



# The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 104, FEBRUARY 2025

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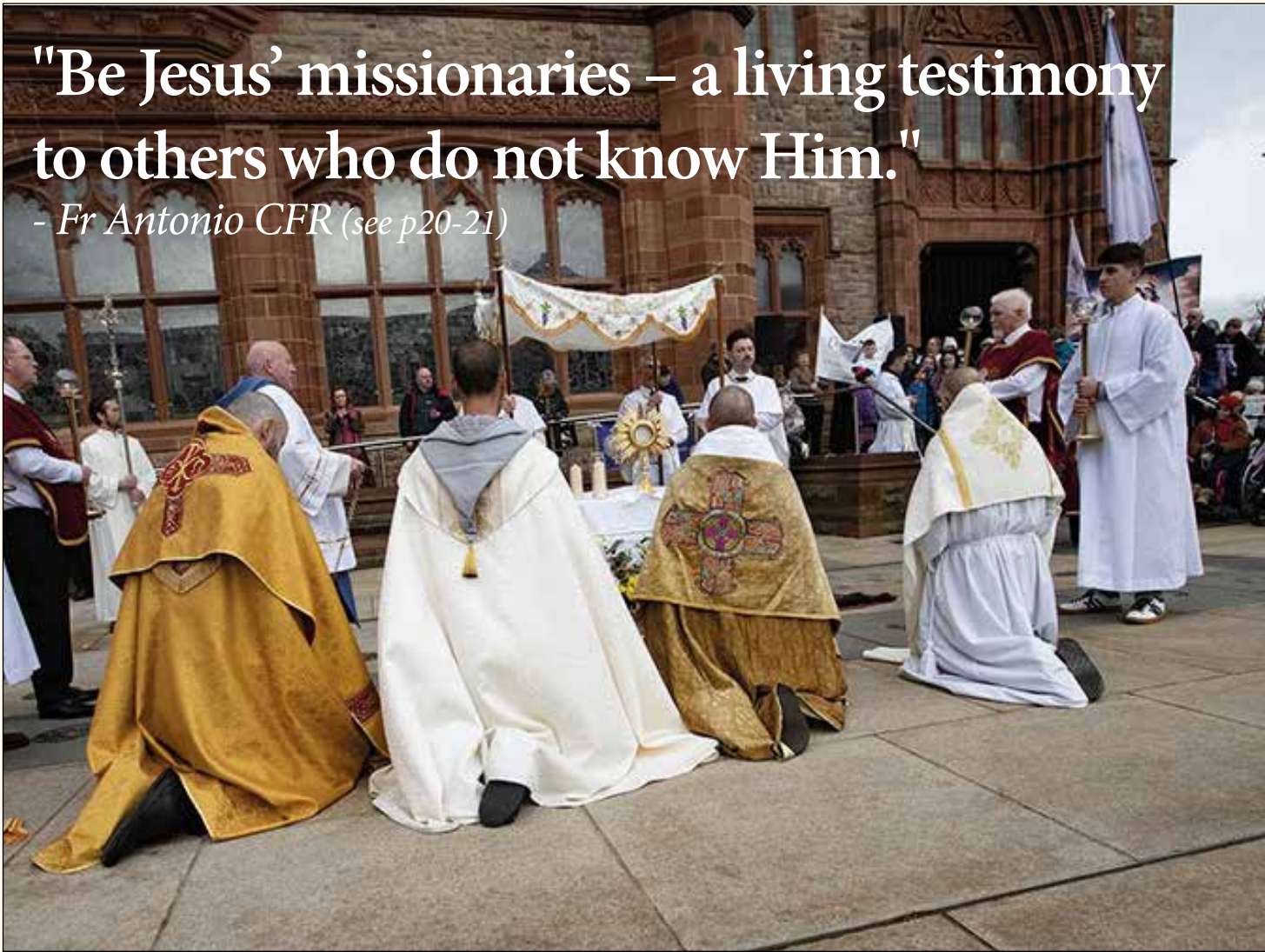
Scoil Íosagáin Sod-cutting – Buncrana



Social Club – St Eugene’s



Catholic Schools Week Launch – Cathedral



Derry Eucharistic Procession on Feast of St Brigid.



Legion of Mary Retreat - Termonbacca



Eucharistic Procession - Claudy



Day of Prayer & Praise - Omagh



Celebrating St Brigid - Urney and Castlefinn

People in focus



Barry Mallett  
- Three Patrons Parish



Bridie Quinn  
- Swatragh



Finbar Madden  
- Faughanvale



The late Fr Liam Donnelly  
- Lavey



The late Mary Brigid Dolan  
- Faughanvale

Also featuring: Diocesan Consecration; Young Writers section; Children’s Catechism Club; Portglenone Charismatic Prayer Group 50th Celebration; Irish section; Prayer in My Pocket; Features; Diary Dates; Quiz and much more...



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# The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

## Contacting us:

If you have a story that you would like to share or an event you would like covered by The Net, just drop an email to

**editorthenet15@gmail.com**

**or ring/text 07809292852**

# Those considering call to priesthood need to know God's people are on their side by Fr Pat O'Hagan

POPE Francis' prayer intention for February is one the theme of vocations to the priesthood and religious life. The Holy Father asks us to pray that the whole community of the Church, each diocese and each parish, "might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life".

Since I became Vocations Director for the Diocese of Derry, I have become increasingly convinced that the Lord is calling people, young and not so young, to serve the people of God as diocesan priests, which is the focus of the Vocations Team with whom I work.

The majority of the men who contact me, some of whom will have been referred to me by their local priest, have already completed their training or education and are already working in what they believe to be their chosen career, some of them have travelled extensively and worked abroad. Some have

been Catholics since birth and baptism. Some are converts to the Faith. Some have returned to the practice of the Faith after a time of questioning or doubt or distance from the Church and the sacraments.

No matter how they have come to feel that they have a religious vocation, I believe that the path that has led them there has been part of God's plan for them and has helped them to make a mature decision for the priesthood, having already explored the variety of options available to them.

When a man speaks to me about his sense of vocation, I ask him to tell me about his life: his family and upbringing; his education and employment history; his friendships and relationships; his prayer life and spirituality. If he has already spoken with his family and friends about the call he feels towards the priesthood, I'll ask him about their reaction. For some, it comes as no surprise at all. For others, it almost knocks them off their feet! Some will

accept and welcome news like that, whilst others may express serious reservations about such a step.

I'll explain to him that things like that are good for him and for his ongoing exploration - what we call 'discerning' - of the choices he still has. I'll ask him to get in touch with a priest who will act as his spiritual director, and with whom he should meet regularly for at least a year before he might apply to the Diocese. This will help him to pray about and work through the desire he has expressed and whatever doubts he may have in relation to the priesthood.

One of my priorities as Diocesan Vocations Director, over the past three-and-a-half years, has been to encourage the people of this Diocese to pray for an increase in vocations and to keep in their prayers those who are already in formation, as well as all those who are in the early stages of discernment.

The Church, as we know it,

needs priests for the celebration of Mass and the administration of the sacraments. If we want to be able to receive the Eucharist and to celebrate and receive the other sacraments, we need not just to pray for vocations but to show an active and enthusiastic welcome for them. Our brothers in Christ who are considering a call to priesthood need to know that God's people are on their side.

So, please pray for the men of our Diocese who are already studying in Salamanca, Maynooth or Rome, for those who are actively exploring the possibility of having a vocation to the priesthood, and the many more out there whom the Lord is calling to be the future spiritual leaders of God's people. Pray that God will give them the courage to say "Yes", as Mary did, despite her questions, doubts and reservations. Pray that their desire to serve the Church in this Diocese will grow into a decision to put themselves forward for consideration



Fr. Pat O'Hagan

and training. Pray that their doubts will be assuaged and that their questions will be answered, with the help of a wise spiritual director and in their own fervent prayer for enlightenment and guidance.

*A Vocations Retreat Weekend for men considering the diocesan priesthood will take place in Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne, from March 7-9, for anyone over the age of 18. If interested, please contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan, at pgoh2111@gmail.com*

## Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

**Aghyaran:** Thursdays, 10.30am-12 noon.

**Ardstraw West & Castlederg:** Fridays, 10.30am-12 noon, St Patrick's Church.

**Badoney Lower:** Tuesdays, after 12.30 pm Mass until 5 pm, St Patrick's Gortin.

**Badoney Upper:** Wednesdays, after 7.30 pm evening Mass until 9 pm, St Patrick's Cranagh.

**Ballinascreen:** First Mondays, from 12 noon-7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.

**Banagher:** Fridays, 10-11am, St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.

**Bellaghy:** First Fridays, from 10 am until 6.30 pm, in St Mary's Church.

**Buncrana:** Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, and Sundays, 2-10 pm, St Mary's Oratory.

**Cappagh:** Wednesdays, 8-9pm, concluding with Night Prayer, and Sundays, 3.30-6.30 pm, in Christ the King,

Strathroy.

**Claudy:** Tuesdays, after 10 am Mass until 8 pm, St Patrick's Church, Claudy, and Wednesdays, after 10 Mass until 8 pm, St Joseph's Church, Craigbane.

**Clonmany:** Tuesdays, 7.30-8.30 pm, the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin; Wednesdays, 3-4 pm, St Columbcille Village, Cleagh; Fridays, 3-6 pm (Rosary at 5.40 pm), St Michael's Church, Urris.

**Coleraine:** Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2-4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.

**Creggan:** Sundays 1.30 pm-6 pm; Mondays 10.30 am - 7 pm; Tue - Sat 10.30 am - 12 pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.

**Donagheady:** First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St Mary's Church, Aughabrack.

**Drumquin:** Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.

**Drumragh:** Wednesdays, following morning Mass,

Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.

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

**Errigal:** Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.

**Fahan:** Fridays after 10 am Mass, St Mura's Parish Church.

**Greencastle (Tyrone):** Thursdays, 6-10 pm, St Patrick's Church.

**Greenlough:** Thursdays, 9am-5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.

**Iskaheen:** Tuesdays, from after 10 am Mass until 2 pm, St Patrick's Church.

**Kilrea:** Mondays, 12 noon - 7pm, St Mary's Drumagarner. Concludes with Benediction.

**Killygordon:** Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.

**Lavey:** Fridays, after 9.30 am

Mass until 5 pm.

**Leckpatrick:** Wednesdays from 8.15 am-5 pm.

**Lifford (Murlug):** 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

**Limavady:** Sundays from 3-5 pm in Christ the King (with Confessions).

**Magilligan:** Wednesdays, 3-7 pm; First Sundays, 3-6 pm, St Aidan's Church.

**Melmount:** Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.

**Moveille:** Mondays, 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, St Pius X Church.

**Newtownstewart:** Thursdays, 6.30-7.30 pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.

**Sion Mills:** Adoration takes place in the side chapel (Oratory) and will be available every day during the Church's opening hours, moving to the main body of the chapel on Fridays, from 11am-6.50 pm, ending with Benediction before 7 pm Mass.

**Steelstown:** Fridays, from after 10 am Mass until 6.50pm.

**Strabane (Camus):** Every day from 10.30 am-1 pm in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), at the back of the Church.

**St Columba's Long Tower:** Wednesdays, after 10 am Mass until 7.30 pm Mass.

**St Eugene's Cathedral:** Sundays, 3-6 pm, and Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.20 pm.

**Three Patrons:** Tuesdays from 11 am-7 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh; Wednesdays from 10.30 am-7 pm, in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, and seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, from 8 am until 6pm.

**Urney & Castlefin:** Tuesdays, 12 noon-8 pm, St Anthony's Chapel.

**Waterside:** Mondays, 11.30 am-12.30 pm, St Oliver Plunkett, Strathfoyle; Thursdays, 1-6 pm, Immaculate Conception Church; Fridays, 1-6 pm, St Columb's Church.

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



# The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

## 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.

## Donating

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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.



*Spiritually stirred through Consecration journey...*

# Many moved to keep praying family Rosary

THE appreciation felt in journeying with Bishop Donal and priests of the Diocese during the 33 days of prayer for the Child Consecration to Jesus through Mary was evident in comments both during and after, and in the great turnout at St Eugene's Cathedral for the Consecration Day prayer on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The nightly time of prayer online, which got underway on January 9, was looked forward to by the many who tuned in not only from various parts of the Diocese, such as Plumbridge, Dungiven, Claudy, Buncrana, Moville, Clonmany and City parishes, but also the island of Ireland as well as globally.

Speaking to 'The Net' as they gathered at the Cathedral in Derry City for the final ceremony on Consecration Day, some having travelled from Roscommon and Dublin to make their Consecration in person with Bishop Donal, and to their express their gratitude to him personally while receiving their Consecration certificate, individuals and families shared how special the experience had been and that they will miss the online nightly community of prayer.

Majella McNamee, who journeyed into the city along the rural roads of Plumbridge, in Co Tyrone, was delighted at the opportunity to accomplish her first Consecration journey: "I saw a notice for the Consecration on the internet and I wanted to do it for my five-year-old granddaughter.

"She loved the story about Daisy and looking at the pictures, and I loved it too. It was really enjoyable. Bishop McKeown and the different priests were so brilliant at reading the story. I don't know what I am going to do now every evening."

A member of the Legion of Mary, with Fr Roland Colhoun, Majella is well used to praying the Rosary. President of Our Lady of Lourdes Praesidium, Newtownstewart, Majella mentioned: "We have a pilgrim statue of Our Lady that goes around houses in the parish, encouraging families to gather

to pray. I think the Rosary is so important and so it is good to get young children to learn to pray it.

It was a first-time experience too for Colette Kennedy and her family. The St Eugene's parishioner was accompanied at the Consecration ceremony by her 14-year-old daughter, Abigail, who enjoyed taking part in the prayer time with her family.

The parish volunteer recalled: "I was volunteering at the Christmas shop in the Cathedral and when I saw the Child Consecration book available there, I thought that this was something I would like to do.

"As a mother, I thought it was lovely. It was geared very much to a child's understanding but also appealed to adults, which was good. It is lovely to discover through Mary that Jesus is the best friend you could take with you throughout your life."

Colette added: "I pray the Rosary regularly and find that when I think about the Mysteries there is always something that stands out for me, such as the fifth of the Joyful Mysteries, the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple, where I can identify as a mother with that worry that Mary had when Jesus was missing."

The O'Doherty family, from the Cathedral Parish, also enjoyed doing their first Consecration journey online with Bishop Donal, and found that they looked forward to praying together every night.

The Coyle family made a two-hour journey from Roscommon for the final Consecration prayer with Bishop Donal, and two of the young girls felt honoured to be asked to carry forward the Offertory Gifts during Mass afterwards for the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

While the father had made the Consecration journey to Jesus through Mary previously, this was a first for his three young daughters. He said: "We have been trying to say the Rosary in the evenings, so hopefully we will now keep it up."

Karen Nolan and her friend, Carol Smyth, travelled from Dublin, and were delighted to get speaking to Bishop Donal afterwards. The friends are

involved in spreading devotion to the Merciful Madonna, through which they found that St Louis de Montfort had recommended Consecration to Jesus through Mary.

### Spiritual charge

"When you complete the Consecration there is a spiritual charge," remarked Karen, "I found that it changed me as a person. I have been brought closer to Jesus."

Carol, who has completed lots of Consecration journeys, said: "Your whole faith comes alive and develops. Frank Duff, who founded the Legion of Mary, had to read Louis de Montfort's book on Total Consecration several times before he fully understood it. It is Our Lady speaking to you personally, which leads you to change inside and to want to be a better person as she draws closer to Jesus."

Many arrived early for the Consecration ceremony to take the opportunity to go to Confession, which is one of the recommendations for Consecration Day, along with attending Mass.

Joined on the altar by Mgr Joseph Donnelly, Fr Seamus Kelly, Fr Shaun Doherty and Fr Charles Laverty, a Pallottine Father from Ardmore missioning in Argentina, Bishop Donal thanked the people for coming in such large numbers and paid tribute to all who had undertaken the Child Consecration journey, saying: "Mary wants us to consecrate our children and ourselves to Jesus. At Knock and in other places where She appeared, Mary always points to Jesus.

Leading the Consecration prayer, the Bishop encouraged the annual renewal of the Consecration and the regular praying of the Rosary in families.

He added: "Perhaps, join one of the Children's Rosary groups in the Diocese, or set one up."

After a short time of prayerful reflection, Mass was celebrated for the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, with the music and singing led by the Long Tower Folk Group.

During the homily, Bishop Donal spoke of the need to be

prepared for struggles in the battle to combat evil and sin as he reflected on the life of Jesus and Mary, and Bernadette of Lourdes.

"Bernadette's family," he noted, "was looked down on as good for nothings, failures. Being an illiterate 14-year-old, she was a most unlikely candidate for apparitions but more likely a candidate for illusions. And the town dump was not the place for a divine apparition. Who would believe her?"

"She had to encounter a parish priest who initially, and not surprisingly, did not believe her, civil authorities who wanted to hear nothing of this unsettling rubbish and barricaded the grotto to keep curious visitor away. Even some sisters in the convent wondered why she was not getting any more visions.

"Bernadette is a Saint not because she had the apparitions, but because she was prepared to stand her ground about what she knew to be true."

"Witnessing to Jesus is not easy," said Bishop Donal, adding: "We live in an alien culture which is intolerant of anything that questions the dominant ideology of 'obey your thirst/ everybody else is doing it'. We live in a world where it is assumed that renewal means giving the loudest voices what they want and saying nothing that might cause anybody offence.

"Jesus knew that was not true. Bernadette knew it was not true. Is that one important lesson that we might need to get from Our Lady of Lourdes this year?"

Following Mass, Fr Colum Clerkin led the praying of the Rosary and Night Prayer of the Church.

Speaking afterwards, Bishop Donal told 'The Net': "It has been very encouraging to meet people in different places who have commented on the Consecration journey. The initiative seems to have spoken to the hearts of many people who want to have spiritual nourishment that leads to Jesus - and helps to water and nourish the seeds of faith in children.

"We have no idea where this will lead - nor do we need to. However, I pray that it may encourage

a regular use of the Rosary, privately and within families.

"It has been one of a series of events - along with the relics of St Bernadette, the Cause of Sr Clare Crockett, the Eucharistic Procession on February 1 - which

speak to the hearts of those who seek to know the hope that Jesus offers. And to journey with Mary amidst all the challenges of life, trusting in the grace and love of God as revealed in Jesus."



The O'Doherty Family, St Eugene's, Derry.



The Coyle Family, Roscommon



Abigail and Colette Kennedy, St Eugene's, Derry.



Majella McNamee, Plumbridge, Co Tyrone.

## Beyond Consecration...

IT is recommended to renew the Consecration to Jesus through Mary annually, by repeating the 33 days of preparation in lead-up to the renewal.

Consideration can also be given to saying the abbreviated version of the Consecration daily: "I belong entirely to you, dear Mother, and all that I have is yours. O Mary, I take you for my all; give me your heart. Amen."

Having set out on the road of sanctification, it is encouraged to keep trying daily to live the Will

of God, and praying often for the help needed to do so.

As well as the benefits of praying in the family home, parish Rosary groups benefit the wider parish family and some may desire to either join or set up a Rosary group. A particularly beautiful Rosary Group to establish in a parish is the Children's Rosary, which is a prayer group movement that regularly brings children together in parishes or schools, to pray the Rosary.

There are currently three

Children's Rosary Groups in the Diocese of Derry, which are open to everyone, and there are hopes that the establishment of more will be one of the fruits of the Diocesan Consecration to Jesus through Mary.

One of the Children's Rosary Group's is held in St Patrick's Church, Claudy, on the First Saturday of each month, at 2 pm, while another is held monthly in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, on the Second Saturday at 2 pm, and the third takes place in St

Columba's Church, Long Tower, on the First Fridays at 3.30 pm.

The Children's Rosary Groups are suitable for age four up to and including teens. Rosary beads will be available and children do not need to know the Rosary to join. Children must be accompanied by an adult, and there is a treat afterwards. Parishioners are welcome to join in prayer with the children.

For further information contact 07706897000 or 07516784394.



## Catholic Schools Week

*Celebrating Catholic Schools for handing on way of looking at life and living life to the full, Bishop Donal echoed Pope Francis' words to young people...*

**Christ is alive and He wants you to be alive!** (Photographs by Stephen Latimer)



YOUNG Catholics filled St Eugene's Cathedral as they gathered to represent the many primary and post-primary schools throughout the Diocese for the launch of Catholic Schools Week, with the celebration of Mass by Bishop Donal on Thursday, January 16.

An annual event to celebrate Catholic Schools, the week of activities within school communities gives pupil's families an opportunity to experience activities celebrating the benefits of Christ-centered education.

This year, Catholic Schools Week ran from January 19-25 and the theme was 'Alive in Christ', which was inspired by Pope Francis' words in 'Christus Vivit': 'Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way He brings youth to our world, and everything He touches becomes young, new, full of life. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive and He wants you to be alive!' (Pope Francis, Christus Vivit, Section 1.)

The theme encouraged schools to reflect on what it means to live life to the full in Christ and highlighted the vibrant faith in Catholic school communities and the hope that this brings. As part of the Catholic Schools Week launch Mass, pupils presented creative displays of how their schools bring hope.

During his homily, Bishop Donal spoke to the young people about Servant of God Sr Clare Crockett, following his attendance at the opening of the Derry-born nun's Cause of Beatification in Spain the previous Sunday.

He explained: "It was to mark the beginning of a journey for a young woman from this city, Sr Clare Crockett, who went to primary and post primary schools in the city and who died in an earthquake in South America in 2016; a journey that might lead to her being called a saint, a model for young people and a sign of hope for the world."

"Many of you will know her story," added Bishop Donal, "She grew up like many young people dreaming of becoming famous – preferably an actor. She had already done a little TV work and enjoyed smoking and partying."

"And, on Good Friday in 2000, in Spain, at a religious service that she had not wanted to attend, she was struck by the sense that she was loved unconditionally by God. That changed her life. She eventually became a young member of a group of women who said that they wanted to dedicate their lives to bringing love, hope and joy to young people."

"She had thought that she knew what would help her to live life to the full, but discovered that a simple community life, with prayer and outreach, would make her so much happier than she had ever imagined."

### Committed

Referring to the Catholic Schools Week theme, 'Alive in Christ', the bishop said: "The basic point is that our schools are committed, not merely to handing on the content of our subjects but to handing on a way of looking at life and living life to the full. We see so much sadness around. Life is dangerous for many young people. And we know the pressures that many of our students are under."

He continued: "What did Sr Clare Crockett find in Jesus that made such a difference to her life? She was an ordinary girl who discovered in God's love reason to believe that her life was precious and that love changes everything. She moved from hoping that she would become famous to believing that the greatest thing she could hope for was to become a saint; the best thing that she could do with her life was to dedicate it to bringing God's love, hope and joy to people, especially to young people."

Noting that some politicians were of the opinion that Catholic Schools were part of the past, Bishop Donal encouraged reflection on how Catholic Schools "build learning





# Catholic Schools Week

Continued from p4

communities where there is joy, hope and support for everybody, wherever they are.”

Warning against Catholic Education selling itself “merely by getting the best results” in a very competitive world, he urged building communities of life and outreach, while acknowledging that there were many great examples of concern for community and those underprivileged.

He expressed the hope that everybody in Catholic schools hear that they are called to be saints, that they can be heroes and make a difference.

He added: “Celebrate your identity during Catholic Schools

Week. Be proud of what you have achieved and what you stand for. Look for examples of young people who have made a difference, like Clare Crockett and Carlo Acutis.

“In that way, you will continue to be great schools. Get excellent academic outcomes but prepare our young people to have hope amid all the problems that we face. Help them to believe that they are precious.”

Bishop Donal concluded by telling the young people: “Christ is alive and He wants you to be alive!”

At the end of the ceremony, each of the schools received ‘Pilgrims of Hope’ candles as a memento of this year’s special Jubilee in the Church.



## Catholic Schools Week a heartfelt expression of Thornhill’s commitment to living out faith

by Fionnuala Moran

THORNHILL College embraced the theme ‘Alive in Christ’ during this year’s Catholic Schools Week, engaging students, staff, and the wider community in a series of meaningful and spiritually enriching activities.

Monday marked the beginning of the celebrations with a Year 10 Retreat centered on the themes of ‘Faith, Hope & Love.’ The retreat provided students with an opportunity to reflect deeply on these core Christian values

the sister of Sr Clare Crockett - Servant of God. Shauna delivered an inspiring and heartfelt talk in the Assembly Hall, sharing stories and insights about her sister’s life and dedication to her faith. The students were deeply moved by Shauna’s words, which encouraged them to reflect on their own spiritual journey and the importance of service and sacrifice.

Wednesday was dedicated to celebrating the family and Grandparents Day, a cherished tradition at Thornhill College. Year 8 students, accompanied by their grandparents or parents, attended a special Mass in the school Oratory. This event highlighted the significance of family and the intergenerational transmission of faith. The Mass was a beautiful expression of gratitude and love, as students and their families came together to honour the vital role that grandparents play in nurturing and sustaining the faith within the family unit.

Throughout the week, Thornhill College’s celebration of Catholic Schools Week was a heartfelt expression of our commitment to living out faith and nurturing the spiritual lives of our students. The activities strengthened the bonds within the school community but also provided valuable opportunities for personal reflection and growth, truly embodying the theme ‘Alive in Christ’.

through various activities and discussions. The highlight of the day was a Mass celebrated by Fr McDevitt with the entire year group, as part of their St Paul Ambassador Award. This collective celebration fostered a strong sense of unity and spiritual growth among the students, reinforcing their commitment to living out their faith in everyday life.

On Tuesday, the school had the honour of hosting Shauna Gill,





## Catholic Schools Week

### St Columb's community 'alive' in Christ for nearly 150 years *by Nathan Thiruvengadam*

THIS year's Catholic Schools Week tagline of 'Alive in Christ' is an attitude that has been applicable to St Columb's College for nearly 150 years, since the College's inception in 1879. It is notable this year's mantra suggests a dynamic and an ever-changing, ever-evolving reality; one in which being a disciple of Christ - journeying with Him, being 'alive' in Him - is not merely a tick box exercise or one that we can finish, but rather an endeavour that we embark upon on a consistent and concerted daily basis.

It is this daily seeking to move towards Christ that the spiritual provision within St Columb's aspires to. Indeed, the holy sacrifice of the Mass is celebrated on a weekly basis, and it has been heartening to see the increase in pupils attending. During Catholic Schools Week itself, resources were disseminated to all staff in an attempt to highlight within

the student body that, regardless of subject or area of study, our school is underpinned by Christ, as illustrated through our motto: Quærite Primum Regnum Dei.

Moreover, pupils had the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. In addition to being prepared by their RE teachers, our school chaplain, Fr Seán O'Donnell, spoke with pupils, outlining the significance of the Sacrament as well as the graces that flow from it. It is appropriate that at a time like Catholic Schools Week, when our position as schools founded with Christ at our core is reasserted, pupils of St Columb's are given time reflect on their lives and recentre them on Christ.

Furthermore, pupils prayed the Stations of the Cross during Catholic Schools Week, with a special focus on the College's Memorial Garden, erected in honour of deceased members of the College community. The

specially created Stations prayer booklet helps pupils recognise and acknowledge previous members of the community who lived a life 'Alive in Christ.'

Catholic Schools Week is a mainstay in the academic calendar and one that we at St Columb's look forward to. From the opening Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral, in which it becomes apparent that, as a Catholic school, we are part of a much wider Catholic educational family, to the activities during the week itself. However, if the legacy of Catholic Schools week ends at the conclusion of the designated week, then it would be a poor legacy indeed.

Here, at St Columb's, we are delighted at the lasting impacts of Catholic Schools Week, which acts as a renewing of our vibrant Catholic ethos rather than a demarcating of it into a specific week of the year. This was exemplified only one week

after Catholic Schools Week at the recent Eucharistic Procession in Derry, on the feast of one of our island's patrons, St Brigid.

While there are many similarities to the opening of Catholic Schools Week Mass, such as a wide array of pupils representing various schools, perhaps the biggest difference is the time the procession took place: a Saturday afternoon. The very fact pupils from St Columb's, as well as from other schools, freely gave of their time when they were off school, in some cases having to rearrange part-time jobs, is the best advertisement of the inculcation of the Catholic ethos in action.

Indeed, as Bishop McKeown has stated in the past: "Our local communities want to develop young leaders for the present and the future, people who will serve the Common Good and not just help themselves to whatever they can grab. Education in



community is about building communities build people. Education that is mainly about exam results is a poor education for a mature adult life."

Therefore, both the wide range of focused faith development in St Columb's during Catholic

Schools Week and the willingness of pupils to testify to their faith publicly in an event such as the Eucharistic Procession, are testaments to Catholic Schools Week 2025. Be it the school community or the wider faith community, it is evident those involved are truly 'Alive in Christ.'

### Carndonagh 'Grandfriends Day' at St Patrick's Girls' NS.





# Catholic Schools Week

## Lumen to strive to make every week a Catholic Schools Week by Stephen Doherty



WE had the privilege of attending Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral to launch Catholic Schools Week in our Diocese. This year's theme of 'Alive in Christ' presented the opportunity to reflect on the nature of the universal family, in all its forms. Each day, in the Lumen Christi College Chapel, we gather for prayer at 8:50am. This prayer time is modelled on the Prayer of the Church (Divine Office) and has been adapted for young people.

A call to prayer is announced beforehand through the ringing of a handbell. Students and staff enter the Chapel to begin the beautiful rhythmic prayer, words motioning from one side of the Chapel to the other. The prayer is led by either staff or senior students, with the junior students participating through their responses and through leading the daily scripture reading.

For Catholic Schools Week, we took the opportunity to create displays and posters for all classrooms highlighting the focus for each day. A special prayer to reflect the daily theme

was shared among the College community, and this was recited in each Registration room at the beginning of the school day.

Our Liturgy Prefect team created a presentation and delivered this over several mornings to the three Key Stage Assemblies.

In this Jubilee Year, our Catholic school continues to recognise the role that each individual plays in making up the Body of Christ. It once again provides a special window to showcase the treasures of our Family of Faith, and an opportunity to present to the community our place in God's

Family as Pilgrims of Hope. Our challenge going forward, is to strive to make every week a Catholic Schools Week.

Sr Clare Crockett, Servant of God, pray for us. Blessed Carlo Acutis, pray for us.



## Catholic Schools Week a meaningful and faith-filled experience for St Mary's community by Catherine Hribar

FROM January 19-25, our school joined Catholic schools across the country in celebrating Catholic Schools Week, reflecting on the theme 'Catholic Schools: Alive in Christ.' This special week was an opportunity for us to deepen our faith, strengthen our school community, and live out our call as pilgrims of hope in this Jubilee Year.

**Sunday, January 19: A Joyful**

### Start

The celebrations began with St Mary's College participating in the 11 am Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral. As a parish school, we regularly contribute to the Children's Liturgy, where our students take an active role in the Liturgy of the Word and Prayers of the Faithful. They also participated in the Offertory Procession and enhanced the

liturgy with beautiful hymns and instrumental ensembles. This was a truly special way to mark the beginning of Catholic Schools Week, reminding us that our faith is something to be celebrated and shared.

### Opening Mass: A Celebration of Faith

On Monday, Miss McColgan and our Year 8 students represented our school at the Catholic Schools Week Opening Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal. During the Mass, our students presented a heartfelt poem expressing how our school community is truly 'Alive in Christ'. This was a wonderful reminder that faith is at the heart of everything we do.

### Daily Themes:

#### Living Life to the Full

Each day, we gathered in assembly for prayer and reflection, focusing on the daily themes of Catholic Schools Week:

Monday: Life to the Full in Our Community of Friends

Tuesday: Life to the Full in Our Faith Community

Wednesday: Life to the Full in Our Families (Grandparents' Day)

Thursday: Life to the Full, for and with Others

Friday: Life to the Full for the Common Good of All

Through our Religious Studies lessons, we explored these themes further, engaging in interactive activities such as designing posters to care for our common home, inspired by Pope Francis' call to environmental stewardship. We also reflected on the ingredients of a healthy friendship, helping us build strong, faith-filled relationships with one another.

### Living Faith Through Action

Faith is not just something we talk about, it is something we live every day. Our Year 14 students partnered with St Eugene's

Primary School, working with Primary 7 pupils in a five-week Confirmation preparation programme. This experience has been enriching and beneficial for both our students and the younger children, strengthening our faith community.

Year 9 students were also privileged to attend the Icon Exhibition in the Cathedral, where they were inspired by the incredible talent of local icon artists. Their work reminded us that art is a beautiful way to express and deepen our faith.

Meanwhile, students in Years 10, 11, and 12, led by Mrs Devlin, took part in the Gaelbhatach committee's annual tradition of making St Brigid's crosses, an activity that connected us to our Irish heritage and faith. Many students also attended morning Mass in the Cathedral, further enriching our spiritual journey.

### Eucharistic Procession:

#### Pilgrims of Hope

A special highlight of our celebration was on Saturday, February 1, when our school proudly joined other post-primary schools in the 'Come Follow Me' Eucharistic Procession from Long Tower Church to the Guildhall and back. This sacred walk reminded us that, as pilgrims of hope in the Jubilee Year, we are called to journey in faith, following Christ's example in all that we do.

### A Community Alive in Christ

Catholic Schools Week 2025 was a meaningful and faith-filled experience for our school community. From prayer and reflection to service and celebration, we were reminded that our Catholic school is truly Alive in Christ. Through prayer, worship, and action, we continue to grow in faith, hope, and love, walking together as pilgrims of hope into the future.

### Alive in Christ, A Beacon of Hope

#### St Mary's College, Derry

*In Derry's heart, a light shines bright,  
St Mary's College, a guiding sight,  
Alive in Christ, with faith anew,  
A beacon of hope in all they do.*

*Through halls where wisdom intertwines,  
With love of Christ, each soul aligns,  
A tapestry of hands in prayer,  
United hearts, God's grace they share.*

*The weary find a place to rest,  
The hungry fed, the poor are blessed,  
With open arms, they heal, they teach,  
The love of Christ in actions preached.*

*In classrooms where young minds unfold,  
Stories of hope and faith retold,  
Through service, joy, and deeds of grace,  
They bring God's light to every space.*

*As pilgrims of hope, they walk the way,  
In Jubilee's bright, sacred day,  
St Mary's lifts a song so clear,  
A hymn of love for all to hear.*

*Alive in Christ, they rise, they soar,  
A beacon strong on every shore,  
In Derry's streets and far beyond,  
They kindle hope, a sacred bond.*

*So here we stand in jubilee,  
With hearts that serve, with spirits free,  
St Mary's College, ever true,  
Alive in Christ, in hope renewed.*

## Celebrating St Brigid at Sacred Heart College Omagh.





# Sun shone brightly as first sod turned for new Scoil Íosagáin buildings



A Ceremony of Blessing and Turning of the First Sod for the new Scoil Íosagáin buildings, in Buncrana, took place following the celebration of Mass for Catholic Schools Week in the neighbouring St Mary's Oratory on January 20.

The Celebration of the Eucharist got underway with the uplifting singing of 'This Little Light of Mine', as Bishop Donal, Fr Francis Bradley PP, Fr John Walsh, retired PP, and the altar servers processed up the aisle of the Oratory, which was filled with pupils representing schools in the Buncrana and Fahan parishes, as well as special guests and parishioners.

During his homily, Bishop Donal recalled the gathering in the Oratory and Scoil Íosagáin last November to celebrate the 100th anniversary of education on the site: "We acknowledged the key role of the parish and the Sisters of Mercy to provide the best possible educational opportunities for the young people of this community. And all of that at a time when the border had just been drawn, and government money was in short supply.

"Now we live in a different era, when money seems to be no problem for government, but

when we still face big questions as to what the role of schools is in education when young people face so many big challenges. People have the right to ask whether religion and the church should have a role in education. But people of faith also have the right to put forward a model of faith-based education."

Reflecting on what they were with the turning of the sod on the site of the new buildings for Scoil Íosagáin, the bishop noted: "Firstly, education is important. Young people have a right to high-quality preparation for the world of work. The present success of the Irish economy is in no small way due to the commitment to helping young people be the best that they can be. But there is the temptation to reduce education to learning the content of subjects and doing well in exams.

"We all learned many things in our school days. But, for me, the most important thing about my science classes was not that I made a rocket to reach the moon, but that I learned to work together with my classmates on projects, and worked hard to understand concepts that seemed strange to me. As someone said, education is what remains after you have forgotten all that you were ever taught.

"Catholic education wants to form great young people, not merely inform them, and it wants to equip you to transform the world with beauty and inspiration. We need those even more than we need flashy new gadgets. After all, the people in the poorest countries in the world can often seem remarkably happy. And many of the best-off countries in the world seem affected by a loss of meaning."

Going on to point out that Jesus

had spent most of His time with people who had grown up to believe that they were failures or useless, Bishop Donal continued: "He still wants us to build up those who feel put down or left behind. He wants everyone to believe that they are precious to God and that they are called to eternal life. Education without a sense of the meaning and value of life does not inspire hope.

## Believe

"Education that does not help young people to believe their lives are more than exams and having things, lets people down. If they don't believe that they are of eternal beauty and value, that affects how they make decisions and decide what is important in life. It makes all the difference when you grow up with the message that you can be a saint. Big hearts are more important than big wallets."

He also highlighted that there are some groups in society "who would want to get church out of education and insist that only their teaching should have any place in schools", remarking: "Some of them can be very intolerant of diversity of opinion and they insist that only what they call scientific truths about relationships should be taught and celebrated. That is not being liberal minded. That is being intolerant.

"Scoil Íosagáin is built on the foundation that human relationships are sacred, that we are healed and made whole by love. Jesus showed that love for people and asks us to be experts in loving and faithfulness. That is not easy when the culture promotes throw-away relationships and says that whatever you want is fine. But you will continue to

help your pupils believe that they are fit for great things. You want to inspire them to expect great things from themselves and from others."

He concluded: "This new building will be a great for Buncrana. It will provide new space and the opportunity for the most modern technology. But the best formation you can give them is that belief that human life is precious, that love and forgiveness are possible and that we can all become saints in our own ways. God bless the next stage of your journey into your second century."

At the end of Mass, Catholic Schools Week candles, which had been burning on the altar during the ceremony for the eight schools in the parishes of Buncrana and Fahan, were distributed to representatives of each of the schools.

Afterwards, all gathered on the green outside for the ceremony of blessing and turning of the first sod by Bishop Donal.

Welcoming all for this very special occasion, the principal, Miss Sinead McLaughlin said: "For many decades, we, as a school community have waited for this day. While our vision remained undimmed and our stamina remained steadfast, today, at the beginning of this Jubilee Year of Hope, we are seeing our hopes realised."

"We are delighted," she added, "to have so many people here who are working together to begin and, with God's blessing, complete this great undertaking. We are delighted that our children are represented, for it is for them and the generations coming after them, that our new school is being built.







## New post-primary advisor looking forward to interacting with schools across Diocese



Finbar Madden, new Post-Primary School Advisor in Derry Diocese

THE latest recruit to the Diocesan Catechetical Centre, located in the gatehouse at St Eugene's Cathedral, in Derry, is former principal of St Columb's College, Finbar Madden, who took up the role of Diocesan

Post-Primary School Advisor at the start of the 2024-25 academic year.

Having recently experienced helping with the organisation of two big events in the school calendar in the Diocese, the Catholic Schools Week launch Mass and the Pope St John Paul II Awards, the 56-year-old reflects on how his time as a teacher and principal led to and helps with his new role.

Growing up in the Holy Family Parish in North Belfast, Finbar's first experience of the educational sector was as a pupil of St Bernard's Primary School, Glengormley, where his mother was a teacher, and then St Malachy's College. He went on to study for an undergraduate degree in History at Queen's University, Belfast, including separate modules in English and Scholastic Philosophy, and then for a Post Graduate Certificate in Education at Queens as well.

As a teacher, Finbar also

studied for a MSc in Education (Management) at Ulster University, and achieved the Professional Qualification for Headship (PQH - NI), through the Regional Training Unit.

Appointed to the teaching staff of St Columb's College in September 1994, where he remained as a member of staff until December 2023, Finbar undertook a number of roles during almost three decades at the College, including Head of Government and Politics (2001-2007), Head of History (2007-2008), Senior Teacher (2007-2008), Vice-Principal (2008-2012) and Principal (2012-2023).

"Being a school Principal today is full-on; schools are facing so many challenges and are being asked to take on more and more responsibilities," he remarked, adding: "Having been in the post for over a decade I knew, by mid-2023, that it was time for me to hand on the baton to the next

generation.

"After finishing in St Columb's, I wanted to take a few months off, although during that time I spent some time working with the BBC on updating elements of its online Bitesize revision material for History. By the end of the summer of 2024, I was suitably refreshed and felt ready for a new and different challenge, although I hoped that it would still have some relationship with education in the Diocese. Serendipitously, the position of Post-Primary Advisor was advertised at just that time!"

Commenting on his experience of the work of the Catechetical Centre as a teacher and principal, Finbar said: "I was well aware of the work of the Centre, not least through the advice and guidance that I was able to obtain from my predecessor, Mary O'Boyle, through the in-service that the Centre provided to my colleagues and, in more recent years, through working closely

with the Catechetical staff as the host school for the first two Diocesan Religious Education Conferences.

"That said, it is only as I have started to work in the Catechetical Centre that I have fully understood the breadth of its work and engagement."

Reflecting on what he brings to his new role, Finbar said: "Through my years in St Columb's, I have developed a fairly decent understanding of the real challenges that Post-Primary Educators face. I have been able to develop a healthy relationship with most of the Diocese's Post-Primary Principals, with some exceptions and this is something that I am now working to address.

"I bring a lively interest in the history of the Diocese too, not least in terms of educational provision. This is something that I am also being able to develop through my work as Diocesan Archivist."

Sharing his hopes for his work as advisor to post-primary schools in the Diocese, Finbar said: "I hope that I can play some small part in furthering the great work that the Catechetical Centre is doing, which is something that I have become even more aware of since I joined the staff in late September.

"I am particularly looking forward to getting out and about across the diocese, meeting colleagues and providing them with any advice and guidance I can. I am also enjoying assisting my colleagues in the Catechetical Centre with the fulfilment of their roles, and it is great being in and around the Cathedral, seeing what happens on a daily basis and helping out in any way I can."

Settling in well to his new role, the father of three remarked: "I am very much enjoying working with my new colleagues and am looking forward to getting out to visit schools."



## Pope John Paul II Awards

# Ongoing success of Pope John Paul II Awards positive sign Church is alive!



THE 18th Pope John Paul II Awards ceremony got underway with the singing of the Award anthem 'Open the Doors to Christ', by members of the Long Tower Folk Group, resounding around St Eugene's Cathedral.

This year, Awards were presented to 420 young people from various parts of the Derry Diocese and beyond, with six receiving the Papal Cross Award.

Welcoming the Award recipients and their families, and Award leaders, Fr Paul Farren, director of the Diocesan Catechetical Centre, noted that the young people represented 22 second level schools and 47 parishes within the Diocese, and 13 parishes outside the Diocese.

Commending the young people for the contributions they have made to their parish communities through undertaking the Award programme, Fr Paul said: "This shows that the Church is alive. The focus of our work is to keep young people engaged. Parish structures need to enable young people to do the Award and to be the presence they should be in our parishes."

Pointing out that 50,000 young people throughout the island of Ireland had been recipients since the Awards first began, with 7,217 from within the Derry Diocese, he added: "The Award continues to be a good news story in the Church and beyond. It is not loudly talked about but it is positive news that the Church is alive."

Patron of the Pope John Paul II Awards since becoming the Bishop of Derry 11 years ago, Bishop Donal told those gathered that it may be his last ceremony as, with his approaching 75th birthday, he had to get a letter of resignation ready. In acknowledgement of his commitment to youth and the Pope John Paul II Award, Bishop Donal was presented with the Papal Cross Award.

### Bright light

Reflecting on the life of the Church in the Derry Diocese at this stage of his episcopate, Bishop Donal spoke of the bright light that the opening of Sr Clare Crockett's Cause was shining

on her home diocese. He told the young people that the now acknowledged Servant of God had been born in the City and had attended St Cecilia's College before following her dream of a career in acting.

"However, when she was 17," he added, "she went on what she thought was going to be a wild trip to Spain, but around the Cross on Good Friday, in 2002, she had an experience of being loved for who she was and despite who she was. Clare went on to dedicate her life to making Jesus known and loved. She died in an earthquake in 2016 and is now known around the world; famous for how she lived her life in a way that she could never have imagined or dreamed of."

Bishop Donal shared a piece of writing by Sr Clare about her life before her conversion: "I lived badly. I lived in mortal sin. I drank a lot, I smoked a lot, I drank so much I couldn't control myself. I felt a void so big that I realised my life would have no meaning if I hadn't given myself to Jesus Christ. I was deceived by the false light of wealth and joy, and that light that made me feel more empty. It's not how you start that makes you a saint, but how you finish. It's not who you were but who you decide to become."

Considering the high levels of addiction, risky behaviour, self-harm, mental illness and loneliness, he then highlighted the question that Pope Francis has asked the Church around the world to consider: How can we be better at filling the void that so many people sense?

"The question," continued Bishop Donal, "is not, 'how do we make it easier to follow Jesus and boost our numbers', but 'how do we get deep down and dirty, taking Jesus seriously, and bring joy and healing to the lives of so many who feel lost and confused.'"

Highlighting the need for more saints in the 21st century, like Clare Crockett and Carlo Acutis, the bishop told the young people: "The big decision in life is not 'what job do I do', but 'what sort of person do I want to become... what do I want to be remembered for?' Saints are remembered. Are

you going to become a model, a hero, saint...or waste your life? Are you ready to be part of the adventure to seek the truth, serve society and spread the Good News?"

### Treasure

Fr Shaun Doherty, CC St Eugene's, also spoke to the Award recipients, urging them to treasure their faith and commitment. He emphasized the significance of the Award and encouraged the young people to remember the support of their families and communities in reaching this milestone.

Sharing some of his personal journey of faith, Fr Shaun detailed his early connection to the Church, an attraction to the Priesthood as young person and his detour into a successful career in acting and broadcasting. As a young man, he participated in Mass as a reader and altar server, demonstrating a strong foundation in faith. However, during a vocational retreat as a teenager, he doubted his intellectual capacity to become a priest and instead pursued acting.

Fr Shaun's career in entertainment as a young man led him to roles in theatre, film, and television commercials, including a role in the Derry film 'Hush-a-Bye Baby', starring the late Sinead O'Connor, in which he played an Irish-speaking British soldier. In his early 20s, Fr Shaun's career took a new turn when he ventured into radio. He worked for a year in Donegal at a pirate radio station before becoming the lead current affairs presenter on Highland Radio.

Over nearly 30 years, he built an impressive career. His show won a national award as Best Programme in the country and he was awarded other personal awards, including the prestigious Paul Harris award from Rotary International as well as two People of the Year awards. He interviewed many politicians, celebrities, and sports stars, gaining the highest local radio listenership in Ireland. He particularly enjoyed the local listener interaction. He then became a director and part owner of the station and material success followed. However, despite these outward achievements, he felt an inner emptiness that impacted his relationships and well-being.

### Moment of Grace

Fr Shaun told the young people that throughout his life he had maintained a connection with his faith, attending Mass regularly and keeping ties with the Catholic Columba Community in Derry and, particularly, the late Fr Neal Carlin. A pivotal moment came in his 40s, when

he reached a personal low point. In a moment of grace, he decided to visit Medjugorje, where he experienced a profound spiritual renewal. This pilgrimage deepened his relationship with Our Lady and set him on a new path. His renewed devotion led him to further visits to Knock, another Marian shrine, strengthening his resolve to follow God's call.

At over 50 years old, Fr Shaun made the bold decision to leave behind his broadcasting career and pursue the priesthood. He spent a six-month trial period in Spain before entering the seminary in Rome, where he studied for four years, including during the challenging COVID-19 period. His journey culminated in his ordination as a deacon at St Paul's Basilica, in Rome, in 2022, and as a priest at St Eugene's Cathedral in Derry, in 2023; the same cathedral where his mother was baptized, confirmed, married, and laid to rest.

Fr Shaun reminded the Award recipients of the power of God's plan, emphasizing that faith, hope, and mercy can lead to profound transformation. He recounted the biblical story of Zacchaeus, the tax collector who climbed a tree to see Jesus and was forever changed by His mercy. He urged the young people to plant seeds of faith through their words and actions, trusting that God would nurture them.

Quoting Pope Francis, he highlighted the importance of young people in the Church, acknowledging their struggles and the uncertainties that they face. He called on the Church to reach out to youth with renewed passion, as they are the joy and hope of both the Church and the world.

Encouraging the young awardees to embrace their God-given purpose, he assured them that miracles happen and that the Church needs their energy and passion. He reminded them that they are just as significant in God's eyes as soon-to-be St Carlo Acutis, Servant of God Sister Clare Crockett, and St Bernadette. Their talents, determination, and faith, he highlighted, are essential in making a difference.

Fr Shaun left them with a powerful message of hope and encouragement, urging them to use their gifts to serve others and uphold their faith with pride and conviction: "Go forth from this cathedral with a renewed belief in a God who knows you, who has called you by name, and who empowers you to do great things in the world. God bless you all."

*Photographs by  
Stephen Latimer.*





Pope John Paul II Awards





## Young Writers share thoughts...

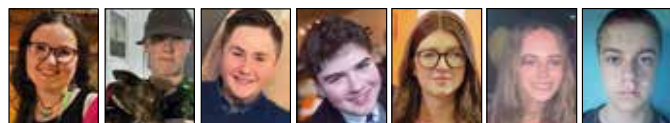
*SAINTS are the focus for some of the young writers this month, with Bronagh reflecting on St Brigid and the symbolism of the St Brigid Cross for Catholics still today, and Erin researching about St Valentine and finding him a great role model for being resilient and grounded in his faith, and how he was able to spread love and happiness in difficult circumstances.*

*James, who is the founder of the Youth of Acutis group in the Derry Diocese, is delighted to report that a film will be released about Carlo to coincide with his canonisation, while Bláthnaid shares her experience of reading C S Lewis' 'A Grief Observed', feeling privileged to be Catholic with all that the Eucharist offers.*

*Reflecting on the Parable of the Prodigal Son, Niamh writes about the importance and power of forgiveness – both in receiving and giving, and Seán shares his experience of working out and building up bodily strength, relating it to developing our bodies as temples gifted to us by God.*



Cara-leigh Doherty - Derry City Deanery  
Bronagh Doherty, Co Derry Deanery  
Peter Grant, Inishowen Deanery  
John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery  
James Tourish, Derry City Deanery  
Erin Whoriskey, Derry City Deanery



Bláthnaid McMenamin - Co Tyrone Deanery  
Shea Doherty, Derry City Deanery  
Evan Curran, Derry City Deanery  
Seán McLaughlin, Co Tyrone Deanery  
Niamh Sharkey, Derry City Deanery  
Cadhla Shivers, Co Derry Deanery  
Luke Doherty, Inishowen Deanery



## New film on Carlo Acutis to be released on his canonisation date by James

A new film detailing the remarkable life of Blessed Carlo Acutis is set to be released in US theatres on the date of Carlo's canonisation, April 27.

US Media company, Castletown Media is producing the picture, and it has already created religious based films such as, 'Jesus thirsts: The Miracle of the Eucharist', a widely successful and critically acclaimed movie that has received much praise.

The movie, entitled 'Carlo Acutis: Roadmap to Reality', will document the life of Carlo and will also go over lessons that can be learnt from his life, especially in the context of educating young people. The film will include interviews with his contemporaries and family, as well as scholars who have researched the life of the soon-to-be Saint.

The film also follows the journey of a group of high school

students who embark on a two-week pilgrimage from North Dakota to Italy, to visit the tomb of Carlo. One of the requirements for the pilgrimage was for the young people to disengage from technology and leave their phones at home.

One of the prevailing themes of the movie shall be how Carlo interacted with others online, and how he utilised the digital age to bring people to Christ, often through his documentation of Eucharistic Miracles.

News is yet to be released about whether or not the movie will be released in Europe, however film producers have said that they hope to make the film accessible to everyone after the release.

Carlo's canonisation Mass is expected to take place on Sunday, April 27, at 10:30 am local time, in St Peter's Square, according to the Diocese of Assisi.

## The Eucharist...a privilege to be Catholic by Bláthnaid

RECENTLY, I had the pleasure of reading CS Lewis' 'A Grief Observed', a collection of diary entries written following the death of his wife, Joy Davidman. Or, as she is referred to in the book, 'H'. A rather thought provoking read, I knew going into it that Lewis was a devout Anglican and, therefore, I had to be conscious of his different perspective throughout, so as to not risk being influenced to steer away from the beliefs that exist within The Truth that is Catholicism.

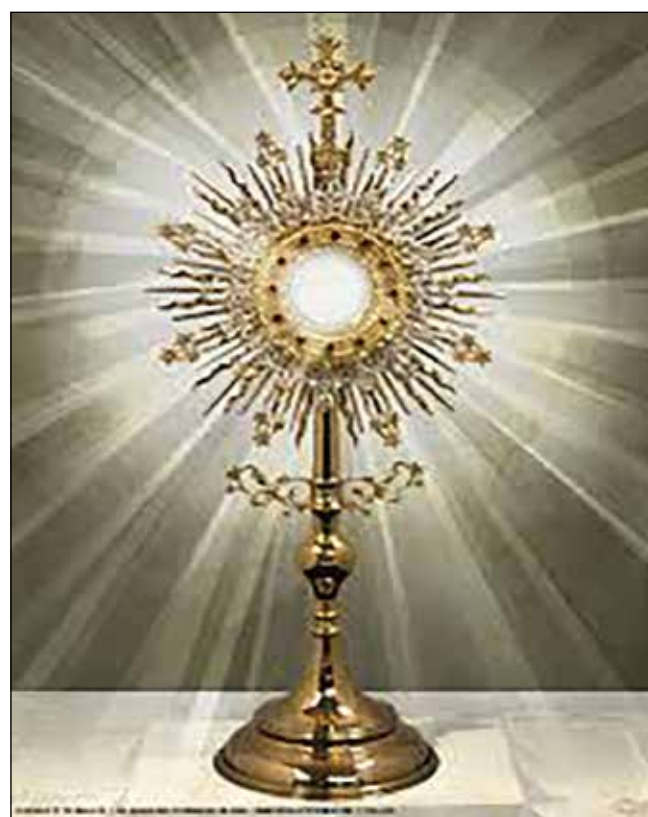
With that being said, there were still many things he spoke on which resonated with me, such as his realisation of his faith resembling a "house of cards," that can easily fall apart when hit with difficult times, or his longing to find God within the mess. These were useful insights into my own faith and prayer patterns, and really helped me to recognize my own flaws in my faith, and encouraged me to go to God and seek His Mercy in helping me overcome this.

However, there was one quote in particular that struck me when reading the fourth diary entry, which was a comment that Lewis made in relation to Holy Communion: "Tomorrow morning a priest will give me a little round, thin, cold, tasteless wafer." For context, in the Anglican church they do not believe in transubstantiation (the change of substance from

the bread and wine to the True Body and Blood of Our Lord), and the Catholic Church does not recognize the validity of their Communion. In the next paragraph, Lewis went on to say: "I need Christ, not something that resembles Him."

It was this that made me pause and truly reflect for the first time throughout the book. Reading a faith-based book on grief, I was expecting the usual themes such as God's beautiful gift of nature that is spoken about in Psalm 19, or the neighbourly love of our brothers and sisters in Christ that helps comfort us in times of dismay. Whilst these are absolutely important elements, I was not expecting to find that the most apparent lesson that I learned from this book is what a privilege it is to be Catholic, and to be able to fulfil the desire of needing Christ through knowing Him in the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is the best gift that God has Blessed us with and offers us many healing encounters with Our Lord, both in times of rejoicing and in times of grief. It is the epitome of God's Grace, and we must defend it at all times. As Catholics, we have to recognize that it is much more than just a "thin, cold, tasteless wafer," and treat it with the respect and adoration that it deserves. The Eucharist provides us with an intimate relationship with The Lord, and allows us the chance to sit in adoration with Jesus which



is essential to our spiritual lives. Through Eucharistic Adoration, we are able to quieten our thoughts and grow in awe of Our Lord, and of His selfless sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins.

The Eucharist is the Bread of Eternal Life and the companionship with Christ that it provides is essential for feeding our spiritual core. Without a nourished spiritual core, we will not be able to see clearly the path for which God has chosen for us

in life or carry it out faithfully, so we must celebrate the Blessing that is the true Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, and recognize what a privilege it is to be members of His One True Church.

As stated by Pope John Paul II: "The Eucharist is the secret of my day. It gives me strength and meaning to all activities of service to the Church and to the whole world."

## St Brigid Cross in homes a reminder of strength, good will and to spread peace by Bronagh

"I would like an abundance of peace. I would like full vessels of charity. I would like rich treasures of mercy. I would like cheerfulness to preside over all."

Born in Kildare, St Brigid is one of Ireland's most beloved saints and is relevant today more so than ever. Her life, full of kindness and spiritual wealth, should be an aspiration to us all. Charity and peace for the poor was Brigid's mission, and her monastery in Kildare became a centre of learning, healing and hospitality. (Solas Bhride Ireland, 2025)

This quote is a timely reminder in today's world that peace should be prominent, and charity and mercy and joy should be seen by everyone; a mission we should always have at the forefront in our daily lives.

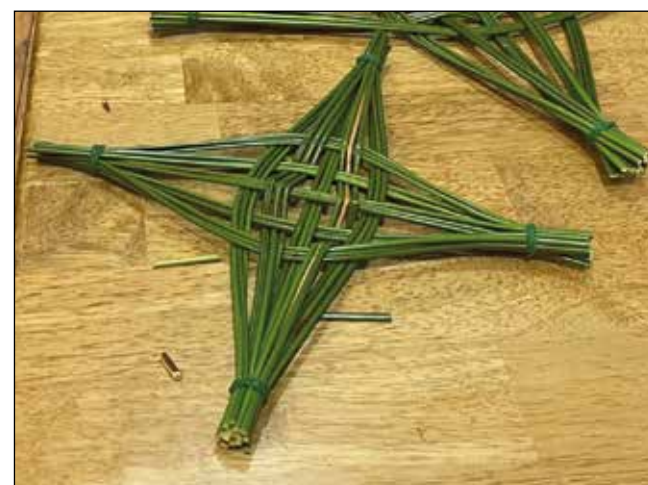
Cheerfulness is seen in the new life, spring, fertility and new livestock, as it is often noted that St Brigid brings the Spring. Hence, February 1 is usually regarded as Spring.

St Brigid is regarded as a Patron Saint of Ireland, cattle, midwives,

Irish nuns and newborn babies (Catholic Online, 2023). St Brigid's connection with agriculture is strengthened by her symbol, one that we are all very familiar with, the St Brigid's Cross. Woven from rushes from the fields of farmers, grown throughout the year through good and bad weather, the St Brigid's Cross represents peace, good will, friendship, endurance and survival of tough times; representing the characteristics that as Christians, Catholics from Ireland we should possess.

The St Brigid cross in our homes is a constant reminder of our strength, good will and survival, and to spread peace, our responsibilities as children of God. The cross protects us from evil.

There is evidence that St Patrick and St Brigid were good friends, as the Trias Thaumaturga claimed: "Between St Patrick and St Brigid, the pillars of Irish people, there was so great a friendship of charity that they had but one heart and one mind". The Trias Thaumaturga is a hagiography of



Irish Saints, St Patrick, Brigid of Kildare and Columba, published in 1647 by John Colgan and Archbishop of Dublin, Thomas Fleming (Wikipedia, 2025). The values of these three Patron Saints of Ireland are still very much embodied in Irish people to this day.

Recently, in my Parish of Ballinascreen, cross making workshops took place. Uniting people, both old and young, in faith, making a cross that represents peace, good will,

friendship, to honour St Brigid of Ireland. And so, keeping the traditions and, most importantly, values of Ireland and Christianity alive in our parishes and homes.

*The Mantle of Brigid about us,  
The Memory of Brigid within us,  
The Protection of Brigid keeping us  
From harm, from ignorance, from heartlessness.  
This day and night,  
From dawn till dark, From dark till dawn.*



## Young Writers share thoughts...

### A path to reconciliation by Niamh

WHETHER we are seeking forgiveness from God or extending it to others, the act of forgiving brings peace, renewal, and strengthens our relationships with others. One of the most moving stories of forgiveness in the Bible is the Parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32). This parable, told by Jesus, illustrates God's mercy and serves as an example for us as Christians to treat each other the same.

The father's unconditional love mirrors God's mercy toward sinners who repent. The parable also highlights the struggle to forgive through the reaction of the older son. He resents the mercy shown to his brother, believing that justice should demand punishment rather than celebration. This part of the story reminds us that, like the elder brother, we often struggle to forgive those who have wronged us. But just as God forgives us, we too must learn to forgive others. Just as the father in the parable eagerly welcomes his lost son, God receives every sinner who comes to Him in the Sacrament of Confession.

Jesus Himself gave us this Sacrament. After His resurrection, He told His apostles: "If you forgive anyone's sins,



their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." (John 20:23)

Through the priest, Jesus offers us His forgiveness and helps us grow stronger in our faith. Sometimes, forgiveness feels impossible. In these moments, ask God for the strength and willingness to forgive. Even when emotions resist, the act of praying for the one who wronged you can begin the healing process.

Confession is also essential for spiritual growth, as it allows believers to acknowledge their failures, seek God's mercy, and receive grace to overcome sin. Through Confession, Catholics can restore that relationship and renew their commitment to following God.

The 'Our Father', also known as The Lord's Prayer, is one of

the most important prayers in Christianity. It is the prayer that Jesus Himself taught His disciples (Matthew 6:9-13, Luke 11:2-4), and is a model for how we should pray and live. One of its most powerful lines speaks directly about forgiveness: "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." Jesus teaches that receiving and giving forgiveness go hand-in-hand.

If we want to experience God's mercy, we must be willing to extend mercy to those who have wronged us. When we pray: "Forgive us our trespasses," we acknowledge that we are sinners.

No matter how hard we try, we all fall short in our thoughts, words, and actions. But the good news is that God is merciful and always ready to forgive those who sincerely repent.

### Saint Valentine a good example of spreading love and happiness by Erin

AS Valentine's Day passes, we may think of the occasion and the meanings behind it. Everyone knows that Valentine's Day is a celebration of love which takes place on February 14 each year, however, as Christians, we are encouraged to reflect on the origins of this special day.

There are several stories about who exactly St Valentine was and the most popular belief is that he was a priest or bishop in the third century AD. Many scholars disagree on factors of his story due to very little being known about him, other than the wide agreement that he was martyred. This led to him being removed from the general Roman calendar in 1969, although the Catholic Church still recognises him as a saint and celebrates his feast on February 14.

There are two very popular beliefs of St Valentine's identity which have significant overlap. These could be variations of the same story which have gotten lost in translation over the years.

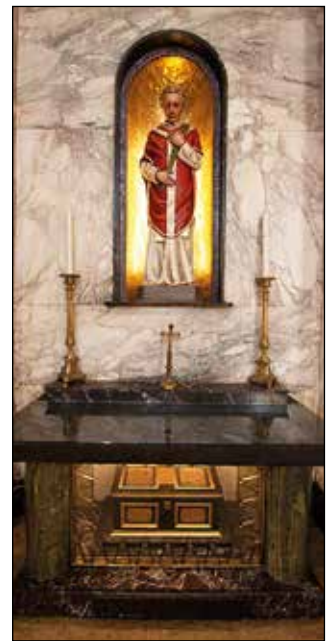
One account of his life is that he was a priest of Rome, born in Terni. Emperor Claudius II had banned marriages at this time, feeling that single men made better soldiers. St Valentine disagreed with this and felt that it was unfair, so he made the choice to defy the emperor and, performed secret Christian weddings for couples. This caused low numbers of soldiers and unfortunately, led to the emperor finding out about his defiance and imprisoning him. The emperor sentenced him to death. Valentine eventually fell in love with his

jailer's daughter and, before he was executed on February 14, wrote her a letter signed 'from your Valentine.' This may have contributed to the tradition of Valentine's Day cards.

Another narrative suggests that St Valentine was the bishop of Terni and, similar to the first, was also a martyr. At one point in his life, he was on house arrest with Judge Asterius. The judge was questioning Valentine on religion and decided to put his faith to the test, to prove the validity of Jesus. He was presented with the judge's blind daughter and told to restore her sight. Valentine placed his hands on her eyes and restored her sight. This caused the whole household to convert to Christianity, the Judge being humbled and releasing all of his Christian inmates.

Unfortunately, Valentine was later imprisoned again for converting people to Christianity. This narrative also believes that he was performing secret marriages. Despite forming a relationship with the emperor, Valentine met his fate when he attempted to convince the emperor of Christianity. He was sentenced to death and commanded to renounce his faith. He continued to refuse, staying faithful right up until his execution on February 14. Once again, he was believed to have sent the judge's daughter a letter signed 'from your Valentine.'

St Valentine was buried in Rome, but his remains were gifted to Fr John Spratt from Pope Gregory XVI in 1836, along with a small vessel of his blood.



His remains are now on show in the Whitefriar Street Church, Dublin. There are relics of St Valentine scattered all around, including parts of his remains in Glasgow. A flower crowned skull of his can be found in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Cosmedin, Rome.

St Valentine is the Patron Saint of love, beekeepers, epilepsy, engaged couples, fainting, plague, and happy marriages. We commemorate him on February 14 every year, remembering him and his life through celebrating devotion and love. We can see great example through Valentine's story, although there may be unsure details, of persistence and dedication. It's clear that he was very resilient and grounded in his faith, and he was able to spread love and happiness in very difficult circumstances.

### Our body is a temple...a gift to develop by Sean

THE building of the complex human body is an immeasurably difficult and strenuous path. I was 16 years old when I got my first gym membership, and I was ecstatic to begin working out. I was met with anti-climactic disappointment when I realised the sheer weakness of my own body. I have always been a fairly resilient person, and, therefore, I was not prepared to slink away into the shadows of human pettiness. Over the weeks and months that followed my weightlifting campaign, through sheer mental indefatigability, I developed a physical drive to be a mentally powerful person.

The act of pushing or pulling pure iron up and down holds an exhilarating element that many people do not understand. But what has this to do with God? Our scripture is littered with examples of the use of the body, not for pride or vanity, but rather to glorify God and His creation.

In Corinthians 6:19-20, St Paul wrote: "Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies."

The body of mankind is a wondrously complex specimen, with the potential for greatness in

Imago Dei – the image of God. We are His likeness, and, therefore, we should build the vessel in which our soul resides during our time here. One of the most iconic of Biblical fresco paintings is Michelangelo's 'Creation of Adam' (1512) on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, in the Vatican. Adam's arm stretches out to meet God's, his wrist and fingers limp with weakness, trying desperately to touch the hand of God, which is steady and strong, ready to impart the spark of life into mankind.

We may be imperfect, but what God allowed us to have, yields all that we need. Our body is a temple, a gift, and develop it we must. Physical work is tiring and harsh, but the results in time will compensate for the struggle. In Hebrews 12:11, it is written: "No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it." Only through consistent work will the fruits of effort come.

The following verse reads, "Strengthen your feeble arms, steady the knees that give way." It is advised that we build our vitality in the face of sin, to instil discipline in faith and spirituality. Becoming ultimately aware of the mind while building the body is the greatest defence of the soul

against the schemes of the one who digs in the human pit for opportunities for sin.

St Paul reiterated this message in Ephesians 4:16, writing wisely: "From Christ the whole body builds itself up in love, as each part does its work." The sense of internal awareness as the weight moves, as each repetition is pushed out from within, is an unparalleled experience. I recite prayers in my head as I exercise my strength. It is a mechanism that enables me to push through the discomfort that increases with the length of each set of repetitions I carry out. The powerful words of prayer flow through my mind like the blood pumping through me, as the iron plates clank off each other, the barbell moving up and down in a continuous pattern broken only by the burning of my muscle fibre.

Psalms 89:21 reads: "I will steady him with my hand; with my powerful arm I will make him strong." With my arms I can do so much work, I can lift, pull myself through the water of the swimming pool, eat well and properly, write, paint, draw – so much with which I can glorify the Lord with the power he has granted to me. One of the greatest bodybuilders to ever grace the stage is a man called Kevin Levrone, popular in the 1990s.

Both of his parents died from cancer when he was a child and, in his struggles, he found God in the darkness, refining his discipline and strength in the gym. This was where he found his peace and faith, using God's gift of bodily strength to build himself into a great pillar of strength in a dim period of his life, in which many people would fall into weakness, away from God.

He said, "My message is just never quit, never give up on yourself. So, when you come over here, we try to embrace you with that love. For me, being in this position, I feel like God has given me a lot of responsibility. It's not about me, it's the love. Show everyone love."

Levrone never won a single Mr Olympia (the biggest bodybuilding competition in the world), coming second a whopping 12 times, and yet he was never dismayed, nor did he give in to the decision of the judges. He did not officially retire

until 2018, at the age of 54. This is a perfect example of the sheer strength of which our kind has been made capable.

When I lift weights, what is often on my mind is the sheer resilience of Jesus Christ in His last hours before His death. The standard Roman cross used for execution through crucifixion weighed around 140 kilograms. This is a weight that on a barbell I could only lift for several slow repetitions. With such a weight balanced across my shoulders, like Atlas in Greek myth, I predict that I would not be able to walk very far or for very long without toppling. Jesus fell three times and was forced to carry it for a third of a mile, and yet for us He

bore this burden a while longer for our sake.

In 1 Peter 2:24, it is written: "He himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by His wounds you have been healed."

Jesus Christ is the ultimate example of human strength that we should live up to. In every aspect, He is the template we must follow. God in the flesh walked this world among us, and on His shoulders He carried the weight of the world, and for that we can be saved. Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit which He left behind for us, and, therefore, we should build it to our maximum potential in God's honour.





## *St Brigid celebrations across the Diocese...*

### **Burt**



### **Desertmartin**



### **Aughabrack**



### **Aghyaran**





St Brigid celebrations across the Diocese...

Greenlough



Urney and Castlefinn



Claudy



St Brigid's Day Eucharistic Procession in Claudy

IN union with the major parish Children's Rosary Group. The Eucharistic procession was led by Fr David O'Kane PP, and included local Children of the Eucharist. Following the praying of the Rosary at the Lourdes Grotto in the cemetery, Fr David blessed St Brigid Crosses that had been made by members of the Living Word group.



Steelstown St Brigid's Cross making  
by Steelstown & Culmore Parish Eco Group

LIKE many parishes throughout the Diocese, we had a St Brigid's Cross making session at Our Lady of Lourdes, Steelstown. This was organised by our Parish Eco Group and held in the Conference Room adjoining the Church on Friday, January 31, on the eve of St Brigid's Feast Day. Ashands wove the rushes into the traditional crosses, as generations before us had done, we listened as Roisin Timoney recounted her childhood memories of St Brigid's Eve - Oíche Fhéile Bríde in Gaithdobhair, Co Donegal. "Late evening we all sat around the table and made the St Brigid's crosses. They were then put in a basket along with the brathóg Bhríde. My father walked around the house three times with the basket before knocking on the door, while saying as gaeilge, 'Gabhaigí ar bhur nglúine, osclaig bhur súile agus ligigí isteach Bríd bheannaithe,' to which we replied, 'Sé Beatha, sé Beatha na mná uaisle.' (Get on your knees, open your eyes and let Blessed Brigid in. Hail, hail noble woman.) The

Rosary was said and the contents of the basket were sprinkled with holy water and left outside all night for Bríd's blessing." The brathóg Bhríde, an ordinary piece of white cloth representing St Brigid's cloak, was transformed into an extraordinary symbol of protection and healing for the family and their livestock. Our rushes had been gathered in advance in Culmore Country Park, where rushes now flourish, larks sing and walkers enjoy the fresh breezes coming off Lough Foyle, surrounded by the beauty of the Inishowen hills and Benevenagh. We reflected on the fact that this had been the large landfill site for Derry's rubbish and waste for years. We prayed that our understanding of healing and protection might include the land, sea and air around us; that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction; that we may live more simply, consume less and stop creating mountains and acres of waste.



Celebrating St Brigid in Carnhill





# St Eugene's Cathedral Club a wonderful social support *by Anne Marie Hickey*

THE Cathedral Club was formed on February 1, 2024. The Primary focus is to support parishioners in their social life by coming together once a week, each Thursday, after the 10 am Mass. We meet in our Cathedral Hall and enjoy tea, coffee and home-made bread!

Each week, we try to have a different activity, including Guided Meditation, Music, Arts & Crafts, and enjoy learning from each other. We engage with our Parish Primary and Post Primary Schools, who come to provide entertainment for the group;

sharing talents with generations of people.

Our Parish celebrated 150 years in 2023 and the motto for the anniversary was 'Generations of Faith', so we are continuing that theme when we work together intergenerationally.

The Club have gone on several pilgrimages to date. We went on an Advent Pilgrimage to the IOSAS Centre and celebrated Mass in Ballyliffin Oratory, finishing with dinner in a local restaurant. We visited Doon Well and Ards Friary in August of 2023, and it

was during that time that the idea of a Parish Social Group emerged. Spending time with each other, praying together and celebrating life events with like-minded people proved very supportive to many. We made a Pilgrimage to Knock Shrine in June 2024, on which over 100 people journeyed together to our National Marian Shrine to pray.

We have planned an Internet Safety Workshop for March 13, when experts will come and speak to us all about looking out for scams and to be more mindful

when online. I feel that practical help as well as togetherness, combined with spiritual support, is a great recipe for this group of people.

I look forward to our time together each Thursday after the 10 am Mass in the Cathedral Hall, at Infirmary Road, Derry City. You are most welcome to pop in and say hello.

*(Anne Marie is the pastoral co-ordinator for St Eugene's.)*



## We love our weekly get-togethers

THE buzz of conversation on entering the Cathedral Hall during the weekly club for anyone who would like to come along, whether you are a St Eugene's parishioner or not, was a sure sign that the Cathedral Club was a social success.

Young people from some of the parish schools had just left after a fun morning of helping to make St Brigid Crosses, which were blessed by Fr Shaun Doherty, and the chatter amongst the Club members had turned to talking about their next venture, getting involved in the Age NI and Republic of Ireland 'Big Knit'...or crochet.

Some were happy to share the positive impact that belonging to the Club had made to their lives over the first year of its operation.

Vonnie Mohamat, of the neighbouring Long Tower, who has been coming since the Club first began last February, said: "I came along because I wanted it to be part of my social life and I look forward to it every week. I love

meeting all my old school friends from years ago and enjoy the activities."

Her friend, Annie Begley, of Holy Family Parish, who has also been attending from the start, remarked: "It is a lovely social occasion and a chance to meet old friends. It really is very good and I particularly enjoy the times of meditation. We also get a lovely cup of tea and sweet things served with a smile."

"We go on a lot of social trips too, such as to Knock and the IOSAS Centre, and I am looking forward to going to Portglenone, and also to an overnight trip to Knock and Westport."

Sally Kennedy, from the Long Tower, said: "I have been coming along since the start too and enjoy the company. It is a great place to come to meet and enjoy the company of others. There is always something different happening, and sometimes the school children come along and sing or dance for us. And we all enjoy Anne Marie."

Jane Feeney, of the Cathedral

Parish, has enjoyed the few times that she has attended the Club, remarking: "What makes it successful is that it is a living community. I really enjoyed making the St Brigid crosses today."

Ann Coyle, of Culmore, has only recently started coming to the Club: "My daughter, Fidelma has been attending for longer and she encouraged me to come along too, and I am loving it."

Ann's daughter, Fidelma Legge, is a good friend of Anne Marie's and readily accepted her invitation to come along to the Cathedral Club and has been thoroughly enjoying it. "I especially enjoyed making the St Brigid crosses," she said, adding: "I just learnt how to make them today and I had a couple of special people I wanted to make some for."

Ann Wilson, of St Eugene's, started attending the weekly club a few months after it first started: "Someone told me about it, so I came along to see what it was like. I enjoy the company and doing something different every week."

Today was my first time to make a St Brigid's Cross and it was a lovely experience."

Maura Mullan, who lives in Pennyburn but is originally from the Cathedral Parish, loves attending the Club whenever she can and particularly enjoyed the trips to Knock and the IOSAS Centre, and the Chapel of Ease at Fahan.

"This was my first time to make St Brigid's crosses and I loved it," she remarked, adding: "I made one for my mum, who is called Bridget, and one for my sister, Breidge."

Helena Coyle, Pennyburn, who received her first sacraments in St Eugene's, has been attending the club since it started on the Feast of St Brigid last year: "I came to make St Brigid's Crosses and I have been coming along since. I enjoy the craic, friendship and the support that you need if you wanted to talk to someone. It is that lovely sense of belonging somewhere."

"I enjoy all the different activities that we do and I think it is great that the young people of the parish come along on special occasions to join us. It gives them an insight into the more mature members of the parish."

So, if you feel like coming along to the Cathedral Hall on a Thursday morning, after 10 am Mass in St Eugene's, there is always a welcome on the mat, a kettle on the boil and home baking to die for, not to mention plenty of craic and a song or two thrown into the mix.





# Eangach

## Paidir Dhúchasach

An té níonn toil Mhic Dé ar neamh is grian shoilseach shamhraidh san: is cinnte ó Dhia a dhul ar neamh; is soitheach gléineach geal glan.

Is each uasal ar mhá réidh fear a chosnaíonn ríocht Dé mhóir; is carbad a fheictear faoi rí i mbeireann bua faoi ardghlóir.

Is grian a ghorann flaitheas naomh fear dár buíoch an Rí mór; is teampall sonasach saor; is scrín naofa um thaisce óir.

Is altóir ar a ndáiltear fion um a gcanann iomad cór; is cailís ghlan i bhfuil lionn, is fionndruine fionn, is ór.

## Iomann traidisiúnta Gaeilge-Laidine

Deus meus, adiuva me,  
tabhair dom do shearc, a Mhic dhil Dé;  
tabhair dom do shearc, a Mhic dhil Dé,  
Deus meus, adiuva me.

Tuum amorem sicut vis,  
tabhair dom go tréan, a déarfad arís;  
tabhair dom go tréan, a déarfad arís,  
tuum amorem sicut vis.

Quaero, pulso, peto a te,  
mo bheith ar neamh, a Mhic dhil Dé;  
mo bheith ar neamh, a Mhic dhil Dé,  
quaero, pulso, peto a te.

Domine, Domine, exaudi me,  
go raibh m'anam lán de d'ghrá, a Dhé;  
go raibh m'anam lán de d'ghrá, a Dhé,  
Deus meus, adiuva me.



Naomh Bríd

## An tSiúr Clare Crockett, Searbhónta Dé

I Mí na Samhna 2024, d'fhógair an Eaglais Chaitliceach an tSiúr Clare Crockett, bean óg ó Dhoire a fuair bás i gcrith talúin in Eacuadór ar an 16ú Aibreán 2016, ina Searbhónta Dé. Is é seo an chéad chéim i dtreo na Naofachta. Ciallaíonn an teideal “Searbhónta Dé” go bhféadfadh go dtabharfaí “Urramach” uirthi amach anseo agus “Beannaithe” ina dhiaidh sin. Cuireadh tús le cur chun cinn a cáis ar son beannaithe le searmanas i Madrid ar 12ú Eanáir 2025.

Rugadh an tSiúr Clare Crockett ar an 14ú Samhain, 1982 i nDoire. Ba í a mian nuair a bhí sí óg ná a bheith ina haisteoir Hollywood mór le rá. Thug a cara cuireadh di le dul ar saoire léi, saor in aisce, nuair a bhí sí 16 bliana d'aois. Chuir a cara in iúl di gur íoc duine éigin i ngan fhios di as an turas, mar go mbeadh an t-eispéireas speisialta céanna a bhí aige, ag duine óg éigin eile. Ghlac an tSiúr Clare leis an chuireadh mar go raibh sí ag súil leis an trá, leis an ghrian, agus le dul ar an drabhlás sa Spáinn. Áfach, oilithreach a bhí i gceist, i mbaile bheag sa Spáinn.

Fágadh a haisling ar leataobh i ndiaidh éispéireas pearsanta a bheith aici le Dia a d'athraigh a meon agus a hanam agus ní raibh aon dúil aici i rud ar bith eile seachas i gCríost ina dhiaidh sin.

Chuaigh sí isteach leis na Siúracha

Seirbhíse (Servant Sisters), i mBaile na Máthar (Home of the Mother) sa Róimh ar an 11ú Lúnasa 2001, nuair a bhí sí 18 bliain d'aois. Ghlac sí na chéad mhóideanna ar an 18ú Feabhra 2006 agus ghlac sí an t-ainm an tSiúr Clare Maria na Trionóide agus Chroí Mhuire. Ghlac sí a móideanna síoraí ar an 8ú Meán Fómhar 2010. Chaith sí a cuid ama i bpobail na Siúracha Seirbhíse i mBelmonte, in Cuenca na Spáinne, in Jacksonville, Florida sna Stait Aontaithe, in Valencia na Spáinne, in Guayaquil san Eacuadór, agus in Playa Prieta, Manabí san Eacuadór.

Ar an 16ú Aibreán, 2016, agus 33 bliain slánaithe aici, mar gheall ar chrith talún, thit foirgneamh ar an Siúr Clare agus bhuaill sí lena Tiarna sa deireadh. “Dá mbeadh orm dul le Dia, cén fáth a mbeadh eagla orm?” is iad siúd na focail dheireanacha a dúirt an tSiúr Clare.

Tá an tSiúr Kristen den bharúil go bhfuil sé de chuspóir ag an tSiúr Clare i ndiaidh a báis chun soiscéalaíocht a dhéanamh ní hamháin in Éirinn, ach fud fad an Domhain chomh maith. Dúirt an tSiúr Kristen go n-aithníonn na siúracha a chónaigh léi go raibh clú uirthi as a suáilc gaisciúla agus go mbíonn siad ag guí chun an tSiúr Cláre le go mbeadh na suáilc ceanna acu, i ndiaidh a báis.



Clare Crockett – Bean as Doire

## Aontaithe ag an Cháisc

An bhliain seo – 2025 – beidh rudaí suntasacha ar leith ag titim amach i dtaca le saol na hEaglaise. Tá a fhios againn gur Bliain Iubhaile atá ann – bliain an trócaire atá bunaithe, go pointe, ar an tSean Tiomna, agus ina bhfuil deiseanna speisialta ar fail do phobal Dé tarraingt ar thrócaire Chríost.

Tá rud ar leith eile ann a ‘sheasann amach’ fán bhliain seo, atá mar thoradh ar chomhtharlú seachas rud ar leith atá beartaithe ag duine ar bith. Den chéad uair le blianta fada, beidh Caitlicigh agus baill den eaglais Ortadocsach ag ceiliúradh na Cásca ar an dáta céanna, agus dáta traidisiúnta na Cásca sa dá eaglais ag teacht le chéile ar 20ú Aibreán.

Tráth, bhí an na hOrtadocsagha aontaithe leis an Eaglais Chaitliceach – bhí tragóid ann nuair thut eachtra amach ar a dtugtar an Sciosma Mór nó an Scoilt Mhór agus scaradh taobh amháin den eaglais ar shiúl ón Phápa. Fríd an stair, le míthuiscintí agus eile, ní dhearnadh an scoilt a leigheas, d'ainneoin roinnt iarrachtaí.

Tá iarmhairtí le feiceáil sa difear a tháinig ar an dóigh a dhéanann an dá thaobh an Cháisc a cheiliúradh. De réir an chreidimh, ní chaithfidh an Cháisc a bheith ar an fhiordháta

nuair a tharla an tAiséirí ar dtús. Féile inbhogtha atá inti. Ar dtús, an Eaglais aontaithe úsáid as Féilire Julius. Le himeacht ama, i ndiaidh na scoilte, rinne pápa amháin uasdátú agus bhí Féilire Ghréagóra in úsáid ag na Caitlicigh. Bhí na dátaí difriúil óna chéile ó shin.

Maidir leis an bhliain seo, dúirt an Pápa Proinsias: “Níl an Cháisc ann mar gheall ar a ndéanann muid ar ár gconlán féin nó trí fhéilire amháin nó ceann eile. Is ó Chríost a thagann sí”. Dúirt an Pápa gur mian leis go ndéanfaí traidisiún bun de seo ionas go mbeadh an Cháisc á cheiliúradh ag críostaithe ar fud an domhain le chéile. Léirigh sé oscailteacht, chomh maith, maidir le hathrú a dhéanamh ar chúrsaí a bhaineann leis an fhéilire leis seo a bhaint amach. An mbeidh seo amhlaidh sa todhchaí, cá bhfios?

B'fhéidir go bhfuil suntas leis seo agus an Iubhaile – tréimhse an trócaire – ar siúl in 2025. Nuair nach féidir linne, an cine daonna, deacrachtaí nó scoilteanna a shárú ar ár gconlán féin, thig le trócaire ón Tiarna é a dhéanamh. Ón Cháisc, tá a fhios againn go bhfuil an bua ag Íosa, lena bhás agus a aiséirí, ar pheaca agus ar rudaí a scarann clann Dé óna chéile.



An Pápa Proinsias & An Patrarc Ortadocsach Bartholomew Pope Francis and Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople greet a small crowd after delivering a blessing in Istanbul Nov. 30. (CNS photo/Paul Haring) Pope Francis announces 2025 Jubilee Year theme: 'Holy Year of Hope'





# Portglenone Prayer Group reminded of missionary call during 50th anniversary celebration



CELEBRATING the 50th anniversary Mass for Portglenone Charismatic Prayer Group on the Feast of St Francis Xavier, the Patron Saint of Catholic Missions, Fr Seamus Kelly called on those gathered to become missionary.

Fr Seamus, one of the founding members of the Prayer Group, was joined in the celebration of the Eucharist by Fr Kieran O'Doherty and Fr Paddy Doherty, PP Maghera, on Tuesday, December 3.

Recalling the first prayer meeting that he had attended while studying for the priesthood in Rome, Fr Seamus said: "A group of students got together and went into a room with a Bible, a candle and a bottle of wine, in case the Holy Spirit didn't turn up."

During his time in Rome, he read about the Charismatic Movement and when he finally got his first appointment some time after his ordination in April 1972, it was to the Bellaghy Parish, not far from the Cistercian Monastery in Portglenone.

Fr Seamus told those gathered that he met Fr Martin Dowley during a visit to the Monastery: "When I asked about prayer

meetings, Fr Martin said that he would like to set up one there, and I said that I would come. There were not many charismatic groups but we had a Legion of Mary group in Bellaghy, and two car loads of us went to a Charismatic Conference in the RDS, in Dublin. There was a lot of hand clapping and praying in tongues, and the ladies who had travelled to the conference with me thought they were all mad, and I thought that as well. But we had paid for the digs so we decided to stay for the rest of the Conference, and on the way home we prayed a very prayerful Rosary as everyone had had such a beautiful experience.

"I went to Fr Martin and told him that I had some ladies from the Legion of Mary who would be interested in attending a Charismatic Prayer Group, so we got started with Fr Martin, myself and a few people. We did the 'Life in the Spirit' seminars and the group took off from there.

"After I left Bellaghy, Fr Martin or Bridie Quinn, who became the group leader, would 'phone me every now and then to come and say Mass. I'm sorry to hear that Bridie is unwell and can't be here."

During his homily, Fr Seamus spoke about St Francis Xavier, explaining that he had been born in 1506, in Spain, into a wealthy family and was sent to university in Paris to study. He added: "St Ignatius of Loyola was there and they struck up a friendship. He tried to persuade him to become a priest, but Francis refused, saying that he wanted the secular life and went to teach at university for years. However, St Ignatius didn't give up on him and he was eventually ordained in his 30s.

"He was sent to India to preach for a number of years. He was an amazing preacher and writer of spiritual things. He also spent time in Japan and China, and everywhere he went to preach, he brought people into the Church. He took sick and died at the age of 46, and when his grave was opened years later, his body was found to be incorrupt. St Francis Xavier is the Patron Saint of Missionaries because of the number of people he brought to the faith."

## Gift of Tongues

Going on to comment on Jesus telling the 11 apostles to go out to the whole world and proclaim the good news, Fr Seamus said: "One of the gifts that the apostles received was the gift of tongues, which Jesus said was the sign of the Holy Spirit. So, don't be afraid to praise in tongues. What is happening in the heart is the most important. At the core of our faith is the Kingdom of Love, that is what we are being called to here and now.

"The invitation is to become missionary. How do we do that? Every day we are meeting people, so just say a little word to someone would they not think about going back to Mass, or to come to the

prayer meeting in Portglenone. By saying that little word to someone, the seed drops and moves around in someone's heart."

He continued: "Our Lady is appearing more now than any time in history and it is the same message of repentance. She is calling us to be prepared for the final coming of Christ. Our Lady is encouraging us as a mother to come back again to Jesus. It is important to take that moment with people and ask the Lord how we can be used. It might be to pray for someone, or speak to someone, or be reconciled with someone you have fallen out with for a long time. It is time for reconciliation, peace and coming to the Lord."

Fr Seamus left them with a simple prayer, 'Maranatha' ('Come, Lord Jesus'), saying: "This is a simple prayer that can be said easily at any time. Try and give a little time to the Lord in your life. Try to find a corner of the house that you can go to for peace and quiet to give time to Jesus in prayer. You will be amazed at how soon you come to find Jesus deep in your heart."

At the end of the ceremony, Prayer Group member, Anne O'Connell, standing in for Bridie Quinn, thanked everyone for coming and read a message from Bridie to the group: "As we begin a new year in hope, we look forward to a new chapter for the prayer group. We are pilgrims of hope in a confused world and we trust that the Holy Spirit will accompany us."

Afterwards, everyone was invited to the dining room for a cuppa and some tasty treats, including a delicious anniversary cake.

All are welcome to come along to the Tuesday night Prayer Group at Portglenone Monastery, which starts at 7 pm.





# Charismatic Movement makes people aware of God active in their lives – *Bridie Quinn*



Bridie Quinn, Swatragh

ONE of the committed members of Portglenone Charismatic Prayer Group is Bridie Quinn, of Swatragh, who was disappointed to miss the 50th anniversary Mass due to illness.

Speaking to 'The Net' afterwards, the retired teacher recalled how it had been through her late husband's ill health that she began coming along regularly to the weekly Tuesday night prayer time on the site of the Cistercian Monastery over 40 years ago, in 1980.

"My husband, Art, was very ill at that time with a chest problem," said Bridie, adding: "The doctors had given up on him and told me to prepare for the worst. That was on a Sunday, and on the Tuesday he was prayed for at the Portglenone Prayer Group and began to improve. This happened at the end of June, and by July 12 he was home from hospital, and lived for nearly 14 years after

that."

While she had known of the prayer group before this, Bridie hadn't thought of attending it. She remarked: "I knew of people going to this prayer group and thought they must be very good people, but I just let them go on. However, with Art's great recovery, I knew that I had to make more of an effort in my prayer life.

"So, after he came out of hospital, I started going to the prayer group from September 1980, and I have been going ever since. I can remember looking around at everyone and taking it all in, and thinking that they were very good people. They struck me as being quite special and very prayerful. I wasn't a bit prayerful, but a short time after I got used to it and committed to attending regularly."

The prayer group was started by Fr Seamus Kelly, who was ministering in Bellaghy at the time, the late Fr Martin Dowley from the Cistercian community at the monastery, and an Italian man who lived in Belfast, Frank Forte.

"Fr Martin was always there," Bridie fondly recalled, "Sometimes you would think he was sleeping, but he wasn't. He never missed a thing. He wanted it to continue even when it came to Christmas – he would say, keep it going and whoever comes, comes."

Bridie hadn't been attending the prayer group too long before Fr Martin drew her into the core

organizing group, which involved taking her turn in being responsible for organizing a speaker and topic of the talk at the prayer meeting.

## Speakers

"There was a different topic each week and we had different speakers. If you couldn't get a speaker, then you spoke yourself. I remember doing one on the sacraments," said Bridie, adding: "Some of the guest speakers were Thomas Carey, who had his own group in Randalstown, and Fr Jim McNally, who was very devoted to Our Lady. He had retired and was living in the area and came along every Tuesday night. As well as our own Fr Martin, we also had the late Fr Colm Rafferty and the late Fr Neal Carlin, a free spirit who came to speak often.

"Fr Jack McArdle also came often to speak. He said to us one time that we should do the Life in The Spirit seminars. We thought that the weather at the time wasn't great, but he said do them, as now is the time. We had various speakers for the seminars and they were very powerful."

However, numbers attending the prayer group have dwindled over the years, which wasn't helped with the onslaught of Covid-19.

Bridie remarked: "Some people have been coming for many years but we do get the odd new one. After Covid, we had a Mass to gauge interest. We had a big crowd and I asked them if they wanted to renew

the prayer group and keep going, and all said yes, but when it came to attending not many attended. We could have as few as 10 during winter months but more than 20 when the weather is favourable.

"Our prayer is that more people will join, particularly those in their 30s, which seems to be the age when people realise that they need God. People who come to the Life in The Spirit seminars tend to come back, so hopefully that will happen when we next have the seminars.

"Bro Vianney has taken on the leadership of the group and our hope is that he will be stationed at Portglenone when he is ordained in the summer."

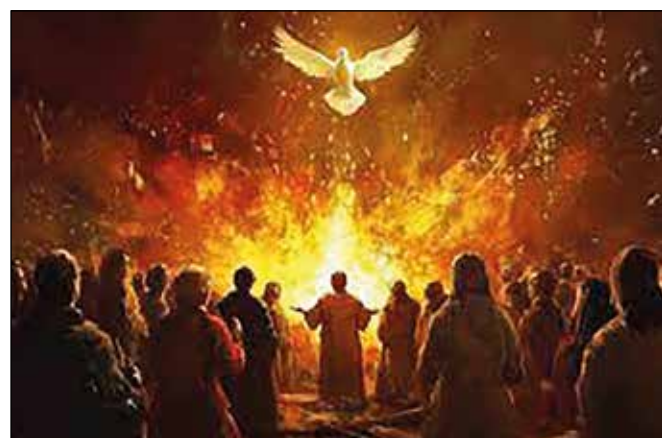
Sharing how the charismatic prayer meetings had helped her faith life, Bridie said: "I became very aware of the power of God in my life. Even in my recent illness, it is a comfort to know that God is always with me. People talk a lot about God, but do they ever focus on what it means to have Him in their life. I think that is one thing that the charismatic movement does – it makes people aware of God active in their lives. And it makes you very attentive to your daily prayer and daily Mass, if you can get to it."

As well as the weekly Tuesday prayer group gatherings at 7 pm, Mass is celebrated on the first Tuesday of each month, at 7 pm in the Oratory beside the prayer room, by a Cistercian priest. All are very welcome to attend.



## Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

# Listen more to the "power from on high" by *Fr Eamonn Kelly*



JESUS still speaks today. He still communicates with his people. Through the Holy Spirit, many people realise how close God is and that the Kingdom of God is within the soul of every man, woman and child. For others, the world is too busy, too noisy, too boisterous and blaring to hear the whisper of the living Spirit of God. Thankfully, many Christians are aware of the stories of the miracles and cures that Jesus did as well as the basic outline of His life here on the earth. Yet, there are instructions that Jesus gave and these receive less attention. For a moment, let

us look at one of these. In Luke 24:49, Jesus says: "And now I am sending to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high."

This is specific. It is direct. There can be no haziness. The ministry of Jesus is to continue after He returns to the Father. This ministry is to be carried out by the disciples. Therefore, the disciples must know the ministry and how to carry it out. As it is not their own ministry but the ministry of Jesus, He gives them the method of knowing what Jesus wants

them to do. This 'method' is the power from on high, the Holy Spirit. If the disciple does not follow the instruction of Jesus, gradually, even with good heart and intention, that disciple will preach a kingdom not rooted enough in Jesus. The wheel does not have to be reinvented. Jesus gives us the ability and power to proclaim the truth with love, the true Kingdom of God.

The Spirit is very alive and calls the disciple to be alive with the truth. As it is a living truth, it remains fresh, inspiring and stirring souls to fresh commitment, deeper understanding and ever-growing sincerity. None of us can claim to know how to promote the Kingdom of God in the best way in every situation. So, we need to stay in contact with the breath of Christ through his Spirit that is still calling humanity to listen to the Word of God, to respond to the invitation to love and to let life be the great adventure it is meant to be. A little story may help to illustrate.

Every time I speak at Mass, I try to tell something about the

message of Jesus. Every homily, every talk must be about the One who gave His life to gain our redemption. One Sunday morning, I proclaimed the Gospel at Mass and then got the homily I had prepared the evening before. I was ready to begin. As the people settled in their seats and I looked down, I got a wee notion or a prompting, a thought in my head. The notion was 'speak to the woman in the red coat.' There was a woman about six or seven seats down and she had a lovely, noticeable red coat on. I began to speak 'to her' and, therefore, to all about every day is a new day, every moment is a new moment.

## Listening

The words came quite easily about just because we have made a mess of yesterday, we do not have to repeat that mess today or tomorrow. I was conscious that these sentiments were a long way from my homily notes about not over-reacting to things that are often proclaimed in the media. I looked at the congregation and felt that they were truly

listening as I heard myself speak about possibility, potential, the goodness of the human heart and the opportunities that we now have with our own personal experience. When I finished speaking, I was very conscious of hoping that I had done the right thing, acting on that notion that had come into my head. I never met the "woman in the red coat," I think she may have been a visitor but I am not sure. I finished Mass and no one mentioned my words at all.

However, six months after this, a man came to see me. He spoke about one of the Masses that I had celebrated. As he spoke, I knew that he was speaking about the Mass I have just related about. The man told me that his brother was at my Mass and, on returning home, told him about my words suggesting that there was no need to repeat the mess. The brother spoke about the potential we have within. The man in front of me said "as my brother told me about your words, I realised how much better life could be without alcohol and now I am sober and enjoying the fresh air, the new

beginning and the opportunities that are in life."

As he spoke, I was massively conscious of the notion "speak to the woman in the red coat" and realised that God had used this notion to breathe new life into this man in front of me who had not even been at the Mass. As we finished our conversation, he shook my hand (and nearly broke three fingers!) and thanked me for my priesthood, my words and my commitment. I did not cry in front of him but, when I closed the door, I did, for none of this was my doing, none of this was my planning, none of this was within my ability and I knew that I must listen more to the "power from on high"

It is important not to put a limit on God. It is important to try and be faithful to promoting the Kingdom of God as Jesus promoted. And it is important to remember where any success will come from. "And now I am sending to you what the Father has promised. Stay in the city then, until you are clothed with the power from on high."



*Pilgrims attending Derry Eucharistic Procession on Feast of St Brigid encouraged to...*

# Be Jesus' missionaries...a living testimony to others who do not know Him – Fr Antonio CFR

*"All my life You have been faithful, all my life You have been so, so good, with every breath that I am able, I will sing of the goodness of God." ('Goodness of God' – by Bethel Music and Jenn Johnson)*

FROM beginning to end, the Eucharistic Procession on the Feast of St Brigid from St Columba's Church, Long Tower, through the City Walls to Guildhall Square, and back again via the Bogside, was a reverent, prayerful walk with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Many of the over 4,000 pilgrims carried St Brigid's Crosses, flowers, Rosary beads, religious icons, posters or flags, as they publicly proclaimed their belief in the goodness of God, and those are the words that they heard filling the air of Long Tower chapel as they silently filled the pews on returning with the Eucharistic Procession, for some time in Adoration of the Lord in the Monstrance on the altar, followed by Benediction.

Maria Doherty, Buncrana, gave a beautiful rendition of the 'Goodness of God' song, written by Bethel Music and Jenn Johnson, as the large congregation reverently rested in the presence of Jesus, reflecting on the many graces that had surely flowed out not only on them but on all who witnessed the large Eucharistic Procession make its way through the City Centre. Blessed with great stamina as well as a beautiful singing voice, Maria and her father, Hugh P, helped set the spiritual tone that pervaded throughout the afternoon of prayer on the streets of Derry and in the historic Long Tower House of God, with their music ministry very much part of the whole occasion.

As well as all the practical preparations for the 'Come Follow Me' Eucharistic Procession, a powerful number of prayers were also offered in the lead up to it, including 24-hours of Adoration in the Carmelite Monastery, at Termonbacca, and the 12-noon praying of the Rosary in Guildhall Square, led by the City's Men's

Rosary Group.

The Guildhall Square became the focus of prayer again during the Procession, with the large crowd kneeling down in Adoration of Jesus in the Monstrance on the temporary altar, led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal. Many hearts were also touched by the praying of the Rosary by members of the Carnhill and Magherafelt Children's Rosary Groups.

Organised by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal and a dedicated team of volunteers, the time of prayerful witness in honour of God included amongst those who took part: Fr Gerard Mongan and Fr Stephen Ward, of the Long Tower; Fr Michael Spain OCD Termonbacca; Home of the Mother Servant Sisters, Crossroads, Killygordon; and Benedictine Monks of Perpetual Adoration from Silverstream Priory, Stamullen, Co Meath.

The overwhelming response to the call to join in the 'Come Follow Me' Eucharistic Procession in person in Derry was a fruit of the growing renewal of faith not only in the Diocese of Derry, but across the island of Ireland and well beyond.

In unison with the Maiden Derry, Eucharistic Processions also took place in many other locations, including: St Patrick's Church, Claudy; Lurgan in Co Armagh; Clondalkin in Dublin; Medjugorje; Perth in Western Australia; Malawi in Africa; New Mexico and New York, in America; and at the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe, in Mexico.

In addition, Adoration and prayers were offered from a large number of places, including: Termonbacca and Abbey House, in Derry; Cookstown; Down; Galway; Mayo; Sligo; Wexford; Limerick; Clare; Cork; Armagh; Dublin;



Scotland; America; Canada; Rome; France; Australia; the Philippines; Portugal; Africa; and England, making it a global event.

Reflecting on the occasion afterwards, Fr Antonio Maria Diez de Medina told 'The Net':

"It was amazing! Not until we began the Eucharistic procession and proceeded outside of the church, was I struck by how many other people were there; it was as if we were walking in the midst of a sea of humanity, with two walls of people on either side as our Eucharistic Lord led the way.

## Solidarity

"I give thanks to our Almighty Father in Heaven for holding back the rain and giving us good weather on the day. I also thank our core team, who gave of themselves in remarkable ways in the weeks leading up to the procession, using their gifts, talents and charisms to promote the Eucharistic procession on the digital continent and beyond, and the fire was being lit! This is evidenced by 70 or more places in Ireland, Medjugorje, United States, and other parts of the world where a Eucharistic procession, Adoration, or Mass took place in solidarity with wee Derry.

"It went really well, and I also give thanks to Maria and Hugh Doherty, a wonderful father-daughter band who blessed us with their music and song during the procession itself and the subsequent Mass for the Feast of St Brigid. This is the beginning, there is more to come. Jesus is on the move and He is bringing His Mama Mary, and ourselves, with Him. The little oakgrove of Derry is walking with the Eucharistic Lord."

In his homily during the St Brigid Feast Day Mass, Fr Antonio

encouraged those gathered to "bring the Eucharistic fire you have received here with you" and to "carry the joyful shout of Sr Clare Crockett that you have received here, in Derry, back to your families. Thank God for the fire that He has brought, and for what He is doing within your hearts here and around the world. When we spend time with the Lord, transformation comes."

He added: "There are new things that the Lord is doing. New communities come about through time spent with Jesus. His fire is lit in you and me. We are called to be saints. We are not bound by the mistakes we have made. Be Jesus' missionaries...His disciples. Proclaim what you have experienced today with your lips and your whole being so that you become a living testimony to others, because there are people who don't know Jesus."

The Procession received the blessing of Bishop Donal, who had been unable to attend due to another commitment but did what he could to encourage people to support it. Commenting on its great success, he told 'The Net': "These last months have had special blessings for the faithful of the Diocese. Following on the great time of prayer around the visit of St Bernadette's relics, we had the Eucharistic Procession in Galliagh on the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe. January brought the opening of Sr Clare Crockett's Cause and the start of the 33 Days of Child Consecration to Jesus through Mary. The response to both of those pointed to a deep hunger among many people for divine hope and healing.

"And on February 1, Derry was at the centre of international attention





*continued from page 20*

as some 4,000 people walked behind the Blessed Sacrament through the city centre in a great display of devotion and faith. Many people joined the initiative at a suitable time in their own parish or country.

“Synodality is not about making our plans. It is about looking where God’s grace is active through the Holy Spirit. There is a phrase repeated in the Book of the Apocalypse – ‘Listen to what the Spirit is saying to the church’ (Rev 3:22). In Derry, I hear a call to become missionary in our time and place – and never to hide our light under a tub! (Matthew 5:15)”

Long Tower administrator, Fr Gerard Mongan described the occasion as “a truly beautiful and uplifting experience,” especially to see so many young people

in attendance. He also found it encouraging to hear accents from all over Ireland and “not just the usual local Derry, Donegal and Tyrone voices.”

Delighted that the Long Tower, an ancient place of pilgrimage, had once again become a place of pilgrimage on the Feast of St Brigid, Fr Gerard remarked: “We are celebrating 1500 years since her death in 525, and of continuous Christian activity on or near this sacred site.

“We believe the procession of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament will bring much hope and healing to all who are hurting in our city, country and throughout the world. Thank you to all who attended, in what was a wonderful turnout, not only inside St Columba’s Church, but the colourful procession that made its way through our city in celebration of St Brigid.”



*Brought back to practicing his faith through the witness and intercession of St Pio, Derry man, Barry Mallett shares faith story that is fueling his enthusiasm for...*

## Building on grace-filled Eucharistic Procession through the youth



Barry Mallett, Three Patrons Parish.

THE amazing response to the Eucharistic Procession through Derry City Centre on the Feast of St Brigid made all the hard work behind the scenes, in the lead up to it, worthwhile for the core committee headed up by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal.

The talents of each member of the team came to the fore and bore fruit in different ways. Amongst them was Barry Mallett, of Three Patrons Parish, who came to discover the power of Eucharistic Adoration through reading about Padre Pio and used his experience of giving talks promoting the Saint as a powerful intercessor to help promote the Eucharistic Procession far and wide.

As well as being the voice in a very impactful recording urging people to come to Derry to be part of the procession, which was shared countless times on social media, the 54-year-old financial advisor also gave interviews on Christian YouTube channels, including Uniquely Mary with Alvaro, Texas, Mother of Refuge of the End Times with Ron, and Elijah’s Cloak with Rob. He did an interview with Jill from the US National Cenacle of the Flame of Love, and Radio Maria too. So impressed were they with Barry’s enthusiastic sharing of the growing renewal of the Catholic faith not just in

Derry but throughout the island of Ireland, and the belief that from this will come the spark to fire renewal in other parts of the world, reflecting the missionary efforts of Irish religious down the generations, that some of them made the journey to Derry to personally experience and report on the Eucharistic Procession.

Feeling blessed to have been able to play a part in the organizing of such a grace-filled occasion for his home city, Barry shared his experience with ‘The Net’, reflecting as well on his own faith journey, which has led to him researching and travelling to Marian Shrines around the world over the past 10 years, including Garabandal, Guadalupe, La Salette, Lourdes, Fatima, Akita, and, of course, Knock.

The third eldest in a family of 11 born to Barry and Mary Mallett, he is grateful for the passing on of the Catholic faith down the generations of his family and for the strong faith of his mother: “I remember my mother regularly taking the Legion of Mary statue of Our Lady into our home and us saying the Rosary as a family, on our knees.”

### Relic

“Like most, I strayed from practicing my faith when I was about 17 years old, though I always believed,” said Barry, “but it was just a lazy phase. I came back to practicing my faith when I was about 38 years old and had started taking a Padre Pio relic out to people.

“My mother’s best friend, Anne Mulrine is the lady who had the miracle healing through a Padre Pio relic that contributed to his canonization. Because I knew her, I was asked by people if I could get them the relic, which I did, and I have just kept on doing this because I kept seeing miracles and conversions. So, this played a massive part in my

own conversion. It reinforced my faith, and the feeling of being able to help people who were desperate for help was so comforting.”

Barry went on to give the example of the healing of a 66-year-old man who had stage three bowel cancer: “I brought the Padre Pio relic to him, with the prayers to say, and advised him to go to Confession and put it all in God’s hands. He did this. He went into hospital on Padre Pio’s birthday, May 25, 2023, to have his stomach completely removed and a bag attached for the rest of his life, as best possible outcome. On the day he went in, the consultant told him that he would have to discharge him, saying: ‘There will be no bag or operation. We cannot find any trace of cancer in your bowel.’

“Another recent example is that of a 52-year-old woman, who was told by her consultant that she would never walk again. She was bed-ridden, having lost all power from her waist to her toes about one-and-a-half years ago. After I visited her with the St Pio mitt and the prayers and advised her to go to Confession, which she did within 24 hours, the next morning she moved her toes to the disbelief of the doctors. She was then released from hospital, still bed-ridden. I told her what prayers to say for the next 12 days and on the 12th day, which was the Feast Day of the Sacred Heart, she got out of the bed and walked.”

### Sacramental life

Saying that Anne Mulrine was still the custodian of the Padre Pio mitt, which he gets from her when someone asks him for it for a blessing, Barry continued: “I have been doing this now for about 10 years and I find it so humbling and fulfilling. I am called upon very regularly. Being self-employed gives me great flexibility, enabling me to take

the glove to people and to also lead a more sacramental life in going to Mass and Adoration every day, which has completely changed my life.

“I have also read about Padre Pio and give Novena talks about him. This has changed my life too, especially reading about his devotion to Confession, that was a big one for me. He heard confessions sometimes 12 or 14 times a day, and that made me think why did he do that? Reading about his life and what he said about the importance of staying in a state of grace by going regularly to confession, really struck me. Before I came back to practicing my faith, I hadn’t been to Confession in 20 years and now I try to go regularly. I find that this has led me into more deeply understanding the importance and benefits of regular confession.”

“This is something that I will continue to do, and hopefully my children will continue to do as well,” added the father of three.

Barry’s devotion to Eucharistic Adoration led to him organising a period of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in St Joseph’s Church, Galliagh, back in November, to mark the Feast of Christ The King, during which there was an opportunity to go to Confession. Then, following the Eucharistic Procession in the Galliagh area on December 12, the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, Fr Antonio CFR asked if he would join the core committee for the organization of the ‘Come Follow Me’ Eucharistic Procession.

“Everyone on the committee did as much as they could to promote it, advertising it everywhere we could think of,” remarked Barry, saying: “I was asked to do a few YouTube interviews and Radio Maria asked to interview me, and I also went around the second-

level schools in and around Derry City, as we really wanted school children to the fore in the procession. Thankfully, they all loved the idea and the students came in their school uniforms to take part.

“We also had the Children’s Rosary involved and Children of the Eucharist were in the procession too. My daughter is involved in the St Brigid’s Carnhill Children’s Rosary Group and they led the Rosary at the Guildhall. It was so beautiful it would make you cry. I believe that this generation of children are going to convert their parents, they are going to bring Jesus back into the home.”

### Globe

All the promotion by Fr Antonio, Barry and a few others, including radio and YouTube interviews that went around the globe to promote the Eucharistic Procession, attracted a great response, not only in bringing 5,000 people together for the Derry Procession but also inspiring people in over 70 parishes, in six continents, around the world to either hold their own Eucharistic Procession in unison with Derry or have a period of Eucharistic Adoration.

Overwhelmed by the response, Barry said: “First of all, the Procession was just being organised in Derry, and then it was announced that Medjugorje was also holding one simultaneously. From that, it spread around the world like wild-fire, including Australia, the Philippines, Canada, as well as many places in America and Europe. The one in Perth was organised by Derry girl, Emma Gallagher, and it attracted 1,000 people.”

Barry took the opportunity to pay tribute to the leadership and enthusiasm of Bishop Donal in helping to promote the Eucharistic Procession, and to Fr Antonio and his fellow friars, and

other members of the organising committee for their “faith and courage”, as well as everyone else who helped in any way “to make this world-wide Eucharistic Procession the success that it was.”

He added: “The whole aim was to bring the Eucharistic Lord into the streets to encourage people to have a personal relationship with Him. About 600 took part in last year’s Eucharistic Procession, so we would have been happy with 500-1,000, but it looks like Heaven wanted more, just like the multiplication of loaves. People came from all over Ireland as well as Scotland, England, Portugal and America to join us in Derry.

“The feedback has been phenomenal. All glory to God. The joy and hope that people have received through this is so beautiful. The impact will hopefully be felt from generation to generation. Everybody is hoping that it will happen again next year. Will it?...To be continued...”

In the meantime, Barry and his friend, Anthony Hogan are being moved to undertake another mission: “We are hoping to contact all the local schools in an effort to increase interest in the local Children’s Rosary, and also to distribute Miraculous Medals and St Benedict Medals to them. We hope to build on the special graces of the Eucharistic Procession through the youth.”

Barry is also involved in a ‘Come and See’ Eucharistic Procession on the eve of St Patrick’s Day in Athlone, to which Children’s Rosary Groups throughout Ireland are invited to come along and, once again, lead the praying of the Rosary. This procession on Sunday, March 16, starts at 3 pm from St Mary’s Church, Athlone, and ends with Benediction at 5 pm and Mass at 6 pm, with opportunities for Confession.



*Fr Liam Donnelly's nephews and nieces share cherished memories of their uncle...*

## A priest with great love for family and desire to serve as long as he could



THE late Fr Liam Donnelly is greatly missed by many, especially his family, as revealed in the following tributes to him by his nieces and nephews some four months after his sudden passing on October 26, 2024.

His namesake, Liam Donnelly described Fr Liam as “an inspiration,” recalling his uncle’s response when asked during the final year of his life why he was working so hard in retirement: “I am doing it for the people.”

“He wanted to keep going for as long as he could for the people and was on the road most days to say Mass somewhere. He celebrated Mass in Bellaghy on the Sunday and, unfortunately, took ill on the Tuesday,” said Liam, adding: “As he said himself at the funeral of an elderly person who had died suddenly, a person’s life is like a spool of thread, running out with the last thread coming off the spool.

“His own funeral was a powerful tribute to a very holy man, who put faith in very simple terms. He didn’t say much, but whatever he did say meant a lot.”

Reflecting fondly on some of the conversations they had over the years, Liam said: “I enjoyed talking to him about his school days at St Columb’s in Derry, where he shared a dormitory with his classmate, Seamus Heaney, and about his time at Maynooth, where I enjoyed going on a few trips with him.

“He was very interested in history, especially the penal days and the church, and could recall stories in photographic detail. He always had great respect for what the people went through for the Irish faith, and we had a shared interest in graveyards, old churches and Mass Rocks.”

Liam went on to share a story involving the marble altar in the Convent Chapel in Buncrana, where Fr Liam was ordained by Bishop Neil Farren, whose nephew was ordained the same day with him: “After the Convent Chapel closed, the altar there was installed in St Mary’s Church,

Coolcalm, Desertmartin, when it was refurbished in 2014. I was working there as a contractor on the refurbishment and was asked to help re-assemble the marble altar.

“It was the same one that was in the Convent on Fr Liam’s ordination day and he was very pleased that it was re-used in Desertmartin chapel, and that I was involved in re-assembling it some 50 years later, which was very special for me too. It was like a continuation of the faith. A short time later, he was very happy to be asked to say Mass there.”

He continued: “When he moved back to Drumlamph, Fr Liam was available to help out in a lot of parishes, including Bellaghy, Greenlough, Kilrea, Magherafelt, Ballinascreen, and others besides, I’m sure. He was an inspiration how he discreetly helped so many people in his lifetime and how much he was respected. Caring for people in sickness was a big part of his life. He was a priest for the people. When you mention his name, people smile because he always had a wee smile for people.”

Greatly interested and involved in the renovation of Lavey Church, sharing his vast historical knowledge of his home Parish, Liam found it fitting that his uncle was buried just across from the doorway of the chapel: “People can stop to pray for him and he will be praying for us all too.”

### Unwavering love

Rory Donnelly described his uncle as having “an unwavering love for God, a love of his vocation, a love of his family and a love of his home parish of Lavey.”

He added: “For many locally, my Uncle Fr Liam was known as ‘wee’ Fr Donnelly. Nothing could be further from the truth, as truly he was the cornerstone of our family and the focal point from where we all took direction in leading our lives with faith.

“Although my father was to be sick for many years and die when I was 13 years of age, I vividly remember his love and admiration

for his brother, Liam. I noted that these exact sentiments were shared by all his brothers and sisters. As I matured, I could fully understand and also share this love and admiration. I believe that all of us related to Uncle Fr Liam shared these sentiments.

“In visiting my grandmother, you could not help but notice a photograph of him on his ordination day, his beaming smile filling the room. His love for God was a reflection of my grandparents’ unwavering faith. I am sure in those times, life for all was hard, however, that example of unwavering faith was firmly passed from one generation to the next and now to the current generation.”

“Whilst balancing the challenges of priesthood,” continued Rory, “He regularly returned home to take his elderly mother to visit for a few hours with her youngest daughter, Martina, who was unfortunately stricken with multiple sclerosis from a young age and confined to a wheelchair for most of her life. Unable to look after herself, she was always reliant on the help of others. I am sure this small gesture was of great solace to my grandmother and aunt, for those few hours they were able to spend together.”

He went on to recall: “For many children, the month of September meant the end of the long, last days of summer and return to school, but for the Donnelly family it meant that Uncle Fr Liam would be returning to his home in Drumlamph, Lavey, for his summer holidays. This meant two things to us children. One, Uncle Fr Liam would take his mother and sisters, Martina and Marie, for a week’s holiday in Portstewart. To there, all his nieces and nephews would visit, each of us knowing that we would be treated to a day at Barry’s Amusements and the infamous Ghost Train, and, thereafter, to Morelli’s for ice-cream. Even as we mourned Uncle Fr Liam’s death, each one of his nephews and nieces fondly remembered this treat.

“The second thing that this September holiday would mean was that we, as a family of Donnellys and Fullans, would regularly gather as a family to celebrate Mass in my granny’s house. After his retirement, Uncle Fr Liam would regularly celebrate Mass in my home parish of Ballyscullion. On these occasions, my mind always returned to those glorious times of the entire family gathered on those occasions in September at my granny’s. I often chuckled watching Uncle Fr Liam, as he left the altar at the conclusion of Mass, gently waving to acknowledge those in the congregation he had known for many years. I reflected that surely that is truly one of the essences of coming together in the church for Mass, as we are ultimately one family with God.”

He added: “As an adult, I admired my Uncle Fr Liam’s humility and willingness to put others before

himself. When I visited, I often found him simply sitting in his favourite chair, bought by his housekeeper Orla, reading his breviary. I always enjoyed our chats and time together. As I celebrated my 50th birthday with my family, Uncle Fr Liam was invited and attended this occasion, something that, due to his commitments, he had never been able to do before. At the conclusion of the event, he apologised to me for not bringing a gift but assured me that he would say Mass for me the following morning. Surely this was the greatest birthday gift I had ever received.

“I am blessed that he baptised all of my children and that they had a chance to meet and know him. Recently, when my daughter passed her driving test, her first thoughts were to immediately visit with Uncle Fr Liam, to personally thank him for his prayers and ask for his blessings.

“My final lesson from my Uncle Fr Liam came at the time of his death, when I witnessed the certainty of his faith. As a family, we returned Uncle Fr Liam to St Mary’s Church, Lavey. A final reflection of his love of the place and the people there.”

### Dedicated

For Catherine Donnelly, Fr Liam “was a dedicated, wise and caring uncle, who was loved dearly by all his nieces and nephews.”

“He enjoyed family time immensely and a good joke,” recalled Catherine, adding: “He always took interest in our lives as well as our children’s. He took us for days out when we were children and visited very often. It was great when he returned to Drumlamph in his later years, as we got to see him more often. He was happy and content and never in a bad mood. We all miss him and find it hard to believe that he has gone.”

A stand-out memory for Laura Donnelly is “Mass in granny’s always being part of weekends when he was at home. We all knelt behind him and often had a few giggles, as so many cousins were gathered together. He loved having us all gather around him in Drumlamph. Tea and chats after Mass were about local Gaelic matches, and he particularly particular had an interest in Bellaghy and Lavey.

“He was always fond of a game of chess with our dads, when we were younger, and we have fond memories of our trips to Barry’s with Fr Liam, where no trip was complete without the ghost train and a Morrelli’s ice-cream. As we got older and could drive, he would enlist us as his extra driver many times when he golfed, and we got to drive his car from Portstewart Golf Club into town for granny, Marie and Martina to sit at the sea and then head for coffee and ice-cream. I have lots of great memories.”

Caroline Donnelly expressed gratitude for her uncle’s prayers for all the family, and recalled his keen interest in what everyone was doing, and especially if the children





# Fr Liam's faith clearly seen in his joy while celebrating Mass

THE high esteem with which the late Fr Liam Donnelly was held was evident in the packed St Mary's Church, Lavey, for his Requiem Mass on Wednesday, October 30, with many from other faith traditions amongst the congregation. The main celebrant of the Mass was Bishop Donal, who was joined on the altar by Fr Eamon Graham PP Lavey, Fr Paul McCafferty, Fr Patrick Lagan and Fr Liam's old school friend, Fr Oliver Crilly, who was the homilist.

Fr Oliver spoke about how he and Fr Liam had been two of "six contemporary students for the priesthood in the one country parish in South Derry," raising a laugh when he joked: "No wonder they used to say that Lavey was famous for the three Ps — priests, plants, and póitín."

Recalling having sat beside Liam Donnelly in Rocktown School, he remarked: "He was always humble, and made jokes at his own expense about not being very academic, but he got the 11 Plus and went on to St Columb's College."

Leading the way to St Columb's and then Maynooth, ahead of the other three who entered its seminary, including Fr Oliver, Fr Liam was ordained on June 21, 1964, and reached the 60th anniversary of his priesthood last year. Loving the "whole life of a priest", he first served as curate in Coleraine (1965-1970), then Glendermott (1970-1977), Pennyburn (1977), Ballyscullion

(1977-1981), and Ballykelly (1981-1989), before being appointed as parish priest of Strathfoyle (1989-1994) and then Errigal (1994-2008). His last appointment was as curate again in Ballykelly, from 2008 until his retirement in 2014.

While a curate in the Waterside, Fr Liam was also Chaplain to the American Navy base and Hospital Chaplain, ministering there at the time of Bloody Sunday. "Liam was a good hospital chaplain," said Fr Oliver, adding: "He was hard-working, caring, and compassionate. He had many other important gifts. There's a word in Irish - siosmaid - it means practical wisdom. Liam had it. Then there's what Pope Francis calls 'heart'. In his new encyclical Pope Francis writes: 'The heart is the locus of sincerity, where deceit and disguise have no place. It usually indicates our true intentions, what we really think, believe, and desire, the 'secrets' that we tell no-one. It is the part of us that is neither appearance or illusion, but is instead authentic, real — entirely 'who we are' (Dilexit Nos)."

"Liam also had the gift of empathy/listening - wanting to hear what is important to you, and the gift of faith. When I sat back and looked at these gifts that Liam had, I realised that I had written down some essential criteria for the role of a pastoral priest. God in His providence had given Liam Donnelly the gifts that he would need as a priest of the Derry

Diocese. Then, in the famous words of St Thomas Aquinas, Liam was 'providentiae particeps' - he became a participant in God's providence through responding to God's call."

**Lavey man**

Going on to describe Fr Liam as a true Lavey man, Fr Oliver referred to his love of football, recalling: "In our time in Maynooth, there were 600 students for the priesthood. The place was full of county players, both in hurling and football. Liam could hold his own. He wasn't very tall, but he was very sturdy - they used to say he had a low centre of gravity. When a taller player thought he could shoulder Liam off the ball, Liam placed one leg firmly on the ground like a prop at the side of a cornstack, and leaned into the tackle. The big man just bounced off him!"

With regards to Fr Liam's gift of faith, Fr Oliver spoke about how it had pervaded his life: "It was seen in his joy in celebrating Mass, even in retirement. He was loved not only in Lavey, but in Greenlough and Ballyscullion, and in all the parishes and roles in which he served."

He continued: "When a young priest is ordained, part of the ceremony is the anointing of the hands with a generous quantity of the holy oil. His hands are then bound together with a strip of white linen cloth, which soaks up the excess oil. The cloth is taken off for the celebration of the Mass, and traditionally the cloth is presented to the young priest's

mother. Before he died, Fr Liam explained to his nephew that his mother had kept the strip of linen cloth carefully all her life. When she died, Fr Liam kept it in a safe place and knew exactly where it was. He asked that it be bound around his wrist in his coffin. It remains with him as a symbol of two things: his relationship with his family - if it was important to his mother it was important to him; and secondly, what his priesthood meant to him - his reverence for the sacred trust given to him by God for the service of his people."

Aged 85 when he died, Fr Liam is survived by his sister, Philomena Fullan. He and his twin sister, Marie, had been the eldest of the children born to Frank and Minnie Donnelly, of Drumlamph, that also included Henry, Francis, Jim and Martina.

Joe McGurk, a close friend of Fr Liam's, appreciated the opportunity at the Requiem Mass to pay tribute to him, during which he described him as "a remarkable man whose life exemplified humility, service, and profound wisdom," and pointed out that he "was not one to seek the spotlight or accolades; rather, he dedicated himself quietly to the needs of others."

Another of many tributes to the much-loved pastor noted that he will be remembered "for his lively sense of humour, short but meaningful homilies, friendly waves, and charming smile."



Fr Liam, top left, with his siblings, Henry and Francis, and, front l-r, Marie, Jim and Philomena.



During his time as curate in Bellaghy, Fr Liam met Pope John Paul II in Rome around 1981, along with Fr Michael Flanagan, who was Bellaghy PP.

*continued from page 22*

were involved in GAA. He was particularly proud of his great-nephew, Eoin, who plays hurling for Lavey.

"We were so blessed that he baptised us all, married our parents and all of us," said Caroline, recalling: "At every christening, he was so proud and reminded us what number he was at now!"

Frank Donnelly remembered his uncle as "a keen and very strong chess player, with the skill of an 1800-rated competitor."

"His favourite opening was the

Queen's Gambit," recalled Frank, "and he had a unique style that almost resembled draughts - always thinking several moves ahead. Against less experienced players, he enjoyed going for a fast checkmate, often setting up the infamous Fool's Mate when the opportunity arose. A sharp mind and a sharp game, he was always a few steps ahead on the board."

Holding his late uncle up as a role model for the family, Adrian Fullan commented: "I thought he always maintained his dignity, however trying the circumstances. He will be sorely missed."

Sharing fond memories of Fr Liam's return to Drumlamph on September 1, 2014, Patrick Donnelly recalled: "He was very content to be back home. He loved walking around Drumlamph Lane, talking to the neighbours and family about his childhood and telling stories about his brothers and sisters and what they got up to. In telling his stories, you could see the joy in his face and how the memories made him laugh heartily. He also enjoyed the dogs down the road, visiting them daily and providing endless amounts of treats."

"He loved his routine of Mass first thing in the morning and then to Castledawson or Guladuff for the 'Irish News'. You could set your watch by him leaving the house. He talked fondly of his nieces, nephews, grand-nieces and nephews, and enjoyed regular family gatherings, which he would talk about for weeks beforehand."

"He is a truly missed member of the family and community of Drumlamph Lane, where everyone knew his wee car up and down the road, and the beep of the horn as he smiled on his way past is a great memory."

## Pope's monthly intention

*The Holy Father has asked for prayer during February for:*

**Vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life:**  
Let us pray that the ecclesial community might welcome the desires and doubts of those young people who feel a call to serve Christ's mission in the priesthood and religious life.

**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:**  
All priests (Feb 1st)  
All priests (2nd)

- Fr Michael Doherty (3rd)
- Fr Patrick Doherty (4th)
- Mgr Andrew Dolan (5th)
- Fr Brian Donnelly (6th)
- Mgr Joseph Donnelly (7th)
- All priests (8th)
- All priests (9th)
- All priests (10th)
- All priests (11th)
- Fr Malachy Gallagher (12th)
- Fr Jack Farrell (13th)
- Fr Paul Fraser (14th)
- Fr John Farren (15th)
- Fr Neil Farren (16th)
- Fr Paul Farren (17th)
- All priests (18th)
- Fr John Forbes (19th)
- Fr Edward Gallagher (20th)
- Fr Dermot Harkin (21st)
- Fr John Gilmore (22nd)
- Fr Joseph Gormley (23rd)
- Fr Eamon Graham (24th)
- Fr Gerald Hasson (25th)



Fr Karl Haan (26th)  
Fr Eugene Hasson (27th)  
All Priests (28th)

FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU, DECLARES THE LORD... TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE AND A

# HOPE

*Jeremiah 29:11*

Our world needs hope and healing - could God be calling you to be a man of hope?

Consider your call on a Priesthood Retreat at Drumalis, Larne - 7th to 9th March

for more information contact Fr Pat O'Hagan at - pgoh2111@gmail.com



*Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group follows up day of prayer proclaiming nothing is impossible to God, with...*

# Lenten journey of hope



Fr Eamonn Kelly, guest speaker, with Fr Joseph Varghese

OMAGH Charismatic Prayer Group will be hosting 'Life in the Spirit' seminars from March 6 to April 10, offering a Lenten journey of hope, and one of the talks is to be given by Fr Eamonn Kelly, who was the speaker for the annual Day of Prayer, Praise and Healing organised by the prayer group back in November.

On that occasion, the Raphoe parish priest and long-time volunteer with Mary's Meals Ireland, gave an inspiring, heartfelt talk on the theme 'With God nothing is impossible' (Lk 1:37).

Fr Eamonn opened his talk by reminding those gathered that they have been redeemed. "Our sins have been forgiven in the name of Jesus," he said, noting: "There is nothing stopping us from loving God except our pride or what society has taught us. Today, we hope to look at the reality of our faith rather than what people say it teaches. Very often we are told what the Church teaches by people who do not believe, so we believe and take on board what the pagans say."

Highlighting the importance of their understanding of God, he told those gathered: "God will reveal to you that nothing is impossible to God. God died for us all, not just the goodies and the generous. Jesus said that He didn't come to call the virtuous but sinners, and that it is not the healthy that need the doctor but the ill, and we are all ill in different ways."

"We think we know the Scriptures," added Fr Eamonn, "but unless we reflect on them it is only a story, a bit of information that someone has given us. The more we reflect on the Scriptures, we find that this God of ours actually knows our thoughts and weaknesses; this God who sent His Son to die for my sins, that I can only comprehend in little parts.

**Free will**

"Nothing is impossible to God. But if we allow others to tell us about God, we allow them to take away our free will to think about it ourselves. God invites us to allow Him to forgive us, to make a new start and deepen the relationship.

"We must start on the basis that what we know is given to us in the Scriptures of the Church that Jesus Christ founded. Often, we want to do it on our own but it is not possible."

He went on to say: "The Church is weak at the moment. The scandals have rocked us. We do not deny the scandals, but we go deeper. The cover up, the lies and the pretence, we do not deny this in the institutional church, in the local church, and in ourselves as members of the church.

"The Church is weak. God is depending on ordinary people. If you look around, you will see little green shoots in the church, such as a day like this with people like you who want to listen and learn. Already there are young organisations within the Church founded on solid principles, vowing to love God above all else.

"The era we are beginning to encounter will need ordinary people to take a stand and allow God's work to be done. God is calling on all of us to take a stand to know our Saviour, to walk with Him, to be led by the Spirit and make a difference. This is the time to allow the Spirit to work."

Urging his listeners to become adult in the faith, Fr Eamonn said: "Begin a relationship that is much more meaningful that saying a few prayers when you drive the children or grandchildren to school in the morning. I invite you to see that your sins are forgiven by our Redeemer. He wants you to know that you are redeemed. Through His wounds are we healed for nothing is impossible to God."

**Silence**

He went on to relay a conversation he had with a girl in

sixth class during a school visit, saying: "She asked me why does God not talk to people any more. I asked her to explain and she said about the Bible and people He talked to there. I tried to explain that God has not stopped talking to people, but people are not listening. There is a lot of noise in daily life today. It is very hard to get any silence and silence is the key to communicating with God.

"God will speak in a way that you know God has spoken, but we will not hear Him if there is too much noise. Take your prayer life seriously. I invite you to make an appointment with God every day and I want you to keep it, whether on your knees, standing, or whatever. Then let there be silence. If you do this exercise, you will be amazed. For the first fortnight or so, you will be surprised about all the thoughts that go through your head - the back room needs painting, I need a new kitchen, etc - but if you stay with that silence, your body will get used to it. You will realise that there is a presence you can't explain to anyone else. You will find that someone talking to you will ask an awkward question and you will give them a good answer and wonder where it came from. It comes from the silence."

In a second talk on the day, Fr Eamonn spoke about the huge loss for humankind of paradise by our forefathers: "We were walking with God. God wanted us to be in His presence. However you interpret the story of Adam and Eve in the garden, something happened that destroyed our relationship with God and damaged our relationship with one another. Our relationship with God had been pure and beautiful. Adam and Eve had known the Creator that loved them.

**Revelation**

"After the loss of our relationship, it was God's initiation to call Abraham, and so began a revelation of love of the Divine. This revelation continues down the years. Jesus comes and reveals the God of love, mercy and forgiveness. This

Good News given by Jesus is rejected by humanity. Humanity found it difficult to do what Jesus was doing, to pray to our Heavenly Father, not a vague, distant God, and to be the hand of love in the world."

"Are we willing to stand with Jesus who is rejected, spat upon, who was flogged and nailed to the cross?" he asked, saying: "It is not an easy place to be. Some who follow Jesus will only come so far and no further. It is not easy to be with Christ in the rejection but He has the ultimate victory. So, we must be convinced in ourselves that the victory belongs to Him. We have so many people now trying to say that we can only be Catholic if we do it their way. If we want to follow Christ, we need to stand with the One who is rejected. We are not on our own.

"The power of our faith is massive but it takes a strong person to live it. It is up to us to realise how much we are loved. God invites us to stand with Him in our situation, so that more and more people might benefit from our decision to be faithful to Christ. God is not asking us to force people to come back to Church but to be authentic men and women of the Church, to proclaim God is love not in words but in the conduct of our lives.

"I know this is a challenge, as I feel it myself. I invite you on this day of renewal to come close to God so that one day you can live in the fullness of life, for nothing is impossible to God."

The day of prayer and praise came to a close with the celebration of Mass and a Eucharistic healing service, during which Fr Joseph Varghese carried Jesus in the Monstrance around to all in the room, giving a blessing.

**Life in the Spirit**

Fr Eamonn will be back in the Omagh area again on April 3, to give the fifth 'Life in the Spirit' talk on 'Baptism in the Spirit'. Other speakers are: Fr Peter McAnenly, who will speak about 'God's Love' on March 6; Fr Damian Bresnahan SMA,

who will speak about 'Salvation' on March 13; Bishop Donal, who will speak about 'The New Life' on March 20; Dr Lynette McShane, who will speak on 'Receiving God's Gifts' on March 27; and Fr Antonio Maria Diez de

Medina CFR, who will speak on 'Growth & Transformation'.

The seminars will take place in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, during the 7.30 pm Thursday Mass, and are accessible online at [www.drumraghparish.com](http://www.drumraghparish.com).





Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group invites you to

## Life in the Spirit

Seminars 2025

### Sacred Heart Church

Omagh, Co.Tyrone  
Accessible online at [www.drumraghparish.com](http://www.drumraghparish.com)

**Thursday 7.30pm Holy Mass**  
**Lenten journey of Hope**

|            |                         |                         |
|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6th March  | God's Love              | Fr Peter McAnenly       |
| 13th March | Salvation               | Fr Damian Bresnahan SMA |
| 20th March | The New Life            | Bishop Donal McKeown    |
| 27th March | Receiving God's Gifts   | Dr Lynette McShane      |
| 3rd April  | Baptism in the Spirit   | Fr Eamonn Kelly         |
| 10th April | Growth & Transformation | Fr Antonio CFR          |

"Find rest in God alone, O my soul; from Him comes my hope". Ps. 62.6.









## John Keys O'Doherty - Bishop and Poet *by Dr Seán Beattie*

IF bishops are remembered for their building projects, Bishop John Keys O'Doherty has a great record. He was responsible for the completion of St Eugene's Cathedral, when the spire was finally added. He also laid the cornerstone for the Nazareth House in Bishop St, Derry, and promoted the construction of 20 schools in the Diocese. He had the distinction of being the first Bishop to be consecrated in the Cathedral.

### A Published Poet

Born in Termonbacca in 1833, he was proud of the City of his birth and he had a deep commitment to the history of the Diocese. The 'Keys' in his name comes from his mother's surname; she was from Killea. In his leisure time, he had an interest in writing on a diverse range of subjects. These included local history and, of course, ecclesiastical matters. Such themes have been dealt with by many of the bishops, but in one respect, he stood apart among his peers of modern times. This was his great love of poetry and the fact that he succeeded in having his work published in his book, 'Derriana', in 1902.

### Lofty Themes

His poetic interests related to our

national history, our monuments, and, of course, nature. Some of his poems are intensely personal, as he reflects on the death of a young fellow student in Maynooth College and other family tragedies. His poetry is written in a lyrical vein, with rich imagery, combining amazing references, sometimes drawn from the 'Annals'. Carefully crafted, language flows effortlessly from his pen, and the poems are mostly written in rhyming couplets.

### Inishowen

In the mid-1860s, he served in the parishes of Carndonagh and Malin, and in Ardstraw, as Ireland recovered from the Great Famine and before the social upheaval of the Land War. He enjoyed long walks in the countryside, listening to people who regaled him with the folklore of the area.

Three poems related to Inishowen are rich in images from the peninsula. In 'Dirge for Sir Cahir O'Doherty', he lamented his premature death in the Rebellion in 1608. His love of Irish history is beautifully explored. The poem is a lament supposed to be sung by one of his followers after the Battle of Kilmacrennan, Co Donegal, where Sir Cahir was slain on July 5, 1608:

*"From the wild rocks of Malin to Derry's fair hill,*

*From Buncrana's lone castle to sea-washed Moville,  
May his name ne'er be breathed  
save with curse or with groan  
Who shot down the Chieftain of  
Old Inishowen."*

In 'The Hurricane', he lamented the loss of a fishing boat and crew in the Clonmany area, with reference to two prominent hills in the parish:

*"Till Raghtin looked with  
queenly pride far out into the main,  
And Binion threw its giant shade  
across the watery plain;  
And fair Dunaff in distance blue  
raised up its head on high,*

*And caught the sun's expiring  
beams, and kissed the cloudless sky."*

Written early in his life, his poem 'This Life's Like a River' takes a philosophical view:

*"This life's a river, it flows to the  
main,  
And sinks in its bosom, nor rises  
again;  
Thus man rushes on thro' life's  
rocky way*

*From childhood to manhood,  
away and away."*

His poem, 'The Beggar's Bed' upholds the simplicity of a life well-lived. In the introduction, he records the story of a poor farmer, who lived in Malin Head. He rarely left home but he had a warm welcome for all travellers who came across his path. He

kept a bed in the kitchen for any beggar that asked for a place to sleep for the night. When his own time came to depart the world, he asked his family to carry him to the same bed and to continue such hospitality long after he had passed on:

*"Within his humble cottage lay by  
Malin's rocky shore*

*A dying peasant, who would gaze  
upon this scene no more:*

*No more behold Clonmany's hills  
hurl back the crested wave,  
Nor the life-boat breast the surges  
wild the fisherman to save."*

One of the great monuments in the Diocese is the ancient stone fortress of Aileach.

In 'Derriana', he writes a short history of the fort, quoting from a diverse range of sources, including the 'Annals of the Four Masters':

*(1101): "A great army was led  
by Muirheartach Ua-Brian, King  
of Munster...and burned many  
churches and many forts about  
Fahan-Mura...and he demolished  
Grianán-Ailigh."*

He reminds his readers of the power of the Kings of Aileach, based on the tributes (taxes) which were paid to them. These are set down clearly in the 'Book of Rights'. His poem, 'Saint Patrick at Aileach', in which he surveys the landscape as far as he can see, he clearly shows that he was a man



Grianán Ailigh, on the outskirts of Derry City, in Co Donegal. The Bishop's mother, as a young girl, attended Mass here at a makeshift altar before the Long Tower was built in 1784.

who knew the topography of the north west:

*"From the Grianán gazed the  
Saint o'er all that glorious scene*

*Of mountain brown, of valley  
deep, of river and ravine,*

*He looked on Foyle's spacious lake,  
on Swilly's shadowy tide,*

*On fair Tyrconnell, green Tyr-  
Eoghain that stretched to Banna's  
side."*

According to the former Diocesan historian, Fr Walter Hegarty, Bishop O'Doherty's grandmother, as a young girl, attended Mass at Grianán before the Long Tower church was built.

### Literary Legacy

Only 15 of his poems have been published in 'Derriana'. Most of them were written in his college

days and consequently, he regards them as "bearing the marks of juvenility". Perhaps aware of his status as Bishop, in later life, he continued to publish his work in various journals and periodicals, mostly in the form of an essay. Writing from the Bishop's House in 1901, he admitted that his great aim in life was to publish a history of the Diocese. His fervent prayer was that both his essays and poetry would act as an encouragement to some future historian to do so. Quoting Cardinal Newman, he commented, "Life is not long enough to do more than our best".

He died in Bishop's House, Derry, in 1907, at the age of 74 and he is buried in the Long Tower, Derry, having served as Bishop for 17 years.



Parish *Post-its*

Aghyaran

**Adoration:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Thursdays after 10 am Mass, and finishes at 12 noon.  
**Weekend Mass Times:** 7.30 pm Vigil, and 11 am.

Ardstraw East  
(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 takes 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 12.30 pm Mass until 5 pm on Tuesdays, and in St Mary’s, Rouskey, after 7.30 pm Mass on Wednesdays.  
**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.  
**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.  
**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 in St Joseph’s Church, Fincairn, 10.30 am in St Mary’s Church, Altinure, and 12 noon in St Peter’s & St Paul’s Church, Foreglen.

Bellaghy

**Community Café:** The Open Door Community Café is open on the last Sunday of each month, from 11.30 am until 1 pm.  
**Adoration:** Fridays from 10 am-8 pm (Rosary at 7.30 pm).  
Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil in Bellaghy, 10 am in Ballyscullion, and 11 am in Bellaghy.

Buncrana

**Holy Year of Hope events:** At parish level, the Holy Year of Hope will be marked with times of prayer, participation and pilgrimage. The first of these initiatives is entitled ‘Come away from your nets for a moment’, and involves gathering special interest groups of people from the parish for a special Mass and ceremony of blessing, each third Wednesday of the month (except in July & August).  
**Adoration:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament now takes place in St Mary’s Oratory every Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, 6 am-10 pm, and on Sundays 2-10 pm.  
**Rosary:** The Rosary is prayed each weekday 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, 9 am and 12.30 pm; St Mary’s Cockhill – Vigil 6 pm, and 11am; Star of the Sea, Desertegney – 10 am. (Note new Vigil times, which will be reviewed at the end of Daylight Saving Time in March.)  
**Burt, Inch & Fahan**  
**Adoration:** Adoration in St Mura’s Parish Church, Fahan, takes place each Friday after 10 am Mass.  
**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Aengus’ Burt; 9 am, Our Lady of Lourdes, Inch; 7.15 pm Vigil, 11.30 am, St Mura’s, Fahan.  
**Cappagh (Killyclogher)**  
**Padre Pio Prayer Group:** Cappagh Padre Pio Prayer Group Pilgrimage 2025 will take place from September 10-17, visting the shrines of Assisi, Giovanni Rotondo and St Michael’s cave. Cost: £1,135 pps. For information contact: Marie on 07799112224 or Clare on 07778025587.  
**Eucharistic Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesday from 8-9 pm in Christ the King, Strathroy, concluding with and ceremony of blessing, each third Wednesday of the month (except in July & August).  
**Rosary:** The Rosary is prayed in St Mary’s Church, Killyclogher, Monday-Saturday at 9.15 am, and in Corpus Christi, Mountfield every Thursday evening at 8 pm.  
**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.  
**Polish Mass:** Mass is celebrated in Polish in the Church of Christ The King, Strathroy, Omagh, on the first and third Sunday’s of each month at 10 am.  
**Weekend Mass Times:** 6.30 pm Vigil, 12 noon, Christ The King, Strathroy; 9 & 11 am, St Mary’s, Killyclogher.

Carndonagh

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

Castlederg & Ardstraw West

**SVP Senior Social:** St Patrick’s SVP Conference, Castlederg, is hosting its Senior Citizens’ Social on Thursday, February 27, from 2-5 pm, in St Patrick’s Hall, Castlederg. Tickets available after weekend Masses and from SVP committee members.  
**Concert:** Michael English will be in concert in St Patrick’s Church on April 25. Tickets are available in the Sacristy before and after Masses in St Patrick’s, Castlederg, in the parish office and in Dinny’s and Taggart’s shops.  
**Adoration:** Adoration takes place following 10 am Mass in St Patrick’s Church on Fridays, until 12 noon.  
**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm Vigil and 11 am, Castlederg; 9.30 am Dregish; and 12.30 pm Drumnabey.

Claudy

**Adoration:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place from after the 10 am Mass until 8 pm on Tuesdays in St Patrick’s Church, Claudy, and on Wednesdays in St Joseph’s Church, Craigbane.  
**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

**Parish Pilgrimage:** A Parish Pilgrimage to Lourdes will take place from June 10-14, 2025. Staying at Hotel Padoue, the cost will be 760 Euro per person sharing, full board. Enquiries to the Parish Office.  
**Exposition:** Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament in St Michael’s Church, Urris, on Fridays, 3-6 pm (Rosary at 5.40 pm); in the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin, on Tuesdays, 7.30-8.30 pm; and in St Columbcille Village, Cleagh, on Wednesdays, 3-4 pm.  
**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

**Alpha Course:** Inter-denominational Alpha begins West of the Bann. The North Coast team is delighted to be holding this new Alpha Course in the Bushtown Hotel, Coleraine, which is being hosted by St John’s Parish and open to all. It started on January 14 and will run through until April 8. The course will be taking place each week from 7-9 pm in a private dining room at the Bushtown. If you know someone who this might be of interest to, please do pass on this information or

get them to make contact if they would like further information - 07760 647665 or alphanorthcoast@gmail.com.

**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; 7.30 pm Vigil, St Mary’s Dunboe; 9.45 am, Our Lady of the Assumption, Aghadowey.

Creggan

**YOUCAT:** The YOUCAT Programme is underway in the Parochial House Conference Room on Wednesdays at 7 pm. All welcome.  
**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

**Good as New Shop:** St Mary’s Church Bocan Re-decorating

Committee has the ‘Good as New Shop’ now open in Carndonagh. All proceeds are for the Re-decorating Fund.

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

Desertmartin

**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.

Drumquin

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

Drumragh (Omagh)

**Life in Spirit seminars:** Omagh Charismatic Prayer Group is hosting Life in the Spirit seminars from March 6 to April 10 in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, starting at 7.30 pm with the celebration of Mass. They are accessible online at www.drumraghparish.com.  
**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.  
**Rosary of Reparation:**



# Parish *Post-its*

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

**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 12 noon, Sacred Heart Church; 10.30 am, St Mary’s Drumragh.

**Dungiven**

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

**St Pio Healing Mass:** A St Pio Healing Mass is celebrated monthly, on the first Tuesday, in St Patrick’s Church at 7 pm. **Society of St Joseph:** The Society of St Joseph’s for the support of religious vocations meets on the second Tuesdays of the month in the Committee Room, after 10 am Mass in St Patrick’s Church.

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

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

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

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

**Errigal**

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

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

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

**Faughanvale**

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

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

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

**Greencastle**

**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, Broughderg.

**Greenlough**

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

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

**Weekend Mass Times:** 5.30 pm Vigil, and 9 am.

**Iskaheen, Drung & Muff**

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

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

**St Peregrine:** The St Peregrine Novena Prayer and veneration of relic takes place on the first Friday of each month, alternating between the three 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; 8 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Columba’s, Drung; 9 am, St Patrick’s, Iskaheen.

**Kilrea**

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

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

**SVP:** The St Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop is open on

Saturdays from 10 am -1pm.

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

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

**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 in St Patrick’s Church, Crossroads, every Thursday after 9.15 am Mass.

**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Patrick’s; 8 pm Vigil, 9 am & 11 am, St Mary’s Sessiaghoneill.

**Lavey**

**Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Fridays from 9.30 am until 5 pm.

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

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

**Leckpatrick**

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

**Weekend Mass Times:** 5 pm Vigil, St Mary’s Church, Cloughcor; 9.45 am St Joseph’s Church, Glenmornan; 11.15 am, Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road.

**Lifford**

**Adoration:** 9.30 am-12.30 pm.

**Confessions:** Saturday, 6-6.15 pm

**Weekend Mass Times:** 6.30 pm Vigil; 11 am.

**Limavady**

**Adoration:** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Sundays in Christ the King (with Confessions) from 3-5 pm.

**Children’s Prayer:** A Children’s Prayer Group is held in the Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly, on the First Saturday of every month, from 2.30-3.30 pm. All welcome. Contact: Kathy on 07538749627.

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

10.30 am, St Mary’s Church.

**Maghera**

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

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

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

**Magilligan**

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

**Malin**

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

**Melmount**

**Blessing of Graves:** The annual Ceremony of the Blessing of Graves will take place on Sunday, May 25, at 4 pm.

**Exposition:** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the church on Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6 pm. The Rosary will be recited prior to closure of Adoration at approximately 5.40 pm. Everyone is welcome.

**Weekend Mass Times:** 7 pm Vigil, 10.30 am and 12.30 pm.

**Moville**

**Stations of the Cross:** The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 10 am Mass on Fridays.

**Prayer:** The Rosary and Divine Mercy Chaplet will be recited in St Pius X Church, Moville, at 7.30 pm every day, from Sunday – Friday.

**Adoration:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Mondays, from 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, in St Pius X Church.

**Confessions:** Confessions are available on Saturdays, 6.15–6.45 pm.

**Weekend Mass Times:** 7 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Pius X Church. 12 noon on Sundays as follows – St Mary’s Ballybrack, 1st and 3rd Sundays; St Columba’s Ballinacrae, 2nd and 4th Sundays; St Pius X 5th Sunday.

**Sion Mills**

**Blessing of Graves:** The annual Ceremony of the Blessing of Graves will take place on Sunday, May 18, at 3 pm.

**Adoration:** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Fridays, from 11 am-6.50 pm, ending with Benediction before 7 pm Mass.

**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.

**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm Vigil; 9 am & 11 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:** Fridays 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:** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every day, from 10.30 am-1 pm, in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), which is situated at the back of the Church.

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

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

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

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

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

Vigil, 9.45 am & 12.15 pm.

**Templemore – St Eugene’s**

**Songs of Ireland:** Afternoon Tea, with a Songs of Ireland theme, will take place in St Eugene’s Cathedral Hall on Saturday, March 29, at 1 pm. Pre-booking is required and the fee is £25. To book call at the Cathedral Parish Office or telephone 028 71 262894.

**Little Way Novena:** The annual Little Way Novena in honour of St Therese of Lisieux will take place in the Cathedral from May 10-18.

**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 Dympna 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**

**Sr Clare Retreat:** The annual Sr Clare Retreat will run from Monday, March 31 to Sunday, April 6 in St Columba’s Church.

**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.

**Lectio Divina:** Praying with the Scriptures, using the method of Lectio Divina for the Sunday Gospels of Advent, continues downstairs in Aras Colmcille on Tuesdays, December 10 & 17, from 8-9 pm, and Thursdays, December 12 & 19, from 11 am to 12 noon. All welcome to attend. Leaflets will be provided.

**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 from1950’s onward. The pack contains a double DVD with many clips of Derry in the 50s up to 80s. Much of the footage was filmed in the Brandywell area and the Long Tower School. Cost £10, available from Parish Office and Aras Cholmcille.

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

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

**Three Patrons**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Be Still:** Be Still is a Men’s Prayer and Friendship Group that meets every Thursday night from 8.15-10 pm in Our Lady’s Chapel, within St Joseph’s Church building, Galliagh. Its mission as a



Parish Post-its

Parish Post-its

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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 6 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 next monthly meeting for the intercession of Priests takes place on Tuesday, December 10, at 12.30 pm in Termonbacca.

**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, Saturdays from 6-6.30 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 5-5.30 pm; and in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, on Thursdays from 6.15-6.45 pm, and Saturdays after 11 am Mass and from 5-5.30 pm.

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

Urney & Castlefinn

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

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

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

**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm

Vigil, St Columba's, Doneyloop; 10.30 am, St Mary's Castlefinn.

Waterside & Strathfoyle

**Vocations Prayer:** Holy Hours for Vocations to the priesthood in the Diocese of Derry will take place on Wednesday evenings at St Columb's Church, Waterside, on February 19 and March 12, starting at 8 pm.

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

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

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

**Weekend Mass Times:** 7 pm Vigil, 10 am, 12.30 pm & 6 pm, St Columb's; 6 pm Vigil, 10.15 am & 12.15 pm, Immaculate Conception; 11.15 am, St Oliver Plunkett.

March opening for St Paul's Books & Gifts in Derry



ST Paul's Books & Gifts Shop is opening in Derry City on Monday, March 3, in the former Veritas location, at 20 Shipquay Street.

One of the many people delighted at the news is Marie Browne, who had been manager in the Derry Veritas shop at the time of its closure and has now been appointed as manager of the St Paul's shop.

"There was great sadness amongst the Veritas staff and customers when the news broke

that the Derry shop was to be closed along with the other Veritas outlets in Ireland," said Marie, "so it is great that the Word of God will be spread again through this St Paul's shop as it did through Veritas, and which is very needed and wanted in Derry. "It is just great news that a world-wide company like St Paul's has chosen Derry as one of its locations."

The shop will be open Mondays to Saturdays, from 10 am to 5 pm.

Diocesan Diary

**Fatima Youth Pilgrimage:** The Derry Diocesan Youth Team invites young people aged 16+ to join them on pilgrimage to Fatima for four nights from July 14-18. This will be a unique experience for young people and an opportunity to engage with their peers from around the world in a faith context. Cost is £700 and there will be a budget plan to help with this. Names and deposit of £100 are required as soon as possible to secure a place. For more information or to book in please contact lizzie.rea@derrydiocese.org 00 44 2871264087.

**Vocations Retreat:** There will be a Vocations Weekend Retreat for men aged 18+ in Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne, from March 7-9. Anyone interested should contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan at pgoh2111@gmail.com.

**Vocations Holy Hour:** A Holy Hour for Vocations to the priesthood in the Diocese of Derry will take place at St Columb's

Church, Chapel Road, Waterside, on Wednesday, March 12, starting at 8 pm.

**Knock Pilgrimage:** The Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock will take place on Sunday, June 15, 2025.

**Lourdes Pilgrimage:** The Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2025, led by Bishop Donal McKeown, will take place from Monday, June 30 to Friday, July 4, leaving from City of Derry Airport. Price £849 plus insurance and single supplement if required. The Pilgrimage Office, 164 Bishop Street, Derry, will open for booking on Saturday, February 1, 11am-1 pm (and each following Saturday & Thursday at the same time unless notified). Enquiries via email: derrypilgrim@outlook.com.

**Accord Derry:** Marriage Preparation Workshops with Accord Derry take place on: March 28-29; April 11-12; May 30-31; June 20-21. To book contact www.accordni.com.

...other Diary Dates

**National Rosary Rally Launch:** The launch event for this year's All Ireland Rosary Rally in Knock takes place on Saturday, March 1, in St John's Centre, Knock. Starting at 12 noon with the praying of the Rosary, the day will include talks, the celebration of Mass and First Saturday prayers.

**Religious Gifts & Books:** St Paul's Books & Gifts shop will be opening in Derry on Monday, March 3, in the former Veritas building on Shipquay Street. It will be open Mondays-Saturdays, from 10 am-5 pm.

**Pro-Life Retreat Day:** Precious Life is hosting a Pro-Life Retreat Day on Saturday, March 15, in St Pio House, Galliagh, from 10 am until 4 pm. The day will include the celebration of Mass by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Prayer and Talks.

**Gala Concert:** St Columb's School of Music is hosting a Gala Concert, Saturday, March 1 in St Columb's Hall, Derry, at 7.30 pm. Doors open at 7pm. Tickets £12.50/£7.50. Performances by Margaret Keys (Soprano), Thornhill College Chamber Choir, Ebrington Primary School Choir & St Columb's School of Music tutors. Tickets available: www.

stcolumbsschoolofmusic.com.

**National Adoration Pilgrimage:** The annual National Adoration Pilgrimage to Knock, organised by the Apostolate of Eucharistic Adoration, will take place on Sunday, April 6, from 10.30 am until 5 pm. There will also be a Saturday evening programme, with the speaker being Fr John Mockler. For the full programme and bus details visit: www.eucharisticadoration.ie

**'Sing for Joy!':** Are you involved, or keen to become involved in, Church Music in your Parish, School, University, etc? We invite you to join us for 'Sing for Joy!' – A Day of Music and Ministry on Saturday, April 26, at Lough Derg, Pettigo, Co Donegal. Boat departs at 9.30 am. There will be various inputs as well as time to pray, connect with others and explore this Sacred place. The day will conclude with the Celebration of the Eucharist at 5 pm (open to the public). This day is open to young people aged 18-35 and is free to attend (supported by the Knights of St Columbanus). Registration is essential via https://bit.ly/SingforJoy. For further information please contact info@knightsfstcolumbanusomagh.co.uk / +447759496677.

**LIFE Camp 2025:** Living In Faith Everywhere...LIFE Camp is a voluntary organisation staffed by teachers, students and experienced volunteers. It takes place in St Mary's College, Northland Road, Derry. We are calling all pupils currently in P3 – P7. Week 1: Tuesday 1st – Friday 4th July and Week 2: Monday 7th July – Friday 11th July. Cost for Week 1 is £35. Cost for Week 2 is £40. To register go to www.klubfunder.com/Clubs/Life%20Summer%20Camp

**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 7.30pm, in the Parochial House at Cross, Killygordon, (F93PN0X), and the weekly Holy Hours on Thurs at 7 pm.

**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 next monthly meeting for the intercession of Priests takes place on Tuesday, December 10, at 12.30 pm in Termonbacca.

**Polish Mass:** Mass for the Polish community is celebrated in the Church of Christ The King, Strathroy, Omagh, on the first and third Sunday's of each month at 10 am, and at 9.30 am every second and fourth Sunday in the Divine Mercy Chapel, at St Mary's Church, Creggan, in Derry City.

**Stations of Cross:** On the First Friday of each month, after 10 am Mass in St Eugene's, there is a silent procession from the Cathedral to St Columba's Church, Long Tower, meditating on the Stations of the Cross.

**Coastal Rosary:** Rosary on the Coast for world peace and the protection of unborn babies takes place at Lisfannon Beach, Buncrana, on the first Sunday of every month at 3 pm, and at Benone Strand on the third Sunday of every month, at 3 pm.

**Men's Rosary:** The Men's Rosary

takes place on the first Saturday of every month in Market Street, Omagh (opposite Primark) at 1 pm. All Welcome!

**Sr Clare Mass:** Mass in honour of Sr Clare Crockett is celebrated on the second Sunday of each month, at 7 pm, in Termonbacca. All welcome. The Mass is streamed live via Termonbacca YouTube channel.

**Reading with the Carmelites:** The Carmelite Fathers at Termonbacca hold a monthly session of 'Reading with the Carmelite Saints', to

explore learning friendship with Christ through the example of the Carmelite Saints. It takes place on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm.

**Healing Night:** The monthly Healing Night with the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, in Derry, takes place on the First Friday of each month, at 7 pm.

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



# The prayer in my pocket by Kieron Kehoe



Anna.

ALMOST everyone has a prayer whether they carry it in their pocket, in their purse, in their wallet, or in their handbag. It might be tightly placed into their mobile phone or iPad case. Wherever they keep it most; they will also keep it in their heart.

**Prayer for St Joseph's Protection**

*Oh, St Joseph, whose protection is so great, so prompt, so strong, before the throne of God, I place in you all my interests and desires. Oh, St Joseph, do assist me by your powerful intercession, and obtain for me from your Divine Son all spiritual blessings, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. So that, having engaged here below your heavenly power, I may offer my thanksgiving and homage to the most loving of fathers.*

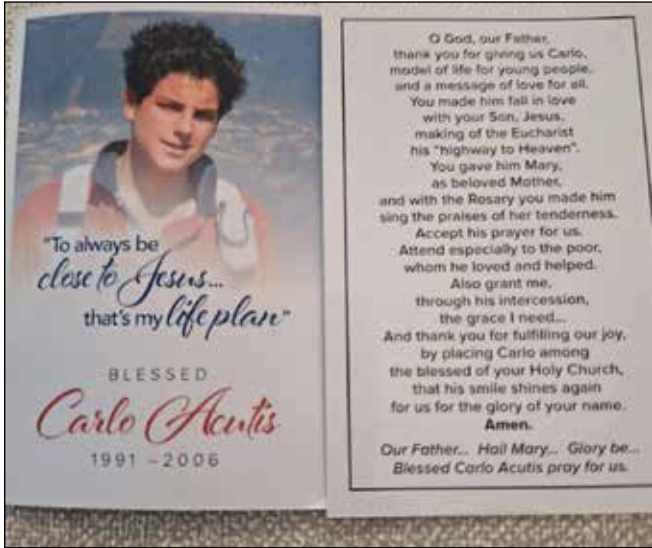
*Oh, St Joseph, I never weary contemplating you and Jesus asleep in your arms; I dare not approach while He reposes near your heart. Press Him in my name and kiss His fine head for me, and ask Him to return the kiss when I draw my dying breath.*

*St Joseph, patron of departing souls - pray for me. Amen.*

There are many reasons why we all have a particular prayer that we continuously say more than others. It may be asking for something for ourselves, for a friend or for family members. We pray at times for healing, guidance and, of course, in praise and thanksgiving to the Eternal Father, The Son, and The Holy Spirit. Our prayer maybe to a Saint, or to The Mother of Jesus Christ, asking them to intercede for ourselves or others to the Lord.



This leads me to two questions that I will put to various people in different parishes in our Diocese: Do you have a prayer in your pocket? Why did you choose this prayer? The first person I talked with has been a great servant to St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry City. Anna is ever present in the Cathedral, whether it is cleaning, flower arranging, replenishing candles, saying the Angelus and Rosary, or serving as Eucharistic Minister at Holy Mass. Anna has many prayers, but one that she has most devotion to is the prayer to St Joseph. She learned about St Joseph when only six years old and would regularly talk to him. Unfortunately, by the age of nine, things changed in her family life. Mum left her in the care of nuns. It took over a year to get used to this new way of living. Then, to help her get used to missing her mum, she would turn to St Joseph in prayer and chat with him. This was a great help because she got comfortable



talking with St Joseph and became confident in her schoolwork. Anna took the name of Joseph as her confirmation name. After three years, she met her mother again but only for a few days, when they made promises to meet each other again. Four years later, the promises they had made came true when they reunited in England. Being used to having Mass every day when in Ireland, it was a shock when she realised Mass was only once a week in England. So, St Joseph was to be a comfort again. "I only wanted St Joseph to be like a father to me," said Anna, "I still pray and talk with him 70 years on. His feast day is on the March 19. St Joseph pray for us." Carlo Acutis The second person I spoke with is Manus. Just like Anna, he has many prayers and, of course, there is always one that is said every day. Manus walks into the Cathedral each day, which is roughly one and half miles from his home, for the Angelus and Rosary at midday. This can be viewed Monday to Friday on the webcam from Cathedral website, or on the Cathedral's Facebook page. During Covid, Manus got a call from his son, telling him that his grandson was at university in England and was seriously ill. Manus started praying to Blessed Carlo Acutis. As Carlo died at a young age and is known as the saint-to-be for young



Manus. people, he felt there would be a connection with his grandson. Shortly afterwards there was an improvement in his condition, and he eventually recovered. Now, when Manus enters the Cathedral, his first stop is to light a candle and say his prayer to Blessed Carlo Acutis. Blessed Carlo Acutis will be canonised a Saint by Pope Francis on April 27, this year. His statue can be seen in the Cathedral beside the baptismal font and depicts him just as he was as a teenager; dressed in his blue jeans, red jumper and slippers. To show the world the love that he had for Jesus, Carlo used modern technology to create his own website logging Eucharistic Miracles, making information on them accessible in the one place. He is truly a saint of our time. Blessed Carlo Acutis, pray for us.

# Celebrating and giving thanks for the life of Mary Brigid Dolan by Fr Joseph Varghese



THANK God for allowing us to experience the gift of getting to know Mary Brigid Dolan and her goodness, gentleness, humility and compassion, and her commitment to being a true follower of Christ. Mary never sought the limelight but was such a diligent teacher in all aspects of her life and would have helped anyone in need. She was always a great prayer and we all witnessed her abiding faith. I met Mary on January 14, 2010, while ministering in the Cathedral. We became good friends. I found her to be a very spiritual person. Mass and the Sacraments were an important part of her life. Daily Mass, Rosary, followed by personal prayer, was Mary's way of starting a new day. She was a very independent lady and was blessed with good health. Derry Cathedral was an important place in Mary's life. She always loved going to the Cathedral to spend time in personal prayer. As a member of the Carmelite Third Order, she also went to the ministry in Termonbacca Monastery, prayed and received the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis. She ended all her personal prayers with the words, "Sacred Heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in Thee." I would like to quote from Pope Francis' recent encyclical, 'Dilexit nos', on the human and divine love of the Heart of Jesus, where says, "He loved us." St Paul makes us realise

that nothing can ever 'separate us' from that love (Rom 8:39). The heart is the locus of sincerity, where deceit and disguise have no place. It usually indicates our true intentions. The Book of Proverbs also reminds us: "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life." During a conversation one day, she made it known to me what she wanted and what she didn't want at her funeral; no eulogy and no talk about her life story, though she herself loved to hear other people's life stories and to pray for them in their life's struggle. She showed a very caring nature, visiting sick friends on a regular basis and getting Masses said for their speedy recovery. She would have travelled extra miles to see them when she was able to do so. Her wish was, as she got older, not to trouble anybody and not having to be nursed for any length of time, wanting to stay on her feet until the end. She got that wish, I am sure. Mary was a very knowledgeable person and had great wisdom. I am indebted to her for the unwavering support she gave me while I was doing my Doctorate in Theology, in Maynooth, as she had a great command in languages. It was my privilege to offer a special birthday Mass for her on St Stephen's Day (December 26), as her birthday was on Christmas Day. Christmas was very important to her. Let us thank God for allowing us to know Mary and to have her with us for 89 years, she was one month short of 90, and to benefit from her wisdom, example and generosity of spirit. May Mary rest in peace in the loving arms of Jesus. Mary died on Monday, November 25, 2024, in the Royal Victoria Hospital, Belfast. Her Requiem Mass was celebrated in Star of the Sea of the Sea Church, Faughanvale.

# Legion of Mary annual retreat a blessed time by Sean Mullan

THE Legion of Mary held its annual retreat for members in Termonbacca on Sunday, October 27. This enjoyable event brought together legionaries from all over the Derry Diocese. The day included talks from two of the Carmelite priests, Fr Cajetan and Fr Baturi. These talks discussed how legionaries should approach their apostolate with others and the special role of Mary within each legionary's spiritual life. One of the Fathers talked about his own membership in the Legion in Africa and how strong the Legion

was within his own Parish. The day closed with Mass celebrated by Fr Michael Spain, and Fr Thomas Canning concelebrating. Fr Canning is the Spiritual Director for the Legion of Mary within the Derry Diocese. In his homily, Fr Spain discussed how, as a missionary priest in Africa, the Legion of Mary was very influential and prominent in the spiritual lives of a particular parish he had been assigned to. The Legion of Mary is always open to new members. There are Legion groups, known as praesidium,

in many different parishes in the Derry Diocese. If you would like to find out more information about membership contact Gerry Gallagher on 07904341198, or Sean Mullan on 07854027877 - or via

email seanftmullan@gmail.com. Individuals are welcome to attend meetings commitment free to see if this is something they would like to follow further.





# The future of humanity passes by way of the family

Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR



Fr. Johnny Doherty CSsR

THE title of this article, 'The future of humanity passes by way of the family', is taken from an Encyclical Letter of Pope St John Paul II called 'Familiaris Consortio'. It is a strong statement. It is a stark statement, especially for the world we live in.

Today, we are all too aware of the fact that the future of humanity depends so much on curbing climate change, because we are living in a dangerous situation of going beyond the place of no return in relation to the climate of the world.

We are also very conscious of the dangers that are inherent in all the wars in our world. These could so easily escalate into a nuclear war that would be disastrous for all of creation, as well as humanity.

This statement of Pope St John Paul II brings us back into what is most important and dynamic for the future, our closest relationships with one another, especially in marriage and family life, without in any way denying the importance of these other elements.

## Holy Family of Nazareth

I have chosen this title for the month of February because this month begins, Liturgically, with the celebration of the Feast of the Presentation of Christ in the Temple on Sunday, February 2.

It is very unusual for a Feast Day to take over from one of the scheduled Sunday celebrations of the Eucharist. The fact that, this year, the Feast of the Presentation of Christ takes over from the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary time, shows how important this Feast is in our understanding of Christ and for our following of Him.

## Following on from Christmas

As St Luke's Gospel puts it: "When the time came for them to be purified", Mary and Joseph, brought Jesus to the Temple to consecrate Him to God. This was to fulfil the Law that every first-born male would be consecrated to God. But for Mary and Joseph, it was much more than a legal requirement. It was a deeply spiritual action that they were taking part in, as they, like many other Jewish parents before and since, celebrated the wonderful gift of their child.

At Christmas, Jesus was proclaimed by the angels and the shepherds as the Chosen One. At the Epiphany, He was adored by the Magi and shown to be for the whole world.

Now, the Presentation, became the first time that Jesus was proclaimed the Chosen One in the community of God's people. An elderly man, Simeon, and an elderly woman, Anna (the Gospel tells us that she was 84 years of age), spoke about Him and pointed Him out under the power of the Holy Spirit. Simeon especially

spoke about Him to Mary and Joseph, and foretold the sufferings that He was to undergo and also the sufferings that Mary would have to face.

The Gospel account of the Presentation concludes: "When they had done everything the Law of the Lord required, they went back to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. Meanwhile, the child grew to maturity, and was filled with wisdom; and God's favour was with Him."

We can truly say that the future of humanity passed by way of this family, the Holy family of Nazareth. It still does through our families today.

## Family is central

Celebrity culture is very strong in our society today. The people who make the news are generally those who make a name for themselves in entertainment or sport or by becoming rich. The other way of becoming famous is through some scandal!

The truth is that the great heroes of every generation, and of this one, are the people who commit themselves to one another in love, especially in family life. They are the true cement through which society is held together and flourishes.

## What is family?

Marriage and Family Life have traditionally been two of the most vital foundation stones on which society and the Church are built.

Until comparatively recently, accepting this truth was easy. Most men and women got married to each other and then had their children. The vast majority made a success of their family life, not without problems of course and, at

times, with great sacrifice.

## A different world and a different Church

We live in a different world and a different society today.

- So many couples continue to get married in the Church because that is the kind of marriage they want for themselves and for their family.

- Many couples choose to live together. Many of them have their children and then decide to get married or not.

- Many couples choose a civil marriage or a humanist marriage, in which God or the Church have no place.

- Many marriages break up for a variety of reasons. Some of the people involved in marriage break-up marry again.

- We now have to face the question of same sex relationships and same sex marriage. This is a question that was unheard of until recently. It is an important question that has implications for all of us.

- And we have the other quite recent question to face of people who are transgender.

## A variety of family combinations

All of these changes in adult relationships give rise to a great variety of family combinations that we need to acknowledge.

- There are married couples with children.

- There are married couples who do not have children.

- There are lone parents with children, some married but separated or divorced or bereaved, and some not married.

- There are divorced and remarried couples with children, often with each partner bringing

children of their own into the new family and then having children together.

- There are single people who have never had children and who live alone or maybe with a sibling.

- There are same sex couples, some with children and some not.

This list is not exhaustive of the possible combinations of family life that are in our society and, consequently, in our Church today. This rapid change in people's lives has serious implications for both Church and State. The State deals with it mostly through legislation and often with very little reflection on the effects they are having on family and society. We, as the Church, also need to respond to them. Our response has to be filled with love and respect, while keeping an open mind on how Church thinking and legislation can change to meet the new realities.

## Faith values

- We have some vital faith values that need to be lived out as we find our way to include everyone.

- The dignity of every human person, from the moment of conception to the moment of natural death, and beyond.

- A major task of the Church is to be a people among whom every person and family can find a home and a place of comfort and hope.

- Every family, whatever its composition, is a sacred place where Christ lives because of Baptism and especially because of love.

- The marriage of a woman and man who choose to get married in, and into the Church, is one of the seven Sacraments and is due very particular respect and support from all of us

- As Catholics, we are in communion with the Universal Church, the Regional Church, the Diocese, and the Parish, and we take our lead from this communion. We do not depend on our own ideas or we are not guided by our feelings when we make decisions on how to behave in relation to these situations.

- We can only deal with the complexity of today's Church and world when we bring it all into prayer – personal, family, and parish community prayer.

## Conclusion

The future of humanity passes by way of the family. In our Catholic tradition, we acknowledge this truth when we identify the family as The Domestic Church. We need every family to be seen as the core element of the Church's life. And we need every family to live out their love for one another in such ways that they grow in love; in hope through their care for one another; in faith through family prayer; in joy through making their home a place where each one is glad to be, so that others can be drawn into Christ's presence and promise.

When we talk about the renewal of the Church today, we generally only think about the big Church of the parish, or the Diocese, or the Universal Church. The renewal of the Church of the family or the home is at least as important, if not more so, as any of these other levels.

During this month of February, we could all do well to look at this and decide how we can build up the faith, hope and love of our own family. And we can also look at how we can encourage others to do the same.

# What makes a good marriage?

by Sinéad Strong



It is a difficult question to answer. What works for one marriage might not work for another. We are living in an age where people are, more and more, choosing not to get married and not to have children. It can be daunting when you do choose married life and begin to face struggles. So many, nowadays, jump to divorce or walk away from their marriage if their needs are not being met or that it wasn't what they imagined it would be. Now, I don't mean that all marriages should stay together

no matter what, there are valid reasons to leave, such as violence and other forms of abuse. I simply wonder how can people, who have chosen marriage, stick through it in a world that puts 'self' first.

Marriage is, first and foremost, a sacrifice. A sacrifice of ourselves to and for each other. We know, as Catholics, that marriage is a sacrament. However, beyond that sacramental element is the natural understanding of marriage that has existed for generations throughout human history, but seems to be forgotten in more modern times. That is, marriage is a lifelong communion of a husband and his wife, established by their free consent and for the sake of the generation and education of children. Marriage is difficult, whether it's a happy one or not, and many are having difficulties, struggling with family life, having a lot of children or maybe not

even able to have children, and dealing with that. Then throw into the mix, work, school, activities/sports, household duties and so on; it can be a recipe for disaster.

So, what can we do? How does a marriage survive? Well, to start with, I think it is important to point out that there is no such thing as a perfect marriage. Every couple is different, every person is different! There are many couples who are very satisfied and happy with each other, who have lots of differences: different temperaments; interests; and even sometimes values. Arguments happen in happy and difficult marriages. What those in lasting relationships have realised is that at the heart of their marriage is simply a deep friendship; this friendship bonds them together and gives them that unity needed to survive the arguments and difficulties. Think back to those times in the early days of your

relationship, where you went to so much effort to woo this person you have chosen to spend the rest of your life with. Go back and reignite the friendship you had during those courtship days.

When a marriage is struggling, we can tend to become very negative and focus on all that is wrong with our spouse and with our relationship. It is so important to take on a positive mind-set so that we can rebuild trust and friendship. Practically, we can be in contact more, sending a text to let them know you are thinking about them, or asking how an appointment or meeting has gone. Showing a genuine interest in your spouse is a great way to show you care. Carve out time in all the busyness to spend with your spouse, once a week or once a month for a date night. It doesn't have to be anything lavish or spectacular, but just a



set an amount of time for you both to rekindle that bond in your marriage. Have a dating mindset in your marriage, that extra bit of aftershave or perfume when you are going out, doing your hair, and picking out your 'perfect' outfit to look your best for your spouse. That date is an opportunity then to get to know each other, to ask questions, listen, find out about each other's likes and dislikes. Get to know your spouse intimately,

be well-versed in their hopes and dreams, pray with and for each other. Holding each other in this high regard will strengthen your marriage and allow blessings to flow through the grace of the sacrament of your marriage, on you and your family.

*"The greater the friendship, the more solid and long-lasting the marriage will be, as we are united not only in flesh but in domestic activity."* (St Thomas Aquinas)



# Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

**HELLO children. Welcome to the month of February. This month is dedicated to the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. The Holy Family is where Jesus spent the time from His birth until He started His public journey telling us about God. The Holy Family is our best example of love, hope, faithfulness, and joy (CCC 533).**



During the month of February, we celebrate The Presentation of the Lord – Candlemas Day (CCC 529). The Presentation of the Lord is the story of Jesus being brought to the Temple in Jerusalem by Mary and St Joseph. It was customary for Jewish parents to present their child in the temple 40 days after birth. When St Joseph and Mary brought Jesus to the Temple they met Simeon, a devout Jew who had prayed that he would live to see the coming of the Messiah. Simeon, filled with the Holy Spirit, took the Baby Jesus in his arms, blessed Him and proclaimed that He was truly the Son of God.

The Feast of the Presentation is also known as Candlemas or Candle Mass Day. It is given this name because Christ is the light who has come into the world to chase away the dark and drive out sin. Since the seventh Century, candles have been blessed before Mass and used in the year ahead for celebrations like baptisms and prayers in the home.

**Saints of the Month**  
**February 1: St Brigid of Ireland**  
**February 3: St Blaise**  
**February 5: St Agatha**  
**February 10: St Scholastica**

## Our Lady of Lourdes

We celebrate the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes on February 11. This feast celebrates one of the most famous apparitions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. It took place in Lourdes, in southern France. On February 11, 1858, a young girl named Bernadette Soubirous was out collecting firewood with her sister and a friend near a grotto. Suddenly, Bernadette saw a vision of a beautiful lady. This was the first of 18 appearances.

During these visits, the Lady (who did not immediately identify herself as the Blessed Virgin Mary) asked for a chapel to be built on the grounds, so that Bernadette could pray for the

conversion of sinners. She also asked Bernadette to drink the spring water that was revealed to her at the grotto.

The news of the apparitions spread rapidly and caused quite a commotion in the town. As a result, Bernadette was detained, interrogated and harassed by the civil authorities and treated as if she were a common criminal. The villagers, however, came to Bernadette's rescue and demanded that she be released. Through all these difficulties Bernadette was given an interior strength.

Many of the townspeople believed that it was the Blessed Virgin Mary who was appearing to Bernadette, and they came down in large numbers to the grotto to pray. The spring which the Lady asked Bernadette to drink from, at the grotto, quickly revealed itself to give forth blessed water with miraculous healing properties.



On March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, the Lady appeared at the grotto again, this time identifying herself as the Immaculate Conception: "With her two arms hanging down, she raised Her eyes and looked up at the sky, and it was then that She told me, joining Her hands together now at the height of Her breast, that She was the Immaculate Conception. Those were the last words She ever said to me."

The Marian dogma of the Immaculate Conception (CCC 490-493) had been announced by Pope Pius IX a few years previous, on December 8, 1854. This infallibly defined dogma stated that the Blessed Virgin Mary, "from the first moment of Her conception, by a singular grace and privilege of almighty God, and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, was preserved free from every stain

of original sin is a doctrine revealed by God and, for this reason, must be firmly and constantly believed by all the faithful."

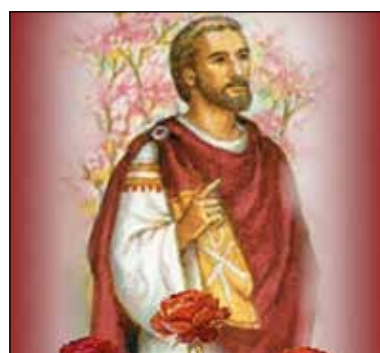
Lourdes has become a place of pilgrimage and healing, but even more of deep faith. A beautiful church has been erected near the grotto. The Shrine of Lourdes is visited by millions of pilgrims each year. It has become one of the most prominent places of pilgrimage in the world. The water of Lourdes is readily available to all pilgrims and numerous miraculous healings of Lourdes have been medically documented. Many people who visit Lourdes return home with renewed faith and a readiness to serve God in their lives.

*Our Lady of Lourdes, pray for us.*

## February 14 - St Valentine's Day

*"...and the greatest of these is love" (1 Cor 13:13)*

February 14 is always a very special day as we celebrate the love which we have for each other, and we remember especially the love that God has for us. According to Catholic history, there were two saints named Valentine who were both martyred. Little is known about the lives for these men, but tradition does speak of their great love for God and for others.



## Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. In which US city was the 2025 Super Bowl recently staged?
2. Who played the title role in the hit 1989 movie 'Uncle Buck'?
3. What 3 colours make up the national flag of Belgium?
4. What river flows through the city of Limerick?
5. In what William Shakespeare play was the lead character, a military commander, duped into believing his wife, Desdemona, had been guilty of infidelity?
6. In what European city is the football club Boavista based?
7. What do the letters RSVP stand for on a formal invite?
8. In what part of the UK would you find the Brecon Beacons?
9. After how many years of marriage is a 'ruby' anniversary celebrated?
10. Which two American regions have both a North and a South state?
11. Striker, Gary Lineker played for three English League clubs in his career. Leicester City was the first, but which team did he join from there?

**Quiz Answers:** 1, New Orleans; 2, John Candy; 3, Yellow, Red and Black; 4, The Shannon; 5, Othello; 6, Porto in Portugal; 7, Répondez s'il vous plait; 8, Wales; 9, Forty; 10, Carolina and Dakota; 11, Everton; 12, Twelve; 13, Boiling water; 14, Michigan; 15, Great Dane; 16, New Zealand; 17, Brighton & Hove Albion; 18, Leroy Brown; 19, Adil Ray; 20, Anne of Green Gables; 21, Germany; 22, Jennie Bond; 23, Chris Eubank; 24, Bedfordshire; 25, Clancy Wiggum.



## Feast of St Brigid of Ireland

St Brigid, one of the most loved saints in Ireland, was born during the fifth century. There are many stories about Brigid, especially her generosity to others. One story tells how St Brigid, after giving her mother's whole butter supply away to the poor, prayed to God that the butter would be replaced. And it miraculously re-appeared!

Brigid founded a monastery under an oak tree in Kildare. The monastery quickly grew in numbers. Many men and women came there to study the faith and learned the skills of ornate writing and religious art.

In Ireland, we have special devotion to St Brigid's Cross. Tradition speaks of how Brigid went to visit a dying pagan who needed to hear the Gospel. The man was very unsettled so she sat and prayed with him and, as she prayed, Brigid lifted some straw from the floor and weaved it into a cross. When the man had become quiet, he asked her what she was doing. Brigid explained the Gospel to him with the use of her cross made of straw. He immediately came to believe in Jesus. Brigid baptised him before he died. Today, people still make St Brigid's crosses out of rushes and place them in their home to ward off evil and welcome

Christ.

## St Blaise – The Blessing of the Throats

The Feast of St Blaise is celebrated on the third day of February. Blaise was a doctor before he was consecrated Bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia. He was imprisoned for his faith during the persecutions of Licinius. While in prison, he miraculously cured a young boy who was choking to death on a fishbone lodged in his throat.

From the sixth century, people who have been sick with diseases of the throat have prayed to St Blaise asking for his intercession. The custom of the blessing of throats arose from this and is practised every year in our churches. The priest holds two blessed candles over the head of the faithful or touches their throats, while he says the prayer of the saint and imparts God's blessing.

The priest says: "Through the intercession of St Blaise, Bishop and Martyr, may God deliver you from all ailments of the throat and from every other evil, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."

We should also ask St Blaise to protect us against any spiritual illness showing themselves through our tongues, such as cursing, gossiping or making unkind remarks. St James in his Letter (James 1:26) reminds us that our tongues should be used to praise God and not to curse others. Therefore, we pray to St Blaise to protect us from all physical and spiritual ailments which attach to our throats.





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

# Let Your Light Shine!



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