks over recent decades in Ireland, and elsewhere, the Conference was a wonderful reminder of the richness of our Catholic tradition and that we shouldn't be afraid to preach Jesus to all who hunger for Him, but just don't know that their hunger won't find rest until they find it in Him.

I found the conference



Fr. Peter Madden

uplifting and was excited to bring back to my parishes, and their pastoral groups, some of the ideas for parish renewal that seem to work very effectively in other places.

This is not about filling the pews on a Sunday or a Saturday evening, but filling the hunger for God that lies in every human heart. When you realise that Jesus will satisfy that hunger with His Word and with the Eucharist, you will come and take your place in that empty seat which has always been waiting for you.

Conference set our hearts on fire by Anne Marie Hickey

THE Hearts on Fire Conference, for me, was a time to reflect on the work we do in parish and learn more skills on how to make our parishes places of great welcome.

It was an opportunity to find new resources to help bring our St Eugene's Parish community closer to Jesus.

The thought-provoking talks from experienced clergy and lay-people certainly set our hearts on fire.



Anne Marie Hickey

It was wonderful be part of it all.

Revitalisation of hope and mission for Conference attendees by Finbar Madden



Finbar Madden

"IN St Luke's account of the Disciples on the road to Emmaus, it was in taking a moment for reflection and discernment that they recognised how an encounter with the risen Christ provided a renewed sense of hope and mission." (Bishop Alan McGuckian SJ)

On June 25 & 26, hundreds of delegates from across the island of Ireland and beyond gathered in the Hilton Hotel, Belfast, for the 2025 Hearts on Fire Conference. The purpose of the Conference was to provide those attending with an opportunity to take some time to reflect on and explore the Church's sense of hope and mission, something of particular significance in this Jubilee Year of Hope.

The Diocese of Derry was well represented at the Conference, with Bishop McKeown having invited a number of clergy, parish workers and other diocesan personnel to join him at the event.

Over two packed days, delegates were treated to a range of presentations, reflections and discussions that focused on what evangelisation and mission will look like in the next number of years. In particular, those attending were invited to consider what evangelisation looks like in parishes, how parishes are to move to mission and how the Church can reach out beyond

parishes.

Expertly compered throughout by Fr Eugene O'Hagan and Angelina Fusco, the Conference opened each day with Morning Prayer, led by Bishop McGuckian, whilst Mid-day Prayer preceded the afternoon sessions. Both days concluded with the Examen and the celebration of Mass. Indeed, throughout the Conference, delegates had the opportunity to engage in spiritual conversations with a number of facilitators, whilst Adoration continued throughout each day.

Day One got off to a strong start with an engaging and thoughtful reflection by Archbishop Eamon Martin on Pope Francis' last encyclical, 'Dilexit Nos', in which the Holy Father had invited the faithful to rediscover the importance of the heart; the symbol of the love of Jesus Christ for us.

The second speaker was Canadian, Fr James Mallon, Pastor of Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish in Dartmouth, Nova Scotia, and founder of Divine Renovation. In a compelling address, Fr Mallon took delegates through the outworking of moving parishes to mission. After a break for lunch, this contribution was followed by an insightful panel discussion, where a number of speakers reflected on the challenges of 'setting hearts on fire'. The final keynote speaker on Day One was Ferns' Fr Billy Swann, who currently serves as Administrator of Wexford Parish. Fr Swann spoke at length on the question: 'What is Evangelisation?'.

Initiatives

The working part first day of the Conference would conclude with a reflection and closing prayer, but this was preceded by a breakout session that allowed delegates to attend talks covering a range of initiatives

that had already facilitated opportunities for a greater sense of evangelisation and mission in the wider church. These included Divine Renovation, Alpha - Catholic Context, Sycamore for Parishes, FOCUS, Called & Gifted and Catholic Christian Outreach - Creating disciples for Christ. Delegates agreed that it was fascinating to listen to the variety of approaches on offer, with regard to facilitating a greater sense of evangelisation and mission in the wider Church.

After a good night's sleep, delegates gathered again on Thursday, June 26, for an even more intensive day of prayer, presentation, reflection and discussion. The day began with a thought-provoking, and humorous, input from Michelle Moran, a founder member of the Sion Catholic Community for Evangelism, on what evangelisation looks like in the parish of today. This was followed by another panel discussion, this time focusing on the challenges of moving parishes to mission. The final input before lunch, delivered by Dr Hannah Vaughan-Spruce, Executive Director of Global Mission for Divine Renovation, focused on how to reach out beyond parishes.

After the break for lunch, a fascinating overview on Ireland's changing marriage landscape was delivered by 'Irish Times' and 'Irish Catholic' columnist, Breda O'Brien, accompanied by

a fascinating range of statistics, which she prefaced by reference to, allegedly, Disraeli's famous aphorism! This exposition was followed by the final keynote address, delivered by Fr Eamonn Conway, Professor of Integral Human Development at the University of Notre Dame, Australia, on continuing the Synodal Journey as Pilgrims of Hope; the theme of the current Holy Year.

Following the breakout sessions for Day Two - the same as Day One, thus enabling delegates to attend at least one different session - the conference continued with a final panel discussion on what had been learned, over the course of two remarkably busy days, on moving from maintenance to mission. With that done the Conference concluded with Bishop McGuckian offering his closing remarks and a final prayer.

"Were not our hearts burning within us while He was talking to us on the road. While He was opening the scriptures to us?" This extract, again taken from St Luke's account of the Disciples on the road to Emmaus, provides a fitting epitaph to the two days of the Hearts on Fire Conference; it could be said that the Conference enabled those in attendance to leave with a revitalisation of both hope and mission. Indeed, it could be suggested that everyone departed the Conference with a real sense of 'hearts burning' within them.

Blessed three days on Lough Derg for Derry Diocese pilgrims



ST CANICE CHARISMATIC
PRAYER GROUP
50 YEARS OF
LIFE IN THE SPIRIT



JUBILEE CELEBRATION
EMMAUS HALL (beside St Patrick's, Dungiven)
SUNDAY 21ST SEPTEMBER
2:30pm PRAYER AND PRAISE
3:00pm GOLDEN JUBILEE MASS
Followed by light refreshments

The Derry Discussion 1828 *by Dr Seán Beattie*



Tremone Bay, located between Culdaff and Kinnegoe Bay. In 1848, Bishop McGinn assisted the Young Ireland rebel, Thomas D'Arcy McGee to avoid arrest and escape to America from the Boat Port, Tremone. A monument marks the location today.

THE City of Derry is no stranger to public debate, whether political or religious. In the case of the latter, almost 200 years ago an unusual event took place in which some of the finest orators and public speakers took part. Although the agenda was strictly theological, all rules of engagement in public debate were pushed to the limit. Another unique feature was that all of the speakers were churchmen.

Background

It is important to understand the social and political background of the early 19th century. Passions were running high following the Act of Union (1800), which abolished the Irish Parliament and placed Irish government in the hands of the Westminster parliament. Catholic Emancipation, which would give Catholics the right to sit in Westminster, was also a major issue.

A Tithe War was erupting

at intervals, the tithe being a tax imposed for the upkeep of the Church of Ireland but which was also payable by other denominations. Those who refused to pay faced imprisonment.

Why a Discussion?

The origins of the great debate arose from an attempt by some Church of Ireland members to establish a branch of the Reformation Society in the City; a well organised national body which was regarded as a proselytising agency by the Catholic clergy. The Society has often been described as the promoter of 'The Second Reformation', which aimed to expand the Protestant religion in the first half of the 19th century. The Society challenged the Catholic clergy to a public debate on matters of doctrine.

Over a period of 12 days, from March 12, 1828, six Church of Ireland clergymen and six Catholic priests engaged in an intense

discussion on their respective beliefs, from Transubstantiation to Purgatory, Communion, Prayers, Holy Wells, and the Mass. The Court House in Bishop Street was the venue on most days, but as local interest developed the venue was moved to the Cathedral. The unusual gathering drew widespread national interest in the press.

Influential speakers

The 12 speakers selected were 'young guns', fresh from their respective training colleges, who could draw on the Bible and religious literature to support their arguments. Each speaker was limited to 45 minutes and, as the proceedings progressed, a number of key speakers emerged. The Discussion was chaired by clergy or, on some occasions, prominent citizens such as Pitt Skipton or Tristram Kennedy. It was no place for the uninitiated and many of the speakers had honed their skills on

the pulpit.

The Speakers

Among the Protestant clergy were Revs Alexander Ross (Banagher), William Smyly (Annaghloo), Robert Collis (Camus), Mark Bloxham (Tamlaghcrilly), Archibald Boyd (Templemore), and Robert Henderson, (Leckpatrick). On the opposition, speakers were Frs Patrick O'Loughlin, Francis Quin, Neal O'Kane, A J McCarron, Edward Maginn and Simon McLeer. The debate lasted five hours a day and was later published in book form, running to 783 pages.

Two of the speakers later held prominent positions in the Diocese. Fr Maginn was outspoken on political issues throughout his life and was appointed Co-Adjutor Bishop in 1845. Rev Robert Henderson became Headmaster of Foyle College during the Great Famine in 1848 and retired in 1853. Fr Patrick O'Loughlin served in Derry, Dungiven and Ballinascreen. When the Ordnance Survey was being carried out in the 1830s, he met John O'Donovan and impressed him with his knowledge of Irish language, customs and culture. Neither Bishop became involved in the Discussion, but respective churchmen held a watching brief.

Fr Quin was a native of Desertmartin and served in Derry, Donaghmore and Drumragh.

Fr Alex J McCarron was the only Derry-born speaker on the Catholic side; he was a priest in Coleraine and Glendernmot. Fr O'Kane held positions in Derry, Cappagh and Donaghmore. He had an untimely death at the age of 46, when he fell from a horse on his way to a sick call. Fr Simon McLeer worked in the parishes of Moville, Iskaheen and Badoney.

The 24 Propositions

While most speakers contributed to the Discussion on several occasions, Fr Maginn was the most prominent speaker, having addressed the Discussion on no less than nine occasions. He was able to draw on his training in debate in the Irish College in Paris, where he had studied for the priesthood. On the final day of the Discussion, he made a lengthy speech in which he listed 24 challenges which had to be addressed by his opponents. He claimed that the arguments which he had put to the Discussion at the outset had not been answered. He was particularly critical of the Protestant interpretation of the words of Christ, "This is My Body". To support his argument, he drew heavily on Sacred Scripture, especially St Paul's Letter to the Corinthians, St Luke's Gospel, the Gospel of St John and the Book of Exodus.

In one of his criticisms, he said: "How, in the name of common sense, can my Rev opponents unblushingly state, that any man differing from them in opinion is wrong – they who admit every man should judge for himself, and that in judging for himself he is

right?" (sic).

Last words

On the twelfth and final day, the last speech was given by Fr Patrick O'Loughlin. He ended with the following words: "In the words of St Paul, 'watch, stand in the faith, act manfully, be comforted.' " (1Cor:16, 32).

The question has often been asked, who won the debate? The answer is that there were no winners or losers, but each side claimed victory. However, in fairness, the Catholic party could claim some measure of success in that the Reformation Society was never established in Derry.

Legacy

To formally bring the Discussion to a close, it was decided that the proceedings should be "adjourned sine die". It was agreed that a discussion on the respective merits of the two churches should immediately commence between six of the Catholic clergy and six of the clergy of the Established Church of Ireland. It was a face-saving arrangement. Church historians are grateful to two reporters who were present, Frederick Campbell and William Wallen. Richard Coyne, Dublin, printed the reports and the Discussion was published in association with W M Curry, Junior, Dublin in 1828.

The Discussion marked an important phase in the gradual restoration of civic rights to the Catholic Church. The following year, Daniel O'Connell secured Catholic Emancipation.

Prayer in my pocket...heart *by Kieron Kehoe*

PRAYER in my pocket/heart returns this month with an interesting talk with Jane.

Jane is originally from Essex but, after visiting Derry on a couple of occasions, she decided to make the move here permanent, and now, 13 years later, she feels like a Derry girl.

Jane spends a lot of her time these days mostly in St Eugene's Cathedral and sometimes in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh.

Originally Church of England, she is now confirmed into the Catholic faith and has become a Eucharistic Minister in St Eugene's Cathedral. She has a deep concern for the youth of today and prays fervently for them.

The following is a vocation prayer for the youth of today:

"O God, our Heavenly Father, receive the youth of the world today into your open hands.

May the Holy Spirit received in our baptism touch the hearts of the youth today, to open up their hearts to receive the light of Christ. Guide the parents and families of the world today with wisdom and courage to support the youth of today, so they are filled with the love of Christ and the peace of God in their hearts. Amen.

Chaplet for youth

Start the Chaplet in the same way as you would the Rosary: Apostle's Creed; Our Father; three Hail

Marys and Glory Be.

On the large beads pray: *Heavenly Father, may Thy adorable, sweet Jesus, Thy only begotten Son's Heart be offered up as a humble contrite heart for all of our sins and for the sins of the youth today.*

Small beads: *O adorable sweet Jesus, cleanse the souls of the youth with Your Precious Blood.*

In place of the Glory Be, pray: *O Heavenly Father, O Sweet Jesus, O Holy Spirit, surround the youth with your glorious Light. O Blessed Virgin Mary may you fill the youth with your Eternal Motherly Love.*

Conclude: For the Pope's intentions pray an Our Father, three Hail Marys and a Glory Be.

The above prayer and Chaplet are



Jane with the Blessed Carlo Acutis figure in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry City.

worded by Jane, feeling guided by the Holy Spirit and Blessed Carlo Acutis.

Prayer to St Joseph

(Following the appearance of the 'Prayer in my pocket' story in the May edition, entitled 'Danny finds powerful St Joseph prayer never fails', some readers got in contact to request the actual prayer, as it had been left out. Apologies for the oversight...here it is...)

Oh, St Joseph, whose protection is so great, so strong, so prompt before the throne of God.

I place in you all my interest and desires.

Oh, St Joseph, do help me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your Divine Son, all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

So that, having engaged here below your Heavenly power,

I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of Fathers.

Oh, St Joseph, I never weary contemplating you

and Jesus asleep in your arms, I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart.

Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.

St Joseph, patron of departing souls,

Pray for us.

(Say for nine mornings for anything you may desire. It has never been known to fail.)



ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH AGHYARAN

BACK TO SCHOOL MASS

FOR ALL SCHOOL PUPILS

BLESSING FOR THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR

SATURDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER
7.30PM

Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

The Heart and the Spirit by Fr Eamonn Kelly

GOD has a plan, a way of working things that is full of eternal love. As the plan has eternal love it is often difficult for the human to comprehend the 'why' of much of life. As the plan has love in it, the human being struggles to understand the full meaning of what happens. In short, understanding eternal love in our heads is beyond us, so let me share a story that may enlighten us.

On Christmas Day 1945, a family friend cycled the seven miles from Donegal Town to my home village of Frosses. He did so to tell my parents that their 18-month-old daughter had died in the hospital. Naturally, my parents were devastated, and so too were all the family members. Their world was turned upside down. Their wee pride and joy, Nellie Kelly, had been taken from them. She was always called Nellie, even though her proper name was Gertrude Ellen. Nellie was a normal healthy

child up until November, when she started to cough. They had taken her to the local doctor and he had sent her to the hospital. Everybody tried hard. But sadly, to no avail. Nellie's human existence ended on the day that we celebrate the birth of Christ.

Heart of God

Nellie's funeral took place a few days later. Due to fears that existed back then, the family were not allowed to open the coffin, and the body was not taken into the Church building. The priest offered a Mass for Nellie's broken-hearted family, stating several times that Nellie had gone to the heart of God and that it was the grieving family who needed the prayers.

While the Funeral Mass was being prayed, Nellie's maternal grandfather sat in the car beside the wee white coffin.

Nellie was laid to rest in the family grave in Frosses. After the funeral,

the family shared a meal and, later that day, they all went to the graveyard to visit the freshly turned soil that would always attempt to hide love and sorrow, joy and bitterness, hope and grief, loss and affection.

The story of Nellie Kelly does not end in the graveyard at Frosses that day in 1945. Her story continues right up to this day, and her story will continue for all time. I am convinced of this, and I will share with you the reasons why I am convinced.

Alive

Firstly, the love that Nellie's family had for her is alive. She would have been 80 last May. We, her family, still talk about her, wonder what she would have made of life. I was born some 18 years after her death and so never saw her. We do not even have a photo of her. Yet, she has always been part of our family story and is always part of our identity, for love

goes beyond time and beyond the grave and her spirit lives on in her family members.

Secondly, in the days of Nellie's sickness, she was allowed no visitors. It is hard to imagine that fact today but, for the six weeks that she was in hospital, the family were not allowed to visit. So, when the family friend entered the family home that Christmas morning, he brought terrible and shocking news, for the family had been hopeful of a recovery.

Then the news came that the coffin would not be opened, and the pain was intensified. However, a few days after the Funeral, Nellie's Grandfather revealed that he had broken the rules and had opened the coffin during the Funeral Mass. He was able to describe in detail what Nellie looked like, what she was wearing and even the design on the linen that enfolded her. This brought tremendous consolation to her family, especially to her Mother,

who found great solace in the words of her father.

Truth

Thirdly, the priest offered a Mass for the family, stating that the child had gone to the heart of God and that it was the family who needed the prayers. He understood his faith. He knew his stuff. He spoke great truth, with love and care

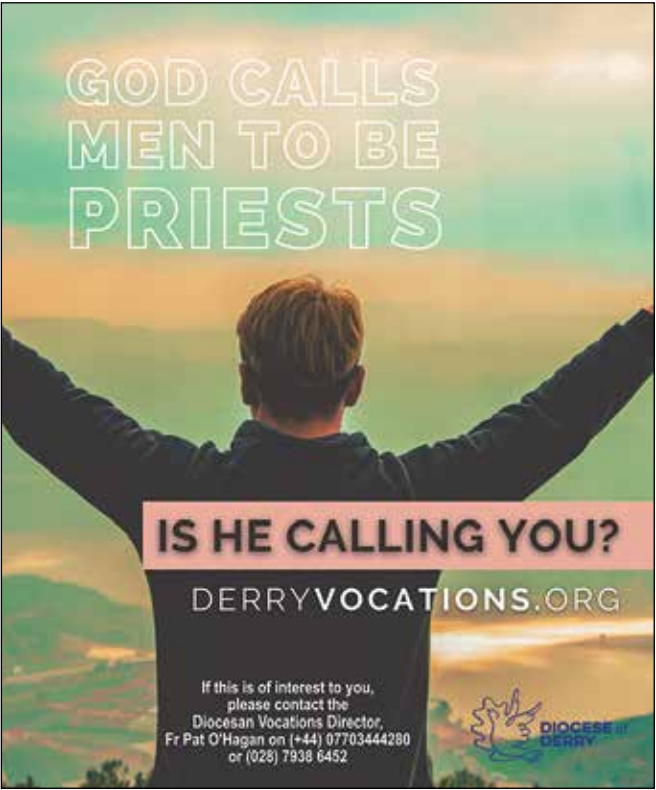
And, most importantly, Nellie will live forever because eternal love is the real meaning of the Incarnation. When the child Jesus was born in the shed of Bethlehem, the world was changed forever. It is no wonder that the spirit of Nellie lives on in our family. In the draughts and smells of that stable, human history was being written in a way that even the greatest human imagination could not have imagined and, so, the priest spoke great truth at Nellie's Funeral.

The Maker of all that is, was born in time and space. The Almighty

God allowed Himself to be born into our world as a helpless dependant and crying baby. The infant God-child changed the world. The radical act of kindness by Nellie's Grandfather is only a small example of the love that God has for each of us. The Child wrapped in rags by His devoted Mother was given the name Jesus, which means 'God saves'. Yes, God saves Nellie, her parents, her grandparents, and all her family, for this is the plan of God.

I never met my sister, Nellie. But I believe that one day I will meet her. This is what I call eternal love. I believe that we will greet each other in and through what Jesus Christ did for us. It is the heart that holds the spirit and the spirit that holds the heart. When God's Son came into this world it was because of love, eternal love.

Vocations News



Encouraging time of prayer and discussion with Vocations Team

THE Diocesan Vocations Team hosted an afternoon of prayer, discussion and reflection on Sunday, August 24, for seminarians and men who are actively discerning their calling in life.

The Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan, celebrated the 12.30 pm Mass in St Columb's Church, Waterside, during which he encouraged the congregation to pray for vocations to the diocesan priesthood, noting that the large number of seminarians and discerners in, and from, our diocese is the fruit of ongoing prayer for that intention.

Bishop Donal gathered with four priests, Deacon Stephen Baxter, three other seminarians, and 14 other men who are at various stages in their vocation story, including four who have applied to begin their formal training in Salamanca this coming January.

Fr Shaun Doherty, Fr Stephen Ward and Fr Patrick Lagan spoke about their years in ministry. Each one of them talked about the joys of serving God's people as priests, as well as the challenges. They all emphasised the importance of personal prayer and love for the Scriptures.

Bishop Donal noted that people appreciate the ministry of their local priests, especially at occasions of trauma, particularly at times of bereavement. He said that, like the Greeks who approached Philip, the people of God "...want to see Jesus..." in their priests.

Fr Pat took the attendees through the various stages of the road to priesthood, including spiritual accompaniment prior to applying to the diocese. The application process includes psychological assessment and an interview, with a panel of lay people who

are committed Catholics with an amount of expertise in the pastoral, personal, educational, and spiritual elements of priestly formation, which takes places over a number of years, beginning in Salamanca and continuing in either Maynooth or Rome.

Everyone at the gathering spoke about their personal story of faith and vocation, or asked questions about the training process. There was general agreement that the afternoon had been a worthwhile exercise and that everyone had learned something valuable and helpful in their discernment.

The gathering concluded with a period of Adoration of the Blessed

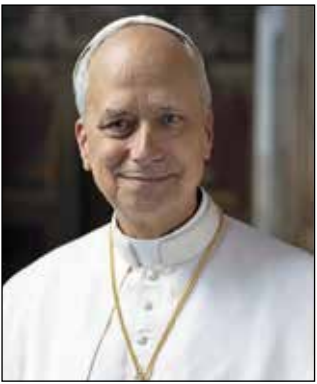
Sacrament and the Evening Prayer of the Church.

Prayer Evenings for Vocations

EVENINGS of Prayer for an increase in Vocations to Priesthood, in the Diocese of Derry, will take place each month in St Columb's Church, Chapel Road, Waterside.

The evenings will begin with Mass at 7.30 pm, followed by a Holy Hour from 8-9 pm.

The dates are: Tues, Sept30; Tues, Oct 28; Tues, Nov 25; and Tues, Dec 2.



Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during September for:

Our relationship with all of Creation:

Let us pray that, inspired by St Francis, we might experience our interdependence with all creatures who are loved by God and worthy of love and respect.

Prayer for Priests

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

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

Give them the grace they need to

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

Remember in prayer:

- Fr Pat O'Hagan (Sept 1st)
- Fr David O'Kane (2nd)
- All Priests (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)
- All Priests (12th)
- Fr Gerard Sweeney (13th)
- All priests (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)
- All Priests (28th)
- All priests (29th)
- All priests (30th)

Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group
Day of Prayer,
Praise and Healing
Mellon Country Hotel,
Omagh, BT78 5RA
Sunday 19th October 2025
Registration from 9.30am
Holy Mass in the afternoon
"Apart from me you can do nothing."
Jn 15.5
Speaker Fr John Keane
Cost £30, includes morning coffee and lunch.
Booking by Sunday 5th October is essential for catering purposes, indicate any dietary requirements.
Mob 07876411435/07596609041

Weekend Mass Times:

LOUGH DERG
2025 PILGRIMAGE SEASON
SANCTUARY OF SAINT PATRICK

**JUBILEE 2025
LOUGH DERG
PILGRIMS OF HOPE**

GREENCASTLE PARISH
JUBILEE OF HOPE 2025

One Day Retreat
Saturday 20th September 2025

Cost which includes tea/coffee and scones on arrival,
a light lunch and the bus is €50

Bus pick up points are:
Old Hall, Gortin at 7.45a.m.
Rouskey Chapel Carpark at 7.55a.m.
Greencastle Chapel Carpark at 8.10a.m.
Crevenagh Park and Ride, Omagh at 8.30a.m.

To book, please contact
Maria at 02881648357 or WhatsApp 07768395038


Sanctuary of Saint Patrick
Ferry, County Donegal
F94 PG40
☎ +353 (0)91 94 01118 ✉ info@loughderg.org
www.loughderg.org 

*It is our intention, may the Jubilee be a moment of grace, personal encounter with the Lord Jesus who is our hope!
Pope Francis

Parish *Post-its*

7.30 pm Vigil in St Patrick’s, Keenaught; and 10 am in St Mary’s, Coolcalm.
Confessions: Saturday evenings in St Patrick’s, Keenaught, from 6.30–7.10 pm.

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

Donaghmore (Killygordon)
Gospel Concert: The Patrick Feeney Gospel Concert in St Patrick’s Church, Crossroads, will take place on Sunday, November 2 at 5 pm. Tickets cost 25 Euros and can be purchased in Bradley’s Shop, McCreary’s Topline, All Things Nice Antique Shop – Stranorlar, and Stockhouse Interiors Drumrooske, Donegal Town. All proceeds will go towards the Church Restoration Fund.
Holy Hour: Prayerful reading of the Scriptures & Rosary with the Home of the Mother, Servant Sisters every Tuesday from 6.30-7.30 pm at St Mary’s Church, Sessiaghoneill, Ballybofey, and every Thursday from 7-8 pm at St. Patrick’s.
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary’s Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick’s Church, Crossroads.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Patrick’s; 8 pm Vigil, 9 am & 11 am, St Mary’s Sessiaghoneill.

Drumquin
Rosary: The Rosary is prayed each Tuesday morning at 10 am in St Patrick’s Church, Drumquin.
Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 6 pm – Mass at 7.30 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: Vigil 6.30 pm, and 11 am.

Drumragh (Omagh)
Prayer Group: The Charismatic Prayer Group meetings take place in The Pastoral Centre on Thursday evenings, with Rosary at 7.30 pm and prayer meeting at 8 pm. All welcome to come and pray.
Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary Men’s meetings take place on the first, second and last Monday, and third Tuesday of each month at

7.30 pm, in St Vincent’s Hall (beneath Sacred Heart Church Sacristy). Contact: Sean on 07730671370.
Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Sacred Heart Church on Wednesdays following 10 am Mass until 5.30 pm.
Rosary of Reparation: On the first Saturday of each month, a Rosary of Reparation will be prayed at 1pm on Main Street, Omagh. All welcome to join.
Stations of Cross: The Stations are prayed after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church.
Confessions: Confession take place on Saturdays after 10 am Mass and after 6 pm Mass in Sacred Heart Church.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 12 noon, Sacred Heart Church; 10.30 am, St Mary’s Drumragh.

Dungiven
Prayer Group 50th: St Canice Charismatic Prayer Group marks 50 years of life in the Spirit with a jubilee celebration in the new Emmaus Hall, beside St Patrick’s Church, on Sunday, September 21. A time of Prayer & Praise will take place from 2.30 pm, followed by the Golden Jubilee Mass at 3 pm, and then refreshments.
Concert: Dungiven Community Choir Concert will take place in Dungiven Parish Conference Room on Sunday, November 30, at 3 pm. (doors open at 2.30 pm.). A second concert will take place at 7 pm. (doors open at 6.30 pm.). Ticket only event. Tickets £15, available by contacting Tel: 077 1432 9319.

Legion of Mary: Dungiven Legion of Mary meets every Tuesday at 6 pm in the Parish Committee Room. New members welcome. If anyone would like to have the Legion of Mary Statue, (Our Lady of Peace), please telephone 078 9552 9563. Many blessings have been bestowed upon those who have taken the statue to their home for a week.
Prayer Group: The St Canice’s Charismatic Prayer Group meets each Thursday at 7 pm, in the Conference Room, and invites anyone who wishes to deepen their faith through shared Scripture, Prayer and Praise.
St Pio Healing Mass: A St Pio Healing Mass is celebrated monthly, on the first Tuesday, in St Patrick’s Church at 7 pm.
Society of St Joseph: The Society of St Joseph’s for the support of religious vocations meets on the second Tuesdays of the month in the Committee Room, after

10 am Mass in St Patrick’s Church.
Children’s Liturgy: Children’s liturgy recommences on Sunday, October 20 and will continue every third Sunday of the month at 11.30 am Mass. Children from P2-P4 are invited to participate.
Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross will be prayed after the 10 am Mass on Fridays, in St Patrick’s Church.
Rosary: The Rosary is prayed on Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 9.35 am, in St Patrick’s Church.
Adoration: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9 am-6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 11.30 am, St Patrick’s; 10.15 am, St Matthew’s; and 4.30 pm, Immaculate Conception.
Confession: Confession is available in St Patrick’s Church at 11 am on Saturdays.

Errigal
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Mondays after 10 am Mass in St Mary’s Church, Ballerin, until 2.30 pm.
Rosary & Chaplet: The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet are prayed in St Joseph’s Church, Glenullin, every Wednesday evening at 6.30 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, St Joseph’s Church, Glenullin, and St Mary’s Church, 10 am, St Mary’s, Ballerin, and 11.30 am in St Joseph’s, Glenullin.

Faughanvale
Rosary: The Rosary is prayed every Friday at 7 pm in Star of the Sea Church.
Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Faughanvale Branch meets in St Mary’s Church on the second Monday of the month (not Jan July, August) following morning Mass. They pray for and sponsor vocations to the priesthood. New members are needed. The meeting only takes less than an hour.
Rosary for Priests and for Vocations: A Rosary for priests and vocations is recited each Monday before morning Mass.
Weekend Mass Times: 5 pm Vigil, 12 noon, Star of the Sea; 6.30 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Mary’s.

Granaghan (Swatragh)
Weekend Mass Times: 12 noon & 7 pm Vigils; 10.30 am.

Greencastle
Lough Derg Retreat: To mark the Jubilee of Hope, the Parish will attend the One Day Retreat on Lough Derg on Saturday, September 20. The £60 cost includes tea/coffee and scones on arrival, a light lunch and transport. Bus pick-up points are: Old Hall, Gortin, at 7.45 am; Rouskey Chapel car park at 7.55 am; Greencastle Chapel car park at 8.10 am; and Crevenagh Park & Ride, Omagh, at 8.30 am. To book contact Maria on 028 81648357 or WhatsApp 07768395038.
Divine Mercy: The Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed on the First Tuesday of every month at 12.15 pm before Mass in St Patrick’s Church, Greencastle.
Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in St Patrick’s Church on Thursdays, 6-10 pm.
Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 7.30 pm Mass on Fridays in St Patrick’s, Greencastle.
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Fridays from 9.30 am until 5 pm.
Confession: Confessions are heard from 5.15–5.45 pm on Saturdays.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 11 am.

Greenlough
Rosary: Tuesday Night Rosary is prayed at 7.30 pm in the Church.
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Oliver Plunkett’s Church from 9 am-5 pm on Thursdays.
Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil, and 11 am (alternates with 11 am Sunday Mass in St Mary’s Bellaghy).

Iskaheen, Drung & Muff
St Peregrine: The next St Peregrine Novena Mass, with the Sacrament of the Sick and blessing with the relic, will take place on Friday, September 19, at 7 pm, in Sacred Heart Church, Muff.
Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Tuesdays after 10 am Eucharistic Service, until 2 pm, in St Patrick’s Church, Iskaheen.
Divine Mercy: Divine Mercy Devotions take place on Thursdays after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church, Muff.
Rosary: The Rosary is prayed before all weekday Masses.
Confessions: Confessions are available in Iskaheen on Saturdays, 9.45-10 am, and in Muff on Saturdays, 6 pm, and after 6.30 pm Vigil Mass
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 11.30 am, Sacred Heart Church, Muff; 8 pm

Vigil, 10.15 am, St Columba’s, Drung; 9 am, St Patrick’s, Iskaheen.

Kilrea
Eucharistic Adoration: Mondays, from 12 noon - 7pm, at St Mary’s Drumagarnier. Concludes with Public Prayers.
Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed on Sundays in St Anne’s Oratory at 7 pm, with Confessions beforehand from 6.30-6.50 pm.
SVP: The St Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop is open on Saturdays from 10 am -1pm.
Confession: Confession is available immediately after the 7 pm Vigil Mass in St Anne’s Oratory each Saturday. Alternatively, feel free to request the sacrament before or after any weekday Mass.
Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm, Vigil, St Anne’s Oratory; 10am St Mary’s, Drumagarnier; 12 noon, St Mary’s, Craigavole.

Lavey
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Fridays from 9.30 am until 5 pm.
Confession: Confessions are heard from 5.15–5.45 pm on Saturdays.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 11 am.

Leckpatrick
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 8.30 am Mass until 5.30 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 5 pm Vigil, St Mary’s Church, Cloughcor; 9.45 am St Joseph’s Church, Glenmornan; 11.15 am, Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road.

Lifford (Murlog)
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 8.30 am Mass until 5.30 pm.
Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are recited publicly each Friday after 9.30 am Mass in St Patrick’s Church, Murlog.
Adoration: 9.30 am-12.30 pm
Confessions: Saturday, 6-6.15 pm
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 11 am.

Limavady
Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Sundays in Christ the King (with Confessions) from 3-5 pm.
Children’s Prayer: A Children’s Prayer Group is held in the Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly, on the First Saturday of every month,

from 2.30-3.30 pm. All welcome. Contact: Kathy on 07538749627.
Weekend Mass Times: 4.30 pm Vigil, 9 am, 12 noon, Christ the King Church; 6 pm Vigil, St Finlough’s Church; 10.30 am, St Mary’s Church.

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

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

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

Melmount
New Parish Priest: Fr Sean O’Donnell will be installed as the new Parish Priest of Melmount at the 11.30 am Mass in St Mary’s Church on Sunday, September 14.
Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the church on Mondays after 10.30 am – 6.30 pm (Benediction at 6.30 pm if priest available).
Confessions: Second and fourth Saturdays at 11.30 am in St Mary’s; for First Fridays – after Mass Thursday & Friday mornings (if no funeral) and after First Friday evening Mass.
Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, 11.30 am.

Moville
Parish Mission: There will be a Parish Mission as part of the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025 celebration, from October 13-16. Further details in the coming weeks.
Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 10 am Mass on Fridays.

Prayer: The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet will be recited in St Pius X Church, Moville, at 7.30 pm every day, from Sunday – Friday.
Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Mondays, from 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, in St Pius X Church.
Confessions: Confessions will be heard in St Pius X Church on Saturdays from 5.45-6.15 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Pius X Church. 11.30 am on alternate Sundays in St Mary’s Ballybrack, and St Columba’s Ballinacrae.

Sion Mills
New Parish Priest: Fr Sean O’Donnell will be installed as the new Parish Priest of Sion Mills at the 8.30 am Mass in St Theresa’s Church on Sunday, September 14.
Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Fridays, from 10.30 am – 6.30 pm (ending with Benediction if priest available). The Blessed Sacrament can also be adored in the Adoration Room in St Theresa’s anytime while the Church is open.
Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary meets in the Green Room, behind the church, each Monday evening at 7.30 pm. This is open not only to members of the Legion but to anyone interested in joining. Anyone can come along to the start of the meeting for the Rosary.
Confessions: First, third and fifth Saturdays at 10.30 am in St Theresa’s.
Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil; 9.30 am.

Steelstown & Culmore
New Parish Priest: Fr Declan McGeehan will be installed as the new Parish Priest of Steelstown & Culmore at the 6.30 pm Vigil Mass in Our Lady of Lourdes Church on Saturday, September 13, by Bishop Donal.
Lectio Divina: Lectio Divina is a way of praying the Scriptures together and takes place every Wednesday after 10 am Mass, in the Parish Conference Room. All welcome.
Adoration: Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6.50 pm.
Stations of the Cross: Come along to reflect on the Way of the Cross on Fridays at 7.30 pm.
Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 9 am, 11 am, and 12.15 pm.

Strabane (Camus)
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on

Parish *Post-its*

continued from page 27

Wednesdays from 8.30 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

Stations of Cross: Stations of the Cross are recited publicly each Friday after 10 am Mass in Immaculate Conception Church. **Adoration:** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every day, from 10.30 am-1 pm, in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), which is situated at the back of the Church.

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

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

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 9.45 am & 12.15 pm.

Templemore – St Eugene's Eucharistic Adoration: Every Sunday, there is Eucharistic Adoration from 3-6 pm and every Tuesday from 10.30 am until 7.20 pm.

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

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

Cathedral Club: The Cathedral Club meets after the 10 am Mass each Thursday in the Cathedral Hall. Everyone is welcome to this parish social group. Refreshments will be served.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.15 pm & 7.30 pm Vigils; 9.30 am, 11 am, 12.30 pm & 7 pm.

Templemore – Long Tower

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Three Patrons

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

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

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

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

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

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

Women's Bible Study: Women's Bible Study takes place on Wednesdays from 7-8 pm, in the Upper Room, St Brigid's Church, Carnhill.

God Club: God Club is an opportunity for teenagers to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room, Carnhill, on Saturdays from 11.30 am until 12.30 pm.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Living Disciples: Living Disciples meet on Tuesdays at 7.30-8.30 pm in St Pio House, St Joseph's Church grounds, for Praise & Worship, friendship and a cup of tea. All welcome.

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

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

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

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

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

Pennyburn. New members welcome.

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

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

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

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

Urney & Castlefinn

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

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

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

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

Waterside & Strathfoyle

Golden Jubilee: The 50th anniversary Mass for St Oliver Plunkett's, Strathfoyle, will be celebrated by Bishop Donal on Thursday, September 18, at 11 am.

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

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

Confessions: St Columb's – Saturday after 10 am Mass, Monday-Friday at 7 pm, before evening Mass; Immaculate Conception, after 11 am Mass every Saturday and at 5.30 pm before evening Mass on a Saturday; St Oliver Plunkett, Every Saturday 5.30 pm, before the Vigil Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, St Columb's; 6 pm Vigil,

10.15 am & 12.15 pm, Immaculate Conception; 11.15 am, St Oliver Plunkett.



FREE ADMISSION
THE EVENT IS AIMED
AT 18-35 YEAR-OLDS

Does Gen Z have a future without religion?

SATURDAY, OCT 11
10AM TO 4.30PM
ELY HOUSE, 8 ELY PLACE
DUBLIN 2

SPEAKERS:

BISHOP NIAL COLL
'The crucial choice before Gen Z'

PROFESSOR STEPHEN BULLIVANT
'Prospects for religious revival
among Gen Z'

FR CONOR MCDONOUGH OP
'Reaching Gen Z: Opportunities
and Risks'

MARIA STEEN
'What do the Irish think about
religion and the Church?'

AS SPACE IS LIMITED, BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL
TO BOOK PLEASE EMAIL: info@ionainstitute.ie

Benedictine Monks of Our Lady of the Cenacle

DERRY
Saturday 20th September 2025

Information and Invitation Day!



ALL WELCOME | **St Pio House Derry**
2pm-5pm

We look forward to meeting you !

Benedictine Spirituality
Our Shop and Merchandise
Prayer, tea and chat

Receive a special invite to our monastery !

Diocesan *Diary*

ACCORD Derry: Accord Derry Marriage Preparation Workshops take place on September 26 & 27, October 17 & 18, and November 7 & 8, in the Everglades Hotel, Prehen Rd, Derry, BT47 2NH. Please visit www.accord.com

ACCORD Inishowen: On-line Marriage Preparation Programmes will be hosted on

September 12&13, October 17&18, 24&25, November 7&8, 21&22 (Fridays 7-10 pm and Saturdays 10 am – 4 pm), or Mondays, December 1, 8, 15, at 6.30 pm. All materials posted to address on booking form. Book online at accord.ie or for further details contact 0749374103/ inishowen@accord.ie

...other Diary Dates

Derry Search Youth Group: The monthly prayer meetings are starting back up in September, taking place on the first Sunday of each month. Everyone is welcome whether you have been before or not. It will start with a cup of tea, then open the prayer meeting with a theme to reflect on. The meeting will be in the Search centre at Iona Business Park, Southway. We look forward to seeing some old and new faces to join us in prayer and praise.

SPARK: A weekend experience which follows core themes from YouCat, as well as stories of role models such as Bl Carlo Acutis and Sr Clare Crockett, to help young people learn about their faith, while making friends and hopefully having a bit of fun in the process! This will take place in Termonbacca on September 12. Cost €80. For details text or WhatsApp Brendan on +353 86 8067973 or Vivienne on +44 7935 007351.

Community Walk: There will be

a community walk at the Rural College, Draperstown, from 11 am on Saturday, September 13, to mark World Suicide Prevention Day.

Benedictine Spirituality Day: There will be an information and invitation day regarding Benedictine Spirituality in St Pio House, Galliagh, Derry, on Saturday, September 20, from 2-5 pm, with Benedictine Monks of Our Lady of the Cenacle.

St Therese Prayer Hour: This year, it is 100 years since St Therese of Lisieux was declared a Saint. In order to mark this wonderful occasion, the Carmelites at Termonbacca Retreat Centre, in Derry, have built a new chapel which holds a first-class relic of St Therese. From Monday, September 1, they will also hold a weekly prayer hour in the new chapel, praying for the intercession of St Therese, particularly praying for world peace. The prayer will be from 7:30-8:30 pm and everyone is welcome to come along and join in.

St Therese Triduum: The annual St Therese Triduum will take place in Termonbacca Carmelite Monastery from September 29 until October 1. Starting at 7.30 pm each night, there will be Mass, Triduum Prayers and a relic blessing. The Triduum begins with a Healing Mass on the Sunday, with a focus on the Blessing of Children on the Monday night, and the traditional Blessing of the Roses will take place on the Tuesday night.

St Michael Retreat: On Monday, September 29, the Feast of the Archangels, Fr Andrew Marshall will lead a day of prayer and reflection on St Michael in Termonbacca. There will be talks, time for prayer, Confession, Mass and blessing with a sword blessed by Archbishop Eamon Martin. The day costs £20, which includes tea/coffee and light lunch. Places can be booked by calling 02871262512 or email termonbaccaderry@ocd.ie

Sr Clare Weekend Retreat: There will be a Sr Clare Crockett Retreat in Termonbacca Carmelite Retreat Centre on the weekend of October 10-12. The time of

reflection will be led by Fr Stephen Quinn OCD. The weekend costs £90, which covers all food and accommodation. To book a place complete the booking form at the following link: <https://forms.gle/fbXiKJQLZgW5hpgq6>

Day of Prayer & Healing: Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group is holding its annual Day of Prayer, Praise & Healing on Sunday, October 19, in the Mellon Country Hotel, Omagh. The theme will be 'Apart from me you can do nothing' (Jn 15:5) and the guest speaker will be Fr John Keane. All are welcome. Registration is from 9.30 am and Mass will be celebrated in the afternoon. The £30 cost includes morning coffee and lunch. Booking by Sunday, October 5, is essential for catering purposes. Indicate any dietary requirements. The contact numbers are 07876411435 or 07596609041.

Anam Cara: Anam Cara is holding a bereavement support evening for bereaved parents on Tuesday, September 9, at 7 pm, in the Inishowen Gateway Hotel, Buncrana.

Termonbacca News...

Praying with St Thérèse of Lisieux

Join us from Monday 1st September and every Monday evening after when we will gather in prayer in the new St Thérèse chapel from 7:30pm—8:30pm.



Termonbacca Carmelite Retreat Centre
Monday evening 7:30pm—8:30pm

Carmelites launch weekly St Therese prayer hour


THIS year, it is 100 years since St Therese of Lisieux was declared a Saint. In order to mark this wonderful occasion, the Carmelites at Termonbacca Retreat Centre, in Derry, have built a new chapel which holds a first-class relic of St Therese. From Monday, September 1, they will also hold a weekly prayer hour in the new chapel, praying for the intercession of St Therese, particularly praying for world peace. The prayer will be from 7:30-8:30 pm and everyone is welcome to come along and join in.

DDS Daily Masses 2024-2025

St Eugene's 17 Jan, 9 Mar, 29 Apr, 19 Jun, 9 Aug, 29 Sep, 19 Nov	10 Dec 2024, 30 Jan, 22 Mar, 12 May, 2 Jul, 22 Aug, 12 Oct
St Columba's 18 Jan, 10 Mar, 30 Apr, 20 Jun, 10 Aug, 30 Sep, 20 Nov	11 Dec 2024, 31 Jan, 23 Mar, 13 May, 3 Jul, 23 Aug, 13 Oct
The Three Patrons 19 Jan, 11 Mar, 1 May, 21 Jun, 11 Aug, 1 Oct, 21 Nov	Donaghmore 12 Dec 2024, 1 Feb, 24 Mar, 14 May, 4 Jul, 24 Aug, 14 Oct
St Mary's, Creggan 20 Jan, 12 Mar, 2 May, 22 Jun, 12 Aug, 2 Oct, 22 Nov	Termonamongan 13 Dec 2024, 2 Feb, 25 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jul, 25 Aug, 15 Oct,
Our Lady of Lourdes 1 Dec 2024, 21 Jan, 13 Mar, 3 May, 23 Jun, 13 Aug, 3 Oct, 23 Nov	Langfield 14 Dec 2024, 3 Feb, 26 Mar, 16 May, 6 Jul, 26 Aug, 16 Oct,
Holy Family 2 Dec, 2024, 22 Jan, 14 Mar, 4 May, 24 Jun, 14 Aug, 4 Oct, 24 Nov	Sion Mills 15 Dec 2024, 4 Feb, 27 Mar, 17 May, 7 Jul, 27 Aug, 17 Oct,
Culmore 3 Dec 2024, 23 Jan, 15 Mar, 5 May, 25 Jun, 15 Aug, 5 Oct, 25 Nov	Ardstraw East 16 Dec 2024, 5 Feb, 28 Mar, 18 May, 8 Jul, 28 Aug, 18 Oct,
Glendermott 4 Dec 2024, 24 Jan, 16 Mar, 6 May, 26 Jun, 16 Aug, 6 Oct, 26 Nov	Ardstraw W & C'derg 17 Dec 2024, 6 Feb, 29 Mar, 19 May, 9 Jul, 29 Aug, 19 Oct
Donagheady 5 Dec 2024, 25 Jan, 17 Mar, 7 May, 27 Jun, 17 Aug, 7 Oct, 27 Nov	Clonleigh 18 Dec 2024, 7 Feb, 30 Mar, 20 May, 10 Jul, 30 Aug, 20 Oct
Leckpatrick 6 Dec 2024, 26 Jan, 18 Mar, 8 May, 28 Jun, 18 Aug, 8 Oct, 28 Nov	Drumragh 19 Dec 2024, 8 Feb, 31 Mar, 21 May, 11 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Oct
Ardmore 7 Dec 2024, 27 Jan, 19 Mar, 9 May, 29 Jun, 19 Aug, 9 Oct, 29 Nov	Cappagh 20 Dec 2024, 9 Feb, 1 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jul, 1 Sep, 22 Oct
Strathfoyle 8 Dec 2024, 28 Jan, 20 Mar, 10 May, 30 Jun, 20 Aug, 10 Oct	Greencastle 21 Dec 2024, 10 Feb, 2 Apr, 23 May, 13 Jul, 2 Sep, 23 Oct
Camus 9 Dec 2024, 29 Jan, 21 Mar, 11 May, 1 Jul, 21 Aug, 11 Oct	Badoney Lower 22 Dec 2024, 11 Feb, 3 Apr, 24 May, 14 Jul, 3 Sep, 24 Oct
Urney & Castlefin	Badoney Upper 23 Dec 2024, 12 Feb, 4 Apr, 25 May, 15 Jul, 4 Sep, 25 Oct
	Maghera 24 Dec 2024, 13 Feb, 5 Apr, 26 May, 16 Jul, 5 Sep, 26 Oct
	Desertmartin 25 Dec 2024, 14 Feb, 6 Apr,

27 May, 17 Jul, 6 Sep, 27 Oct	2 Aug, 22 Sep, 12 Nov
Faughanvale 26 Dec 2024, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 28 May, 18 Jul, 7 Sep, 28 Oct	Fahan 11 Jan, 3 Mar, 23 Apr, 13 Jun, 3 Aug, 23 Sep, 13 Nov
Claudy 27 Dec 2024, 16 Feb, 8 Apr, 29 May, 19 Jul, 8 Sep, 29 Oct	Clonmany 12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Apr, 14 Jun, 4 Aug, 24 Sep, 14 Nov
Banagher 28 Dec 2024, 17 Feb, 9 Apr, 30 May, 20 Jul, 9 Sep, 30 Oct	Carndonagh 13 Jan, 5 Mar, 25 Apr, 15 Jun, 5 Aug, 25 Sep, 15 Nov
Ballinascreen 29 Dec 2024, 18 Feb 10 Apr, 31 May 21 Jul, 10 Sep, 31 Oct	Malin 14 Jan, 6 Mar, 26 Apr, 16 Jun, 6 Aug, 26 Sep, 16 Nov
Dungiven 30 Dec 2024, 19 Feb, 11 Apr, 1 Jun, 22 Jul, 11 Sep, 1 Nov	Iskaheen 15 Jan, 7 Mar, 27 Apr, 17 Jun, 7 Aug, 27 Sep, 17 Nov
Limavady 31 Dec 2024, 20 Feb, 12 Apr, 2 Jun, 23 Jul, 12 Sep, 2 Nov	Culdaff 16 Jan, 8 Mar, 28 Apr 18 Jun, 8 Aug, 28 Sep, 18 Nov
Magilligan 1 Jan, 21 Feb, 13 Apr, 3 Jun, 24 Jul, 13 Sep, 3 Nov	1ST FRIDAY MASS FOR LIVING MEMBERS 2024 / 2025
Coleraine 2 Jan, 22 Feb, 14 Apr, 4 Jun, 25 Jul, 14 Sep, 4 Nov	Ballinascreen 06/12/2024
Garvagh 3 Jan, 23 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Jun, 26 Jul, 15 Sep, 5 Nov	Banagher 03/01/2025
Kilrea 4 Jan, 24 Feb, 16 Apr, 6 Jun, 27 Jul, 16 Sep, 6 Nov	Bellaghy 07/02/2025
Greenlough 5 Jan, 25 Feb, 7 Jun, 28 Jul, 17 Sep, 7 Nov	Coleraine 07/03/2025
Bellaghy 6 Jan, 26 Feb, 8 Jun, 29 Jul, 18 Sep, 8 Nov	Desertmartin 04/04/2025
Lavey 7 Jan, 27 Feb, 9 Jun, 30 Jul, 19 Sep, 9 Nov	Dungiven 02/05/2025
Moville 8 Jan, 28 Feb, 20 Apr, 10 Jun, 31 Jul, 20 Sep, 10 Nov	Errigal 06/06/2025
Granaghan 9 Jan, 1 Mar, 21 Apr, 11 Jun, 1 Aug, 21 Sep, 11 Nov	Greenlough 04/07/2025
Buncrana 10 Jan, 2 Mar, 22 Apr, 12 Jun,	Kilrea 01/08/2025
	Lavey 05/09/2025
	Limavady 03/10/2025
	Maghera 07/11/2025

Eighty-Third Mass in Memory of Sister Clare Crockett



Sunday 14th September 2025 at 7pm

Mass will be streamed live via Termonbacca YouTube channel

Forty Hours - 2025

Sun 7 Sept	St Matthew's, Drumsurn	Dungiven
Sun 7 Sept	St Columba's, Straw	Ballinascreen
Sun 7 Sept	St Mura's	Fahan
Sun 14 Sept	St John the Baptist	Granaghan
Sun 14 Sept	St Mary's, Cockhill	Buncrana
Sun 14 Sept	Immaculate Conception	Camus
Sun 21 Sept	Christ the King	Limavady
Sun 21 Sept	St Columba's, Drung	Iskaheen
Sun 21 Sept	St Mary's, Castlefin	Urney & Castlefin
Sun 28 Sept	St Pius X	Moville
Sun 28 Sept	St Aidan's	Magilligan
Sun 28 Sept	St Mary's	Creggan, Derry
Sun 5 Oct	St John's	Coleraine
Sun 5 Oct	Holy Rosary	Ballinascreen
Sun 5 Oct	St Eugene's, Glenock	Newtownstewart
Sun 12 Oct	St Columba's, Long Tower	Templemore, Derry
Sun 12 Oct	St Mary's, Dregish	Ardstraw West & Castlederg
Sun 12 Oct	St Mary's	Maghera
Sun 19 Oct	St Mary's	Limavady
Sun 19 Oct	St Brigid's, Carnhill	Three Patrons, Derry
Sun 19 Oct	Christ the King, Strathroy	Cappagh
Sun 26 Oct	St Mary's, Melmount	Mourne
Sun 26 Oct	Our Lady of Lourdes	Steelstown

Do you know who I am? *Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR*



Fr. Johnny Doherty CSsR

DAVID is a very successful businessman. For the past 10 years and more, he has put every waking moment into the development of his business and now he sees the good effects of all his work. He also knows that it has, at times, been to the detriment of his marriage and family life. But he is determined to make up for that in the near future.

Recently, David was going on an important business trip to Europe. When he arrived at Dublin Airport, he discovered that there was a delay in his flight and there was a very long queue at the check-in. He panicked.

As he pushed his way through the queue all he could think of was the important meeting he was going to. He hardly heard the objections of the people he was pushing aside.

When he got to the check-in desk, he immediately began to explain his predicament to the attendant. But all she said to him was: "Sir, please go back to the end of the queue." The more he insisted that he needed to be listened to, the more she seemed to say: "Please go

back to the end of the queue."

Finally, he burst out in anger, asking her: "Do you know who I am?" He kept repeating his question until, finally, the attendant lifted the phone and made an announcement: "Attention please. There is a well-dressed gentleman carrying an expensive briefcase at the check-in desk of ... (and she mentioned the name of the airline). He does not seem to know who he is. If anyone can help him to identify himself please contact this check-in desk. Thank you."

"Now, sir, please go back to the end of the queue."

God's Word for September

On August 31, we, as the Church, celebrated the 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time. This was an introduction to the Word of God for the Month of September. The core message of the Gospel on this day was, "Jesus said: 'Those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted'."

Sometimes, we may think that to be humble means that we have to regard ourselves as being no good! Of course, that does not fit well with us because it does not mean that at all. We have a right to know how good we are and a responsibility to help others to know how good they are.

Pride means making ourselves the centre of our world and insisting that everything and everybody revolve around us. Humility means making others the centre of our lives. Our energy and care are given to them. In this sense another word for humility is love.

The wrong question

They say that if you keep asking the wrong question you will keep getting the wrong answer and the wrong results. The question that David asked in the story above – "Do you know who I am?" – is certainly the wrong question for any kind of relationship between people. The question we need to learn to ask is: "Do I know who you are?" This question takes the emphasis off myself and puts it firmly on the other person, and on my responsibility of love towards her or him.

A prime example

I am sure that most people are only too familiar with the scene that was played out in the Oval Office in Washington DC a few months ago, when President Zelenski of Ukraine was invited to meet with President Trump. The purpose of the meeting was to see how the awful invasion of Ukraine could be brought to an end.

It quickly turned into a humiliating time for President Zelenski because he dared to stand up for the rights of the Ukrainian people to their country and their independence. And it was all around the question of "Do you know who I am, who we are?" from President Trump and his Vice-President, JD Vance. They talked about holding all the cards and President Zelenski held no cards. They seem to have forgotten that Ukraine belongs to Ukraine and it is being brutally ravaged by Russia.

Coercive control

The term 'coercive control' is comparatively recent in our vocabulary. But the reality of it

goes back a long way! It means that people use their power – real or imaginary – to impose their will on others.

David, in the story above, used the fact that he was a successful and wealthy man to push others aside in order to get to the top of the queue. To him, that was his right. And it was his right to get preferential treatment from the attendant at the check-in desk because of the importance of the meeting that he was scheduled for in Europe. That is coercive control.

President Trump and his Vice-President presumed that, because of their position at the top of the American system, they could dictate to Ukraine that they needed to give everything to the Russians in order for there to be peace in their country. And they place the blame on President Zelenski for the continuation of the war if he refuses to do this. That is coercive control.

Closer to home

But coercive control also happens much closer to home. And here, too, it has to be dealt with. Otherwise, it will have very serious consequences for the important relationships of human life.

1. The Sacrament of Marriage: For us, as Catholics, the relationship of a woman and man in the Sacrament of Marriage is a very significant reality. They pledge to love each other all the days of their lives for better or worse; for richer or poorer; in sickness and in health. That means that they set out to put each other first in everything. And they set out to put their marriage as their number one priority. It is an amazing promise.

It becomes a problem when one or other of the spouses constantly puts their own needs and their own way before the needs of the other. This can lead to coercive control when the marriage is shaped primarily by one of the spouses. In the Letter to the Ephesians, we learn the key to the marriage relationship: "Give way to one another in obedience to Christ".

2. Parenting: When people have children, they enter into a wonderful and very special relationship with their family and with each of their children personally. The challenge is to love each child as she/he needs to be loved as each one grows into adulthood.

The shortcut that is often tried is to make the children be the way that the parents want them to be. It never works in the long run. Coercive control by parents of their children can only lead to resentment that can last a lifetime.

3. Family life: Sometimes the needs of one or other members of a family can be a controlling factor on family life. Parents need to be very careful about this.

This is particularly true when the need comes from an addiction of some kind, especially a drug addiction. Parents often have very difficult decisions to make in order to free family life from the control that this is imposing on the others.

4. Education: The education system has an awesome responsibility for the formation of each individual as she/he grows up. When the system is controlled by the need for success as measured only by exam results and placements, then many can leave it with a sense of failure

rather than successful maturity.

Each individual teacher is constantly faced with the choice of following the question: 'Do you know who am I am?' and focus on his or her own importance as a teacher; or the question: 'Do I know who you are?' and focus on the needs and potential of the pupils. It is not an easy choice a lot of the time.

5. The faith community: The late Pope Francis very often talked about the sin of clericalism and prayed for the Church to be cleansed from it. That sin is surely coercive control.

Bishops, and priests, who share in the priesthood of the bishop, have a very special place in the life of the Church. The problem though is often that the Church is identified with them. Bishops and priests can act as if they are the Church. The laity can be reduced to 'pray and pay members'!

If Bishops and priests live by the question: 'Do you know who I am?', they can easily try to lord it over everyone. They, too, need to switch to the question: 'Do I know who you (the people) are?', and see their own role as setting the gifts of the Spirit that are in the whole Body of Christ free for the evangelisation of the world.

Conclusion

"Those who exalt themselves will be humbled; those who humble themselves will be exalted."

These words of Christ hold a great challenge for all of us. Placing ourselves at the centre of our lives can only lead to disappointment. When we put God and one another at the centre, we will be led into the fullness of life.

Faith in Action... Making choices as a Catholic parent *by Sinéad Strong*



WE live in a time of so many choices. There are so many decisions to make that it can become overwhelming, and also lead to so much indecision or fear of making a decision! I listened to a video by Fr Mike Schmitz recently, where he said: "Disciples make decisions, you have to choose. To make the decision is to take responsibility."

As a Catholic mother, I find myself thinking a lot about choices. Every day brings a string of decisions, some small, others

that feel huge. It is humbling and, honestly, a bit daunting to realise that God has given me not just intellect, but also free will; He actually wants me to use both. That means I have to step up, put my heart and head together, and choose.

Decision-making really is about taking responsibility, not just for myself but for those around me. It is important to try and remember that God didn't create us to just drift along. He gave us the ability to think and reason, to

discern and, at the end of the day, to choose. My job as a mother isn't to control my children's every move or protect them from every mis-step, as tempting as that is. Instead, I need to encourage their growth, help them develop sound judgment, and trust that they will make good choices; sometimes by letting them fall and get back up.

The choices I make, whether it is how I answer my children's questions, how I handle disagreements, or how I apologise when I fall short, are all ways I steward what God has given me. We usually hear of 'stewardship' when people talk about money or caring for the earth but, for me, it is even more about everyday life. The most important thing I am a steward of is my family; my children, my spouse, our home. Stewardship means paying attention, making intentional choices, and using the gifts God has given me, even when I am tired or unsure.

It is not just about the big moments. It is about the daily things, too, like making time for each of my children, listening

instead of just reacting, setting healthy boundaries, and trying to live out my faith in front of them. That is where discipleship gets real. My hope is that, through these small choices, my children see that faith isn't theoretical, but lived out in the mess and beauty of ordinary days.

Balance

One of the hardest parts of parenting for me is finding the balance between giving my children responsibility and letting them have the freedom to make their own decisions. I want to protect them, but I know they need the space to learn and sometimes make mistakes. Our home is a place where questions are okay, where we talk about consequences, and where we try to turn mistakes into lessons. It is not easy to watch them struggle or face disappointment, but I know that is often where the real growth happens. My job is to support them, pray for them, and trust that God is working in their hearts, often in ways that I can't see.

Making decisions, big or

small, feels like an act of faith for me. When I choose patience over snapping, honesty over convenience, or kindness even when it is hard, I feel that I am saying "yes" to God, however imperfectly. Most of these decisions aren't dramatic. They are quiet, hidden, and sometimes only God notices. But I believe they matter. My faith is my anchor. I draw strength from the sacraments, pray for help (a lot!) and look to the saints, especially Mary, whose "yes" to God changed everything. Her example comforts me; even the smallest, quietest acts of trust can bear fruit.

At the end of the day, discipleship for me is all about choosing: choosing Christ; choosing to take responsibility; and choosing to love the family God has given me. Every decision, woven together, is part of the tapestry of my faith and the life I am trying to build.

God gave us an intellect, He gave us free will. He wants us to use that intellect and then put it to work by making a decision and choosing. If you realise that you have made a decision and it

is the wrong one, then change course. Not based off feelings, but from the facts. God has given us such freedom. We have to, make decisions, take responsibility and use what God has given us. Every decision has risks, every decision costs something, but so does not deciding.

O Lord, help me to make wise decisions. Grant me the strength and courage to make the decision You desire, and fill my heart with Your peace as I trust in Your will. Amen.

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



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



Mary's Birthday

We celebrate Our Lady's Birthday on the 8th day of September. Mary was born without Original Sin and full of grace (CCC 491). She was chosen to be the Mother of our Saviour Jesus Christ, the spiritual Mother for all of us. She is the holiest of all God's creatures. We rejoice and celebrate this wonderful Feast, for on this day the dawning of redemption for the world came about through Mary's birth.

Father of Mercy, give your people help and strength from Heaven. The birth of the Virgin Mary's Son was the dawn of our salvation. May this celebration of Her birthday bring us closer to lasting peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.



Saints of the Month

- St Mother Theresa – September 5
- St Matthew – September 21
- St Pio – September 23
- St Jerome – September 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 St 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.

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 the 29th of September – 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 your Guardian Angel

Angel of God, my guardian dear, to whom God's love commits me here, ever this day be at my side, to light and guard, to rule and guide. Amen.

A symbol for the Year of Hope – Carlo Acutis

Carlo Acutis, born on May 3, 1991, will be canonised on September 7, 2025, by Pope Leo XIV; he will be the first millennial saint.

Carlo is known for his use of digital technology to evangelise and spread devotion to the Eucharist. He is a great reminder that technology, when used right, is a fantastic tool to help us to deepen our faith.

Carlo challenges all young people to live their faith and to stay close to the sacraments. He showed us that we can find holiness in our modern world and encourages us to always have hope, to seek Jesus in the Eucharist, and to use our talents to spread the Gospel.



Hail Mary

Use the word bank below to fill out the prayer

Hail Mary full of _____ the _____ is with thee. _____ art thou amongst _____ and _____ is the _____ of thy _____, Jesus. Holy _____ Mother of _____, _____ for us _____, now and at the _____ of our _____. Amen.

Word Bank

Sinners; Grace; Lord; Fruit; God; Mary; Blessed; Hour; Pray; Women; Death; Womb; Blessed

Quiz Time with Lawrence

- 1. What European dessert dish translates into English as 'Make Me Happy'?
- 2. In what South American country are the 'Angel Falls'?
- 3. The Bernstein Musical, 'West Side Story', was based on what Shakespeare characters?
- 4. With what invention is Alessandro Volta credited?
- 5. At what football ground do West Bromwich Albion play their home games?
- 6. The outlaw, Henry McCarty was better known by what nickname?
- 7. Who originally released the song 'Ob-la-di ob-la-da' as a single in 1968?
- 8. What does Moe Szyslak own in 'The Simpsons'?
- 9. Which is the largest of Spain's Balearic Islands?
- 10. "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...." is the first line of what Charles Dickens novel?
- 11. Of which country is Zloty the currency?
- 12. What BBC daytime quiz show is hosted by Ross Kemp?
- 13. In a regular game of darts, what is the highest possible 3-dart checkout without landing on any segment of the '20'?
- 14. Which renowned British actor voices the O2 telephone company's TV adverts?
- 15. In what country is 'The Jungle Book' set?
- 16. What is the capital city of New Zealand?
- 17. Who created the popular US puppet characters, 'The Muppets'?
- 18. In slang terms, what sum of money is referred to as 'a pony'?
- 19. What is the chemical symbol for lead?
- 20. What city is served by Schiphol airport?
- 21. At what club did Roy Keane finish his senior football playing career?
- 22. When sending an email, what do the letters 'CC' stand for when including other people?
- 23. Of what US State was Barack Obama the Senator before becoming President?
- 24. Who played 'The Fonz' in the 1970's US sitcom 'Happy Days'?
- 25. In the 1997 movie 'Bean', what famous painting is Mr Bean tasked with looking after?

Quiz Answers: 1, Tiramisu; 2, Venezuela; 3, Romeo & Juliet; 4, The battery; 5, The Hawthorns; 6, Billy the Kid; 7, The Beatles; 8, A bar; 9, Majorca; 10, A Tale of Two Cities; 11, Poland; 12, Bridge of Lies; 13, 164 (treble 19, treble 19, bullseye); 14, Sean Bean; 15, India; 16, Wellington; 17, Jim Henson; 18, £25; 19, Pb; 20, Amsterdam; 21, Glasgow Celtic; 22, Carbon Copy; 23, Illinois; 24, Henry Winkler; 25, Whistler's Mother.

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

Let Your Light Shine!



World Wide Eucharistic Procession Christ the King Centenary Celebration

**Sunday 23rd
November**

**Feast of Christ the King
St. Columba's Chapel
The Long Tower, Derry**

*Start: Holy Mass 12.00pm
Benediction and an Eucharistic
Procession through the City to the
Foyle River then into Ebrington Square
for an afternoon of Celebrations*



Led by Bishop Donal McKeown

REDEMPTION, LIBERATION, CELEBRATION
christthekingis100@gmail.com

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnylough, Drumquin, Dunamaghy, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,

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

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