



The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 121. SEPTEMBER 2026

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HOPE Summer Camp – Banagher



Blessed start to school year
– Holy Cross, Melmount



Young Pioneers
– Desertmartin & Ballinascreen



Parish Sports Day – Malin



“Step into your classrooms this year not with fear, but with joyful confidence, knowing that Christ walks before you, charting new maps of hope.”

– Dr Melodie Wyttenbach
(see p14-17)

Teachers enjoying one of the workshops at the Diocesan RE Conference at St Columb’s College. (Photograph by Stephen Latimer)



Mol an Oige – Search, Derry



Parish Heritage Trip – Coleraine



New Lourdes Grotto – Greenlough

People in focus



Bishop Michael Router
- Bishop-elect of Derry



Mena Crossan,
- Craighane



Roisin McGarrigle
- Faughanvale



Roisin O'Hara
- Trocaire



St Carlo Acutis

Also featuring: Young Writers section; HOPE Camps – Dungiven, Banagher, and Claudy-Craighane; Celebrating Search volunteers; Buncrana Parish Fete; Three Patrons Marian Tour; Bellaghy celebrates Church Island Sunday; Craighane Sacristan retires after 58 years; Diocesan RE Conference; Children’s Catechism Club; Features; Parish Post-its; Diocesan Diary; other Diary Dates; Quiz and much more...

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Trócaire’s NI Outreach Manager, Roisin O’Hara reflects on the Pope’s September prayer intention for the Care of Water:

“Let us pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.”

A call to reconnect with ‘water’ as essential source of life and well-being

“We have forgotten that we ourselves are dust of the earth (cf. Gen 2:7); our very bodies are made up of her elements, we breathe her air and we receive life and refreshment from her waters.” (Laudato Si, 2)

IN 2010, the United Nations recognised access to safe drinking water and sanitation as a fundamental human right. Yet, for billions of people around the world, this right continues to be denied. Today, an estimated 2.2 billion people lack access to safe drinking water. Many communities, particularly across the Global South, are still getting their water from polluted rivers, unprotected wells, or costly and unreliable water deliveries. Water pollution often comes from multiple sources. Sometimes communities are forced to use rivers and streams shared with livestock. Elsewhere, industrial activity, like mining, threatens local water supplies. Here at home, we have witnessed the environmental crisis affecting Lough Neagh, highlighting the importance of protecting our own precious water resources. This lack of clean water has profound consequences. Women and children often spend hours each day collecting water from distant sources. Time spent carrying water is time lost from school, work and family life. Unsafe water also causes serious health problems, with the World Health Organisation estimating that around one million deaths each year are linked to contaminated water and poor sanitation. For the farming communities Trócaire supports, water is also essential for growing food. Without reliable rainfall, irrigation systems or water storage facilities, harvests fail and families struggle to survive. Climate change is making these challenges even greater. Increasingly unpredictable weather patterns are bringing prolonged droughts in some places and destructive flooding in others, both of which can devastate crops and livelihoods.

I experienced a small glimpse of this reality while growing vegetables at home this year. After a few dry weeks, I found myself regularly watering raised beds and quickly exhausting the water collected in my water butts. I thought every day about the farmers Trócaire works with. For me, a few failed crops would be disappointing but not devastating. For a farmer in Malawi, Somalia or Guatemala, crop failure can mean hunger, lost income and reduced opportunities for children’s education and healthcare. And when these challenges persist, they often lead to forced displacement of entire communities. The scale of water injustice



Roisin O'Hara, Trocaire NI Outreach Manager

and inequality is huge and can sometimes feel overwhelming, but there are many reasons for hope. Across the world, many people and communities are working to protect water and

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese			
Aghyaran: Thursdays, 10.30am–12 noon.	Sundays, 2-10 pm, St Mary's Oratory.	Mary's Church, Aghabrack.	7pm, St Mary's Drumagarnier. Concludes with Benediction.
Ardstraw West & Castlederg: Fridays, 10.30am–12 noon, St Patrick's Church.	Cappagh: Wednesdays, 8-9pm, concluding with Night Prayer; and Sundays, 3.30-6.30 pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.	Donaghmore: Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.	Lavey: Fridays, after 9.15 am Mass until 5 pm.
Badoney Lower: Tuesdays, after 12 noon Mass until 5 pm, St Patrick's Gortin; and Wednesdays, Mass 7.30 pm, Adoration and Confession until 9 pm, St Mary's, Rouskey.	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.	Drumquin: Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.	Leckpatrick: Wednesdays from 8.15 am–5 pm.
Badoney Upper: Wednesdays, after 7.30 pm evening Mass until 9 pm, St Patrick's Cranagh.	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.	Drumragh: Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.	Lifford (Murlog): 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
Ballinascreen: First Mondays, from 12 noon-7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.	Coleraine: Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2-4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.	Dungiven: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9am-6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.	Limavady: First Sunday of each month from 3-5 pm in Christ the King Church (with Confessions), and on Thursdays in St Mary's Church, from 1-6 pm.
Banagher: Thursdays, 10.30-11.30 am, St Mary's Church, Altinure, and Fridays, 10–11am, St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.	Creggan: Sundays 1.30 pm-6 pm; Mondays 10.30 am - 7 pm; Tue - Sat 10.30 am - 12 pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.	Errigal: Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.	Magilligan: Wednesdays, 3-7 pm; First Sundays, 3-6 pm, St Aidan's Church.
Bellaghy: Every Friday, from 10 am until recitation of Rosary at 7.30 pm, in St Mary's Church.	Donagheady: First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St	Fahan: Fridays after 10am Mass, St Mura's Parish Church.	Melmount: Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.
Buncrana: Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, Fridays, 6 am-10 pm and		Greencastle (Tyrone): Thursdays, 6-10 pm, St Patrick's Church.	Moville: Mondays, 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, St Pius X Church.
		Greenlough: Thursdays, 9am–5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.	Newtownstewart: Thursdays, 6.30-7.30 pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.
		Iskaheen: Tuesdays, from after 10 am Mass until 2 pm, St Patrick's Church.	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
		Kilrea: Mondays, 12 noon -	
Send any additions/amendments via: editorthenet15@gmail.com or 07809292852.			



The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Supporting us:

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

The NET

was dedicated to Our Lady, through the intercession of

St Maximilian Kolbe, in a ceremony celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown

on August 14, 2019.



The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

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A message from Bishop Michael Router in the lead-up to his installation as Bishop of Derry...

Each called to share responsibility for mission of Jesus Christ in our time and place



THE past two months since I was appointed by Pope Leo as the next Bishop of Derry have been busy, exciting and nerve-racking in equal measure. As I prepare for this next chapter in my priesthood and episcopal ministry, I look forward to one thing above all else, getting to know the people of this great diocese.

I grew up in Virginia, in Co Cavan, and I am very thankful that it was a happy childhood where faith was simply part of everyday life. My upbringing helped me to realise that faith is usually passed on to others not primarily through books, but through relationships – through families who pray together, communities who support one another and the people who quietly

witness to Christ in ordinary life.

The Diocese of Derry is a place with a rich history of faith embracing 51 parishes and almost a quarter-of-a-million Catholics. It is a diocese whose faith has endured through hardship, change and challenge since the time of St Eugene and St Columba. It is both an honour and a privilege for me to become part of that faith story.

My 37 years of priesthood as a curate, parish priest, school chaplain, director of adult faith formation and pastoral development and, for the past seven years, as Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh, have taught me that the Church is constantly changing. When I was ordained a priest on June 25, 1989, I could not have

imagined just how dramatically the Catholic Church in Ireland would transform over the following decades. The abuse scandals shattered confidence, attendance at Mass declined and vocations to the priesthood plummeted. The pace of change within the Church was matched in wider society, as new challenges have emerged that previous generations never had to face. The influence of the internet and social media, the threats to the environment, the proliferation of drug use and the advent of artificial intelligence are among the many new issues that challenge our world and our faith.

Looking back now over the years, I realise that my vocation did not involve just one 'yes' at one moment in time. It has involved multiple renewals of that commitment over the years. Many times, I have had to trust totally in God, often not knowing exactly where He was leading me. My Episcopal motto, 'In Manus Tuas Domine' (Into Your Hands, O Lord), expresses the conviction that ultimately God is in charge and that the Church and the world are in His hands. My task is to trust in Him, to listen carefully to the inspiration of His Holy Spirit and to help God's people discover His presence in their own lives.

What brings me hope

When people ask me what brings me hope, even in the midst of such overwhelming change, my answer is always the same, it is the witness of ordinary, faithful people. Throughout my ministry in the dioceses of Kilmore, Dublin and Armagh, I have discovered that while structures do matter, the real strength of the Church has and will always be found in ordinary believers. In my visits to Derry over the past number of weeks, I can see that that same strength exists in abundance here. The challenge for me will be in helping others to see the importance, not just of maintaining and preserving what we have inherited but becoming missionary again in everything that we do. This missionary imperative embedded in the life of the Church is a crucial factor, not just for its future survival, but for its growth and development.

One lesson we can learn from the Gospel is that Jesus always began His mission with encounter. He met people in their homes, synagogues and gathering places. He listened to their questions, taught them and challenged them, and He walked with them before asking them to follow Him. This is why I believe the synodal method of building relationships, listening with respect and finding unity in diversity, is a crucial evangelical outreach in the modern world.

The one question we must focus on together as people of faith in the coming years is, "How do we become missionary disciples in the 21st century?"

Central to that missionary effort will be the parish. However, today's realities mean that parishes can no longer work in isolation. I hope that neighbouring parishes will collaborate more intentionally and establish pastoral areas. These pastoral areas can help parishes to support one another by sharing resources, coordinating ministries and developing common formation programmes. They can ensure that no community feels isolated or left behind.

Outreach to young people, and particularly young adults (18-35) is more urgent than ever. Young people today face enormous challenges. Loneliness and anxiety are very much part of a world where faith is often absent from everyday life. Yet I know that young people are searching for meaning and looking for a sense of belonging. We must try to create communities where young people feel welcomed, listened to and valued. This can be done through youth leadership training, pilgrimages and in offering opportunities for young people to serve in the Church through initiatives such as the John Paul II Award.

Investing in next generation

The future of parish life depends upon us investing intentionally in the next generation. One of the clearest lessons emerging from the synodal journey is that renewal of our faith depends on formation. We need to expand opportunities for parish pastoral councils, liturgical ministers, youth leaders, parents etc, to develop their knowledge and understanding of theology and spirituality so that they can discuss and pass on their faith with confidence.

I believe that the digital realm is one of the tools that we can use in a positive way to reach out to people and to provide some of this formation. Social media, podcasts and live streaming should never replace active parish life, but they have the potential to lead people towards it. Digital communication must become part of our efforts at evangelisation and formation, rather than just providing an information service.

Alongside the renewal of faith and parish life, there are many other challenges facing our diocese. Supporting families affected by addiction to drugs and alcohol, promoting the dignity of every human life from conception to natural death, and providing chaplaincy services in third-level institutions, hospitals, prisons and

other institutions must be a priority. Throughout my years of ministry, I have seen people rediscover hope and faith simply through the comforting presence of chaplains and pastoral workers in the most difficult and challenging moments in their lives.

As I prepare for my installation as Bishop of Derry in St Eugene's Cathedral on Sunday, September 20, I ask for your prayers. Please pray that I may have the health and strength to work together with you, the priests, religious and lay

faithful, to build a positive future for the Church in the Diocese of Derry.

Our shared calling as baptised Christians is to trust always in the power of the Holy Spirit working through us, and to recognise that each of us is called to share responsibility for the mission of Jesus Christ in our time and place.

(Bishop Michael will be installed as the next Bishop of Derry in a ceremony in St Eugene's Cathedral on Sunday, September 20, at 3 pm.)

Continued from p2

restore damaged ecosystems.

For our part, at Trócaire, we are supporting communities to defend their sacred water sources from large corporate polluters, helping communities gain access to clean water closer to their homes, to develop irrigation systems for their crops and to adopt agroecological farming practices that build resilience against climate change. In Ireland, our education programmes encourage young people to value and protect the natural world and our brothers and sisters who live in it.

The Church's 'Season of Creation', celebrated each year from September 1 to October 4, offers a valuable opportunity to reflect on these issues. This year's theme, 'Living Water', is inspired by the vision found in Ezekiel 42, where water flowing from God's presence brings life, healing and renewal wherever it reaches. Barren places become fruitful, ecosystems flourish, and communities thrive. It is a powerful image of hope and restoration.

Pope Leo's prayer invites us to support a model of water management that places people before profit, stewardship before exploitation, and future generations before short-term gain. His prayer

is a call to reject a worldview that treats water as a disposable resource and to commit ourselves to becoming guardians of God's life-giving water, locally and globally.

There are many ways in which we can respond to that call. We can become more mindful of our own use of water, reduce our consumption and waste, and support efforts to protect and clean up local waterways and national water sources. We can continue supporting the work of organisations like Trócaire, who are helping communities secure clean water, strengthen livelihoods and protect precious ecosystems. Most importantly, we are called to recognise water not as a commodity to be exploited, but as a sacred gift from God, essential to life and shared by all. This September, let us pray for water justice, reflect on our own responsibilities as stewards of creation, and take one practical step, however small, towards caring for this precious resource. In doing so, we can help ensure that the gift of living water continues to bring life, dignity, justice and hope to people around the world.

For more information about the Season of Creation and Trócaire's work promoting water justice around the world, visit www.trocaire.org.

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

MONDAY
5TH OCTOBER 2026
AT 7.30PM

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

AVAILABLE FOR THE FIRST TIME
SPIRITUAL PROTECTION PACKS
FOR FAMILY HOMES FOR THEIR PROTECTION FROM DRUGS.
THESE ARE FREE OF CHARGE.

Venerable **Matt Talbot**
Pray For Us

COLUMBAN
— YOUNG ADULTS —
HOLY HOUR
of Eucharistic Adoration
WITH SOLEMN BENEDICTION & MEDITATION

THURSDAY, 17TH
7PM
OUR LADY OF LOURDES CHURCH, STEELTOWN

PRAYER & ADORATION | MEDITATION | FRIENDSHIP & COMMUNITY

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Holy Cross College Community

Unveiling of St Carlo Acutis statue and dedication of Oratory and Stations of the Cross...

A blessed start to new school year for Holy Cross College community



"This school has borne the name of the Holy Cross for 18 years. Today, we seek God's blessing as we dedicate these Stations of the Cross to the glory of God and in memory of all our deceased College community."

He continued: "As we look upon them and walk Christ's Way of the Cross, may every pupil and member of staff in Holy Cross College learn that the road of the Cross is the road to glory, and may our hearts be drawn to Him who lead us to share in His victory over death."

In an introduction to the blessing of the St Carlo Acutis statues, Fr Sean described it as "a moment of real joy in the life of this school and of our parishes." He went on to explain that Carlo had been "a boy of our own time, born in London, raised in Milan, and 15-years-old when God called him home. He loved football, computers, and his friends. And he loved the Eucharist above everything, calling it his 'highway to Heaven'."

"We bless this statue of St Carlo, which will stand here at the heart of Holy Cross College, and these smaller statues, which will go out from here to the primary schools of our parishes, so that our youngest children, too, will grow up with this young saint watching over them and encouraging them on by his example and intercession."

"A statue is not something we worship. It is a window. Every time we pass it, it reminds us that holiness is possible not for someone else, somewhere else, or long ago, but for us, here, now."

An original

In blessing the statues, Bishop Donal prayed: "Grant that all who look upon them, pupils and teachers, parents and visitors, the youngest child and the oldest member of staff, may be reminded that each of us is made an original, called by name, and destined for Heaven. May our young people learn from St Carlo to stay close to Jesus in the Eucharist, to use every gift and every screen for good, to love the poor, and to live without



THE new school year got off to a wonderful start for Holy Cross College, in the Melmount Parish, Strabane, when Bishop Donal was invited along to bless a striking statue of St Carlo Acutis and Stations of the Cross in the school courtyard, as well as dedicate the oratory to the teenage Millennial Saint and bless the new tabernacle there.

It was a beautiful, sunny afternoon for the outside gathering of school staff, Board of Governors' members, some senior pupils, priests and religious, as Bishop Donal blessed and dedicated the Stations, and then unveiled and blessed the St Carlo statue, which was donated by Strabane man, Paul Madden.

Smaller statues of St Carlo Acutis were also blessed before they were taken to the Gaelscoil and the primary schools in the parishes of Melmount and Sion Mills – St Mary's, Melmount Road; St Theresa's, Glebe; and St Eugene's, Victoria Bridge.

Assisted by Fr Sean O'Donnell, PP Melmount & Sion Mills, school chaplain and main driver of the event, the bishop was joined by a number of other clergy, including Fr Michael Doherty, Fr Declan Boland, Fr Peter Madden, Fr Peter O'Kane and seminarian, Jamie McDaid, a past pupil of Holy Cross College.

Blessing the Stations, created by Paul Madden, Bishop Donal said:

Holy Cross College Community

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fear.”
Moving indoors to dedicate the oratory to St Carlo Acutis and bless the tabernacle, Bishop Donal said: “For 18 years, this school has gathered, learned, and grown under the sign of the Holy Cross. Now, in your goodness, grant that your Son, truly present in the Most Holy Eucharist, may make His home here: the heart of this Oratory, the heart of this school, the heart of every young life within these walls.”

“May all who come before this tabernacle find here what St Carlo found: friendship with Jesus, strength for the journey, and the sure road that leads to Heaven.”

Mass was then celebrated in the school’s multi-purpose hall, with members of the school choir leading the singing. In his homily, Bishop Donal remarked that the start of the school year was “a good time to reflect on what Holy Cross is trying to offer young people.”

He said: “St Carlo Acutis understood that liberating message of the Cross. You are made in the image and likeness of God; you are made for greatness. Many young people get knocked by failures and maybe by adults in their lives. Can we help our young people to believe that their lives are precious?”

“Even when we make mistakes, we can get a fresh start. Jesus says that He takes away the sins of the world. A lot of people feel crushed by their past that tells that they are no good, and they have no hopes for the future. Nobody is defined by their past.”

“Carlo went regularly to confessions, not because he was evil but because he wanted to learn how to be as good as possible.”

Bishop Donal went on to speak about our bodies being “temples of the Holy Spirit”, saying: “We are not wild animals. Our bodies have been anointed at Baptism and Confirmation and they have been fed with the Body and Blood of Christ. Carlo had huge reverence for Holy Communion.”

He concluded by encouraging the Holy Cross teachers to find ways to use the story of Carlo Acutis – and that of other saints, other heroes,

role models of how great young people can be.

“Don’t be afraid to promote self-reflection,” he added, “and the possibility of the Sacrament of Confession. Don’t be afraid to promote silence and prayer before the Eucharist in the oratory - and receive it often, and you could be surprised who might well become a saint!”

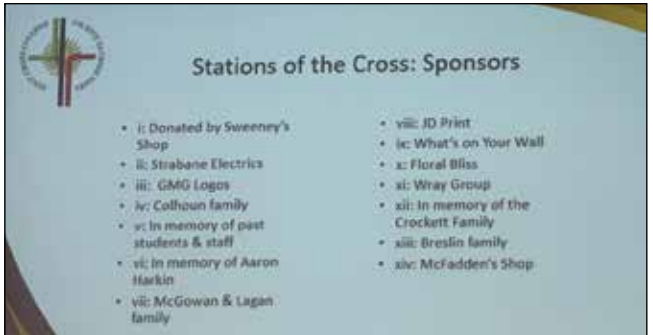
After the distribution of Holy Communion, Bishop Donal placed the ciborium with the Blessed Sacrament in the new tabernacle in the Oratory, after which the Sanctuary Lamp was lit for the first time.

At the end of the celebration, Holy Cross principal, Ciaran Johnston thanked all involved in what he described as “an amazing and special afternoon” for the College, including Paul Madden for gifting the St Carlo Acutis statue and his craftsmanship in making the Stations of the Cross, and those in the community who had sponsored the Stations.

He also paid tribute to Fr Sean, saying: “He has been with us for just under a year and it feels like he has been part of the furniture for quite a while. He really is a force of nature. He is a great support to the school and the Board of Governors, and I see his organisational skills really come to the fore in organising this today.”

Thanking Bishop Donal for taking the time to come along, Mr Johnston wished him every blessing in his forthcoming retirement.

All were invited to enjoy some refreshments, bringing the occasion to a close.





St. Carlo Acutis

Day of Prayer

"The Eucharist is the highway to heaven"

SUNDAY 11TH OCTOBER 2026
2.00pm – 7.00pm

2.00pm – 6.45pm	Rosaries & Music
Veneration of Relic	Main Aisle
Eucharistic Adoration	Mother Teresa Chapel
Sacrament of Confession	Side Aisles
Petitions Area	Back of Cathedral
Journey with Carlo Film	Upstairs Conference Room (Lift)
Gift Shop	South Porch Area

7.00pm
Mass with Bishop Router

EVERYONE WELCOME



HOPE Camp 2026...

Great friendships formed during week of faith and fun in Banagher



THE second week of July saw Banagher Parish hold its HOPE summer camp, with over 160 youth aged 10-15 years old attending, and over 35 volunteers giving 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 had been in previous years. The week was made even better by the fact that we were blessed with beautiful hot and sunny weather for the duration of the camp.

The Camp started off with a day on 'home soil' at Banagher's

GAA grounds. The programme was filled with a variety of fun activities, from circus skills to arts and crafts and various sports. That afternoon, our parish priest, Fr Dermot McGirr, and other priests from the Diocese visited for the Sacrament of Reconciliation. All the young people and volunteers had the opportunity to go to Confession, which was part of the faith formation for the week and was a very prayerful and reflective experience for all.

The second day of the camp started with a very thought-provoking talk from Dearnán Ó Donnghaile, who is a seminarian

for the Diocese of Raphoe. We then went to Brunswick Moviebowl, where the day was jam-packed with lots of fun at the bowling alley, the cinema and eating lots of yummy food and snacks.

The week continued with a day at Derry GAA grounds 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 listened to a very inspirational talk from Brieghe O'Neill, who shared about the life of her daughter, Aisling.

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, the young people had the opportunity to pray and reflect in the presence of Jesus, which was a peaceful and powerful start to the day.

The week ended on home turf again, 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.



HOPE Camp 2026...

Dungiven celebrates another hugely successful HOPE summer camp



DUNGIVEN Parish has once again been filled with energy, laughter and faith as HOPE Summer Camp returned for another unforgettable year, bringing together young people from across the parish for four days of faith, fun and friendship.

Now firmly established as a much-anticipated event in the parish calendar, HOPE Camp 2026 welcomed 153 young people from Year 6 through to Year 11 for a packed programme of activities, adventure, friendship and faith formation.

The camp officially began with the HOPE Mass in St Patrick's Church, Dungiven, where the young people, their families, volunteers and members of the wider parish community gathered together to mark the beginning of another very special week. The Mass provided a beautiful opportunity to place the week in God's hands and remind everyone of the importance of faith, community and looking out for

one another.

Throughout the four days, the young people enjoyed an incredible variety of activities. The first day saw our campers head off on two exciting adventures to Lock'n'Load and Oakfire Adventures. Tuesday and Wednesday brought a huge variety of activities across venues throughout Dungiven, including fitness sessions, bubble football, sports, gaming, music bingo, drumming, cookery, team games, arts and crafts, quizzes and board games. There was something for everyone, and the atmosphere throughout the week was fantastic.

The highlight for many came on Thursday, as the entire camp travelled to Splash NI in Moneymore for a day of water-based fun, bringing the 2026 camp to a brilliant conclusion.

While the activities and trips provided plenty of excitement, faith formation remained at the heart of HOPE Camp. The young people were given opportunities throughout the week to reflect on

their faith, take part in prayer and spend time learning and thinking about what it means to live out their faith in everyday life.

A huge thank you must go to Fr Paul Farren, who supported the camp's faith formation, along with Armagh GAA captain, Aidan Forker, who helped make the week particularly memorable for our young people. We are also extremely grateful for the opportunity for our young people to participate in a Penitential Service led by Fr Gerry Sweeny PP, as well as celebrating Mass with Fr Seamus Kelly during camp week.

One of the greatest strengths of our HOPE Camp in Dungiven, is the sense of community it creates. Young people from across Dungiven Parish come together, many meeting new friends and strengthening existing friendships, while our dedicated team of volunteers work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that every young person feels welcome, included and valued.

None of this would be possible without our incredible HOPE Camp committee and volunteers. Months of planning, fundraising, organising, preparation and hard work go into making the four-day camp happen. From arranging activities and transport to preparing venues, organising meals and supporting the young people throughout each day, there is an enormous amount of work that takes place behind the scenes.

We are incredibly grateful to every volunteer who gave their time and energy to make HOPE Camp 2026 such a success.

Most importantly, we want to thank the 153 young people who made HOPE Camp 2026 what it was. Their enthusiasm, good humour, kindness and willingness to get involved made the week such a joy for everyone involved.

Once again, they showed that when young people are given the opportunity to come together in a safe, welcoming and faith-filled environment, they can create something truly special.

A very special thank you also goes to the McCloskey Family and Errigal Contracts for their continued support and sponsorship.

As another HOPE Camp comes to an end, we are left with tired volunteers, countless photographs and memories, but most importantly, a real sense of pride in the young people of Dungiven Parish.



HOPE Camp 2026...

HOPE Claudy-Craigbane a wonderful week of fun and faith-sharing



HOPE Camp 2026 was another great week of memory-making for the 125 young people from Claudy and Craigbane, and the 50 volunteers of all ages, who took part in a programme that was packed with fun activities and opportunities to mix and make new friends, as well as grow in faith.

Dedicated to the Patron Saint of Teenagers, St Dominic Savio, the camp ran from July 13-17 and was officially launched by parish priest, Fr David O'Kane at a special ceremony in St Patrick's Church, Claudy, on Sunday, July 12, during which he blessed all gathered with a relic of St Dominic.

The guest speaker was Dearnán Ó Donnghaile, a seminarian for the Diocese of Raphoe, who spoke about growing up in Carrickmore, playing underage county hurling and football for Tyrone, and being diagnosed with arthritis at 17, when his life took a radical turn that set him on a search to find meaning and purpose in his life.

This search was very much faith-based, with Dearnán recalling that he had a relationship with God at a young age, particularly through nature: "I loved helping on the farm. I remember, one evening, looking up at the sky and being aware of the vastness of creation. I had a real sense that God had an important job for me."

Surprised to find that his school friends did not have the same depth of faith, he remarked: "It was a shock as I thought that God was so obvious. I began to hide my faith but still prayed the Rosary together with my family, which has kept us very close."

When he was unable to play his beloved Gaelic sports due to debilitating arthritis, and spent time lying in bed staring at the ceiling and pondering life, he recalled: "This is when I started to think about my faith properly, and the first time I prayed sincerely, begging God for help. I had to rethink my identity and started to lean into the faith that had nourished me as a child."

"I thought that going to Mass was for old people, but that changed when I started to go to Youth 2000 and saw so many other young people loving their faith."

Having volunteered at the Claudy-Craigbane HOPE Camp in 2024, Dearnán told the young people: "At Camp this week, you are going to experience an environment where you will have fun playing sports, etc, but that will also centre around your faith. You will have Adoration, when you will have time to spend in prayer, which was huge for me in discerning about priesthood."

"As I got better, I had a real draw to spend time in Adoration in the

chapel, where I found a real sense of peace. God was drawing me closer to Him as I looked for answers, and I started to learn more about what the Church teaches."

Healing

"I wanted to be healed in my legs and back, but God knew that I needed more healing than that. He healed my heart and I hope you all experience that to some degree this week. God speaks to us through ourselves and others. He speaks to us in the silence. I encourage you to find little times of peace. This week may be an opportunity for you to think about prayer. We need someone to turn to and you will get that in the Lord."

The ceremony continued with Gemma Monteith, the youngest member attending this year's Camp, lighting the HOPE candle for the intentions of the Camp – to Help Our Parish Evolve. A mix of campers, volunteers and committee members then came forward to read the Prayers of the Faithful, before Fr David read the HOPE Camp Prayer and declared Camp 2026 open. Music for the evening was played by the talented Katie Donaghy.

Faith formation was very much weaved into the programme for the week, with Bro Shaun, of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in Galliagh, coming along on the first morning to lead the young people in singing uplifting faith songs. In the afternoon, Fr David was joined by a number of priests from neighbouring parishes in hearing the Confessions of the campers and volunteers.

The following morning, Fr Michael Spain OCD, Termonbacca, led a period of Eucharistic Adoration and Healing, and spoke about Derry-born nun, Servant of God, Sr Clare Crockett. Having

read the book on the life of the 33-year-old, Fr Michael told the young people: "The part that I remember best is that she was great. Despite the rigour of her life as a Sister, she had joy, she was fun."

Noting that this year's Camp theme was 'Love', Fr Michael invited all gathered to say with love to Jesus, present in the Host in the Monstrance that he would carry around to bless them, "Jesus, I love You."

On day three, Harry Mason, one of 'The Net' Young Writers and senior student at St Columba's College, who is considering priesthood, shared his faith testimony. Having attended St Patrick's & St Brigid's College, in Claudy, prior to going to the College, Harry's was a familiar face to some of the campers and volunteers.

Focusing his talk on prayer and the Mass, Harry spoke about the Real Presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Encouraging his young listeners to try and go to Sunday Mass, he said: "Mass is not supposed to be entertaining. On Judgement Day, you will not regret having gone to Mass; all the Saints tell us that. When I go to Mass, I try to be thankful for everything that God has given me – family, friends, and whatever He did for me that week in my life."

Explaining the different parts of the Mass, Harry said that the readings offered "guidance on how to lead our lives; how to treat people", with the Gospel stories telling of Jesus' life. The 'Gloria', he pointed out, was an opportunity "to give thanks and glory to God", while the 'Credo' proclaims the belief of the Catholic Church.

Eucharist

Turning to the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Harry noted:



HOPE Camp 2026...

Continued from page 8

"Some people don't take Holy Communion very seriously. St Carlo Acutis would have been your age and he said that the Eucharist is the highway to Heaven. Jesus is really present in the Eucharist. He said, 'This is My Body...This is My Blood', and He is not a liar. In receiving the Eucharist, you become more like Jesus; it will help you become a saint."

Harry then asked how many prayed at least once a week and there was an impressive response amongst the young people, with some saying that they prayed the Rosary and others that they read the Bible, and a good number saying that they attended Mass every week.

"Prayer is the lifting of the heart and mind to God," remarked Harry, adding: "It is important as only some special graces are received by prayer. It helps to align your life with God."

Sharing some of his own story, Harry said: "I wasn't really living a Christian life until I was 14. I was swearing, being rude to my parents, watching what I shouldn't have been, and I wasn't happy. But when I started praying and reading the Bible, it helped me to stop doing bad things and brought me closer to God."

"I went to a priest when I was 14, and he gave me Rosary beads. He asked me to take them home and use them, which I do. I pray the Rosary every night and it has worked miracles in my life. I have had so many good things happen and have great friends."

During a Question & Answer session, Harry responded to a question about how he had felt called to priesthood, saying: "Being a priest wasn't something that I initially wanted, but it is what God wants me to do and I trust Him. I started going to Mass and praying, which are the most important things in our Christian life, and I began to have this desire to become a priest."

Asked about his daily prayer-life, he said: "In discernment for priesthood, I am advised to pray the Breviary three times a day – morning, evening and night. I also pray the Rosary and read the Bible."

Giving examples of simple prayers to say, Harry suggested the Our Father, Hail Mary, and the Guardian Angel prayer, adding: "God created you and knows you. You can say to Him, 'I don't know how to pray' and He will help you pray. Talk to God like He is your friend. Tell Him what you did that day or whatever you need help with."

The final testimony of the Camp was given by Sarah McChrystal, Limavady, who shared her experience in realising that while she had a prayer life, she wasn't connecting how her faith could help her in living her life, which was filled with anxiety. She recalled the trauma of the Covid-19 lockdown and turning to Our Lady

for help in her life, and how this led to maturing in her faith, returning to Confession and attending Mass again.

Peace

Recalling going on a retreat, where she felt a great peace after going to Confession, Sarah spoke about how she felt a desire to do something worthwhile in her life and ended up joining Net Ministries for a year, during which she worked with young people doing school retreats.

Having experienced the return of great joy in her life, she realised that she would love to work with young people and help them get to know God, so they know that they are not alone and discover the great things that He can work in their lives if they give their 'yes' to Him. This led Sarah to spending the last two years walking with young people through serving with 'Home for the Harvest', a Catholic missionary community based in Limerick, where she now starts a new job with the Limerick Diocese.

In addition to all this faith nourishment, the young people enjoyed two amazing trips – to Brunswick Superbowl for bowling and cinema, and the Lake Kilrea Waterpark – as well as sessions of art, music, and peg Cross making, a bake-off, various games and sports, with a Fun Day at the end of the week, which included the popular Zumba and Ceili Dancing sessions, penalty kicks, volleyball, Gaelic football, and quiz.

The week came to a joyful close with Mass celebrated by Fr David in St Patrick's Church, and the campers and volunteers joining together for the singing, reading and Prayer of the Faithful. Afterwards, Ella Donaghy was announced as the winner of the Aisling O'Neill Cup, which is awarded to the volunteer who best emulates the spirit of Aisling, a greatly missed member of the organising committee and volunteer. The Camp's St Dominic Savio Perpetual Cup was presented to Team 6 as the Camp House of the Week.

With this the last HOPE Camp for Fr David before his retirement, a special presentation was made to him, which included one of this year's Camp jerseys, in appreciation for all his work with the young people of the Parish through the schools and HOPE Camp.

The success of the week was not only down to the great service of the many volunteers and the excellent behaviour of the campers, but also to the prayers of the faithful in the parish and the generosity of all those who contributed financially and in many other ways. As well as the contributions from the many Friends of Hope, including Derry Credit Union, there was substantial funding from North West Finance, the main sponsor of the Camp 2026 jersey, and Fyth, The Fat Fox and Accounts by Paul.



Mol an Óige celebrates 26 years of faith-based summer fun

DERRY Search Youth Group have been serving the youth of Derry and beyond for the last 41 years, and one of the highlights of our year is welcoming the kids through our doors in July for our summer scheme.

This past July marked 26 years since we were invited to St Joseph's Parish, in Galliagh, by Msgr Bryan McCanny, where we welcomed our first group of kids to our Mol an Óige summer scheme. Our

summer scheme venues may have changed over the years, but our mission and purpose haven't, and this year has been no different.

Each day has a different faith-centred theme, including teachings tailored around these themes, developed specifically for the kids, and we end every day with the children singing and dancing to praise God.

Our summer schemes would not be possible without our

young volunteers, who selflessly give up their time to help follow in the footsteps of our patron, St Don Bosco. So, we held a special night to show our appreciation to our young volunteers as we truly believe, as Don Bosco did, that "it is not enough to love the young, they must know that they are loved".

As we enter a new school year, we look forward to welcoming our young people back, and we would also like to extend a welcome to

any newcomers who would like to join us.

Our weekly meetings take place in our premises at Unit 5, Iona Business Park, on Thursdays (10-13-year-olds) from 6-7:30 pm, and Fridays (14 years+), from 6-8 pm.

For further information email: derrysearchyouthgroup@gmail.com or contact Clare on 07712571086.



Celebrating Search Volunteers...



The Rise & Shine Pilgrimage Trust...

Group 173 Donegal 40th anniversary fundraising weekend *by Roisin McGarrigle*

THIS year sees the Rise & Shine Donegal group 173 celebrate its 40th anniversary of taking children and young people with additional needs – physical, learning, mental health and social – on a week-long Easter pilgrimage to Lourdes, the French Shrine of Our Lady and St Bernadette (1858).

Formerly known as the Irish Pilgrimage Trust, the Rise and Shine Trust, along with fellow HCPT groups from around the world, travel to the Marian pilgrimage Shrine of Lourdes every Easter Sunday for a seven-day pilgrimage holiday. This involves around 3,000 pilgrims in total, with 400 of them from Ireland.

All our guests – the young people - travel free, thanks to the generosity of people who donate to the many fundraising events that happen across the country, throughout the year.

In order for a group to travel with 10 non-fee-paying guests, €22,000 per annum must be raised, and this is a commitment of each travelling group. The groups are made up of 15 full-fare-paying volunteers and include: Group leader; deputy group leader; group nurse and student nurse; group priest; and carers.

Innovative fundraising ideas are planned well in advance, and for Donegal Group 173, the finale of a year-long celebration of 40 years travelling is on the weekend of September 25-27, in The Clanree hotel, Letterkenny.

Night 1 is the Gala Dinner Dance with dinner, music by Donegal musicians, and retired players of Donegal GAA as special sponsored guests. Tickets for the Gala night are €75 pps, or if purchasing a table that seats 10 people, it is a cost of €700 (€70pps).

Night 2 is the Celtic-themed night of music and dinner, with Celtic players as sponsored special guests. The cost for this is €55, or if purchasing a table that seats 10 people, it is a cost of €500 (€50pps).

Bed and breakfast accommodation is also available at a discounted rate of €60 per night, per person sharing, and can only be booked through deputy group leader and event organiser, Patricia Rea (00447472869618 or reap1965@gmail.com).

There will be raffles over the weekend and the top prize is a holiday for four to Portugal, including flights, accommodation, and transfers. Tickets can also be purchased by those unable to attend but who wish to donate, by going to the Donegal IPT Facebook page and following the link to purchase tickets - €20 per ticket.

Businesses can also support through sponsorship, and these range from Bronze sponsor (€500), Silver sponsor (€1,000), Gold sponsor (€2,000) and Premier event sponsor (€5,000).

On Saturday at 12 noon, the 40th Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in the Irish Martyrs Chapel, Letterkenny, by Bishop Donal McKeown, the Rise and Shine Chaplain, along with Bishop Niall Coll of Raphoe Diocese. All are welcome to attend this Mass of celebration.

The fundraising event promises to be a weekend of great food, music and craic, and all for a very worthy cause. We look forward to seeing you there. God bless from Group 173 Donegal.

Rise & Shine
Formerly known as Irish Pilgrimage Trust
We take children with special needs on a holiday to Lourdes.

This is our **40th** Year travelling with the Trust!

Banquet evening to celebrate in Clanree Hotel, Letterkenny — 25 September —

TICKETS FOR EVENT

€75
PER PERSON

TABLE OF 10

€700

HOTEL OFFER FOR ACCOMMODATION ON THE NIGHT

€60 PER PERSON SHARING
(First come, first served)

MUSIC BY

Soul Mates

SPECIAL APPEARANCE BY

some Donegal musicians

SOME GAA DONEGAL PLAYERS IN ATTENDANCE

Rise & Shine TRUST (IRELAND)

Registered Charity Number: 20009953
CHF No. 5992

CONTACT PATRICIA

0044 7472 869618
reap1965@gmail.com

Your support helps us continue this wonderful pilgrimage.

Thank you! ♥

Rise & Shine
Formerly known as Irish Pilgrimage Trust
We bring children and young people with additional needs on pilgrimage to Lourdes.

40th ANNIVERSARY
1986 - 2026

GROUP 173 DONEGAL

CELTIC DINNER DANCE
in CLANREE HOTEL, LETTERKENNY
on 26 September 2026
in aid of Group 173, Donegal Lourdes Group

CELEBRATE WITH CELTIC EX-PLAYERS

PETER GRANT

JACKIE McNAMARA

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TAKE A TABLE OF 10

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Young Writers share thoughts...

Trip to Moldova an unforgettable experience *by Erin*



THIS past summer, I was blessed with the opportunity to go on a mission trip with Exodus to Moldova. Some of my friends and I joined a team, and we spent months prior to the trip attending Exodus team meetings.

During these meetings, we read and discussed the Bible together, had meaningful conversations about our faith and shared ideas for our kids' club, which we would be hosting.

As the summer began, meetings involved mostly practical activities and planning to prepare for Moldova. I remember feeling nervous about going at first, especially as it would be my first time travelling without my parents. However, the last few meetings we had as a team reassured me and I found myself getting more excited as time went on.

Before I knew it, 10 of us were on the Aircoach on the way to Dublin Airport. We travelled through the night and, eventually, after what

felt like days - but really was about 15 hours - of travelling or sitting in airports, we arrived at Lumina Lumii Church, in Bălți.

This began our launch alongside two other teams placed in Moldova, where we took part in cultural workshops and a tour, as well as lots of team building activities. Our team most enjoyed spending a day at Aquafantastic - the local waterpark, so much so that we convinced our leaders and the leader of the church to take us back on our next day off!

Over the 10 days we spent in Moldova, I found the kids' club and the home visits the most powerful and moving parts of my experience. Moldova is one of the poorest countries in Europe, and we got a strong insight into how its people live.

Although we were staying in Bălți, we spent most of our time on placement in the village of Pirlita. Our mornings, before kids' club, were spent doing hours of practical

work, which mostly involved painting and cleaning people's houses. Afterwards, some of our team members would stay to lead the kids club, while others would go out on home visits, delivering food parcels to those in need.

Strong faith

This was meaningful to us as we witnessed the strong faith of the members of this church, despite all that they had been through. We also felt a lot of love and kindness from these people and found their generosity extremely admirable. Although they did not have much themselves, they offered us whatever they could. For example, one woman we had visited earlier in the week came to our kids' club with bottles of lemonade and treats for us, as she felt sorry that she could not offer us anything when we had visited. This is just one small example of the love and gratitude that we felt from those we visited, and it was deeply moving for us as a team.

During our visits, we had a chance to share our own testimonies with others. They were fascinated to hear about our own faith journeys and our personal lives in Ireland, even though our experiences may be different from theirs.

I feel that my mission trip to Moldova allowed me to grow in understanding of other Christians' faith. We were placed in an Evangelical church, which was very small in Moldova compared to Orthodox, and got to hear stories of how the two churches had some conflict in the past.

We got to visit an Orthodox monastery in a valley and explore prayer rooms inside of caves. There was even a cloistered monk



Do you know who you are? *by Harry*

AS Catholics, I consider it of great importance for us to know who we are and I ask you to take some time and ask yourself who you are.

Why is it important? For many reasons, one being it helps us to understand why we fall into certain sins. If we recognise this, we can break the constant cycle of falling into the same sins.

It will also help us in discerning a vocation in priesthood, marriage or religious life, and will lead us to greater humility and realise our need for God's grace and how frail we are.

Knowing who we are will help us to develop in virtue and our character, for example, becoming more studious, loving and patient, and will also help us to become the person God is calling each to be. Understanding our nature helps us to co-operate with grace.

The final reason is one of much importance. I recently heard this: "The world will ask you who you are? And if you do not know, it will tell you who you are."

As Catholics, we certainly want to avoid this, as our identity runs much deeper than the changing standards of the world. It will lead us to define ourselves by possessions, appearances and approval of others.

You might be asking yourself, how do I go about understanding who I am, so I will lay out some general steps to help you.



When discovering who you are, look at:

* Character - what virtues do you embody? Are you loving, obedient and loyal? And look at your vices as well - do you disobey, lie and hate?
* Values - what do I see of importance and value? And are these disordered to God or ordered to God?

* Temperament - how you naturally incline, are you quiet, emotional or curious?

* Habits - what are my daily habits and what are my habits when I am with other people?

* Desires - deep down, what do you desire in your heart? Is it a Catholic family, to serve others in celibacy (supernatural desire), or to even be a teacher?

Lastly, know that you are born in the image and likeness of God to know, love and serve Him and to share eternal life with Him.

living in these caves! There was a strong sense of unity as we got to attend the Evangelical church's Sunday service, hear their worship music and work alongside their volunteers throughout our mission trip. Some had better English than others, but we were strongly assisted by translators. Our team made great attempts to learn the basics of their language, which was entertaining for us.

I, personally, felt that the children showed their appreciation for us through actions instead, such as giving us friendship bracelets and crafts that they had made during kids' club, showing affection through hugs, and taking part in all of our games and activities with bright smiles.

This same sense of connection was just as strong within our own team. Being a mixed team of Catholics and Protestants, we got to continue to share and discuss our faith during team time every night. One team member would begin this discussion by sharing a short Bible verse and reflection, and this allowed us to pray together and understand each other even more.

Throughout our time in Moldova, we felt that we grew closer to one another and some great friendships formed. I felt that the helpful and encouraging nature of

my team made my experience ten times more enjoyable. Although some of us may have been friends beforehand, our friendships deepened, while we also got to make new friends - including the other team from Belfast who were staying in the church with us.

Overall, I had an unforgettable experience through Exodus, and I encourage everyone to pray for the people of Moldova. This mission trip allowed my faith to strengthen

through serving others, sharing the Word of God and witnessing His work through the people we met.

I am so thankful for Exodus, our host, our team leaders, my team, and so many more people. I was so blessed to have this opportunity to grow closer to God and see how others have experienced His never-ending love. If you are ever considering going on a mission trip, do it!



Diocesan RE Conference

“You are not merely teaching a subject; you are building the Kingdom of God”...

Diocesan RE Conference encourages educators that Christ walks before them in charting new maps of hope



Dr Melodie Wyttenbach, Keynote speaker

“LET everything you do be done in love” (1Cor 16:14) was the Scripture quote on the front of the brochure for the Diocesan Religious Education Conference at the end of August, when members of staff from schools across the Diocese gathered at St Columb’s College for a time of prayer, workshops and uplifting talks as they prepared for the start of another new academic year.

Just as with the two previous RE Conferences organised by the Diocesan Catechetical Centre staff, in conjunction with Bishop Donal, who is deeply passionate about Catholic schools being communities of hope for young people, attendees found the experience of this time together in such large numbers both energising and heartening.

Around 1,200 delegates attended over the two days, with Day 1 focusing on Post Primary School staff and Day 2 for Primary, and each got an opportunity to attend one of 21 workshops, which looked at best practice in Religious Education, Faith Formation, Social Justice, and Catholic Ethos.

The theme for this year’s conference was ‘Drawing New Maps of Hope’, taken from Pope Leo XIV’s Apostolic Letter, which marked the 60th anniversary of the Conciliar Declaration ‘Gravissimum educationis’, on the extreme importance and current relevance of education in human life.

A powerful talk on ‘Navigating the Uncharted: Drawing Maps of Hope in Catholic Education’ was delivered both days by keynote speaker, Dr Melodie Wyttenbach, executive director of the Roche Centre for Catholic Education at Boston College, who was delighted to share that her grandfather, Frank Elder, had been born in Ballymoney, Co Antrim.

Encouraging those gathered to reflect on the purpose of their vocation in Catholic schools and what is at the heart of that call,

Melodie examined the writing of Pope Leo’s Apostolic Letter and what it may mean for those in Catholic schools today.

“We are living in a very complex time, and for us Catholic educators, we are living in an increasingly secular world,” she remarked, noting: “Today, political volatility has led to multiple armed conflicts, where the whiplash of surviving a global pandemic lingers, where climate change creates uncertainty for many. Where social media is constantly bombarding our young people with algorithmic feeds designed to capture their attention, measure their worth in ‘likes’ and flatten their imagination with endless scrolling.”

She went on to quote Pope Leo’s profound warning in his letter to the modern world, believing that Catholic education is at the heart of the Church: “Education is not an ancillary activity of the Church, it is the concrete way in which the Gospel becomes an educational gesture, a relationship, and a culture.”

“What you do when you step into your classroom or school community today is an act of quiet radicalism,” suggested Melodie, adding: “Because this space, this is where your vocation begins. As a Catholic educator, you do not merely transmit a syllabus; you facilitate an encounter. You aren’t simply about your students obtaining high marks, you realize it is more important to develop students with good souls who care for the common good. You have an incredible, radical opportunity every day to create a sanctuary where a child or a teenager can pause, breathe, and ask the ancient, burning questions of the human heart: Who am I? Why am I here? Is there a God who knows my name and loves me without condition?”

Fall in love

Saying that she never intended

to be a Catholic educator until an experience as a counsellor at a Catholic summer camp for inner-city Latino middle school boys opened her heart, Melodie recalled: “It was also a place where I first read ‘Fall in Love’ - also known as the Arrupe Prayer, and often attributed to Pedro Arrupe, who was the superior for the Society of Jesus in the 1960s and 70s. The prayer states: Nothing is more practical than finding God, than falling in Love in a quite absolute, final way. What you are in love with, what seizes your imagination, will affect everything. It will decide what will get you out of bed in the morning, what you do with your evenings, how you spend your weekends, what you read, whom you know, what breaks your heart, and what amazes you with joy and gratitude. Fall in Love, stay in love, and it will decide everything.”

“I fell in love with my students as a camp counsellor. It was in nature teaching students about science that I witnessed the wonder and awe that came from experiencing science in the outdoors. It was the moment when the scripture verse on your programme came true for me, ‘Let everything you do be done in love.’ The love I felt in this experience led me to the vocation of a Catholic teacher, which ultimately led me to become a principal, and now leader of the Roche Center providing support for Catholic schools nationwide, and now excitedly in the North of Ireland and in the Republic with the leadership of my wonderful colleague, Angela Mitchell.”

“Working in our Catholic context is a beckoning,” said Melodie, “we are here because we started listening to the call. We started listening to what God wants for us. We were attentive to how joy moves in our hearts. We began to fall in love with our students, with the families we serve, and we fell in love with the significance of the work - the impact your work has is very real - it impacts your students, their families, their communities, our world.”

Highlighting that the word ‘vocation’ comes from the Latin ‘vocare’, meaning ‘to call’, she went on to say: “In this light, your role in a school is more than a professional contract - it is a specific summons. If you ‘invent’ your purpose, it is limited by your own imagination and ego. If you ‘uncover’ it, you are tapping into a purpose that is objective and eternal. Vocation implies a Caller. Before teaching

and leading is about what you do - managing students, writing lesson plans, or facilitating extracurriculars - it is about whose you are. The concept of vocation stems further back to the Book of Genesis. Because humans are made in the Image of God, and God is a Creator and Leader, our work is a way of reflecting God’s character to the world.

“One of my favourite prayers that links to this idea is that of St Therese of Avila - Christ has no body but yours, no hands, no feet on earth but yours, yours are the eyes with which He looks compassion on this world, yours are the feet with which He walks to do good, yours are the hands, with which He blesses all the world. Yours are the hands, yours are the feet, yours are the eyes, you are His body. Our work is a way of reflecting God’s character to the world.

Vocation is ‘uncovered within God’s design,’ this means God has already placed the ‘DNA’ of your teaching and leading within you and your specific community.”

Hunger for guidance

Quoting theologian, Frederick Buechner: “Vocation is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet”, Melodie remarked: “As noted earlier, with all the conflict, uncertainty, and troubles in our world, there is a hunger for guidance and that is where you and the quiet radicalism of Catholic education come in.”

Also noting that vocation is defined by Br David Hall and Bill Sultman, of Australian Catholic University, as “the lived expression of the soul”, she said: “Imagine sitting at the intersection of four distinct areas. When these overlap, your vocation becomes visible: Passion and Mission - you do it because you love it. There is a fire there that the daily grind cannot extinguish; Mission and Opportunity - you do it because the world needs it. Our Irish communities, our young people, and our families are hungry for the hope we provide; Opportunity and Profession - you are paid for it. This is the practical reality of our roles, the stewardship of our institutions; Profession and Passion - you are good at it. You have honed your craft, managed the budgets, and led the teams with excellence.”

Melodie went on to consider the three “piercing questions for discernment” put forward by Boston College theologian, the



Photographs by Stephen Latimer



Diocesan RE Conference

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late Fr Michael Himes, saying that educators must ask these of themselves regularly to ensure that they haven't drifted into merely performing a 'job'.

Commenting on each, she said: "What brings you joy? Himes distinguishes between fleeting happiness and joy. Joy is the feeling of being truly alive. In the middle of a difficult meeting with a student or a complex pastoral crisis, is there still a kernel of joy in the service itself.

"Are you good at it? Vocation is not just a feeling; it is grounded in reality. Does this role engage your unique gifts and abilities? We are called to use our talents - not to bury them - in the service of our school communities.

"Does the world need you to do it? Himes described vocation as 'self-gift'. It is not a self-help project. If our work doesn't meet a genuine need in the lives of our students or the mission of the Church, it isn't a calling; it's a hobby. It is about discovering how you can best serve the world.

"As teachers and leaders in Irish Catholic education, you are stewards of this 'self-gift'. When we align what we love, what we are good at, and what our community needs, we aren't just 'managing' schools or teaching in a classroom. We are allowing our souls to speak. Vocation does not come from a voice 'out there' calling me to become something I am not. It comes from a voice 'in here' calling me to be the person I was born to be."

Missionary of hope

"When we speak of answering the call here in Derry, we stand in the long shadow of our own patron, St Colmcille," said Melodie, adding: "Fourteen centuries ago, Colmcille looked out over the oak groves of Derry (Doire) and felt the tug of God calling him into the unknown. When he left these shores for Iona, he set sail on uncharted waters without a modern map, trusting entirely to the wind of the Holy Spirit. As you know, he was a scholar, a poet, and an educator, but above all, he was a missionary of hope.

"Colmcille knew that wherever the Gospel is proclaimed, light breaks into darkness and like Colmcille, you all are being invited to set sail as another school year gets underway. Hopefully, with a deep understanding of your vocation - of what brings you joy, what you are good at, and what the world needs of you - a year filled with hope lies ahead. Even if the waters of a new school year may seem turbulent at times, remember the same Spirit that guided Colmcille's lightweight, wooden boat - his curragh - is the same Spirit guiding you into your classrooms and schools this academic year."

Melodie then went on to look

at the writing of Pope Leo XIV to help understand what it looks like to draw 'New Maps of Hope' in schools today, noting that he outlines three key directions for Catholic education today: Centrality of the Human Person; Education for Peace and Dialogue; Humanizing the Digital Age.

Regarding the Centrality of the Human Person, she noted: "At the heart of Catholic education is a stunning truth: every single child who walks through your classroom door is made in the image and likeness of God (Imago Dei). They are not products to be processed; they are sacred mysteries to be unveiled. In a world that often values young people only for their performance, grades, or social media presence, a Catholic school must be the place where they are valued simply because they exist.

"Pope Leo emphasizes that education must form the whole person - head, heart, and hands. We must nurture four essential pillars in our students, also known as the four C's: Conscience - The inner capacity to discern truth and moral goodness in a complex world; Competence - The intellectual rigour to engage deeply with history, science, scripture, and reason; Character - The moral fortitude to stand for justice, honesty, and kindness when it is costly; Compassion - A heart that breaks for the poor, the lonely, and the marginalized. And this fourth point means so very much, as Pope Leo writes: 'Losing the poor is akin to losing the school's soul'."

She added: "If our schools are welcoming only to the high achiever and have no room for the neurodivergent child, the struggling reader, or the young person carrying trauma, then we have lost our map.

See God within

"We have to ask ourselves about our own classroom and our own school communities - do we see the image of God in children whose brains may not process material as quickly as the neurotypical child? Do we accompany the child who struggles academically? Do we find ourselves short on patience, or do we look into that child's eye and see God within and take the extra time they may need to more fully understand something?"

Moving on to consider Pope Leo's 'Education for Peace and Dialogue', Melodie noted: "In a world increasingly marked by political polarization, harsh rhetoric, and cultural conflict, Pope Leo calls on Catholic schools to become workshops of coexistence where young people learn to 'disarm their words'.

"Here in Northern Ireland, this call has profound resonance. Peace in this land was not built overnight, and it cannot be sustained by accident. It is nurtured in the classroom when we teach young people how to listen across

differences, how to disagree with charity, and how to see the face of Christ in the 'other'. As I learn about the work of your diocese, in many ways you are already doing this. You create interfaith opportunities for students across the city to come together, there are sports activities that allow children to compete together, and A-level courses for older students (17-18) to learn together in specialized areas. Schools are places where the foundational bricks of the peace-building process are laid."

She continued: "We have to ask ourselves as educators, what are things I can be doing in my classroom or for my school community to advance peace? We see this in action when a teacher introduces a simple 'perspective-swapping' exercise during a controversial debate - requiring students to accurately state their peer's opposing argument before responding. In that moment, the teacher isn't just delivering a curriculum; they are training young minds to pause, empathize, and dismantle the instinct to demonize.

"Or what happens when conflict inevitably arises on the playground or in the hallway. When a school replaces quick condemnation with restorative circles - asking students not 'Who is to blame and how do we punish them?' but 'Who was hurt, and what do we need to do to make this right?' - the school becomes a living laboratory of reconciliation. A young person who learns how to offer a genuine apology and heal a broken relationship at fourteen is far less likely to harbour division at forty.

"When you teach dialogue, forgiveness, and reconciliation, you are performing an act of peace-building. You are teaching young people that true strength lies not in shouting louder, but in leaning in closer to listen."

Turning to 'Humanizing the Digital Age', Melodie said: "One of the most remarkable aspects of Pope Leo's letter is his address on digital technology and Artificial Intelligence. I think this is in part because of his American upbringing - he has witnessed how quickly technology has changed childhoods in the States. The Pope does not condemn technology; rather, he calls for a wise and humane discernment.

"He offers a brilliant insight for every educator navigating the era of AI: 'No algorithm can substitute for what makes education human - poetry, irony, love, art, imagination, and learning from human mistakes'.

Algorithm cannot love

"An AI can generate an essay, summarise a theological text, or solve an equation in seconds. But an algorithm cannot love a student. An algorithm cannot notice when a child walks into class with tears in their eyes. An algorithm cannot

offer a word of grace, or model forgiveness, or bear witness to the Living God. Technology is a tool, but relationship is the soul of education.

"As we welcome our students back - many returning from a summer spent behind screens and glowing devices - I challenge you to be the voice that calls them back to reality. Urge your students and their families to set down the devices, to look one another in the eye, and to step into the sacred, messy, beautiful work of genuine human connection."

Referring to Pope Leo's poetic description of Catholic education as a "constellation of hope", she commented: "Each parish, each school, each teacher is a star with its own brightness, but together, we form a constellation that guides travellers through the night.

"When the sky feels dark, we look to the witnesses who have walked this soil before us - how blessed are you to have so many Irish saints who were consummate mapmakers of hope. We spoke about St Columcille, but you also have St Brigid of Kildare, who was hospitable, courageous, deeply attuned to the natural world and the dignity of the poor. She teaches us that Catholic education must welcome the stranger and care for God's creation. And, of course, we have St Patrick, who returned in love to the very land where he had been enslaved, using simple symbols to explain profound truths. He shows us that the Gospel is communicated through humility, forgiveness, and accessible witness.

"These saints, and so many others like St John Henry Newman, remind us that heart speaks unto heart - education happens through heart-to-heart encounters, not through AI bots, but soul to soul."

Melodie concluded by thanking teachers with years of experience in the field for "carrying the light of faith through cultural shifts", and reminding them that Pope Leo has called them to be mentors: "Wrap your arms around the young teachers entering the profession. Teach them the art of patience. Remind them that seed sown in tears in September often yields a harvest of joy years down the road."

And, to new teachers starting out, she said: "You might feel underprepared. You might worry about classroom management, curriculum requirements, or answering difficult questions from skeptical teenagers. Hear this clearly: God does not call the equipped; He equips the called. You do not need to have every answer. What your students need most is a genuine witness.

"When you enter your classroom remember you cannot give what you do not have. Nurture your personal prayer life, take time to pause, reflect, and offer gratitude for each day. Look for Christ in every child - the student sitting in

the back corner who feels invisible to the one that comes in with boundless energy, all are made in the image of God."

Reminding her audience that they are the mapmakers, Melodie said: "Pope Leo XIV's letter ends with an invitation to lift our gaze and choose the way of gentleness, dialogue, and trust. The map of the future is not yet drawn. It is being drawn in your lesson plans, in your quiet prayers before the morning bell, in your listening ear, and in the love you show to every child

entrusted to your care.

"You are not merely teaching a subject; you are building the Kingdom of God. You are giving young people a compass for life, an anchor for their souls, and wings to fly. Go forth with courage. Trust in the words of St Paul, the prayers of St Colmcille and St Terese of Avila. Step into your classrooms this year not with fear, but with joyful confidence, knowing that Christ walks before you, charting new maps of hope."



Diocesan RE Conference

Catholic education...a work of hope



GREATLY impressed by the recent Derry Diocesan Religious Education Conference, the Chief Executive of the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS), Eamonn Broderick has spoken of how such events are a reminder that "Catholic education is, at its heart, a work of hope."

Commenting on his experience, he told 'The Net' that 'Drawing New Maps of Hope' "captured exactly what our schools need as they begin a new academic year."

He added: "St Columb's College provided a fitting setting for the conference, its own long tradition of Catholic education giving real weight to the theme of the day."

"Dr Wyttenbach's keynote, together with the depth of the workshops and the shared experience of colleagues from across our schools, gave teachers not just practical ideas but a renewed sense of purpose in their vocation."

Commending the input of Bishop Donal McKeown, Apostolic Administrator, and Bishop Michael Router, Bishop-elect of Derry Diocese, the CCMS chief officer noted how their contributions, particularly in celebrating the Eucharist and grounding the day spiritually, had "added real value and set the tone for everything that followed."

"Events like this," he concluded, "remind us that Catholic education is, at its heart, a work of hope - and it was a privilege to see that hope so tangibly shared among our teaching staff."

The Conference also had RE Advisors from the dioceses of Armagh, Dromore, and Down & Connor in attendance, as well as Marie Griffin, chair of the Catholic Education Partnership, Fintan Murphy, chief executive of the Catholic Schools' Trustee Service, and Michelle Simpson, Derry Diocesan Education Committee.

This was the third RE Conference to be held in the Diocese under the leadership of Bishop Donal, who received a standing ovation when he was presented with a gift in thanksgiving for his contributions and dedication to Catholic education. Over the years, Bishop Donal has been a member of the Council for Education (2001-

2026), Chair of the NI Council for Catholic Education (2010-now), Chair of CCMS (2019-now), and a member of the Costello Education Review Team (2005-6).

In a comment to 'The Net' afterwards about the Conference, he stated: "We are blessed to have so many wonderful staff in our schools who have a great level of commitment to pupils, and to their development as well-formed adults. The huge level of participation and enthusiasm reflects so well both on the idealism of our schools and on the high esteem in which the Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre is held."

"The key note speaker and the many workshops provided the possibility for professional development and the exchange of good practice. It was also an opportunity for key members of the diocesan family to meet with Bishop Michael Router - and for him to get a sense of the energy in the diocese. I am so grateful to God for the great work of Catholic education in these challenging times."

In a welcome message in the Conference booklet, Bishop Donal wrote: "Many young people and their families are living with pressures and uncertainties that would have been unfamiliar to previous generations. Schools are under great pressure to deal with a host of delicate and often distressing situations. Handing on subject content is one thing, but real education is so much more."

He went on to note that there is "a great hunger for rediscovering our identity as Catholic schools in this time of widespread pessimism and uncertainty in society."

Building communities

"Our Catholic schools," he continued, "are places where faith is not simply taught but lived. Together, we are called to create school communities where young people can encounter hope, ask life's deeper questions and discover the person of Jesus Christ. Building communities that can learn together is much more challenging. However, we are clear that is what Catholic education offers."

Each day began with the celebration of the Eucharist by



Diocesan RE Conference

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Bishop Donal, with the singing led by an impromptu choir made up of attendees from various schools, under the direction of St Columb's Music Department. Reflecting on the Gospel passage about Jesus walking on water (Mt 14:22-33), Bishop Donal told those gathered: "This is not a time for our schools or parishes to be prioritising downsizing, as if Jesus wants the Church to love being small and cosy. He says - get out of the boat, even if there seems to be a storm raging, and start sowing seeds of hope, confident that they will bear fruit in God's own good time."

"This is a time of crisis," he added, "in the Church, but also for the secular agenda. We see the disastrous consequences of the right to choose without criteria, values, principles, in fragmentation and meaninglessness."

He went on to highlight the thinking of Oxford psychiatrist, Iain McGilchrist, regarding the accepted science that the left side of the brain has more to do with logical, rational thinking, while the right brain side has to do with intuition, creativity and the arts. Bishop Donal noted the psychiatrist concluded, in his article in *The Tablet*, that an excessive emphasis in the school curriculum on merely left-brain content is damaging young people.

He asked those gathered: "Can we offer imagination-rich right and left-brain education in the search for truth? Can we chart new pathways for our society by what we model in Catholic schools? Can we step out of the boat - and expect

both mistakes and great things? Can we celebrate the gifts of all and not just those of the so-called high achievers?"

Encouraging them to make space for prayer and silence, Bishop Donal said: "Like all Gospel stories, it took time for the Early Church to appreciate it. Take time to pray with this passage - Who are you in the story? How would you have reacted had you been in the boat? What is Jesus saying to you? And what are you saying in reply?"

Bishop-elect of Derry, Bishop Michael Router was delighted to be able to attend both days of the Conference, and witness such a great turnout as well as hear Dr Melodie Wyttenbach's inspiring talk. Having taught for a period in his early years of priesthood, Bishop Michael said that, over time, he discovered that "teaching is more than just a career, it is a calling" - a calling to bring people into relationship with Jesus Christ.

Highlighting the importance of the school atmosphere, he spoke of the need to "create situations where young people feel that they belong, as that is not something that is easy to feel in a fractured world."

Building the future

"It is a very difficult role you have, but an essential one in today's world," remarked Bishop Michael, adding: "You are probably doing the most important work that needs to be done in our society. It is building the future and laying the foundations."

There was a warm welcome to all by St Columb's principal, Mrs Caroline McLaughlin, and

in particular to the two bishops. Thanking Bishop Donal, on behalf of all the Catholic Schools in the Diocese, for his "many years of steadfast service, commitment and genuinely positive impact to Catholic education", she went on to welcome Bishop Michael, saying: "We know and trust that you will be an equally positive presence for all our schools and young people in the area."

Referring to the Conference theme - 'Drawing New Maps of Hope', she remarked: "Pope Francis commented a lot on the teaching profession. He said, 'to be teacher is to live a mission.' He said, 'teaching is more than a profession, it is a mission, lived every day through patience, sacrifice, guidance and love'."

"As Catholic teachers and educators the hope is that this conference provides us with the opportunity to pause, reflect and prepare for the next school year and really consider our mission, moving forward into the new term with hope and a renewed vision of our mission."

A key feature of the Conference was a panel discussion following Dr Wyttenbach's talk, which included: Melodie; Bishop Donal; Dr Margery McMahon - a Professor of Educational Leadership at the University of Glasgow and past pupil of Thornhill College; Angela Mitchell - a member of the Roche Center for Catholic Education, at Boston College, and currently on the Board of Directors for the Catholic Education Partnership in Ireland; and Michael O'Kane - principal of

St Mary's PS, Glenview, Maghera, who is currently studying for a Masters in Educational Leadership in Catholic Schools.

The after-lunch workshops also proved to be very enlightening, and covered such topics as: Art; AI and the Catholic School; Celebrating the Catholic Life of a School; Children in Crossfire - Peacebuilding (Primary) and Global Education (Post-Primary); Dignity of Work; Guided Gospel Meditation; IT and Religious Education; Celtic Saints; Laudato Si' - Care for our Common Home; Leadership in a Catholic School; Liturgical Life of a Catholic School; Mary's Meals; Music; Research in Catholic Education and a new 'Online Community of Practice'; St Columba Heritage Centre; Smartphone Free Childhood; Sport & Faith; Teaching about Other Faith Traditions & Inclusion of Pupils from Different Faith Traditions in a Catholic School; the new All-Ireland Vision for Catholic Schools; Trocaire - School Initiatives & Resources; and Youth - faith development ideas and resources.

And there was plenty of interest in the promotional stalls in the lobby, which included the Diocesan Vocations Council & the Vocations Society of St Joseph, the Matt Talbot Prayer Society, Divine Mercy, and St Paul's Book and Gift Shop.

Each day ended with a prayer of dedication for school staff and a blessing of hands by both bishops. The next Diocesan RE Conference is scheduled to take place in August 2029.



Claudy Parish News

Craigbane sacristan retiring after 58 years' dedicated service



ST Joseph's Church, Craigbane, was almost filled to capacity on the first Sunday of August for a special Mass of Thanksgiving to mark the retirement of much-loved sacristan, Mena Crossan, after 58 years of dedicated service.

Parish Priest, Fr David O'Kane, who is also retiring, concelebrated the Mass with former curates of the parish, Fr Charlie Logue and Fr Noel McDermott, now PP Faughanvale.

During her time as sacristan, Mena also worked alongside Fr Michael Mullan, Fr Michael Flanagan, Fr Colm Diamond, Fr Michael McCaughey, now PP Leckpatrick, Camus & Lifford, and Fr Patrick McGuigan, who served as curates in the parish, and parish priests - Fr Peter Morgan, Fr Walter Carolan, Fr James Brennan, Fr Michael McElDowney, Fr Eugene Hasson, and Fr Gerry Sweeney, now PP Dungiven.

Amongst the large congregation

of all ages welcomed by Fr David were Mena's sisters, daughters and sons, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

Expressing thanks to Mena on behalf of the priests and the people of Craigbane for her 58 years of service to St Joseph's Church, to the many priests who had served there in that time, and to the Catholic community of Craigbane, Fr David said: "We all owe you so much gratitude for the way you looked after this church year in, year out for those 58 years."

Recalling first meeting her in Claudy Parochial House after he had been installed as parish priest in August 2009, he said: "I was introduced to Mena as she sat in the kitchen of the house, actually between the kitchen and the back porch, and I thought there is a humble lady, not seeking the limelight but genuinely welcoming me to the parish. And Mena has

remained that humble, gentle, unassuming lady all the days since."

Listing the priests with whom she had served, Fr David remarked: "Mena served us all equally. She made no distinction between us. She knew our oddness, our rare ways, our particular notions and our different ways of doing things. At the same time as Mena reared her own family, she saw the priests as just another part of her life and an extension of her care. She was always there. Holidays were put on hold, appointments were changed, family time was dictated by opening and closing the chapel, and no task or time was refused."

"Another quality that I would say all priests liked in Mena is that she gave us space. Mena gave us space to gather ourselves for Mass, to have the sacristy to ourselves for those few minutes before we went out to celebrate Mass. She sat on that hard bench with the altar servers, so we could have some peace and quiet before going out. That signifies her respect for the priest, but it also signifies her respect for the Mass as the centre of our faith."

Great go-between

Fr David went on to describe Mena as "a great go-between with any situations that arose", such as "people wanting more heat, people asking for Confessions, people wondering would the chapel be open, people wanting anniversaries read out", saying: "She sorted things quietly and without fuss."

He continued: "Mena has great

faith, mixed with common sense and a genuine desire to serve the Church. She is very understated, does not seek publicity, particular about linens, vestments and clothes associated with Mass."

There were ripples of laughter when Fr David concluded by saying that he would recommend Mena for a job as a weather forecaster: "Over so many winter mornings in the past years, I would rise and look out at either frost or snow and fall into depression. Not long after, I would get a call from Mena to tell me there was foot of snow in Craigbane or the roads were icy, and for me to stay at home. So, I jumped back into bed and pulled the duvet over my head. Mena's weather forecasting saved me many winter trips to Craigbane and for that I am eternally grateful."

Wishing Mena every blessing in her retirement, he told her: "You have been an outstanding servant to this Church and an example to all of us of kindness, common sense, for preparing for the celebration of Mass, christenings, funerals, weddings and other devotions. Thank you for your selfless dedication to family, priests and the wider Craigbane community."

Mena's daughter, Bernadette (McMonagle), spoke at the end of Mass in a tribute on behalf of her siblings to their mother. She noted that Mena had been a young mother of two small children, with another on the way, when she began her job as sacristan in 1968.

"I don't think anyone could have



Claudy Parish News



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imagined what that would lead to,” said Bernadette, “a life-time of dedication and service to chapel life. What started as a job became her life’s work. This was in parallel to the untold stress and difficulties after the sudden and tragic deaths of Philip Declan and our daddy, Gerry, and of rearing 10 children, and carrying on farming.

“Quietly and without fuss, Mena kept everything in order – altar cloths, vestments, candles, flowers, brushed and mopped floors, and polished brass to prepare the chapel for every occasion.

“She was there for generations of Craighane families when children were baptized, when young people made their First Communions and Confirmations, and when couples were married, and when families came together at funerals to say ‘goodbye’ to people they loved. She quietly prepared the chapel for these sacraments, as well as the high days of bishops’ visits and missions, which were such an important part of parish life in

those days. “Mena was at the centre of the detail for preparing the chapel for Benediction, Adoration, Palm Sunday, Easter and Christmas, ensuring everything was ready for the most important celebrations of the Church’s year.”

Warm smile

Remarking that her mother had worked with many wonderful priests over the years, Bernadette said: “Visiting priests were always met with a warm smile and made to feel welcome with a well-prepared chapel, a cup of tea, a cooked breakfast, and a bit of chat between Masses. That’s Mena. She didn’t just look after the chapel – she looked after the people in it.”

She went on to point that being sacristan “was never just about what happened inside the chapel”, recalling: “There were the days when the weather was against her. There were flooded drains and debris to be cleared. There were snowy steps and pathways that had to be brushed and salted. There were ‘phone calls to priests,

giving updated Craighane weather conditions on icy roads, and ‘phone calls letting parishioners know of any Mass cancellations.

“Whatever needed to be done, she did it. No fuss, no complaint – she just got on with it. There wasn’t one big moment; it was 21,000 ordinary rainy, snowy, busy, quiet days, and days when she was tired and not feeling her best. And that is what makes 58 years so remarkable. For decades, she hardly missed a thing.”

“Of course, over time, things have changed,” said Bernadette, “with an altar society, flower arrangers, cleaners, and many helping hands; there is great support now. But, for many years, the responsibility rested almost entirely with Mena, and she carried it faithfully. Until last year, when a spell of ill-health forced her to slow down; maybe that was the moment we all realised that Mena had been sacristan for 58 years, and it was now time to talk about retirement.

“Although, if we know Mena, I’m not sure she will ever fully switch off! I can just imagine her

in Donegal, supposedly relaxing and still wondering...Is the chapel open? Are there plenty of candles? Are the altar cloths clean? Is the heat on? Because, after 58 years, switching off might be the hardest job of all.”

Telling her mother that they were so proud of her and grateful for everything that she has given – the care, loyalty and quiet dedication behind it, Bernadette finished by saying: “Thank you for every early morning and every late evening, for every task you did quietly and faithfully, but most of all, thank you for being our Mammy. We all love and value you. You have given a life-time to our chapel and our Craighane community, and now, this next chapter belongs to you, enjoy it. You’ve certainly earned it.”

After Mass, all were invited for refreshments in the hall, where Mena was presented with a crystal Irish Cross by Fr O’Kane and a bouquet of flowers by Colette Sharkey, on behalf of the parish, and a further bouquet from Craighane GAC.



Buncrana Parish News

Plenty of fun at annual Garden Fete

Photographs by Martin Moloney



Three Patrons Parish News...

Marian prayer tour in honour of Our Lady a blessed time

THE Three Patrons one-day Marian pilgrimage around part of the Diocese on August 18, in honour of the Feast of the Assumption, was blessed with beautiful weather.

Over 30 pilgrims signed up for the visitation to five of the churches dedicated to Our Lady, and were accompanied by Fr Roni Zacharias, and parish catechists, Kathryn Ellis and Teresa McDaid.

The pilgrimage began with the celebration of the Parish morning Mass by Fr Roni in St Mary's

Church, Ardmore, and the praying of the first of five decades of the Rosary that were recited at the end of each Church visit.

After refreshments in Dungiven, the group made its way to St Mary's Church, Altinure, where Fr Dermott McGirr, Banagher PP, gave them a brief history of the church.

The Church of the Immaculate Conception, in Gortnaghey, was visited next before setting out over the Glenshane for lunch in Maghera, which was followed by

a visit to St Mary's Church in the town there.

Fr Paddy Doherty, PP Maghera, had a warm welcome for the group, and the pilgrims were delighted that some parishioners had come along to pray the decade of the Rosary with them. Sacristan, Angela Lagan, had also lovingly prepared a special Marian altar with lit candles for the occasion, which was greatly appreciated.

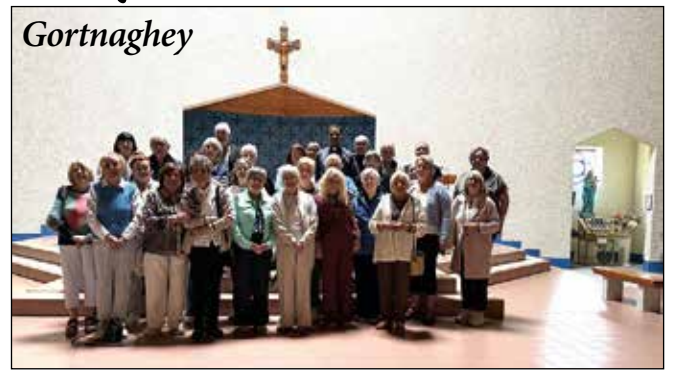
The group then moved on to St Mary's Church, Lavey, known also as Our Lady of Mercy, where they

were greeted by Fr Eamon Graham PP and the sacristan, Patrick Boyle, with Fr Eamon sharing some history of the church and the story of its magnificent renovations.

During the tour, the pilgrims took turns in leading the praying of the various decades, and lit candles for special intentions.

For most, it was the first time they had visited these churches and they were greatly impressed by the beauty of their design and décor, and the history attached to them.

Gortnaghey



Maghera



Lavey



Altinure



Ardmore



Malin Parish News...

Annual Parish Sports Day a lovely community occasion



Greenlough Parish News...

Great turnout for blessing of beautiful Lourdes Grotto



THE blessing of the beautiful Lourdes Grotto in the grounds of St Oliver Plunkett Church, in Clady, Portglenone, on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady, August 15, was a very special occasion for the local community, with the time of prayer followed by fun activities.

The occasion got underway with the celebration of the weekend Vigil Mass by Bishop Donal, with Dom Celsus Kelly, of the Cistercian Order at Our Lady of Bethlehem Abbey, and Fr Pat O'Hagan, PP, concelebrating.

Speaking before Mass began, Maria Lagan, who was involved with the Grotto development, thanked everyone who had donated money, materials, plants, flowers and other items, saying that every contribution, big or small, had helped greatly.

Thanking in particular the

parishioners of Greenlough and surrounding parishes for their wonderful generosity, encouragement and support, Maria pointed out: "This Grotto belongs to all of us, and we believe it will become a very special place as a source of comfort, hope and prayer for so many people. This Grotto can be a place where people can come at any time to pray, give thanks and feel close to Our Lady."

Expressing appreciation to all who had helped in any way in the organization of the celebration, she went on to express deep gratitude for the time and expertise put in by the tradesmen to have the Grotto ready for the Feast of the Assumption.

And, she had a special word for Fr Art O'Reilly, who was unable to be present but hoped to be watching via the webcam, recalling that his "devotion to Our Lady

was unequalled" and that he had instilled the same devotion in the parish during his ministry with them.

Maria also recalled other former priests who had served in the parish after Fr O'Reilly, including the late Fr Oliver Crilly and Fr Hassan, Fr Eamonn Graham and Fr Dermot Harkin, who had all carried on the devotion, and asked that they be remembered in a special way at the Grotto. And she asked for their parish priest, Fr Pat to be kept in prayer too, for his input and encouragement in the building of the Grotto.

"Finally, we would like to say a big 'thank you' to the force of nature that came up with this plan and that is Teeni McErlean," said Maria, adding: "May Our Lady of Lourdes watch over us all, our families and our communities, and may our Grotto remain a place of faith, hope, peace and prayer for generations to come."

Symbols

A number of symbols were brought forward during the ceremony, including the plans for the Grotto, a candle to represent the light of Christ, a bunch of roses to symbolise Our Lady, Holy Water as a reminder of Baptism and God's love and protection, and Rosary beads as a reminder of Mary's invitation to pray and reflect on the life of Her Son, Jesus.

At the end of Mass, Fr Pat paid tribute to the parishioners for the construction of the Grotto and the

celebration to mark its blessing on the Feast of the Assumption of Our Lady into Heaven, saying: "May it be a place to go in prayer and a place of comfort."

He continued: "I said to Bishop McKeown that this is a great parish. It has so many good people in it committed to the life of the parish, and to promoting expressions of faith. It is lovely to acknowledge them tonight and all who work to make this a vibrant community of faith."

"We will not see the Grotto in all its glory this evening as it is not dark enough, but it will be a wonderful focus for us as a parish."

As the wonderful choir sang the closing hymn, the altar servers led Fr Pat, Dom Celsus, Bishop Donal and the people in procession from the chapel for the blessing of the Grotto and the praying of a decade of the Rosary.

Afterwards, many lingered to enjoy further the beauty of the Grotto and to have photographs with Bishop Donal and wish him well in his retirement. Those gathered crossed all the ages, including a young boy who had kept a close eye on the construction of the Grotto as he went back and forth to the primary school next door, and a man in his 80s who had shared his knowledge and expertise on site.

The ceremony was followed by an evening of fun activities in the grounds of the neighbouring Bann Valley Hall, where refreshments were available for all.



Desertmartin & Ballinascreen Pioneer News

Fr Cullen Medals amidst host of Pioneer presentations

THE annual presentation of PTAA pins and medals took place on Saturday, August 22, at St Patrick's Church, Keenaught, officiated by Fr Peter Madden, PP Ballinascreen & Desertmartin.

A total of 22 Pioneers were presented with pins in five categories. These included four Young Pioneers - Rian Walls, Maria Walls, Culann Gilmore, and Olivia Trainor, and one Full Pioneer, Maria O'Kane.

There were also five Golden Jubilarians - Maria McLernon, Margaret McWilliams, Columba

McGuigan, Damien Doyle, and Mary Hegarty, and nine Diamond Jubilarians - Brian Kelly, Ann Diamond, Jim Diamond, Paddy Kelly, Marie Kelly, Rose Logue, Briege McGovern, Annie McCloskey, and Henry Burke.

Very special presentations were made to three brothers, Hughie, Francis and Patrick Trainor, who each received the Fr Cullen Medal for over 70 years' membership.

A previous PTAA presentation was held on May 9, when 16 Pioneer pins and medals were awarded. Recipients included two

Silver Jubilarians - Kevin Walls and Bernadette McCann, and five Golden Jubilarians - Mary Toner, Margaret Shaw, Nuala McBride, Trea McIvor and Loretta O'Hagan.

Presentations were also made to eight Diamond Jubilarians - Kathleen McCann, Olive Walls, Veronica Wilson, Barney Walls, Kathleen Walls, Anna Rea, Rosemary Fox and Mary McPeake, with the Fr Cullen Medal presented to Brian Tohill.

Anyone wishing to become a member of the PTAA can contact the parishes offices by telephone

- Desertmartin: 028 7939 7047, Ballinascreen: 028 7962 8248, or email: desertmartinparish@gmail.com or ballinscreenparish@gmail.com.

You can also join online through the Pioneer Total Abstinence Association - <https://www.pioneers.ie>.

Congratulations to all those who received their pins and medals, and sincere thanks to everyone who continues to support the work of the PTAA in our local parishes.



Seated l/r: Brothers, Hughie Trainor, 70yrs; Francis Trainor, 70yrs; Patrick Trainor, 70yrs. Second row l/r: Maria McLernon, 50yrs; Briege McGovern, 60yrs; Marie Kelly, 60yrs; Margaret McWilliams, 50yrs; Annie McCloskey, 60yrs; Maria Walls, Young Pioneers; Marie O'Kane, Life Pioneer; Culann Gilmore, Young Pioneers; Columba McGuigan, 50yrs. Back Row: Paddy Kelly, 60yrs; Damien Doyle, 50yrs; Henry Burke, 60yrs; Fr Peter Madden; Rose Logue, 60yrs; Ann Diamond, 60yrs; Jim Diamond, 60yrs; and Brian Kelly, 60yrs. Missing from the photograph are: Oliva Trainor, Young Pioneers; Rian Walls, Young Pioneers, and Mary Hegarty, 50yrs.



Coleraine Parish News



Parish trip to celebrate National Heritage Week

A group of 48 set out with Fr Neil Farren, PP Coleraine, during National Heritage week, August 15-23, on a Parish Heritage Trip to Glenveagh National Park.

In this 2026 Year of St Francis, they also visited and prayed at Ards Friary Church, the site of Capuchin

Franciscans in Co. Donegal.

And they ended the day with a meal at The Board Walk Restaurant, near Carrigart.

In 2025, the Parish went to St Brigid's Shrine at Faughart (her place of birth) near Dundalk, where they were blessed with a relic

of St Brigid before travelling on to St Patrick's Hill of Slane.

In 2024, they went on a Parish Pilgrimage to St Patrick's Sanctuary Lough Derg, for the one-day programme, and in 2023, they went to St Patrick's Heritage

Centre, in Downpatrick, and to the Hill of Saul, site of St Patrick's first church in Ireland.

In 2027, it is their hope to go to the sacred island of Devenish on Lough Erne, founded by St Molaise.



Bellaghy Parish News...

Great turnout for Church Island Sunday



ON Sunday, August 30, around 70 people made the annual pilgrimage to Church Island on the shores of Lough Beg, in the Parish of Ballyscullion (Bellaghy). Among the pilgrims were a number of families with young children.

Those who were unable to walk across to the 'Island' were very grateful to Mr Bernard McKenna, who transported them on his tractor and trailer.

Fr Pat O'Hagan, PP, led a time of prayer and reflection based

on 'Living Water', the theme of this year's Season of Creation (September 1 - October 4), an initiative of the late Pope Francis.

We are invited to cherish the gift of water, conscious of the many millions who live with drought conditions for most of the year, not to mention our near neighbours who have endured a very difficult summer of weather conditions not seen in our lifetime, caused probably by global warming.

A visit from Our Lady by Roisin McGarrigle.

FEBRUARY 24 was a very special day in my home. After what was a chance encounter with a friend, who is a member of my Faughanvale Parish Legion of Mary Praesidium, at Sunday Mass, I took receipt of the Legion of Mary statue two days later, for what was to become a Holy and blessed week, that brought graces beyond my expectations.

Our Lady has been my guiding star all of my life. My love for her began as a young child and has continued throughout my life. Our Lady has guided me to Her Son, Jesus Christ, with a gentle hand and steadfast love.

Our Lady's intercession is the first that I seek with both gratitude and confidence. She never ceases to come to my aid and, as a result, the blessings bestowed upon me by Jesus are in abundance. Often, I don't even recognise blessings I am being given until afterwards.

I have been challenged in my devotion to Mary, our Mother, on a few occasions, and my response is always the same – "Mary is Jesus' gift to us. He entrusted us to Mary and Mary to us at the foot of the Cross, and His first miracle was at His Mother's request. I know with

confidence, when Mary asks Jesus to help us, He listens and responds, and often far beyond what our prayers asked for."

The graces I received in my home, from February 24 - March 5, saw 37 friends and family members visit my home to pray the Rosary and Stations of the Cross through the eyes of Mary. Bringing to life Jesus' promise: "Where two or more are gathered, I am with them" (Matthew 18:20). My home and religious objects were also blessed, when on one of the nights a priest led the prayer evening.

To describe the sense of peace and calm that was felt by myself and all who visited is not possible, as I could not do it justice, but six months later, I still smile and feel the warmth of the love that was on display for Jesus through devotion to His Mother, and it all happened in my home!

My home has always had God in it and I bring my faith with me in all that I do, but I will be forever thankful for my chance encounter at Mass with Sheila that led to me having the honour to welcome the Legion of Mary statue into my home. Another grace from the week of prayer saw a friend also

Kilrea's beautiful display for Season of Creation



All are welcome to visit the Laudato Si' meditative displays in St Anne's Oratory and St Mary's Church, Drumagartner, for an opportunity to pause, reflect, and pray during the Season of Creation.



accept the statue into her home, on a week that was poignant to her and her family.

I pray that many more homes get to welcome Our Lady's as an intercessor. She is our greatest ally, and when I pray the simple prayer, "Mary, Mother of Christ, please be a mother to me," She never lets me down.

The Legion of Mary statue can

be received at your request within your parish.

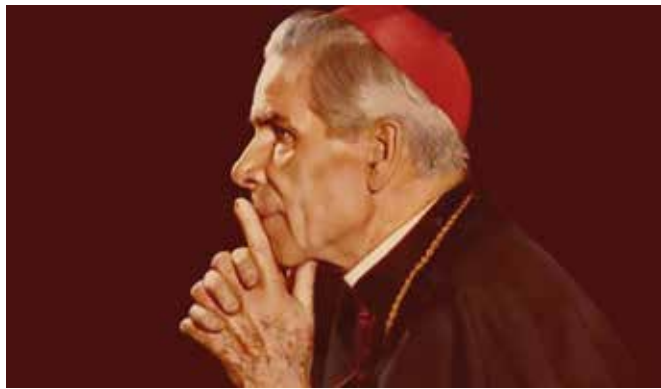
For Star of the Sea, Faughanvale, and St Mary's, Tamnaherin, the contact details are: 07812985963 (Bernie), 07938180035 (Sheila), and 07703350289 (Brenda).

New members are always welcome and meet every Wednesday evening at Star of the Sea Church at 7 pm.



Reflections from a Catholic perspective...Navigating spiritual frustration and finding healing

Fulton Sheen - A voice for Christ in the Catholic home *by Sinéad Strong*



AS the Church prepares for his beatification in St Louis on September 24, Archbishop Fulton J Sheen offers Catholic families a timely guide to prayer, marriage, suffering and faithful witness.

Few Catholic voices of the 20th Century entered as many homes as Venerable Archbishop Fulton J Sheen. Through radio and television, he brought the faith to millions, addressing conscience, freedom, suffering, marriage and the longing for God.

His beatification offers Catholic families an opportunity to rediscover the spiritual wisdom behind his public ministry.

Born in El Paso, Illinois, in 1895, Sheen was ordained for the Diocese of Peoria in 1919. After advanced studies in Europe, he taught theology and philosophy at The Catholic University of America, making profound ideas accessible to ordinary listeners.

His radio programme, 'The Catholic Hour', and television series, 'Life Is Worth Living', made him widely recognised. Yet, his purpose was not entertainment. He showed how faith illuminates questions arising in every home: How do we love faithfully? What do we do with suffering? What gives marriage lasting strength?

Those questions remain urgent. Parents raise children amid noise and competing messages about happiness. Sheen's response was neither withdrawal nor fear, but to understand the age, use its means of communication wisely, and speak truth with clarity and charity.

In 'Three to Get Married', Sheen taught that Christian marriage is not merely a partnership between two people. God is its centre, enabling husband and wife to love one another as gifts rather than expecting either spouse to satisfy every emotional and spiritual need.

For Sheen, love was chiefly an act of the will. Feelings rise and fall; married love matures through repeated choices of fidelity, patience, forgiveness and self-giving, especially during demanding ordinary days.

Sheen's public brilliance was rooted in a daily Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament, a practice he credited with sustaining his vocation and shaping his preaching. A full daily hour may not be possible for busy parents, but family life cannot be sustained by activity alone. Even a short time in quiet prayer can become a place to surrender anxiety, renew patience and entrust loved ones to Christ.

Families might begin with a weekly church visit, 10 minutes before the tabernacle after Mass, or a regular arrangement allowing each parent time for adoration. Older children may be invited to join them. The goal is not perfect concentration but faithful presence.

Sheen's devotion to Our Lady always led towards Christ. Family prayer need not be flawless: a single decade of the Rosary prayed faithfully, despite wriggling children or wandering minds, may be better than an ambitious routine that quickly collapses.

Every family experiences misunderstanding and failure. Sheen's teaching insists that Christian family life is sustained not by the absence of faults, but by

the willingness to forgive, speak honestly and let someone take the first step towards reconciliation. Parents teach mercy most powerfully when they practise it. A parent who apologises does not surrender authority; children learn that conflict need not destroy love and that sin can be brought to honest conversation, reconciliation and the mercy of Christ.

Sheen also addressed suffering: illness; bereavement; financial pressure; loneliness; and concern for children who have wandered from faith. Christianity offers no shallow explanation, but proclaims that suffering united with Christ's Cross is never meaningless. This does not make evil good or remove the need for medical, pastoral or practical help. Christianity does not require families to deny such pain or offer shallow explanations. Instead, it proclaims that suffering can be united with the Cross of Christ. This does not make evil good, nor does it remove the need to seek medical, pastoral or practical help. It means that no suffering endured with Christ is meaningless.

Family life can also become crowded with good activities, leaving little room for Mass, shared meals, rest, or prayer. Sheen's clarity invites households to ask whether their calendars reflect their beliefs. Sometimes saying 'no' to one good activity makes room for something

essential.

The beatification celebrations begin with a novena on September 15. An anniversary Mass will be celebrated in Peoria on September 20, followed by Vespers in St Louis on September 23 and the beatification Mass on September 24, with adoration and confession available beforehand. Events continue in Peoria through September 26.

Families unable to travel can still participate spiritually. They might:

- Pray the beatification novena together.
- Watch one episode of 'Life Is Worth Living' and discuss it.
- Make a family visit to the Blessed Sacrament.
- Pray a decade of the Rosary for the renewal of Catholic marriage and family life.
- Read a short passage from 'Three to Get Married', 'Peace of Soul' or 'Life of Christ'.
- Choose one act of sacrifice or service for a person in need.
- Ask Sheen's intercession for a particular family difficulty.

Parents may wish to begin with a short broadcast rather than a full book. Couples could read a few pages of 'Three to Get Married' together and discuss one idea at a time. Older teenagers may appreciate Sheen's direct treatment of anxiety, freedom and the purpose of life.

The beatification of Fulton Sheen



will honour a gifted preacher, but his deeper legacy is not a television technique or a memorable turn of phrase. It is the witness of a priest whose outward fruitfulness flowed from friendship with Christ.

Catholic families do not need a studio, a blackboard or a large audience to share in that mission. The domestic church is built through small acts repeated with love: Sunday Mass; the Rosary; an apology sincerely offered; a meal shared without screens; a visit to the Blessed Sacrament; and a decision to place God at the centre of marriage.

Sheen's message to families is finally one of hope. Holiness does not require a perfect household. It begins when an imperfect family opens its door to Christ and allows Him to become the third person in every love, the strength in every sacrifice and the peace at the centre of the home.

Fatima *by Dr Seán Beattie*



FATIMA takes its place among the great Marian shrines, along with Knock in Ireland and Lourdes in France. Last month, I wrote about a pilgrimage made by a small group from Merville, Co Donegal, to some of the great shrines of France. On one leg of that journey, the party did a detour and travelled via Spain to the Portuguese shrine of Fatima. The journey was by car and the distance from Lourdes to Fatima was about 600 miles.

Spanish dictatorship

Crossing the border at San Sebastian, in Spain, led us to a different world. Massive bill boards extolled the virtues of various ports and wines associated with the

country. At this time, Spain was still under the control of the Dictator, Franco. His picture greeted us in every café and petrol station we visited. We were told that it was a criminal offence not to display the image, a sign of disapproval of his reign. The gruesome Spanish Civil War was over but the reins of power were in the hands of a dictatorship.

Food was cheaper than in France, but the signs of poverty were clearly evident. In some fields, farmers were ploughing with oxen, and herds of oxen frequently wandered the roads.

Story of Fatima

The origins of the shrine of Fatima can be traced to October

13, 1917, when three shepherd children witnessed an apparition of the Blessed Virgin at the Cova de Ira. The children were Lucia de Jesus and Francisco and Jacinta Marto.

To reach Fatima, we drove through the university town of Coimbra, once the capital of Portugal, with magnificent architecture and now named as a World Heritage Site.

In 1917, Fatima was a mere village, not far from the town of Leiria. Today, a beautiful Basilica dominates the site, with facilities to cater for thousands of pilgrims. While the shrine is open all the year round, special ceremonies take place on the 13th of every month during the pilgrimage season. At that time, huge crowds throng the Basilica and environs, but a more tranquil environment exists at off-peak times.

Fr Hugh Gallagher's Diary Fatima July 1968

As noted earlier, Fr Hugh Gallagher, CC, Merville, (1913-1990) who was born in Pomeroy but grew up in Strabane, kept a diary of our pilgrimage. Here is a key excerpt...

"We drove through some lovely mountain scenery, with a temperature of 98 degrees in the car until we came to the City of Coimbra, where Lucy, one of the children of Fatima, lives in a convent. We were accommodated in some lovely rooms in the Pension

Cararina, at the unbelievable price of £3 for two-and-a-half days on full board. We arrived at Fatima at 7.20 and, as dinner was not served until 8.30 pm, we had plenty of time to make a visit to the Basilica. As we were entering the Santuario, we met a small procession going in. We later learned it was the procession going into the final session of the International Seminar on the Message of Fatima, which was held from the 16th to the 23rd of July. A number of the pilgrims were carrying large flags of the various nations and among them we noticed a man carrying the Irish flag.

"I said Mass in the Basilica at 8.30 am and we spent the rest of the day quietly. The big days in Fatima are the 12th and the 13th of each month from May to October, when processions and Holy Hours take place and large numbers are present. We have no large crowds to contend with and there are no processions or such like. We have Fatima almost to ourselves. The food in our little hotel is fantastic. We had a siesta after lunch.

Places of interest

"In the evening, we visited the Basilica and the Capelhina (the little chapel of the apparitions). On our way over, we met the Irishman who was carrying the flag the evening before. He was from Ballymahon, Co Longford. He is known as 'the Anonymous Pilgrim'.

He has been coming to Fatima for twenty years and is well known here. He agreed to meet us on a visit to places of interest in Fatima: Alustrel, Valinhos, Cabaco, etc. He also took me into the Secretariat and arranged for me to say Mass in the Capelhina the next morning. I have been very lucky today...or is luck the word to use with Our Lady?

"After Mass, we visited the Capelhina again, and I read the Act of Consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary for some pilgrims. This was one of the requests of Our Lady to the children.

"We saw Portuguese women going round the Capelhina and up to the Square on their knees. In the Apparition, there was a request to do penance. Traditionally, many older Portuguese pilgrims travelled from their home place on their knees.

"In the Basilica, there are the graves of Jacinta, and her brother Francisco. Lucy is still living in Coimbra in the convent.

"We drove out to the Santuario, where I said Mass. Then we visited Alustrel, where we visited the house of Jacinta and Francisco Marto and shook hands with Jao Marto, the brother of Jacinta and Francisco. Afterwards, we went to the house of Lucy, where we met Lucy's sister. Next, we went to the spot in the garden where the Angel appeared on one occasion and drank water from the well. Then we went to

Valinhos, where Our Lady appeared to the children on 19 August 1917, as they had been kidnapped for the 13th August by the authorities. We met a Belgian diplomat who said he knew de Valera and Archbishop Walsh of Tuam. Finally, we visited the village of Fatima, where the children's parents are buried. That night, we watched a procession of Portuguese soldiers in a Torchlight Procession."

Fr Gallagher concluded

"Fatima is very different from Lourdes but it has an atmosphere of its own. There is an aura of peace here and the piety and penance of the pilgrims, especially the Portuguese, is very touching. I have seen young girls walking on their knees and then coming over to the water taps to bathe them."

Memories

On a personal level, the pilgrimage to Fatima was one of the most memorable of my visits to the Continent. Our visit to the home of Francisco has remained with me. The international fame of Fatima had not touched the humble world of Francisco. His house was almost unchanged since the days of the Apparition: a bare stone floor, white-washed exterior shining in the sun, the bare wooden brown furnishings and evidence of a humble lifestyle. Tourism may have brought changes today, but not in 1968.

Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

Divine Mercy by Fr Eamonn Kelly



DIVINE Mercy is a living invitation to us - to be healed, restored and redeemed in God, through God and with God. It seems to me that we are mostly skirting around the edges of Divine Mercy, but not entering the beauty manifested to us through St Faustina. There is one thing about looking at an apple pie, but it is an entirely different thing to eat, taste, savour, and enjoy the apple pie, letting it become part of you.

The various aspects of the Divine Mercy revelations are ways of coming to know the wonder of God in a profound way. The Divine Mercy Image, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy, the Diary (Divine Mercy in my Soul), and the Novena of Divine Mercy are tools for opening our hearts to the meaning of the Cross of Christ. Divine Mercy is not a new gospel, but an explanation of the Scriptures and a fresh presentation through the person and personality of St Faustina of a message that the world needs to hear, see and experience.

There are aspects of Divine Mercy that some people grasp straightaway and other features that take longer to penetrate the human heart. Much of the 'success' of Divine Mercy is our own willingness to accept the amount of truth that we want to face and the degree of honesty that we want in our lives. Unfortunately, there is pretence in our modern world, with lies told as truth and falseness presented as fact. Everything seems to have a price and many of our people are sold into slavery as they are led down paths that will not bring much except self-destruction.

The power of Divine Mercy is looking at the real issues - what is going on in my life, what am I running to and what am I trying to escape from. We see so much through the glasses of our experiences and lots of our experiences have no love in them, no lasting good in them, no joy or truth or knowledge of the Almighty. In fact, many of our experiences are the result of false ways of life and the working out of lies by ourselves

Divine Mercy Weekend in Convoy

The village of Convoy, in Co Donegal, is a lovely place to live. Built on the banks of the River Deele, Convoy had a great time of growth with the development of the Convoy Woolen Mill, which, at one time, employed over 400 people. The Mill closed almost 50 years ago but its memory still lives large in the hearts of the people.

Across the road from the Mill is St Mary's Church. Within this modern church is a beautiful alcove that has been developed into the Divine Mercy Alcove. It has quotes from the Diary all over the wall, timelines of both St Faustina and Blessed Fr Michael Sopoko. It also has the Divine Mercy Image, and its centrepiece is a first-class relic of St Faustina.

People come to the Divine Mercy Alcove in a very casual manner, sit and pray. Over the last five years, a wee prayer time has been formed on a Saturday morning, ending with a blessing with the Relic. If we know a group is coming to visit the Alcove, we make a special effort to greet them and have some prayer time together.

On the weekend of October 2, 3 & 4, we are going to hold a St Faustina Weekend. Her Feast Day is on October 5. The idea of the weekend is that we will grow in praying with Divine Mercy. Under this year's theme of 'Divine Mercy is a gift to me', we will have prayer times, quiet times, reflections and Eucharist.

You are very welcome to join us for all or any part or parts of the weekend. We hope that more people come to know Divine Mercy in a deep and profound

way. For more information you can contact me on 0879077985 or eamonnkelly1949@gmail.com.

The greatest things in life are free. Jesus is not a statue but the living Lord of life. Jesus has paid the price for our sins to bring us back into communion with God. Jesus is a stream of living water from which we are invited to drink. The Divine Mercy Revelations are an invitation to let the future be what life was meant to be.

Divine Mercy Weekend Programme

Friday

7.30-9.30pm: Divine Mercy Devotions.

Saturday

9.30am: Divine Mercy Chaplet, Prayer for the Holy Spirit, Morning Prayer from the Divine Office, Lady of Knock Novena, the Divine Mercy Praises and a Second Chaplet.

11.30am-12.30pm: Divine Mercy Prayerful Reflections.

3pm: Stations of the Cross

6pm: We join the parish community in Eucharist.

8.30pm: Candlelight procession

Sunday

On Sunday, there are two Masses: 9.30am in St Mary's Church, Convoy and 11am in St Eunan's Church, Raphoe.

Noon - 1pm: Divine Mercy Prayerful Reflections

3pm: Stations of the Cross

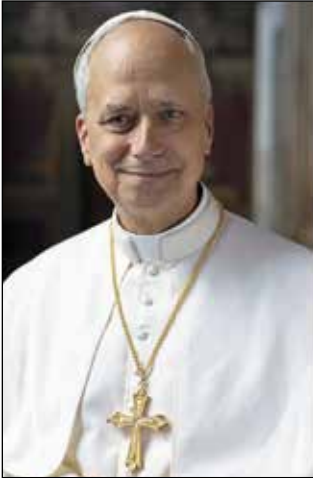
4-6pm: Divine Mercy Devotions ending with October Devotions

IS GOD CALLING YOU?

DERRYVOCATIONS.ORG

If this is of interest to you, please contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan on (+44) 07703444280 or (028) 7938 6452

Pope's monthly intention



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

The Care of Water
Let us pray for a just and sustainable management of water, a vital resource, so that everyone may have equal access to it.

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

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

Remember in prayer:

- Fr Pat O'Hagan (Sept 1st)
- Fr David O'Kane (2nd)
- 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)

A PRAYER FOR VOCATIONS TO THE DIOCESAN PRIESTHOOD

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

(Based on the words of Pope Leo XIV)

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

Parish Post-its

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

Aghyaran

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

Ardstraw East

(Newtownstewart)

Mass of Rededication: The Mass of Rededication of St Eugene’s Church, Glenock, Newtownstewart, will take place on Sunday, September 27, at 3 pm. There will be refreshments and entertainment afterwards, at 5 pm, in St Eugene’s Community Hall, Old Castle Road, Newtownstewart.

Zoom Catechism: All are welcome to join Catechism by Zoom on Mondays, from 7.30-8.15 pm. Email: ardstraweast@derrydiocese.org to get the link. Learn how to answer hard questions.

Pope John Paul II Award – Sessions for Pope John Paul II Award participants take place on Thursdays at 6.30 pm, in the Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.

Holy Hour: 6.30 pm, Thursdays, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.

Weekend Mass Times: 11:30 am, St Eugene’s Glenock.

Badoney Lower

(Gortin-Rouskey)

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

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30 pm Vigil, St Patrick’s, Gortin; 10 am, St Mary’s, Rouskey.

Badoney Upper

(Plumbridge-

Cranagh)

Adoration & Confession: Adoration and Confessions take place in St Patrick’s Cranagh after the 7.30 pm Wednesday evening Mass, until 9 pm, and after the 12 noon Mass on Saturdays in Plumbridge.

Confessions: Confessions are available on Saturdays at 12 noon in Sacred Heart Church, Plumbridge, and before the 7.30 pm Saturday Vigil Mass in St Patrick’s Church, Cranagh.

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30 pm Vigil, St Patrick’s Cranagh; 10 am, Sacred Heart Plumbridge.

Ballinascreen

St Pio Mass: Mass in honour of St Pio of Pietrelcina is celebrated on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary

Church. The Novena prayers and Rosary are recited at 7.10 pm.

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Holy Rosary Church on the First Mondays from 12 noon until 7.30 pm.

Confessions: Holy Rosary Church every Saturday at 5.30 pm, before the Vigil Mass.

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

Ballymagroarty

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Holy Family Church, Ballymagroarty, every Sunday, from 1.30 - 6 pm.

Padre Pio Prayer: The Holy Family Padre Pio Prayer Group meets on the first Tuesday each month at Holy Family Chapel, Ballymagroarty, Derry. It starts with the Rosary at 6.45 pm, followed by Mass at 7.15pm, and Novena to St Pio directly afterwards. There will be a first-class relic available for veneration.

Legion of Mary: The Legion meets on Wednesday evenings at 5.45 pm. Anyone willing to do Our Lady’s work is asked to call Patricia on 028 71417867.

Confessions: Saturdays from 10.30-11.30 am & 5.15-5.50 pm; Tues & Thurs 6.45–7.10 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil; and 9.30 am, 11 am, and 12.30 pm on Sunday.

Banagher

Adoration & Chaplet: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Divine Mercy Chaplet take place in St Mary’s Church, Altinure, Thursdays, 10.30-11.30 am; St Joseph’s Church, Fincairn, on Fridays, 10–11 am.

Confessions: St Mary’s Church, Altinure, Thursday 10.30 am; St Joseph’s Church, Fincairn, Friday 10 am & Saturday 6.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil and 9.15 am on alternate Sundays in St Joseph’s Church, Fincairn, 10.30 am in St Mary’s Church, Altinure, and 12 noon on alternate Sundays in St Peter’s & St Paul’s Church, Foreglen.

Bellaghy

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in The St Carlo Acutis Adoration Chapel on Fridays from 10 am-8 pm, with the Rosary for Vocations at 7.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times:

5.30 pm Vigil livestreamed to Bellaghy from St Oliver Plunkett’s Church, Greenlough; Sunday, 9.45 am in Ballyscullion, and 11 am in Bellaghy, live-streamed to Greenlough.

Buncrana

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament now takes place in St Mary’s Oratory every Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, 6 am-10 pm, Fridays, 6am-10 pm, and on Sundays 2-10 pm.

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed every Monday-Thursday at 9.30 am in St Mary’s Oratory, prior to 10 am Mass.

Guided Holy Hour: A Guided Holy Hour of Adoration in Honour of the Holy Face of Jesus takes place on Sundays, 6-7 pm in St Mary’s Oratory. All welcome.

Rosary for Priests: Three Rosaries are prayed each Tuesday, between 1-2 pm, in the Oratory for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

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

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

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

Burt, Inch & Fahan

Bike Blessing: The annual Blessing of Motorcycles will take place at St Aengus’ Church, in Burt, Co Donegal, on Sunday, September 13, at 1.30 pm. Afterwards, there will be a ride-out to the RNLI Station at Ned’s Point, Buncrana, to present all money raised. All welcome. Mass for deceased bikers will be celebrated earlier in the day, at 11.30 am in St Patrick’s Church, Dungiven.

Adoration: Adoration in St Mura’s Parish Church, Fahan, takes place each Friday after 10 am Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Aengus’ Burt; 9 am, Our Lady of Lourdes, Inch; 11.30 am, St Mura’s, Fahan.

Cappagh

(Killyclogher)

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesday from 8-9 pm in Christ the King, Strathroy, concluding with Night Prayer, and on Sunday from 6-7 pm, in Christ the King, with Devotions and Benediction.

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed in St Mary’s Church, Killyclogher, Monday-Saturday at 9.10 am.

Legion of Mary: Legion of Mary meets every Monday after 10 am Mass in St Mary’s Church, Killyclogher. New members always welcome. Anyone wishing to welcome the Pilgrim Statute of Our Lady into your home and pray the Rosary is asked to contact Rosaleen on 07917421119 to make arrangements with the Legion of Mary, Cappagh Group.

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

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

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

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

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

Cemetery Blessing: The Blessing of the Graves will take place on Sunday, September 6, at 3 pm.

Carndonagh

Good as New: The Good as New Shop for Church funds re-opens on Monday, September 7. All washed and clean donations are welcome. Telephone Bernie on 0861734977 or Don on 0868554796.

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

Castlederg & Ardstraw West

Adoration: Adoration takes place following 10 am Mass in St Patrick’s Church on Fridays, until 12 noon.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.15 pm Vigil and 11 am, Castlederg; 9.30 am Dregish; and 12.30 pm Drumnabey.

Claudy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Clonleigh (Lifford)

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 11 am.

Clonmany

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

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

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

Confessions: Confession is available in St Mary’s Church from 7 pm on Fridays, in lead up to 7.30 pm Mass, 6 pm on

Saturdays, in lead up to 6.30 pm Vigil Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: St Mary’s Church, Clonmany, Vigil 6.30 pm (Rosary at 6.10 pm); Sunday 11:30 am; St Michael’s Church, Urris, Sunday, 10 am.

Coleraine

Society of St Joseph: The Society of St Joseph for the support of religious vocations meets on the last Monday of each month at St John’s Church Sacristy, after the 10 am morning Mass, and is open to everyone. New members are welcome at any of the meetings, which support praying for and assisting to support the vocation to priesthood and the religious life.

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

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

Creggan

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

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

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

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

The contact number for more information on the group or to arrange one to one support is 07907085178.

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

Confession: Monday - Friday 5-5.30 pm, Saturday 10.30 am & 5.30-6.20 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 10.30 am; 12.15 pm.

Culdaff

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

Desertmartin

Michael English Concert: A fundraising concert in support of the parish will take place in St Patrick’s Church, Keenaught, on Friday, October 2, at 8 pm, when Michael English & Band will provide uplifting music. Tickets are £30 and available from Heron’s Shop, Moneyneena Post Office, and Desertmartin and Ballinascreen Parish Offices, or online with Eventbrite.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 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)

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

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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 5 pm, and 11 am on 1st, 3rd and 5th Sundays.

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 6.30 pm. First Saturdays Devotion: First Saturday Devotions take place in Sacred Heart Church, beginning at 9.10 am with a 15-minute meditation, followed by the praying of the Rosary, then the celebration of Mass at 10 am, with Confessions afterwards. The intention is to make reparation for the sins committed against the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Rosary of Reparation: On the first Saturday of each month, a Rosary of Reparation will be prayed at 1pm on Main Street, Omagh. All welcome to join.
Stations of Cross: The Stations are prayed after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church.
Confessions: Confession take place on Saturdays after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church.
Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil, 10 am and 12.30 pm, Sacred Heart Church; 10.30 am, St Mary's Drumragh.

Dungiven
Biker Mass: Mass for deceased bikers will be celebrated at 11.30 am in St Patrick's Church, Dungiven, on Sunday, September 13. The annual blessing of Bikers and Motorcycles will take place later, at 1.30 pm, at St Aengus' Church, Burt. All are welcome to attend the brief service and blessing, followed by the run to Ned's Point RNLI Station, to present funds raised.
Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary meets every Tuesday at 7 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. And we host the Rosary on the first Monday of each month, at 7 pm, in Emmaus Hall, beside St Patrick's Church. Special intentions are prayed for and light refreshments provided. Prayer Group: The St Canice's Charismatic Prayer Group meets each Thursday at 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 Thursday, 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 9.30 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, Drumsurn; and 4.30 pm, Immaculate Conception, Gortnaghey.
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: 4 pm, Saturday, and 11 am Sunday.

Greencastle
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.
Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, St Patrick's, and 11.30 am, Our Lady of Wayside, Broughdery.

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, live-streamed to Bellaghy; 11 am, live-streamed from Bellaghy.

Iskaheen, Drung & Muff
Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Tuesdays after 10 am Mass, until 2 pm, in St Patrick's Church, Iskaheen. Divine Mercy: Divine Mercy Devotions take place on Wednesdays after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church, Muff.
Rosary: The Rosary is prayed before all weekday Masses. St Peregrine Novena & Blessing: The St Peregrine Novena Mass and relic blessing takes place on the First Fridays at 7 pm, alternating between the three parish churches.
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; 5 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Columba's, Drung; 9 am, St Patrick's, Iskaheen.

Kilrea & Desertoghill
Bereavement Support Group: The Bereavement Support Group will be meeting on Thursday, September 10, from 7-8.30 pm, when memory tiles will be created in memory of loved ones. Spaces are limited so booking is essential. Contact – Moira on 07515562797 or Sinead on 07729891596.
Eucharistic Adoration: Mondays, from 12 noon - 7pm, at St Mary's Drumagner. 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, Drumagner; 12 noon, St Mary's, Craigavole.

Lavey
Fundraising Night: Michael Boyle presents 'From an Island to an Island' - Journeying from Lavey to Newfoundland, as a fundraiser for the parish on Sunday, September 13, at 7.30 pm, at Lavey Club, when there will be stories, poems, singing and much more.
Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Fridays after 9.15 am Mass 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: 8.30 am alternate Sundays, St Mary's Church, Cloughcor, and St Joseph's Church, Glenmornan; 12.15 pm, Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road.

Lifford (Murlog)
St Pio Mass: Mass will be celebrated in St Patrick's Church on Wednesday, September 23, at 7 pm, to mark St Pio's Feast Day.
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; 9.45 am.

Limavady
Children's Prayer: A Children's Prayer Group is held in the Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly, on the First Saturday of every month, from 2.30-3.30 pm. All welcome. Contact: Kathy on 07538749627.
Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Mary's Church on Thursdays, from 1-6 pm.
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 & Tot's (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
Parish Shop: The Malin Parish 'Good as New' Shop will be downstairs in G&S Supermarket until Friday, September 11.
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
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
Music: Music continues on Thursday evenings at 8 pm in Moville Men's Shed. Love Music? Just Show Up! Singers, players, and socialisers alike are all welcome for a relaxing evening at one of the few Shed activities open to both men and women.
Prayer: The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet will be recited in St Pius X Church, 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. If there is a fifth Sunday in the month, the 11.30 am Mass is celebrated in St Pius X Church.

Sion Mills
Bible Study: A Bible Study group meets on Wednesday evenings, from 7-8 pm, in the parish room next to Sion Mills Church. This group shares on the Gospel reading for the coming Sunday.
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
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 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

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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: 4.30 pm Vigil, 11 am Sunday.

Templemore – St Eugene’s

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

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

Annual Healing Novena: The annual Solemn Healing Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help, for the nine Sundays before Christmas, will run from October 25 to

December 20, starting at 6 pm. Celebrating the Jubilee of St Francis of Assisi, this year’s theme is ‘Make me a channel of your peace.’

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

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 1950s 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.

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

Holy Hour: There is Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament every Thursday, from after the 7.30 pm Mass until 9 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, aged 13-18, to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room, Carnhill, on Saturdays from 11.30 am until 12.30 pm, and will resume on September 26. For more information contact 07523223204.

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 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

Lectio Divina: Reflect on the Scriptures with Lectio Divina in the side chapel in St Columb’s Church, Chapel

WORLDWIDE NOVENA

TO FIGHT THE CULTURE OF DEATH

Novena to the Archangels Michael, Gabriel & Raphael starting 20th - 28th September

“But he that shall scandalize one of these little ones that believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone should be hanged about his neck, and that he should be drowned in the depth of the sea.”
Matthew 18:6

6 Continents have joined in unity to Choose Life & Protect the Unborn!

Guardians of the Faith, Precious Life, St Benedicts Ministry, EWTN, Radio Maria, Lifesite News, Marian Movement of Priests, The Fatima Center, HLI Ireland, Reclaim the Faith, O Crux Ave, Christine Watkins Queen of Peace Media, Mark McClean, Ireland needs Fatima, Mother of Refuge of the End Times, Fulton Sheehan Institute, Men and Womens Rosary, Catholic Mothers & many many more worldwide ..

Register your Parish or Prayer Group

worldwidenovena@gmail.com

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 from 11.30 am – 12.30 pm, and Wednesdays from 6.30-8.30 pm; in Immaculate Conception Church on Thursdays, 1-6 pm; and in St Columb’s Church on Fridays, 1-6 pm.

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

seminarians. The Rosary is prayed every Thursday at 9.30 am for priests.

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

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

...other Diary Dates

Columban Young Adults: The next Holy Hour of Eucharistic Adoration with the Columban Young Adults will be on Thursday, September 17, at 7 pm in Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Steelstown. There will also be a social time afterwards with food and drink.

Men’s Retreat: Men, are you tired of feeling numb or angry and can’t explain why? Do you have a desire for more, but don’t know what it is? Are you lost in a world that keeps telling you to be something you aren’t? Get some questions answered about what it is to be a man at the Wild at Heart Men’s Retreat in Termonbacca, Derry, from September 18-20. The retreat is based on the book by John Eldredge, and starts on the Friday evening at 5.30 pm, and costs £100.

To book a place contact Nic Young on 07766165377.

Biker Blessing: The annual Blessing of Bikers & Motorcycles will take place on Sunday, September 13, at St Aengus’ Church, Burt, Co Donegal, at 1.30 pm. All are welcome to attend the brief service and blessing. Afterwards, all are again welcome to join the run to Ned’s Point RNLI Station to present donations to the RNLI. Mass will be celebrated earlier in the day, at 11.30 am, in St Patrick’s Church, Dungiven, for deceased bikers, especially those who have died in the past year.

RISE: A vital new community initiative, RISE is dedicated to supporting the families, friends, and loved ones of those living with addiction, and a gathering will take place

on Sunday, September 13, in The Everglades Hotel, Derry. The event aims to bring together people who may feel isolated, overwhelmed, or unaware of the support structures available to them as they navigate a loved one’s addiction. The foundational message of RISE is that recovery and healing involve the whole family. Organisers are designing the day to serve as a safe, welcoming space where people can share experiences, build meaningful connections, and discover where they can turn for help.

Youth 2000 Barndance: Youth 2000 will be hosting a Barndance in Fir Trees Hotel, Strabane, on Saturday, September 19. Doors will open at 5 pm, with the dance lesson at 5.30 pm, followed by food and then

Parish Post-its

...other Diary Dates cont.

the barndance. Tickets cost £30, or 35 Euros. Suggested dress style is Wild West. This is strictly an over-18 event. For more information email: office@youth2000.ie.

Men’s Retreat: ‘Standing in the Breach: No Longer I Who Live’ is the title for the Catholic Men’s Retreat at Portglenone Monastery on Saturday, September 19, from 9 am until 1 pm. Drawing on Galatians 2:20, there will be reflection time on what it means to let Christ shape our everyday lives, our relationships and the decisions we make. Fr Eddie McGee will be the keynote speaker, and there will also be personal testimonies from men, including Liam Stewart, a Catholic psychotherapist from Derry. The morning will include the Rosary and Holy Mass, with tea, coffee and scones and time to get to know one another. This is open to men of all ages and backgrounds. Places are limited. Reserve your place here:

<https://catholicminute.co.uk/mens-retreat/>

YOUTH 2000 Retreat: Youth 2000 will hold its Ulster Retreat on Lough Derg on the weekend of September 25-27, and 16-35-year-olds are invited to register for it now. This will be a Youth 2000 style retreat and not the traditional Lough Derg pilgrimage. Due to necessary island costs, for this particular retreat, there is a charge to attend. The cost is €45 to stay onsite and €15 to pop in for the day. All costs go directly to Lough Derg, so any further donations to Youth 2000 are still welcome. Further information can be found by visiting youth2000.ie.

God Club: God Club is an opportunity for teenagers, aged 13-18, to learn together about their faith. It takes place in the Kildare Room, Carnhill, on Saturdays from 11.30 am until 12.30 pm, and will resume on September

26. For more information contact 07523223204.

Catholic Mothers’ Retreat: Catholic Mothers Ireland is holding its Ulster Retreat Day on Saturday, October 3, from 10 am to 6 pm, at Benburb Priory, Co Tyrone, when there will be a First Class Relic of St Francis of Assisi available for individual blessings during this special Franciscan Jubilee year. Guest speakers will be Jim Deeds, Fr Barry Matthews, and Fr Gerry Campbell & Helen Stewart. Refreshments and lunch will be provided. Booking now open: Retreats - Catholic Mothers Ireland <https://www.catholicmothers.ie/retreats>.

Marriage Enrichment Weekend: Marriage Encounter Ireland are hosting a Marriage Enrichment Weekend from October 2-4, in the Focolare Centre, Curryhills, Prosperous, Co Kildare. This positive, joy-filled experience is guided by presenting couples and a priest in an atmosphere of warmth, prayer and deep Christian faith.

Couples are invited to register online at www.marriageencounter.ie.

First Saturdays Conference: A First Saturdays Conference will take place at Knock Shrine on Saturday, November 28. The day will begin at 10 am with Eucharistic Adoration & Confession in the Reconciliation Chapel, followed by a Parish Testimony by Geraldine O’Donnell at 11.15 am, a talk by Fr Patrick Cahill at 11.30 am, and one by Fr Jaimie Twohig at 12.15 pm, in St John’s Centre. After lunch, there will be a talk at 1.45 pm by Fr Leon Pereira OP (Online) and Fr Marius O’Reilly in St John’s Centre. The Rosary will be prayed at 2.30 pm in the Basilica, led by Fr Mark Quinn & The Children’s Rosary. This will be followed by the celebration of Mass at 3 pm by Fr James Devine. There will be a 15-minute Meditation with Fr Philip Kemmy in the Basilica at 3.45 pm, and the day will come to a close with a Eucharistic Healing Service with Fr John Keane at 4 pm.

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

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

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

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

St Therese Prayer Hour: This year, it is 100 years since St Therese of Lisieux was declared a Saint. In order to mark this wonderful occasion, the Carmelites at Termonbacca Retreat Centre, in Derry, have built a new chapel which holds a first-class relic of St Therese. There is a weekly prayer hour on Mondays in the Termonbacca St Therese Chapel, which contains first-class relic of St Therese, praying for her intercession, particularly praying for world peace. The prayer will be from 7.30-8.30 pm and everyone is welcome to come along and join in.

Ladies’ Bible Study: Ladies interested in coming to a deeper understanding of scripture are welcome to come along to the Ladies’ Bible Study in Termonbacca, Derry, every Tuesday evening from 8:30-9:30 pm. It is led by Fr Stephen Quinn ocd, who is currently working through the Gospel of Mark, which is the Gospel for Mass for this year. This Bible Study is open to all women who are interested in coming along. There is no need to book, you can simply show up. For further information contact Termonbacca on 028 71 262512.

Servant Sisters: The Sisters of the Home of the Mother are hosting weekly formation meetings on Tuesdays, at 7.30 pm, in the Parochial House at Cross, Killygordon, (F93PN0X), and the weekly Holy Hours on Thursdays at 7 pm.

DDS Daily Masses 2025-2026

St Eugene's 17 Jan, 9 Mar, 29 Apr, 19 Jun, 9 Aug, 29 Sep, 19 Nov	Donaghmore 12 Dec 2025, 1 Feb, 24 Mar, 14 May, 4 Jul, 24 Aug, 14 Oct	Claudy 27 Dec 2025, 16 Feb, 8 Apr, 29 May 19 Jul, 8 Sep, 29 Oct	Fahan 11 Jan, 3 Mar, 23 Apr, 13 Jun, 3 Aug, 23 Sep, 13 Nov
St Columba's 18 Jan, 10 Mar, 30 Apr 20 Jun, 10 Aug, 30 Sep, 20 Nov	Termonamongan 13 Dec 2025, 2 Feb, 25 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jul, 25 Aug, 15 Oct,	Banagher 28 Dec 2025, 17 Feb, 9 Apr, 30 May 20 Jul, 9 Sep, 30 Oct	Clonmany 12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Apr, 14 Jun, 4 Aug, 24 Sep, 14 Nov
The Three Patrons 19 Jan, 11 Mar, 1 May, 21 Jun, 11 Aug, 1 Oct, 21 Nov	Langfield 14 Dec 2025, 3 Feb, 26 Mar, 16 May, 6 Jul, 26 Aug, 16 Oct,	Ballinascreen 29 Dec 2025, 18 Feb 10 Apr, 31 May 21 Jul, 10 Sep, 31 Oct	Carndonagh 13 Jan, 5 Mar, 25 Apr, 15 Jun, 5 Aug, 25 Sep, 15 Nov
St Mary's, Creggan 30 Nov 2025, 20 Jan, 12 Mar, 2 May, 22 Jun, 12 Aug, 2 Oct, 22 Nov	Sion Mills 15 Dec 2025, 4 Feb, 27 Mar, 17 May, 7 Jul, 27 Aug, 17 Oct,	Dungiven 30 Dec 2025, 19 Feb, 11 Apr, 1 Jun, 22 Jul, 11 Sep, 1 Nov	Malin 14 Jan, 6 Mar, 26 Apr, 16 Jun, 6 Aug, 26 Sep, 16 Nov
Our Lady of Lourdes 1 Dec 2025, 21 Jan, 13 Mar, 3 May, 23 Jun, 13 Aug, 3 Oct, 23 Nov	Ardstraw East 16 Dec 2025, 5 Feb, 28 Mar, 18 May, 8 Jul, 28 Aug, 18 Oct,	Limavady 31 Dec 2025, 20 Feb, 12 Apr, 2 Jun, 23 Jul, 12 Sep, 2 Nov	Iskaheen 15 Jan, 7 Mar, 27 Apr, 17 Jun, 7 Aug, 27 Sep, 17 Nov
Holy Family 2 Dec, 2025, 22 Jan, 14 Mar, 4 May, 24 Jun, 14 Aug, 4 Oct, 24 Nov	Ardstraw W & C'derg 17 Dec 2025, 6 Feb, 29 Mar, 19 May, 9 Jul, 29 Aug, 19 Oct	Magilligan 1 Jan, 21 Feb, 13 Apr, 3 Jun, 24 Jul, 13 Sep, 3 Nov	Culdaff 16 Jan, 8 Mar, 28 Apr 18 Jun, 8 Aug, 28 Sep, 18 Nov
Culmore 3 Dec 2025, 23 Jan, 15 Mar, 5 May, 25 Jun, 15 Aug, 5 Oct, 25 Nov	Clonleigh 18 Dec 2025, 7 Feb, 30 Mar, 20 May, 10 Jul, 30 Aug, 20 Oct	Coleraine 2 Jan, 22 Feb, 14 Apr, 4 Jun, 25 Jul, 14 Sep, 4 Nov	1ST FRIDAY MASS FOR LIVING MEMBERS 2025 / 2026
Glendermott 4 Dec 2025, 24 Jan, 16 Mar, 6 May, 26 Jun, 16 Aug, 6 Oct, 26 Nov	Drumragh 19 Dec 2025, 8 Feb, 31 Mar, 21 May, 11 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Oct	Garvagh 3 Jan, 23 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Jun, 26 Jul, 15 Sep, 5 Nov	Magilligan 12/5/25
Donagheady 5 Dec 2025, 25 Jan, 17 Mar, 7 May, 27 Jun, 17 Aug, 7 Oct, 27 Nov	Cappagh 20 Dec 2025, 9 Feb, 1 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jul, 1 Sep, 22 Oct	Kilrea 4 Jan, 24 Feb, 16 Apr, 6 Jun, 27 Jul, 16 Sep, 6 Nov	Granaghan 1/2/26
Leckpatrick 6 Dec 2025, 26 Jan, 18 Mar, 8 May, 28 Jun, 18 Aug, 8 Oct, 28 Nov	Greencastle 21 Dec 2025, 10 Feb, 23 May, 13 Jul, 2 Sep, 23 Oct	Greenlough 5 Jan, 25 Feb, 17 Apr, 7 Jun, 28 Jul, 17 Sep, 7 Nov	Termonamongan 2/6/26
Ardmore 7 Dec 2025, 27 Jan, 19 Mar, 9 May, 29 Jun, 19 Aug, 9 Oct	Badoney Lower 22 Dec 2025, 11 Feb, 24 May, 14 Jul, 3 Sep, 24 Oct	Bellaghy 6 Jan, 26 Feb, 18 Apr, 8 Jun, 29 Jul, 18 Sep, 8 Nov	Ardstraw West /Castlederg 3/6/26
Strathfoyle 8 Dec 2025, 28 Jan, 20 Mar, 10 May, 30 Jun, 20 Aug, 10 Oct	Badoney Upper 23 Dec 2025, 12 Feb, 25 May, 15 Jul, 4 Sep, 25 Oct	Lavey 7 Jan, 27 Feb, 19 Apr, 9 Jun, 30 Jul, 19 Sep, 9 Nov	Cappagh 4/10/26
Camus 9 Dec 2025, 29 Jan, 21 Mar, 11 May, 1 Jul, 21 Aug, 11 Oct	Maghera 24 Dec 2025, 13 Feb, 5 Apr, 26 May, 16 Jul, 5 Sep, 26 Oct	Moville 8 Jan, 28 Feb, 20 Apr, 10 Jun, 31 Jul, 20 Sep, 10 Nov	Donagheady 5/1/26
Urney & Castlefin 10 Dec 2025, 30 Jan, 22 Mar, 12 May, 2 Jul, 22 Aug, 12 Oct	Desertmartin 25 Dec 2025, 14 Feb, 6 Apr, 27 May, 17 Jul ,6 Sep, 27 Oct	Granaghan 9 Jan, 1 Mar, 21 Apr, 11 Jun, 1 Aug, 21 Sep, 11 Nov	Donaghmore 6/5/26
Mourne 11 Dec 2025, 31 Jan, 23 Mar, 13 May, 3 Jul, 23 Aug, 13 Oct	Faughanvale 26 Dec 2025, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 28 May, 18 Jul, 7 Sep, 28 Oct	Buncrana 10 Jan, 2 Mar, 22 Apr, 12 Jun, 2 Aug, 22 Sep, 12 Nov	Langfield 7/3/26

Diocesan Diary

New Bishop: The new Bishop of Derry, Bishop Michael Router will be installed in a ceremony in St Eugene’s Cathedral on Sunday, September 20, at 3 pm.

Eucharistic Adoration: Derry Diocese is renewing and developing its Diocesan Adoration Lay Committee in order to increase the practice of Eucharistic Adoration in parishes throughout the diocese. You are welcome to attend an Information Meeting on Wednesday, September 30, at 8 pm, in The Drummond

Hotel, 2 Main Street, Ballykelly, BT49 9HP. Registration and light refreshments from 7.30 pm. See poster in churches for further details.

Accord Derry: Marriage Preparation Workshops will take place in September and November as follows - September 25/26 and November 20/21. These courses are now online for booking at www.accordni.com. Please note that Accord Derry will not be facilitating courses during October or December.

Forty Hours - September & October

Sun 6 Sept	St John the Baptist	Granaghan
Sun 6 Sept	St Mary’s, Cockhill	Buncrana
Sun 6 Sept	Immaculate Conception	Camus
Sun 13 Sept	Christ the King	Limavady
Sun 13 Sept	St Columba’s, Drung	Iskaheen
Sun 13 Sept	St Mary’s, Castlefin	Urney & Castlefin
Sun 20 Sept	St Pius X	Moville
Sun 20 Sept	St Aidan’s	Magilligan
Sun 27 Sept	St Mary’s	Creggan, Derry
Sun 27 Sept	St John’s	Coleraine
Sun 4 Oct	Holy Rosary	Ballinascreen
Sun 4 Oct	St Eugene’s, Glenock	Newtownstewart
Sun 11 Oct	St Columba’s, Long Tower	Templemore, Derry
Sun 11 Oct	St Mary’s, Dregish	Ardstraw West & Castlederg
Sun 18 Oct	St Mary’s	Maghera
Sun 18 Oct	St Mary’s	Limavady
Sun 25 Oct	St Brigid’s, Carnhill	Three Patrons, Derry
Sun 25 Oct	Christ the King, Strathroy	Cappagh

Modelled by your new mind

Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR

A fisherman had landed his catch of fish, cleaned his nets, and was resting by the water's edge, watching the sea, thinking about his day, and enjoying life. A rich man came strolling by. He could see that the fisherman looked relaxed and peaceful, but asked him: "Why are you not working?" The fisherman was surprised at being asked the question and replied: "I have just finished unloading my catch for the day." "But you have time to go out and get more fish", said the rich man. "Why should I do that?" asked the fisherman. "So that you can sell them and make more money," explained the rich man. "But what would I do with the money?" asked the fisherman. "You could buy a bigger boat," said the rich man. "But why?" asked the fisherman. "Obviously you could catch more fish and make more money. Then you would be rich," replied the rich man. "Why would I want to be rich?" asked the poor fisherman. "Then you would be able to sit back and enjoy life" remarked the rich man.

"But that is exactly what I am doing now?" said the fisherman, sitting by the water's edge.

God's Word for September

The month of September is introduced for us by the Scriptures that are found in the 22nd Sunday of Ordinary Time, which we celebrated on Sunday, August 30. These Readings are full of great words of wisdom for living human life in every age and in every circumstance. I would like to take a couple of these passages and reflect on them. And I invite you to think about them in the context of your own life.

Second Reading

In the Second Reading for that Sunday, which is from the Letter of St Paul to the Romans, we read: "Do not model yourselves on the

behaviour of the world around you, but let your behaviour change, modelled on your new mind. This is the only way to discover the will of God and know what is good, what it is that God wants, what is the perfect thing to do." (Romans 12:2)

Our society holds up three things particularly as the sources of happiness and fulfilment in life: positions of importance and power; money and possessions; continuous pleasure. The way of the Lord does not deny the importance of these. But it does call on us to look carefully at them and to make decisions that will be for what is best for ourselves, for those we love, for the Church, and for the world in which we live.

1.Positions of importance and power: Our society is more and more focused on success as meaning those who come first – whether this is in entertainment, sport or exams, and so on. Those who come second or third are much less important. And those who come after these are nowhere to be seen!

This has led us into a celebrity culture where only celebrities are valued. They are held up as the ideals for all of us, even though the vast majority of us will never be celebrities. And, of course, part of this culture is the very false idea that 'you can become whatever you want'. This is being held up, especially to our young people, as a truth, where it is anything but true.

The new mind of Christ that is in us reveals to us clearly that each human person is of infinite value. This is not for what they may achieve but, more importantly, for what they are. And we believe that this is true of each one of us from the moment of conception until the time of natural death – and beyond, into eternal life.

The right to life: Because of Christ, we believe that every

human person has the right to live fully their own unique life. The truth is that countless people are robbed of this right – many by abortion, the most awful scourge of society in which so many are killed because they are not wanted. Most, however, are counted as failures by the systems of society that we so freely accept. These systems tell us that only the first, in whatever aspect of life we are dealing with, are of true value. Coming second does not count. How terrible this is for the vast majority of us.

Jesus, however, says that in His kingdom, the first shall be last and the last first. This is not a punishment for coming first. It is rather a prophesy that, in the light of the truth when it is shown by God's Spirit, everyone will be seen as they truly are and not just as success or failure have made them look.

2.Money and possessions: The story at the beginning of this article is a great example of the difference between the behaviour of the world and the values that Christ brings in relation to possessions. The rich man is all about accumulating more wealth, thinking that this will bring fulfilment. The fisherman is fully content with what he has and enjoys it very peacefully in the present.

We all have the right to enough, by which we can live a good life – and there are enough resources in the world to make this possible. The very sad reality is that countless people continue to live and die in extreme poverty every day. Side-by-side with this, there are some people who are extremely rich. And everything in society is geared to ensure that the rich will grow richer. The consequence of this is that the poor constantly become poorer.

How do we judge society? It is said that the best way to judge any

society is by how they treat the vulnerable and least well-off. Most of our countries today would be seen as very lacking if judged by their treatment of those who have very little or nothing. There is a need for a huge change of heart if the world we live in is to be built on Christ's ways of justice and peace and love.

3.Continuous pleasure: There have been times when the Church made sin and pleasure almost synonymous. When I was growing up many years ago and went to Confession, the question that was very frequently asked regarding any sin was: "Did you take pleasure in it?" If the answer was 'yes' then it was definitely a sin. If the answer was 'no', then it was probably a sin anyhow! We have a right to enjoy living. Pleasure is an integral part of being human and is very important for all of us. But when pleasure becomes the objective of life then it will let us down.

A very strange phenomenon in our world today is the co-existence of so many outlets for pleasure with the rising incidences of loneliness. Suffering and pain are also an integral part of being human. When these show themselves in life, very many people panic and do not know how to cope with them.

Peace be with you: The new mind of being followers of Christ leads us into Christ's greatest desire for each one, a desire that is clearly seen in His constant greetings of His disciples after His Resurrection: "Peace be with you." This is certainly what the fisherman in the story above was experiencing. All the rich man could think of was making more money in order to enjoy himself. And no amount would ever satisfy him.

The Gospel message

The Gospel passage for the Sunday leading us into this month

of September tells us of Christ's message to His disciples. He says: "What will you gain if you win the whole world and ruin your life." All through the Gospels, He is telling us that the only way for true human living is the way of love – love of God with our whole hearts and love of each other. It is such a profoundly simple message. Yet we need to keep hearing it time and time again. Everything should be directed towards those we love and those we are called to care for.

1.Love of God: One of the greatest gifts that we have is the gift of time. It is not limitless, but it is always there in the present. Giving our time to prayer can seem to some people as wasting opportunities for other things that could bring us rewards. Yet the greatest rewards are always to be found when we dedicate time each day to prayer, morning and evening, through which we are constantly in touch with the deepest reality of our lives – the presence, the power, and the love of God.

Unfortunately, we have made going to Mass on Sundays an obligation or a duty that we can easily reluctantly fulfil or ignore. For many people in Ireland today, the time spent on Sunday Mass has been replaced by being part of a golf partnership, or a walking group, or a running group, or a cycling group, and so on. These are all very worthwhile activities and good for our physical health. But they should never be seen as substitutes for Sunday Mass. This is a very important duty towards ourselves and one another if we are to experience the long term and lasting power of God that we have for the salvation of the world, in and through Christ living in us.

2.Love of one another in marriage and family life: Married couples are often reluctant to give good, regular, creative time to one another because of what they



Fr. Johnny Doherty CSsR

might be missing – on TV, in sport, in social life and so on. They can so easily settle for mediocrity rather than the fullness of life, which can only be found in making their marriage relationship the priority of their lives.

And this is also true of parents with their children. There can be no doubt that the greatest gift parents can give to their children is their time and personal attention, at every stage of their lives together. And yet, so many parents continue to try to make up to their children by giving them every material thing that is possible and they then wonder why their children are never satisfied.

3.Love of others in the community and society: All that we have been given to us so that others may be helped and supported. It is only when we are giving our time and resources for others that we ourselves will find fulfilment and joy.

This is why there is so much emphasis today in our parish communities on the involvement of everyone in the mission of the parish community. Yet, so many people continue to stand outside of this involvement and let others take the responsibility for those in need of care and love. The greatest pleasure we will ever have is to be found in giving ourselves to others. This is what is sown for eternal life.

Helping students encounter Jesus through the Rosary by Christine O'Hara



I recently created a set of PowerPoints for primary schools and another set for secondary schools to help teachers and parishioners introduce the

Rosary in schools. I believe it is a deep desire of Our Holy Mother Mary that all children have the opportunity to encounter the love of God through the Holy Rosary. I

truly believe Our Lady wishes the Rosary to be prayed in schools.

I began the Rosary in my own school, Coláiste Chríost Rí in Cork, in 2022. Since then, my students have experienced the love, joy, and peace of the Lord and Our Blessed Mother in a very tangible way. Through the Rosary, students have encountered Jesus and come to know Him personally. They have felt His goodness, His joy, His forgiveness, and His tender love. The Rosary has brought the faith to life for them - the veil between Heaven and Earth has been lifted in a remarkable way.

I would highly recommend the Rosary to any principal, teacher, or parishioner. Its impact on students' mental health has been very evident. These PowerPoints

include prayer moments that have been especially effective with my secondary school students, as well as with primary school children I occasionally visit.

Every teacher that I have encouraged to introduce the Rosary has shared very positive feedback on how much the children love it. The Lord said, "Let the little children come to Me."



I believe the Rosary in schools is both a consolation to the Heart of Jesus and a profound source of peace and contentment for students.

Please pray for the spread of the Rosary in primary and secondary schools. The Rosary for Schools PowerPoints are available at

rosaryforschools.substack.com.

A QR code linking to the website is also provided. Please share these PowerPoints with anyone who may be open to introducing the Rosary in a school. The Rosary PowerPoints are also available in Irish, Spanish, German, French, Italian, Croatian and Filipino.

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



Our Lady's Birthday

We celebrate Our Lady's Birthday on September 8. 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.

There are different traditions across the world which are connected to the Feast of Mary's birthday. In the wine growing regions of France, the birthday of Mary (September 8) is also known as 'Our Lady of the Grape Harvest'. The best grapes are brought from the vineyards to the church. After being blessed, some are tied to the hands of the statue

of the Blessed Virgin, and this is followed by a festive meal.

In the Alps, this day is known as 'Drive Down Day'. Since September 8 marks the end of summer, the cattle and sheep are brought from their summer pastures on the high mountain slopes down into the valley for the winter. The animals wear decorative ribbons and flowers as they are led into the village, accompanied with song and yodelling. The whole village enjoys the festive mood, while the milk and food which is gathered on that day is given to the poor, in honour of Our Lady.



Another ancient belief associated with this Feast Day is that September 8 marks the day that the swallows leave our shores and travel to warmer countries. A popular children's rhyme in Austria reads: "It's Blessed Virgin's Birthday, the swallows do depart; far to the South they fly away, and sadness fills my heart. But after snow and ice and rain, they will in March return again."



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 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 how God knows each one of us. God loves us so much that He gave each one of us our own Guardian Angel as 'a protector and shepherd' (CCC 336) to watch over us.

The Archangels: There are nine choirs (classes) of angels, and the archangels are one of them. The Bible names three of them, which we celebrate on September 29 – Michael, Gabriel and Raphael.

The Archangel Gabriel: The word angel means 'messenger' and Gabriel is the archangel who brought very important news from God. We first hear about Gabriel in the Old Testament in the Book of Daniel, but it is in the New Testament that we learn most about him. Gabriel came to Zechariah to tell him about the arrival of John the Baptist, and to Mary for Her consent to become the Mother of God. Tradition has it that Gabriel will sound the trumpet on the Day of Judgement, summoning 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

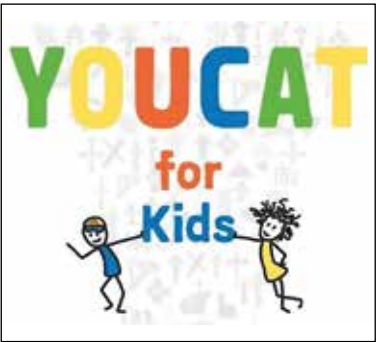
as standing guard with God's people. In the New Testament, the Book of Revelation tells how Michael cast the fallen angels out of Heaven. These fallen angels are the ones who thought they were equal to God. Michael's name means 'who is like God'. He is thought of as the great protector. Michael is often shown dressed in armour and fighting Satan who is the head of the 'fallen' angels.

Prayer to your Guardian Angel

The YOUCAT for kids tells us who Jesus Christ is (Q23), and what the word 'Christ' means (Q24).

Jesus was born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. He is the 'Son of the living God' (Matthew 16:16) who was made man. God Himself becoming man was the greatest miracle of the world. On Earth, Jesus was really human and He was also Divine. He was sent by the Father so that everyone might be saved and come to the knowledge of truth (YC 71). His name in Hebrew means 'God saves' (YC 72).

Jesus is also called 'Christ', which means 'the Anointed One'. In ancient Israel, when someone was going to become a king, he was anointed with holy oil. Jesus was anointed "with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 10:38), so we know that He is the true and only King. We are called Christians after Christ because we belong to Jesus and we are called to follow Him (YC 73).



Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. Which is the largest of North America's Great Lakes?

2. In what year did former SDLP leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, John Hume die?

3. What song was made famous by Bob Hope in the 1948 comedy western, 'The Paleface'?

4. Who played the role of wheelchair-bound TV Detective 'Ironsides'?

5. How many fences are there on the Aintree Grand National circuit?

6. In the periodic table, what is the chemical symbol for Iron?

7. What is the US State Capital of Ohio?

8. How many prime numbers are even numbers?

9. Who is the current manager of EPL side, Leeds United?

10. From which county does current Irish President, Catherine Connolly, originate?

11. In the solar system, which planet is furthest from both the Earth and the Sun?

12. Blaydon Races' is a popular regional song set in which English city?

13. Who is the subject of the TV 'mocumentary' entitled 'The Moaning of Life'?
14. In which European country would you find the city of Trabzon?

15. What nationality is the current (at time of writing) beleaguered President of FIFA, Gianni Infantino?

16. What fictional cartoon character attended the also fictional Greyfriars Public School?

17. What colour is the 'black box' data recorder on a standard plane?

18. Of what country is Mark Carney the current Prime Minister?

19. What ingredient is added to give brown sugar its colour?

20. In his novel 'Nineteen Eighty Four', by what name does George Orwell refer to Britain?

21. What character was played by Brian Wilde in the popular 80s sitcom 'Last of the Summer Wine'?

22. What player won the 'Golden Boot' for most goals scored at this year's World Cup?

23. What is the world's northernmost capital city?

24. Who became the lead singer with the band, Ultravox, in 1979, going on to record a string of hits through the 80s?

25. The flag of which European country contains three horizontal bands of yellow, green and red?

Quiz Answers: 1, Lake Superior; 2, 2020; 3, Buttons and Bows; 4, Raymond Burr; 5, 30; 6, Fe; 7, Columbus; 8, One (2); 9, Daniel Farke; 10, Galway; 11, Neptune; 12, Newcastle; 13, Karl Pilkington; 14, Turkey; 15, Swiss; 16, Billy Bunter; 17, Orange; 18, Canada; 19, Molasses; 20, Airstrip One; 21, Foggy Dewhurst; 22, Kyllian Mbappe; 23, Reykjavik; 24, Midge Ure; 25, Lithuania.

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

Let Your Light Shine!

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

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

A MEN'S RETREAT

WILD *at* HEART

— DISCOVERING THE SECRET OF A MAN'S SOUL —

BASED ON THE BOOK BY
JOHN ELDREDGE

“
You were
made for
adventure.
”



BE RENEWED
Step away from the noise and reconnect with what matters most.



BE EQUIPPED
Deep talks, honest conversations and teaching that speaks to the heart.



BE STRENGTHENED
Build brotherhood and be challenged to live with purpose and courage.



BE SET FREE
Discover the depth of your true identity as a son of God, not just a doer.



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DATES
BEGINNING
**FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 18TH – 20TH**



START TIME
**FRIDAY
5.30PM**

COST: £100



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