

# The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 98. JULY / AUGUST 2024

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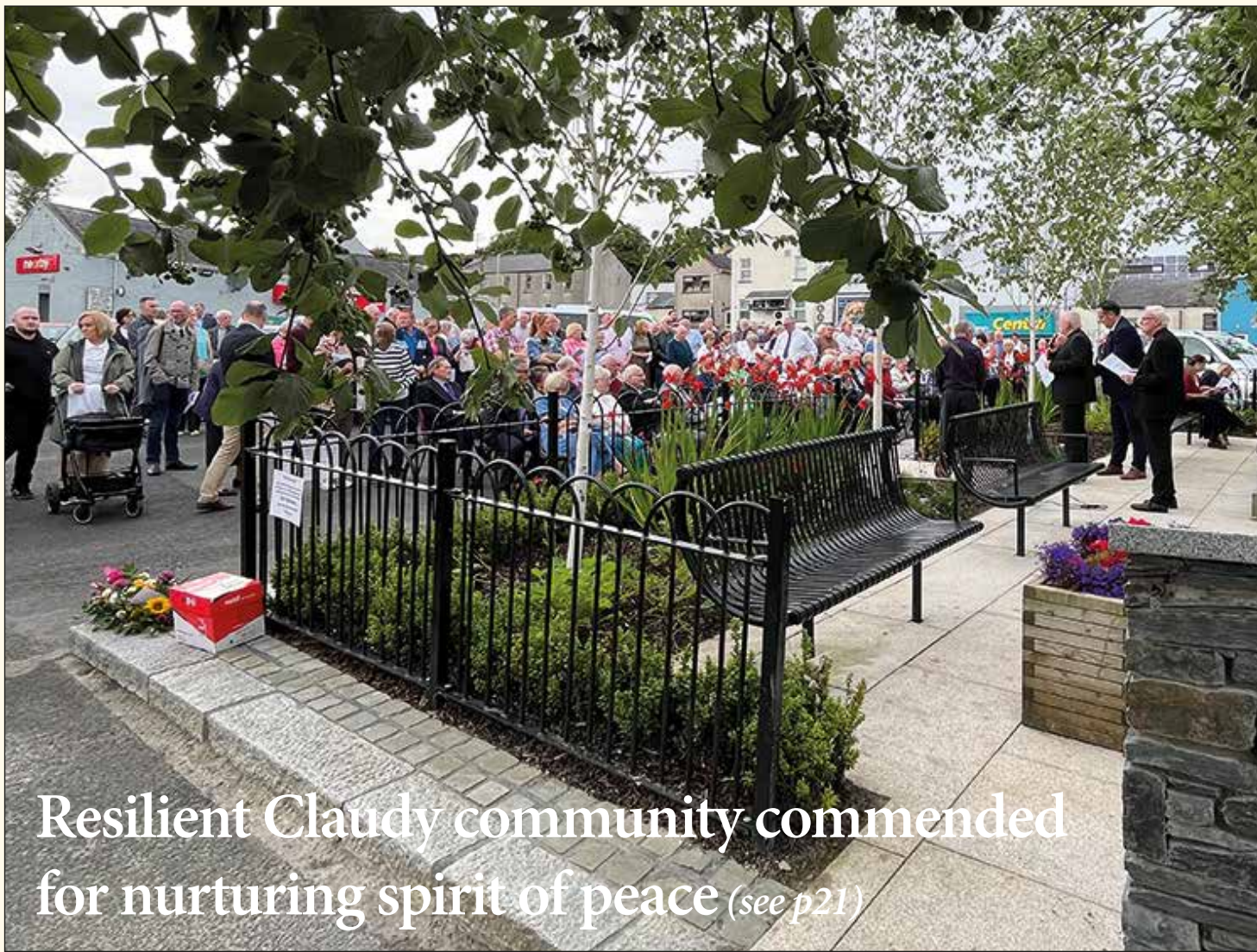
Anam Og summer scheme – Termonbacca



Fr Kearney Award – Newtownstewart



St John's Eve Bonfire – Greenlough



Resilient Claudy community commended for nurturing spirit of peace (see p21)

Rededication of Memorial to Claudy bombing victims on 52nd anniversary.



Sacred Heart Church 125th – Omagh



Hurling Feile Mass – Dungiven

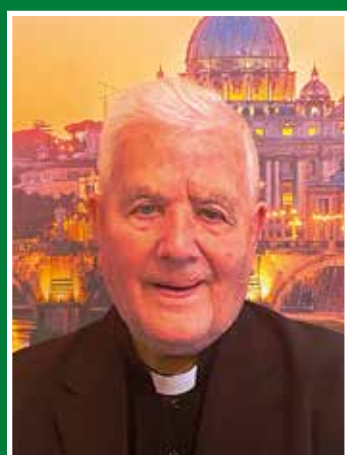


St Patrick's Church 90th – Pennyburn, Derry



Water Display – Steelstown

People in focus



Fr Liam Donnelly – Lavey



Fr Pat O'Hagan – The Glebe, Sion Mills



McCrystal Family – Omagh



The late Joan Harte – Eskra, Co Tyrone



The late Sr Clare Crockett – Long Tower, Derry

Also featuring: Young Writers' section; Gaelscoil Neachtain Dungiven Leavers' Mass; Tyrone dentistry student returns from African dental mission; Dungiven blessing of lilies; Children's Catechism Club – C3; St Eugene's Afternoon Tea with Daniel O'Donnell; Fr Pat O'Hagan's 40th anniversary parish celebrations; Sr Clare Retreat; Derry Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage; Inishowen & Derry Men's Rosaries; New Archbishop of Ardstrow; Clerical Changes; Vocations Day; Irish Section; Preparing for Season of Creation; Liturgical Calendar for August & September; Features; Parish Post-its; 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](mailto:editorthenet15@gmail.com) or ring/text 07809292852

Hospital chaplain, Fr Patrick Lagan reflects on the Pope's prayer intention for July for the pastoral care of the sick...

Offering up suffering a humble gesture that reveals inner strength, resolve and faith



Fr Patrick Lagan

DURING July, our Holy Father, Pope Francis has asked that all God's faithful "pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick confer to those who receive it, and their loved ones,

the power of the Lord, and become ever more a visible sign of compassion and hope for all." In the weeks leading into the summer, we listened to many of the accounts of healing that are recorded in St Mark's Gospel. These are powerful encounters between those who come to our blessed Lord mostly in pitiful desperation and the raw power of not only Christ to bring healing, but also of prayer and intercession. In the case of the woman who comes to Jesus and who reaches for, as St Mark says, "even His cloths", her prayer and, indeed, all who come to Jesus with prayers of healing, have the authority to draw God's healing and grace from Him. This is not because He is weak or bound by mere obligation, but simply

because He loves. He loves so extraordinarily that He cannot but respond in such beautiful compassion to the beloved; His creation, His beloved son and daughter, you and me coming to Him asking for healing. As a hospital chaplain, I experience this faith, this longing and desire for strength, almost on a regular basis. Not only accompanying those who are in their final moments, but in the hearts of loved ones who often feel powerless at a bedside, waiting for medical staff to come and offer assistance, to answer questions, to reassure them that all will be well. For these moments, we have the Sacrament of the Sick. We believe that, "By the sacred anointing of the sick and the prayer of the priest, the whole

Church commends those who are ill to the suffering and glorified Lord, that He may raise them up and save them. And, indeed, she exhorts them to contribute to the good of the People of God by freely uniting themselves to the passion and death of Christ." (CCC 1499) This brief description from the Catechism asks two things, first that we accompany all those who are suffering both in prayer and by our presence. Secondly, for us who are suffering, we can derive a grace, strength, by commending our suffering to the passion and death of our Lord. This second invitation is something I experience regularly when simply talking with families and loved ones who walk that path of

sickness. In those moments, they receive a tremendous and often inspirational strength to offer their own suffering for a particular intention or, as we so often hear...to "offer it up." These words can sometimes be dismissed, but in that humble gesture an inner strength, resolve and faith is revealed. So, in this way, their witness often becomes a sign of God among us. Their resolve and determination teaches us that God is truly with us. Let us pray during July for all those who walk that path of sickness, and let us also remember the many lay faithful and hospital staff who, along with chaplaincy teams, are the bearers of Christ's presence, His compassion to all those who suffer.

Bishop Donal reflects on the Pope's August prayer intention that "political leaders be at the service of their own people, working for integral human development and the common good, taking care of those who have lost their jobs and giving priority to the poor."

Pray for good political leaders dedicated to serving communities...especially the neediest



Bishop Donal

APPARENTLY, 2024 is a year when at least 64 countries – representing nearly half the world's population - will have held national elections. It is not surprising that Pope Francis asks us all to pray for good political leaders, dedicated to serving their communities – and especially the neediest.

The daily news bulletin can be unsettling. Political conflict, between and within countries, is often very bitter. Big donors and wealthy corporate interests seem to have a strong influence on policies and priorities. I find it hard to think of outstanding world leaders who can inspire hope of peace in our younger generations. In our own country, as in most other places, politics revolve mainly around proposals for raising and spending money. I don't hear much discussion about how to create a more loving and cohesive society. When the dominant principle seems to be that 'feeling good' no-one should be made to feel bad because of choices they make. Thus, morality is not something to be discussed in polite company.

And that leaves little room for talk of the true, the good and the beautiful. But Pope Francis wrote: "The best way to dominate and gain control over people is to spread despair and discouragement, even under the guise of defending certain values. Today, in many countries, hyperbole, extremism and polarization have become political tools." Cf Fratelli Tutti (2020) para 15. We know from this island that sectarianism and tribalism exist because they serve the interests of some groups. When we encounter sectarian attacks or displays, it is always useful to ask not just who is acting in a sectarian way, but who is benefiting from the sectarianism. And we know that religion can be used in ways that serve us rather than giving glory

and obedience to God. Similarly, other voices suggest that we should forget and draw a line under the past. Others use the reality of our divided past to say that religious beliefs should play no role in politics or education. Ideas and policies always serve someone's interests. Pope Francis asks us to pray that we will have political leaders who see their role and power as being at the service of the Common Good and not just of sectional interests. We have seen examples of great political figures who have promoted healing without rancour. They were not perfect men and women, but they believed that politics could inspire greatness and generosity, courage and hope. There is a phrase from somewhere which says 'when

elephants clash, the grass gets trampled'. When large political forces collide, it can be very easy to forget the little and apparently unimportant people who will lose out. Jesus wanted to bring healing to His own society. Thus, He had no time for those who used condemnation to promote disunity and hide injustice. He wanted to bring mercy and healed relationships. He did not tolerate those who promoted hatred and division. He said that the gentle, the merciful and the peacemakers were blessed. The Pope's prayer theme for August is very apt for this year when many politicians are being elected. We pray that they will be a blessing on their own people and be builders of peace around the world.



# The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

## Supporting us:

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

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

# Anam Óg summer scheme enjoyed by over 30 children *by Aoife O'Neill*

THE Termonbacca Carmelite Retreat Centre, in Derry, held another very successful annual Anam Óg summer scheme for young people aged 8-14.

From Monday, July 29 until Friday, August 2, the sounds of fun and laughter rang around the monastery, as 34 young people and two young leaders enjoyed the week-long programme.

Using games and fun lessons, the young people explored many topics, including: identity; purpose; friendship with Christ; and prayer. A wide range of icebreakers every day helped everyone to get to know one another and new friendships were forged.

We enjoyed decorating buns, singing, and we even had a performance of a play scripted by one of the young people, Faye Kelly, and performed by some of the young people.

A code-breaking scavenger hunt was quickly cracked by the young people, revealing a very important truth: "Our hearts are restless until the rest in you." In discussion groups, we explored what that meant for us.

On Wednesday, as temperatures soared outside, we had a day of team competition and games outdoors. The young people enjoyed badminton, Frisbee games

and a highly competitive Egg & Spoon race, won by Fr Stephen Quinn ocd...although it was suspected that he cheated! The young people soon got their own back in the water fight!

We learned a lot about the power of words and bullying on Thursday. In discussion groups, some of the young people shared their own experiences of being bullied and how that made them feel. Everyone agreed ways that we could deal with bullying and made a commitment to be more aware of using their words to build up and compliment others.

Throughout the week, we enjoyed prayer time together in the oratory. We reflected on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary and spoke about the importance of talking to God often in prayer.

Overall, the week was a great success and the young people were sad to see Friday come. Our youth group Anam Óg will resume meetings on Sunday, September 1, and we are always open to new members. We meet on the first and third Sunday of each month, from 6-7.15 pm, and explore the faith together in fun ways.

For further information contact Aoife on 028 71 262512 or email [termonbaccaderry@gmail.com](mailto:termonbaccaderry@gmail.com)



## Young Dungiven hurlers take part in special Féile Mass

Derry Féile na Gael winners, Kevin Lynch Hurling Club, Dungiven, who represented Derry in the All Ireland Féile in

Wexford, took part in a special Féile Mass in St Patrick's Church, celebrated by Fr Joseph Varghese, on June 21.



## Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

- |                                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                 |                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Aghyaran:</b> Thursdays, 10.30am-12 noon.                                                                                                                | <b>at 3:45 pm.</b>                                                                                              | <b>Killygordon:</b> Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.  | at the back of the Church.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Ardstraw West &amp; Castlederg:</b> Fridays, 10.30am-12 noon, St Patrick's Church.                                                                       | <b>Creggan:</b> Sundays 1.30 pm-6 pm; Mondays 10.30 am - 7 pm; Tue - Sat 10.30 am - 12 pm, Divine Mercy Chapel. | <b>Lavey:</b> Fridays, after 9.30 am Mass until 5 pm.                                | <b>St Columba's Long Tower:</b> Wednesdays, after 10 am Mass until 7.30 pm Mass.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Badoney Lower:</b> Tuesdays, after 12.30 pm Mass until 5 pm, St Patrick's Gortin.                                                                        | <b>Drumquin:</b> Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.                                                        | <b>Leckpatrick:</b> Wednesdays, after 10 am Mass until 5.30 pm.                      | <b>St Eugene's Cathedral:</b> Sundays, 3-6 pm, and Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.20 pm.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Banagher:</b> Fridays, 10-11am, St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.                                                                                            | <b>Drumragh:</b> Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.                         | <b>Limavady:</b> Sundays from 3-5 pm in Christ the King (with Confessions).          | <b>Three Patrons:</b> Mondays, after 11 am Mass, concluding with a Youth 2000 Holy Hour from 7-8 pm, in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. It also takes place seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, 8 am-6 pm, and on Wednesdays, from 10.45 am - 6.45 pm, in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn. |
| <b>Buncrana:</b> Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, and Sundays, 2-10 pm, St Mary's Oratory.                                                         | <b>Errigal:</b> Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.                        | <b>Melmount:</b> Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.                               | <b>Urney &amp; Castlefin:</b> Tuesdays, 12 noon-8 pm, St Anthony's Chapel.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Cappagh:</b> Wednesdays, 8-9pm, concluding with Night Prayer, and Sundays, 3.30-6.30 pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.                                  | <b>Fahan:</b> Fridays after 10 am Mass, St Mur's Parish Church.                                                 | <b>Moville:</b> Mondays, 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, St Pius X Church.           | <b>Waterside:</b> Monday mornings and Wednesdays, 7-9 pm, St Oliver Plunkett Church, Strathfoyle.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Claudy:</b> 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, Craighane. | <b>Greencastle (Tyrone):</b> Thursdays, 6-10 pm, St Patrick's Church.                                           | <b>Newtownstewart:</b> Thursdays, 6.30-7.30 pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Coleraine:</b> Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2-4 pm, with Rosary                                                                                      | <b>Greenlough:</b> Thursdays, 9am-5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.                                            | <b>Sion Mills:</b> Fridays, 11 am-6.50 pm, ending with Benediction before 7 pm Mass. |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Iskaheen:</b> Tuesdays, from after 10 am Mass until 2 pm, St Patrick's Church.                               | <b>Steelstown:</b> Fridays, from after 10 am Mass until 6.50 pm.                     |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|                                                                                                                                                             | <b>Kilrea:</b> Mondays, 12 noon - 7pm, St Mary's Drumagarnier. Concludes with Benediction.                      | <b>Strabane (Camus):</b> All day in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace),           |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

*Amongst the pilgrims on this year's Derry Diocesan Lourdes Pilgrimage, from July 1-5, were Omagh mother, Carmel McCrystal, and her two daughters, Eilish & Maeve, who share their experiences here with readers of 'The Net'...*

# Pleasure to witness respectful rapport develop between our youth and elderly *by Carmel McCrystal, Youth Leader - Omagh*

I had the honour and privilege of being a Youth Leader on this year's Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage, and I will always cherish what I witnessed in those days. The Derry, Strabane and Omagh youth worked closely with the Diocesan clergy and medical team to help and assist the sick and elderly to participate fully in the very special religious liturgies and events of Lourdes.

I had the pleasure of witnessing respectful rapports develop between the youth and the elderly, as they encouraged each other in their faith and reverently participated in each Mass, procession and event. Whether carrying the Diocesan banner, reading the Prayer of the Faithful, singing the Psalm, or taking part in the torch-lit procession, each member of the youth group carried out their duties with diligence,

pride and as a true witness of their faith in God and Our Lady of Lourdes. I have no doubt that seeds of faith were planted among the youth during this time.

We had a packed schedule, which included very special occasions, including a Mass at the Grotto, Way of the Cross led by Bishop McKeown, a torch-lit procession, a guided tour of St Bernadette's life in Lourdes, and Anointing of the Sick. However, I have two personal highlights.

The first is the beautiful and mostly uphill walk to Bartres, which Bishop McKeown led for the youth and willing pilgrims. Bishop McKeown was, himself, an example of a shepherd leading his flock in faith and modesty, explaining how St Bernadette worked as a shepherdess. The Bishop then continued the walk to the Church

of St John the Baptist, where Fr Michael managed to persuade a nun, who looked after the Church, to allow the group to see the relics of St Bernadette under the care of Bishop McKeown. We felt very privileged and blessed to have this wonderful opportunity.

My second highlight was the water gesture, which I completed with my two daughters, Eilish and Maeve. As I quietly reflected in prayer before the gesture, I thought about Mary the Mother of Jesus, Her love for Her Son and Her unwavering willingness to follow God's will. The act of washing our hands and face, and then drinking the Lourdes Holy water together as a family was very moving, as we united in our prayers and faith.

I wish to thank everyone who supported and organised this very successful Derry Diocesan

Pilgrimage trip for the 190 pilgrims. Huge thanks to those who work in the Lourdes Office in the Derry Pastoral Centre, to the dedicated medical team who looked after everyone with quiet professionalism, to everyone involved in the fundraisers for the youth pilgrimage, including parents who organised and supported hoover raffles, coffee mornings, GoFundMe pages, non-uniform days and all other donations.

Many thanks to the amazing youth for participating fully in the pilgrimage and being a powerful example of faith, hope and love to all those around them. Thanks to all the youth leaders: from Derry - Mark, Marty and Donal; Strabane - Sorcha and Anne-Marie; Omagh - Ann and Deirdre, who all worked as a team to co-ordinate and encourage the youth before and

during the pilgrimage.

Finally, very special thanks to Fr Michael McCaul, our Spiritual Director, for his meticulous organisation and planning of the pilgrimage from its infancy to completion, and including all the youth in the liturgies and events throughout our time in Lourdes. Thanks also to all the clergy on our pilgrimage including Fr Peter O'Kane, Fr Stephen Ward, Fr Colm O'Doherty, Fr Eamonn Graham, Fr Gerry Sweeney, and especially Bishop Donal McKeown for giving up his time to lead this highly successful pilgrimage and his personable manner, with which he communicated and gently encouraged the youth.

It was an honour to be part of this pilgrimage and I will cherish the many wonderful memories. Thank you.



The group of 190 Lourdes pilgrims from the Derry Diocese



The seven pupils from Sacred Heart College, Omagh, with their teacher, Mrs Ann Cullinan.



Seven pupils from Loreto Convent Grammar School, Omagh, at the Church of St Bernadette, in Lourdes.



The eleven pupils from St Columb's College, Derry, with their youth leaders and Bishop Donal.



Bishop Donal led the Way of the Cross.



Derry Diocesan Youth team with their leaders, and Fr Michael McCaul, Bishop Donal and Fr Stephen Ward.



Bishop Donal in the Church of St John the Baptist with the Derry Diocesan Youth.



Queuing for the water gesture in Lourdes.

# Seeing spirit of St Bernadette fill our youth I realised Jesus is with young people

by Maeve McCrystal, Omagh Youth Pilgrim

IN July, I had the pleasure of representing Derry Diocesan Youth on the Lourdes pilgrimage. My role was to accompany the elderly and aid them in their pilgrimage experience, as well as taking part in the various Masses and processions.

The first lesson that I learned from this experience, alongside my classmates, before we even travelled to Lourdes, was that God will provide. At first, when I heard of the planning and fundraising associated with this pilgrimage, I found it hard to fathom how we would do it, but it became clear to us that we weren't going to achieve anything alone. God was going to help us get there by touching the hearts of the generous people in our Parish and the many eager hands willing to help.

In addition, the one outstanding message that I received from this beautiful place of Lourdes was that Catholicism is truly worldwide, and is in everything that we see and do, and in the people we encounter on our life path.

Often, religion today can seem

to be confined to the four walls of our bedrooms and to Sunday Mass, almost foreign to the outside world. Lourdes, on the other hand, illustrated to me through the myriad of languages that I overheard, alongside the sense of community that poured naturally from the crowd of 10,000 people, that we are all united under our love for Our Lady and Her Son, Jesus. It taught me that Jesus is not found in solitude, but in the face of the little Canadian girl who wanted to fill my Holy water bottles with me, and in the gentle, humble moments which St Bernadette is revered for.

The highlight of my Lourdes experience, as simple as it may be in such an extraordinary place of healing, was attending the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a Diocesan community. Seeing my fellow classmates surrender themselves to God, with such sincerity and humility, was a sight that I will never forget. In a world where people are constantly trying to boast and pride themselves in their futile achievements, to see the



spirit of St Bernadette fill our youth allowed me to realise that, counter to popular belief, Jesus is with the youth, we just need to encourage them to trust in Him.

The rapport that built between myself and Denis, whom I cared for, and his two daughters, consolidated for me that Catholicism is not

confined to a specific age group or type of person. The example of St Bernadette being a small, illiterate and seemingly unimportant girl, clarified for me that God does not call the qualified, he qualifies the called. He invites each and every one of us to Him; all we have to do is answer.



Mass at the Grotto.



Padraig Corry and Ronan Darcy reading the Prayer of the Faithful.



Darragh Ellis and Conchur Darcy held the Derry Diocesan banner throughout the pilgrimage



Sarah Jane Campbell leading the Rosary during the torch-lit procession.

# Inspirational to witness strength of faith and devotion to God and Our Lady

by Eilish McCrystal, Medical Team, Omagh

AT the beginning of July, myself and 190 Derry Diocesan pilgrims left Ireland for Lourdes; an experience I had the privilege of joining as a member of the medical team. My role was to attend the sick and elderly, ensuring that they received the level of care they required and were as comfortable as possible throughout their pilgrimage.

As the most junior member of the medical team, I was reassured that pilgrims with complex needs were assigned to more experienced members. I approached each day with the needs of others as my priority, and referred any concerns that I had to senior medical staff, while carrying out my delegated tasks to the best of my ability.

As a third year medical student, I found this experience extremely humbling. Typically, my experience in hospitals is with patients who are unwell and hoping to be cured of their ailments, and I expected this experience to be similar. However, seeing the faith of those around

me hoping and praying for their intentions, including good health or to accept and be at peace with their diagnosis, was not only a reminder of how blessed I am to be in good health and appreciate the good health of my family, but it was also inspirational to witness the strength of faith and devotion to Our Lady and God around me.

My highlight of Lourdes was, undoubtedly, the water gesture carried out at the Baths. This was made even more special as I was able to complete it with my Mum and sister. Growing up, we always attended Mass, Confession, and other religious ceremonies, as a family. However, since starting University in Belfast, I more often attend Mass alone or with friends. Coming together again as a family to place all our intentions before Our Lady of Lourdes was a beautiful memory I will never forget. Also, washing our hands and face and drinking the water as St Bernadette did, felt as though we were walking in her footsteps.



Derry Diocesan pilgrims during the torch-lit procession.



# Steelstown Our Lady of Lourdes water display

by Steelstown & Culmore  
Parish Eco Groups

"Loving God, we thank you for the gift of water. Help us to make good choices to save water and share it fairly. Amen"

This short prayer was one of many in the water display by the Steelstown and Culmore Parish Eco Group. The water droplets contained thoughtful prayers and practical promises by the children of Steelstown PS.

"...Bless those people who do not have clean water. Give us the strength to help them receive clean water."

This child's prayer echoed Pope Francis' words in Laudato si' - "Access to safe, drinkable water is a basic and universal human right since it is essential to human survival. Our world has a grave social debt towards the poor who lack access to drinking water. This debt can be paid partly by an increase in funding to provide clean water and sanitary services among the poor." (Laudato Si' 30)

The Water Display was an opportunity to acknowledge donations and support for the 2023 Advent 'Gifts of Change' promotion, which enabled the parish to fund a solar-powered water pump in Malawi. It also thanked parishioners for generous contributions to the 2024 Trocaire Lenten Appeal. The focus this year was helping people access clean water.

The Trocaire box highlighted how families in Malawi are doubly hit by drought and flooding due to the climate crisis. Too little or too much water is a daily struggle that is hard for us to imagine. Women and children spend hours carrying up to 20 litres of water at a time. It is a heavy burden.

Water containers were part of the display, and the original idea was to invite people to feel the weight...and then imagine carrying it to Culmore or Pennyburn. On second thoughts, however, that was dropped for health and safety reasons, which emphasises the unfair hardships



others endure.

**"Help us to be grateful for the gift of water every day."**

On average, we each use 145 litres of water daily in Northern Ireland...at the turn of a tap!

**"Dear God, I am sorry for wasting water. Help us to conserve water."**

The children's promises included practical suggestions:

We promise to take shorter showers; We promise to put more clothes in the washing machine in each wash; We will drink any water that we pour; We will not fill the kettle more than we need to; We can use collected rainwater to water our plants and gardens.

The Parish Eco Group has followed that last bit of advice and recently installed a water butt, in a discrete location at the side of the Church, to collect rainwater to water the pollinator friendly flowers at the Grotto.

**"Dear God, help us to cherish water..."**

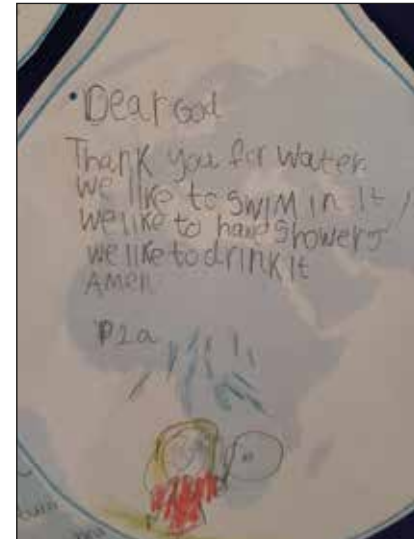
Our Water Display included photographs capturing the well digging event in Northern Nigeria, that was described so vividly by Sr Geraldine, an Irish

Sister of Charity, on a recent visit to our Parish.

There was great rejoicing when eventually damp soil was reached...more valuable than gold!

**"Hail Mary, help us to live in wonder and awe by protecting our seallife..." "Dear God, thank you for water. We like to swim in it."**

We give thanks to the Creator, with the children, for this wonderful, lifegiving gift. We pray that we may have a deeper appreciation of water and a stronger commitment not to waste it. We pray that we may not pollute our rivers and seas through carelessness and selfishness.



## My First Holy Communion money...and an ongoing challenge

by Patricia McCormack



Patricia McCormack, Steelstown & Culmore Parish Eco Group

JUNE saw the beautiful celebrations of First Holy Communion of children in our local Steelstown and Culmore primary schools. At the beginning of the month, the Novena to the Sacred Heart was prayed at daily Masses and, on a later weekend, we had an engaging talk from Sr Geraldine, an Irish Sister of Charity who has worked overseas with "the least, the lost and the last". In June also, we had a display on Water prepared by the Steelstown & Culmore Parish Eco Group.

These things got me remembering and thinking. I wondered what the lasting memories for these

children would be. Two things stand out from my own First Holy Communion Day. Firstly, the breakfast in the adjoining school. Not the sociable mingling of families and photo opportunities like today, just the children, long trestle tables, hot tea and buns, which were very welcome after the morning's fasting. And three whole pastries each!

The second abiding memory is that after the customary visits to grandparents, aunts and uncles and the contents of my wee white, drawstring bag were counted, my mother suggested that half should go to a water project on "The Missions". I don't remember how my seven-year-old self felt but, with the passing of time, I have grown to understand and appreciate this valuable lesson. Welcoming Jesus and His love for everyone, including me, also means passing it on, imitating His compassionate, generous Heart.

My mother explained that my First Communion money would help provide clean water for children like me, who were going blind because of water shortages, poor sanitation and infestations of flies. It was the first time that I heard of trachoma, but I recall my

mother saying many, many times over the years: "Thank God for clean water!"

Sr Geraldine spoke of those who still struggle to find water during droughts and suffer the effects of devastating flooding intensified by global warming. She asked for our prayers and financial support.

"So tight, he still has his First Communion money!" is a humorous remark...but seriously, I am challenged to be more generous. I am no longer a child. An adult faith also requires me to be painfully aware of what is happening around the world and closer to home. What is causing the climate and environmental crises? What does it mean for poorest and further generations? I am challenged to examine how my lifestyle contributes to the problems and to make changes to what I buy and discard, what I eat, how I travel and heat, how my savings and pension are invested. What environmental campaigns should I support?

It can all seem too complex and difficult until I return to the Eucharist and in the words of one of my First Communion Day hymns: "Sweet heart of Jesus, Fount of love and mercy."

## Tyrone Dentistry student returns from African dental mission

DENTISTRY student, Erin O'Hagan from Attagh, in Co Tyrone, and Martin McCormick from Glenn Finn, in Co Donegal, along with five other fourth-year Dentistry students from Trinity College Dublin, who travelled to Arusha, Tanzania.

Over two weeks, supervised by dental staff, they examined and screened 270 patients, extracted 105 teeth, completed 30 restorations, and performed 52 scale and polish procedures. They also provided oral hygiene education.

In addition, they screened 30 children at a local orphanage, where they distributed toothbrushes and taught oral health.

The DOVE group in Tanzania thanks everyone for their donations and the staff at St Elizabeth's Hospital for their assistance.



# Calling the world to unite in daily praying of the Rosary *by Catherine McGowan*

THE All-Ireland Rosary Rally, at Knock Shrine in Co Mayo on June 1, proved to be a most memorable event for both young and old. At midday, in the large, grassed area behind the Basilica, over 200 people took part in Ireland's first ever Living Rosary.

People wearing white and colour-coded t-shirts formed a gigantic Rosary, which was over 240 feet in circumference. White t-shirts represented the Hail Mary's, red t-shirts the Our Fathers, and blue t-shirts for the Hail Holy Queen.

Fr John Harris, OP, led the group in prayer. Overhead drones captured the remarkable scene on video from various angles, images of which created a great buzz on social media platforms.

Later that week, the Living Rosary event was highlighted on the EWTN Washington news bulletin, where they referred to it as a "Master of Mysteries" and broadcast some of the drone footage, which displayed the message "Pray the Rosary Every Day".

This is also a message of hope to the world that, despite bad news and misrepresentations coming from Ireland (legalisation of abortion, Eurovision etc), that all is not lost.

The Catholic faith in Ireland

is clearly alive and vibrant. The Catholic faithful in Ireland want to ignite a desire for each country to host a national Rosary Rally, inspired by the late Fr Patrick Peyton.

We are also calling the world to unite with us in daily praying of the Rosary, this incredibly powerful prayer which honours Our Lady and, ultimately, gives great glory and praise to God, Our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, Jesus.

More information and videos are available on [www.AllIrelandRosaryRally.com](http://www.AllIrelandRosaryRally.com)



The Home of the Mother Servant Sisters, based at Cross Roads, Killygordon, at the National Rosary Rally.

# Newtownstewart 'Fr Kearney' Award



The Newtownstewart Parish Award was presented to P7 recipient, Louise McNamee on Sunday, July 14. In honour of the late Fr Stephen Kearney, the award acknowledges St Patrick's School children's contribution to the liturgical life of the parish during their P7 year. Louise is a faithful choir member and reader at Sunday Mass. She is pictured at St Eugene's Church, Glenock, with Fr Roland Colhoun. Photograph by Gena McNamee.

# Men's July First Saturday Rosary...



Derry



Clonmany

# Blessing of Lilies in Dungiven



Blessing of Lilies in St Patrick's Church, Dungiven, on the Feast of St Anthony, by Fr Joseph Varghese.

# School leaver's Mass for Gaelscoil Neachtain Dungiven



Gaelscoil Neachtain Dungiven Leaver's at Mass celebrated in St Patrick's Church by Fr Paddy Doherty, Maghera.

## Young Writers share thoughts...

A warm welcome this month to the latest addition to *The Net* Young Writers, 17-year-old Bláthnaid McMenamin, from the Leckpatrick Parish, in the Co Tyrone Deanery. In her first article, Bláthnaid shares the powerful experience she had on pilgrimage to Lourdes in July with the Derry Diocese, where she had a very touching encounter with Our Lord in the Eucharist.

Travelling on the same pilgrimage as a member of the Youth Team, Seán writes about the great impact Lourdes had on him as well, leaving him with memories that he is sure will never fade of a week that led him to grow greatly spiritually and in his relationship with God.

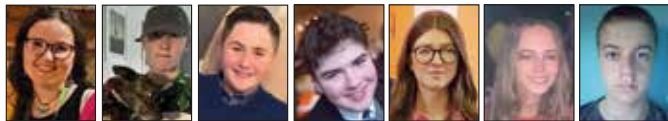
Continuing with the pilgrimage theme, Cadhla shares her amazing experience as a pilgrim walking the Camino with her classmates, teacher and parish priest, while Luke reflects on the small changes we can make in our lives that could have a powerful, positive effect on those around us.

Niamh and Erin both write about the legacy of St Therese of Lisieux, and how her simplicity makes the call to live a Christian life and to help spread the Good News feel more achievable in our everyday lives.

Reflecting on Pope Francis' message for World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly 2024, Peter writes about the wonderful example and support of his grandmother in his life, while James shares the striking story of a young weightlifting champion in America, who became aware of a call to priesthood after experiencing a Eucharistic Congress and will become a seminarian in September.



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



## Emotional Lourdes experience...

# The Eucharist healed me in ways I didn't even know I needed by Bláthnaid

NESTLED in the Pyrenees foothills of south-west France, Lourdes attracts up to six million pilgrims each year. With each one humbly asking for Our Lady's intercession, it is clear to see that God is at work there. Lourdes offers each pilgrim a new experience and a personal encounter with Jesus every time they arrive.

Having been to Lourdes twice before with my family, I thought I knew what to expect when my mother and I joined the Derry Diocese on their annual pilgrimage to the shrine in July. However, I couldn't have been more wrong, and was pleasantly surprised to see the contrasts from going with an organised group as opposed to independently.

One notable difference I found was the increased sense of community. In recent years, I've very much become someone who shuts the door and prays in private, but I often lack appreciation for the gift of both public worship and fellowship. From singing Responsorial Psalms together, to getting to know the people we shared a dinner table with, this pilgrimage gave me a new appreciation for how God works through His people.

A specific example of this, which spoke volumes to me, was when anonymous petitions were offered around to each pilgrim whilst leaving the closing ceremony. The simple act of praying for another person's intentions, whilst knowing someone is praying for mine fills me with both comfort and hope. As a young person, sometimes I find it difficult to talk about or share my faith with others, but it was a lovely reminder that I am not alone in my faith and turning to God in times of difficulty is absolutely nothing to be ashamed of.

Furthermore, as a young person, I was delighted to be able to venerate the relic of St Pope John Paul II, which can be found in a side Chapel of the Basilica of Saint Pius X. Worn on the day of his attempted assassination, the relic is a fragment of his soutane from May 13, 1981, marked with his blood. Commonly referred

to as the 'Pope of the Youth', it was a privilege to have a quiet moment of prayer to ask God for his intercession, when praying for both the youth and the future of the Church.

Our Lady of Lourdes appeared 18 times from February 11th to July 16, 1858. During the eighth apparition, on February 24, Our Holy Mother brought a message of penance to St Bernadette, instructing her to "pray to God for the conversion of sinners."

Dedicated to the sick and disabled, the low stations allow wheelchair users and those with reduced mobility to pray and reflect on the Way of the Cross. Our Mother Mary's message of "Penance! Penance! Penance!" played on an endless loop in my mind whilst praying here.

### The Cross

Something I admittedly probably don't do often enough at home, I found reflecting on Christ's journey to the Cross to be a very fruitful experience. Being very much aware that each time that we fall into sin, we add weight to His Cross. With each Station, I was reminded of Jesus' sacrifice for us and just how painful His Passion really was, which helped me put my own struggles into perspective and further grow in awe of His selflessness.

After reflecting on this message of "Penance", I was so thankful to have the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the evening penitential service. As some of the friars from the Irish Dominicans were also in Lourdes, they kindly helped with this service. This was a particular highlight of the pilgrimage for me, as the Dominicans are one of my favourite religious orders, so I was very appreciative to be able to have a Dominican priest hear my Confession.

Lourdes offers every pilgrim their own personal encounter with Christ. Whether it be an answered prayer through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, a moment of peace during Eucharistic Adoration, or the beginning of a new God-centered friendship, each person has a specific moment of their pilgrimage which stands out to



them as a real connection with Jesus.

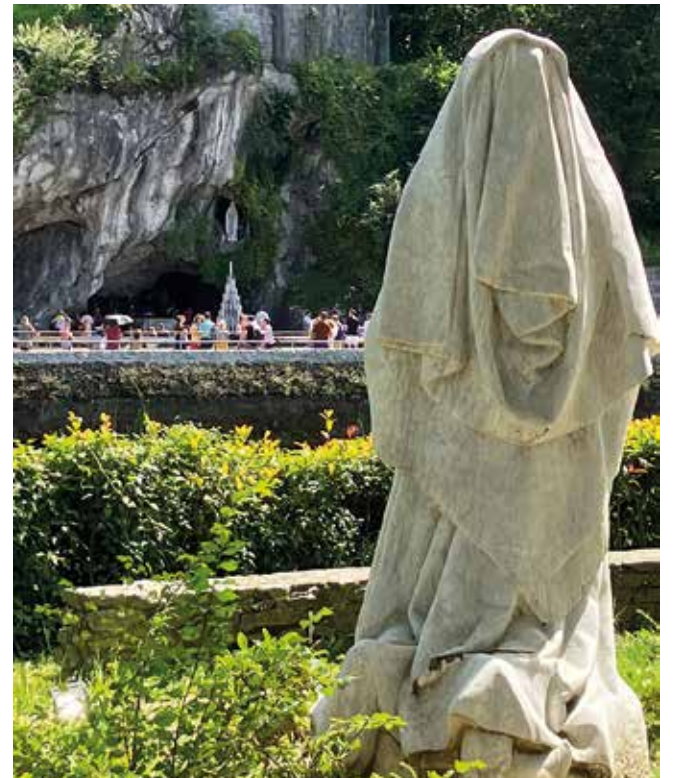
This time, I experienced an intimate moment with Jesus when receiving the Eucharist during the nightly French Mass at the Grotto. Honouring Our Lady enables us to better know, love and serve Her Son, Jesus Christ. Kneeling in front of the rock where Our Lady appeared to St Bernadette and receiving the true Body, Soul and Divinity of Our Lord was an amazing blessing that filled me with such indescribable peace. An emotional experience, the Eucharist healed me in ways I didn't even know I needed.

Following the onset of my illness when I was 15, I have visited numerous doctors, therapists and counsellors. Whilst all these people have been helpful in their own way, I can confidently say that no tablet or medical professional has been,

or ever will be, able to bring me the comfort and healing that Our Lord has.

Lourdes is a very special place, where Jesus Christ touches the hearts of so many people who are broken in mind, body and spirit. With 70 confirmed miracles recorded to have taken place in Lourdes, the sick are the most important there. Whilst not every pilgrim is granted a miraculous healing, Jesus offers each pilgrim in Lourdes their own experience with Him that can work wonders and change their lives for the better.

The Miracle Club, a film released in 2023, follows the story of a group of women from Dublin on pilgrimage to Lourdes in the late 1960s. As it was worded in the film, "You don't go to Lourdes for a miracle; you go for the strength to carry on when there isn't one."



## Young Writers share thoughts...

### From the barbell to the thurible *by James*

I love hearing vocation stories, it always reminds me that people from all walks of life, and those with different interests and hobbies, can be united in the common path of the Priesthood. Recently, I read a story of a young man, aged 21, from Ohio, USA, and his story was of great interest to me.

Will Heller, a two-time Junior National Medalist, All-American Athlete, and the 2023 University National Champion in the 102 KG Class in weightlifting, is now preparing and training for a more soul-intensive goal, becoming a Catholic Priest. As a man who has represented his country in weightlifting, he will now hope to represent Christ, like how a priest does especially In Persona Christi.

A 'cradle Catholic', Heller admits that he was "never much of a practicing Catholic", saying that he would go to Mass on Sunday, but Adoration, the Rosary and other facets of the Faith were not all that present in his life.

However, he credits a FOCUS Missionary for helping to bring him back to the Faith. After a Christmas Eve Mass during his freshman year, the missionary, whom Heller happened to know from the grade school he attended, approached him. She invited him to events on campus and he began to attend.

"It's funny, because my dorm was actually looking right at the Catholic Campus Ministry Center and I was on the Catholic Campus Ministries email list and I had unsubscribed myself," he recalled.

Upon meeting another FOCUS Missionary, he began to really invest much more time into the Faith, leading Bible Study and other discipleship projects.

Then, in December 2022, Heller



was on his way to Mass before heading home for winter break when the PP of the church, who had formerly been the vocations director for the diocese, told him that he should consider the priesthood.

"I just kind of laughed like, 'Ha ha Father, yeah that's funny,' and he goes, 'No, I'm serious,'" Heller recounted. "In my mind I was like, 'Just because a guy goes to daily Mass doesn't mean he wants to be a priest.'"

And so, he blew off the idea. Since he was a child he had always wanted to get married and have children, however, after witnessing his Diocese's Eucharistic Congress, he began to consider the idea more closely.

He began spiritual direction, talking with priests he was close to, and read 'Discernment of Spirits' by Timothy Gallagher. He decided to apply to the seminary in October 2023 and was accepted in January.

But the big question is, will he be keeping the barbell on the rack? Not quite. During his meeting with his bishop, Heller explained what his workout regime looks like and asked if he would be able to continue to lift weights.

"He said that he would be in support of it, but obviously if the academics were to fail or the spiritual life was not developing,

then the weightlifting would have to go," he explained.

Also, in an unexpected turn, when Heller visited the seminary, he was surprised to find out that the rector of the propaedeutic programme is actually a power lifter himself and has a gym in the basement with all the equipment Heller will need, which he took as divine providence.

The soon-to-be seminarian sees many parallels between fitness and Faith, saying: "The principle of concupiscence — we're drawn to sin and we have to do everything in our power to combat that. I liken it to a barbell and gravity."

He explained: "When I get there on the weightlifting platform, that barbell is on the ground, and if I'm not doing anything it's staying on the ground. But through repeated efforts over time, through much hardship, I get the bar off the ground and the bar only stays off the ground as much as I put it off the ground. So likewise for a man trying to combat sin; he has to have that continued effort, that tenacity in a sense, to keep the bar off the ground, to keep himself from sinning."

As for Heller, he is due to start seminary classes in September, and has asked for prayers for him and his journey.

### Small Changes *by Luke*

THERE are a seemingly endless number of stories about kindness and generosity connected to Christianity, whether these are from the Bible itself or stories about a Christian putting their faith into action. Easily one of the most well-known stories that match this description is the parable of the Good Samaritan, told in Luke 10:25-37.

You've almost certainly heard this before, so I shall keep my summary brief. One day, a man is travelling when he is attacked by a group of robbers, who take all that belongs to the traveller and leave him severely injured on the side of the road. Respectable people pass him and pretend not to see him. The only one who helps the traveller is a Samaritan, a group that was treated with disdain by the Jewish people at the time. The Samaritan treated the traveller's wounds, carried him to an inn and paid for his stay.

This story is so well known that there is even an Irish law named after the parable. It is clear that this is a wondrous act of kindness for anyone to perform, essentially saving the traveller's life. You may be wondering what my point is and what this has to do with the title of this article. Allow me to explain. We hear a myriad of tales about good people doing great, almost heroic things. Our exposure to these stories has only increased with the advent of modern technology. We may hear about someone donating their liver to save a stranger, running into a burning building to save a child, or many other similarly dramatic things.

These stories can be a positive thing for us to hear about, far better than many of the terrible things we are shown by the same technology. They can uplift us



and inspire us to do better, but there is another side of that coin that I think needs to be examined. The reality is that most of us will not do acts on the same level as these stories. This can be a disheartening feeling for some, knowing we are unlikely to make such a sudden and noticeable change.

I think it is a tragedy how thinking like this can lead us to forget about the small changes we can make in the world. We can forget that while big, heroic acts are certainly worthy of our admiration, they are not what being a good Christian is about. It is about believing in God and showing that faith through worship and by being a good person. That doesn't need to be big or exciting.

We need to remember how much small changes matter. Things like a smile or holding the door for someone may seem insignificant, or even meaningless, but I assure you it is not. I think this can be compared to the butterfly effect; an effect in chaos theory which shows how tiny changes in the conditions of a complex system can result in radically different outcomes.

The original analogy says that the flap of a butterfly's wings could be the difference between a tornado forming or not.

This effect is not exclusive to meteorology, it can be observed in many complex systems. I would say that our lives are a complex enough system for the butterfly effect to manifest itself. While a little act of goodness could seem irrelevant to us, it could potentially lead to huge changes in the future that would be almost impossible to trace back.

Perhaps when faced with the chance to make a big difference in the world, someone will make the right decision because they are feeling a little more optimistic or charitable because of something as simple as a smile from a stranger. It's unlikely that they would even think of the smile at that moment, but it could be a factor in their subconscious that helps them.

Of course, that is not to say that this smile is the sole reason for whatever good deed occurs, just like the butterfly is not solely responsible for the tornado. It is merely the tiny thing that pushes it over the edge; the straw that broke the camel's back, if you will.

All this is really just a way of saying how important tiny positive changes are in everyday life. Do not underestimate the effects that a little bit of goodness can have on the world.

## St Therese's legacy invites us to find holiness in daily routine and trust in power of prayer

*by Niamh*

ST Therese has been a highly influential model for Catholics, and for others, because of her simple approach to spiritual life. She is one of the most popular saints in the history of the Church; Pope Pius X called her "The greatest saint of modern times".

Born in 1873 in France, she entered the Carmelite Convent at Lisieux when she was 15. Her life in the convent was devoted to prayer, humility and sacrifice. She believed that through prayer, one could connect deeply with God and have a heartfelt conversation, surrendering her hopes, fears and desires to him.

Therese's emphasis on sacrifice was equally significant. She embraced suffering and offered it to God as a form of prayer. Whether it was enduring physical pain from her tuberculosis, emotional trials, or the difficulties of daily life, she offered all these sufferings to God with joy. She believed that these sacrifices, when united with Christ's own sacrifice, had great spiritual value.

This idea is rooted in Catholic teaching, that suffering, when accepted and offered up to Jesus, can help with the redemption of souls and the world. The power of prayer and sacrifice, according

to St Therese, lies in their ability to go beyond what human words and actions can do. Words can often fail to convey the depths of our hearts or create true change, whereas acts of service and prayer can display it.

"My whole strength lies in prayer and sacrifice. They can move hearts far better than words." (St Therese of Lisieux)

On the morning of Good Friday, 1896, St Therese discovered she had Tuberculosis. As she took to her bed, her Mother Superior suggested that she serve God by writing her spiritual biography. For the next year-and-a-half, she wrote down her thoughts on

faith, the Church, and, most of all, her deep love for Christ.

This autobiography would become 'Story of a Soul'; the memoir of a young woman's faith, which not only inspired the world but made her a saint.

St Therese's legacy teaches us that we do not need grand gestures to make an impact. By living a life of quiet prayer and sacrifice, we can achieve great spiritual feats. Her approach is accessible to everyone, regardless of their state in life. It invites us to find holiness in our daily routine and trust in the power of prayer.



## Young Writers share thoughts...

### My Lourdes memories will remain a notable highlight of my life *by Seán*

I spent the first five days of July on the annual Derry Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes, in southern France, the site of the apparitions witnessed by 14-year-old St Bernadette in 1858.

The entire trip was an oddly entrancing experience, spiritually rivalling even my visit to Rome a year prior. It is for this reason that I felt that it was worthy of an article. Not only was it an important event for the Diocese, considering how it is only resuming now as a result of Covid disruptions, but it was also a magnificent personal journey.

The first day of the pilgrimage consisted mainly of travel; travelling by bus to Dublin for a chartered flight specifically for the youth of the Diocese to the small airport outside of Lourdes. On the short bus ride into the small town itself, all 40 youths received our first close up view of the globally famous location, a small French town in the foothills of the Pyrenees Mountains, which were constantly looming over the town to the south, funnelling the oddly blue-watered Gave de Pau River down the mountainside and directly through the town of Lourdes.

The authenticity of the town was amazing in itself; it may be a massive receiver of pilgrims (4-6 million annually) and yet it has not lost any simplicity. Ordinary locals live normally, and the small cafes and shops felt natural and lacked any commercial brightness.

The Monday evening was spent in group prayer and then independent exploration of the town, which my St Columb's group used to visit the Grotto and Chapel of Candles for the first time; truly entrancing sights, enhanced by the misty atmosphere created by the combination of the setting sun and spitting rainfall.

Our Tuesday morning began with meeting our charges, the older people from the Derry Diocese who we would be pushing in their wheelchairs. The week provided me with the fulfilling sense that I was enabling people to enjoy this spiritual pilgrimage, despite their limitations in moving around independently.

#### Calming

In total, from the Diocese, around 200 people had travelled, and the morning Mass in Eglise Sainte-Bernadette Chapel, just across the river from the Grotto, was the first instance in which we were all gathered in the one place. It was an irritatingly wet day, with the mountains condemning the town to being damp until the end of the day. The day continued with a tour of the Stations of the Cross, further upriver from the Chapel of Candles. It was a slow

and calming process, which provided much time for thinking and reflection.

That evening, we attended an enlightening silent service in the Basilique Saint-Pie X, an enormous underground Basilica supported by dozens of concrete pillars and beams. The warm, dim atmosphere of the service resulted in total calm and thoughts devoted entirely to God.

That night was dedicated to the sacrament of Confession, in which everyone in the Diocese had the opportunity to confess their sins to God. We sought our forgiveness due to our recognition of our own sins and why they were wrong. The day was lengthy and tiring, but definitely marked a great first full day of the pilgrimage in Lourdes, and the first step in our understanding of the significance of the place itself.

Wednesday morning began with the first proper rays of sun since our arrival, and was accompanied with an especially significant Diocesan Mass at the Grotto itself, the exact location of the apparitions. The Mass was exceptionally special for this reason, standing at the back of the congregation, aware of the hard stone beneath my feet, my eyes were set on the slick, wet rock behind the altar and the statue of the Virgin Mary embedded in it. I spent much time comprehending that on that very spot, 166 years ago, the young Bernadette had been scavenging in the town dump for firewood and was visited by the Mother of the Christ.

I had the opportunity afterwards to drop petitions given to me into the collection box, and was able to touch the rock of the Grotto and watch the spring water gush through its path below the rock. The Mass was mentally empowering, and the day was not to become any less important.

We moved onto the famous baths, which are filled with the natural spring water that Bernadette had discovered in her desperation. Before Covid, visiting the baths involved a full submerging in the water, but it has since reverted back to the way that Bernadette herself was instructed to use the water. I had to first wash my hands using the water, then my face, and then drink it from my hands. Feeling the sharp coolness of the water cannot be described as anything else but awakening.

#### Hike

Wednesday had already provided two extremely significant experiences, and yet it hadn't even reached noon. At two in the afternoon, Bishop Donal led the majority of the Derry youth on a 10 kilometre hike out of Lourdes to the small

village of Bartres, in the hills to the north. Bartres was significant to Bernadette as she had spent a significant part of her childhood living there, herding sheep in the lightly forested green hills, which provided an even better view of the Pyrenees than Lourdes itself, due to our greater elevated position.

We visited the small barn where Bernadette had kept the sheep, and then the local chapel where some of her relics are kept and we had the opportunity to see a sample of her first attempt at writing. The hike was peaceful and warm, and the surroundings and significance of the environment allowed for great internal mental development in my relationship with God.

The day was not yet over. That warm evening involved the Candlelight Procession, the largest event of the pilgrimage, and Derry had the privilege of leading the procession, which involved thousands of people at the one time. I was pushing my charge in her wheelchair, in the third row of the Derry section, just behind our large banner, and we were the first to reach the wide steps of the Rosary Basilica. The Rosary was said in several languages as we slowly marched down the two-sided avenue and back up, and continued for almost an hour afterwards, with people of many nations gathered as one for this solemn procession, filtered a warm orange by the sun which had almost completely retired by the time the procession had ended.

The St Columb's boys had the privilege of being able to carry the statue of Our Lady along the avenue and up onto the steps of the Basilica, the pure white light of the box around the statue creating an irresistible beacon that all eyes were fixed on, as it slowly moved past the massive crowds that had gathered.

This very full day was definitely my favourite of the entire pilgrimage, and spiritually will remain the most notable to me.

#### Honour

Thursday was to be our last full day as a Diocese in Lourdes, before Friday was used as another travel day. Thursday morning began with a Mass in a small chapel dedicated to blessing the Diocesan Candle before it was to be burned at the Chapel of Candles. It was about five feet in height, and I had the honour of wheeling the candle up the aisle to the foot of the altar for its blessing at the end of the Mass, and wheeling it back to the door afterwards. The candle was taken to the Chapel of Candles and lit for the entire Diocese of Derry, back home. I felt gifted to have the opportunity of presenting

the candle. I was able to play my part in the pilgrimage's journey to God and the Virgin Mary in this holy place of her choice.

Thursday afternoon was used for the youth to receive the formal tour of St Bernadette's two homes in Lourdes and the museum dedicated to her. The museum contained plentiful information about her and her circumstances, and how the apparitions changed her life forever. Her first home was the old town jailhouse that had been shut down because it was deemed unfit for prisoners to live in. Bernadette's family was in financial trouble, and their living situation was difficult. It felt surreal to stand in the rooms that she had stood in all that time ago. We moved onto her second home in Lourdes, where she lived when she had the apparitions. It had been left completely untouched since her time there, and it looked extremely rustic compared to the rest of the buildings in the street, with some wooden beams, bare stone walls, and even her very small bed remaining there.

Thursday evening was the last full gathering of the Diocese, and we had our closing Mass in another small, underground chapel, with a natural lighting via the skylight in the ceiling above the altar. It was a Mass of reflection for everybody and asserted an



obligation to look back on the past

days and what we had learned from our pilgrimage in Lourdes. I know that I learned an important sense of Diocesan community. There were people there from three different counties, united by a common love of God and the interest in visiting the site of one of the Virgin Mary's appearances.

Friday had a morning Mass exclusively for the youth, before we went on a long bus journey to the port of St Jean de Luz on the Atlantic Coast for a visit to the beach, and then continuing onto Bordeaux for our late flight back

to Dublin.

The entire pilgrimage experience provided me with a spiritual sense that I hadn't realised was attainable before. I am so fortunate that I had the opportunity to go on the pilgrimage, and it is a week in my life that hasn't consistently left my mind yet, and I don't think that it will ever go away. I don't want it to leave my mind, and the memories and development of my spiritual self and my relationship with God will forever remain a notable highlight of my life.

### Preparing for the future...with a little help from our grandparents *by Peter*

POPE Francis and the Church has recognised and commemorates World Day for Grandparents, which was celebrated on July 28 and highlighted the importance of closeness that generations of both young and old share with one another.

Pope Francis emphasises that the elderly should not suffer loneliness from the younger generation, and for the younger generation to listen to the voices of the elderly, and embrace their thoughts and feelings in the church and revive old traditions, which he applauds them for.

Throughout your childhood, not only do you look up to your parents, but you also look up to your grandparents very much, realising how they comfort you in tough times and that you can learn life lessons from them too.

For me, in my childhood, and thankfully still with us today, my granny is an inspirational person whom I look up to, as she always takes the positives from the negatives in situations in her life.

After my grand-dad's death 14 years ago this year, the whole of my family was in great sadness, but my granny always said: "He



is now in the Lord's care and we will see him again in the Lord's Kingdom".

If things ever went wrong for me growing up, and even today, she would always be patient and have the time to talk to me and help with my problems, not just by lighting a holy candle for me during my exams back in school and currently in college, but everything else too, from college life to my personal and work life.

My granny is like the cement that keeps our family together, like Jesus did with His disciples whenever they were in need of Him, and really that is the main role of grandparents these days, to bring families and friends together to help each other out,

and not to be worried about everything that life hits you with either.

The elderly and young folk in my parish have a great bond with one another and help each other out. Whenever people move on in years through in life, they pass their knowledge on to the next generation.

Pope Francis states that all elderly people have a huge role in the church and society to pass down their knowledge and beliefs of Jesus, especially in Him saying: "I am with you always".

The older generation is encouraged to be forever guiding us on life's journey, as my grand-dad did, and as my granny still continues to do.

## Young Writers share thoughts...

### My Camino experience *by Cadhla*

I had the privilege of walking the Camino de Santiago along with my classmates, teachers and Parish Priest, Fr Peter Madden, at the beginning of June this year. We walked a total of 113 kilometres. It was, without a doubt, an immensely rewarding experience that I would love to do again if I ever get the opportunity.

It was amazing to meet so many different people, from all corners of the world. For some, like ourselves, it was their first Camino, for others, this was an annual pilgrimage. Everyone we met along the way was always friendly and encouraging.

It felt like we were part of a community, where everyone was united by a shared goal – reaching Santiago. I was fascinated by the transformative power of a singular destination shared among many. When hundreds, maybe even thousands, of people all have the same goal in mind, it creates a certain type of momentum. Even though our feet were sore every evening, the next morning we were all ready to begin the walk once again.

There are many routes of the Camino De Santiago, but no matter which route travellers decide to take, they all end in Santiago de Compostela, where the trails come together at the town's eponymous Romanesque cathedral, a structure completed in the early 1200s and believed to hold the tomb of the Apostle St James. When the tomb was purportedly discovered in the ninth century, the town and its cathedral became one of the most important Christian pilgrimage sites in Europe, leading to the

creation of the Camino de Santiago.

On our final day, we went to a Mass in the Cathedral, and it was a beautiful ceremony. After long days of walking, we would also celebrate Mass in our hotel every evening with Fr Madden.

Walking the Camino de Santiago taught me many lessons. One of note being that each day is different. Sometimes it's a pleasure to trip past undulating fields, and other times we were met with rainy days where the path ahead was barely visible. But on the Camino as in life, it is important to keep going.

Even if the forecast calls for rain, it likely means that there is an unknown beauty ahead. So, if you've ever considered doing the Camino, I would wholeheartedly recommend it!



### Christ has no body but yours

*by Erin*

FOR this edition, I will be writing about a quote from St Teresa of Avila...

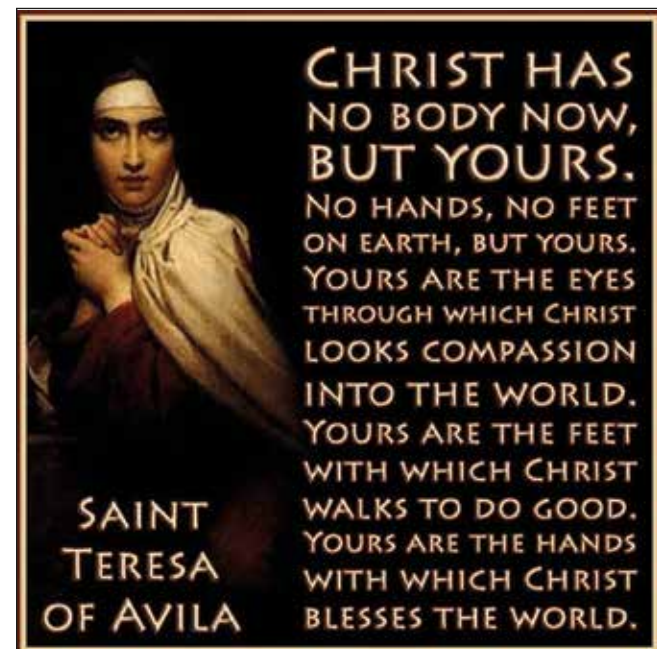
"Christ has no body but yours. No hands, no feet on earth, but yours. Yours are the eyes through which Christ looks compassion into the world. Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good. Yours are the hands with which Christ blesses the world."

This quote helps me to reflect on God's love for us and, in particular, how He uses others to show it. God's love is never-ending, which we can see in the Bible, for example the Parable of the Forgiving Father. God is constantly forgiving and accepting in His love for us. However, there are other ways of seeing God's love for us shine through in our daily lives.

For me personally, a huge blessing in my life is to be surrounded by people who share my faith, and I've had many interactions where I have felt a bit of His love shining through.

As humans, we know that our words and actions have affect on others, therefore we should try to show love and acceptance daily through small acts or conversations. Showing true kindness can have a huge impact on someone's self esteem and confidence. Jesus loved everyone, even the people who didn't expect anything from Him or didn't accept Him. Sometimes it can be hard to love someone, which means we should try even harder. This is how we can help Jesus to be His body on Earth.

These conversations,



compliments, or even an invite to Mass may be someone's introduction to their faith and if they continue to grow in faith, your kindness will always remain a positive memory. For myself, I'll always be grateful to the youth leaders who convinced me to go to Camp Veritas as it truly sparked my faith.

As Catholics, we are united to Christ through the Eucharist, participating in the Body of Christ. This can change our perception of being Christ's Body on Earth. We should care for ourselves and others, as a way of caring for Him.

Another part of this quote which sticks out for me is 'Yours are the feet with which Christ walks to do good.' God wants us to contribute good,

not only by following the Ten Commandments, but also by going out of our way to serve and give back. This is a response to God's generosity and a way of putting others before yourself.

Another way of doing good is by spreading God's word. All Catholics are called to spread the Good News. This is how we, as Catholics, can serve like the original disciples. Jesus wants us to leave behind our previous lives and follow Him, just as they did.

Lastly, to truly act as Christ's Body on Earth, we can reflect on our own lives by asking ourselves if we're going down a good path, and allowing God to guide us in the right direction. God has a plan for everyone, and we can turn to Him in prayer.

## Young Derry pilgrims amongst thousands gathered in Medjugorje hear Pope Francis' message for the 35th Youth Festival...

### May Mother Mary's example urge you to be heralds of hope, love and peace in the world

*Dear young people,*

I am happy to be able to address this message to you on the occasion of the 35th Youth Festival, which has brought many of you together in Medjugorje, so that the encounter with the Lord Jesus in communion with the Virgin Mary may kindle the flame of your faith.

In these intense days, reflect on the theme: "Mary has chosen the good part" (Lk 10:42). Starting from this phrase of the Lord, I would like to offer you some brief suggestions for your spiritual growth and your commitment in the Church and in the world.

Jesus, with what He says to Martha, the sister of Lazarus and Mary, reminds us that the approach of an authentic disciple is to listen to the Word of the Lord. Mary realizes that the Lord has entered her house, but He also wanted to enter into her heart. In fact, she sat at His feet to

listen to Him, thus choosing the better part that "will not be taken away from her".

Another authentic disciple is Mary of Nazareth. God entered the house of this young girl and spoke to her. She welcomed the Word of God into her heart and participated in His plan, making herself available when, in the fullness of time, God sent his Son. She was present in silence at the foot of the cross when Jesus, the Son of God and His Son, redeemed the world; she followed the apostles on the day of Pentecost, when the Church was born in the Holy Spirit. By allowing the Word of God to enter her heart, the Virgin Mary fulfilled her mission with fidelity and attention. She too chose the best part: the Lord Jesus.

In the same way, you, dear friends, are called to become authentic disciples of Christ. Remain in the presence of the Master to meditate

on the Word of God, allowing it to illuminate your mind and heart to discover and collaborate in the plan that the Father has for each of you. For this reason, I encourage you to establish a close bond with the Gospel and to have it with you, so that it may be for you like a compass that shows you the path to follow. By reading it you will learn to know Christ, "the Son of God made man, is the unique, perfect and definitive Word of the Father, who in Him says everything, and there will be no other word than that" (CCC, 65), as St Jerome also confirms: "Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ" (PL 24,17). Strengthen yourselves also with the power of the sacramental grace of Reconciliation and the Eucharist; visit the Lord in this "heart to heart" encounter, that is, in Eucharistic adoration.

An authentic disciple, moreover,

becoming wise and strong in the Spirit, necessarily transmits the Kingdom of God to others, because announcing His Word is not an obligation only for priests and religious, but also for you, dear young people. You must have the courage to speak of Christ in your families, in your educational and working environment, in your free time. Announce Him above all with your life, manifesting the visible presence of Christ in your existence, in your daily commitment and in coherence with the Gospel in every concrete decision. The Lord wants you to be fearless apostles of the Good News and builders of a new humanity.

Dearest, may my blessing accompany you, and I entrust each of you to Mother Mary, Mother of the Church, so that she may intercede that you may have the strength and wisdom to be able to

speak with God and speak of God. May Her example urge you to be heralds of hope, love and peace in the world. Finally, I kindly ask you to pray for me."

*Rome, at San Giovanni Laterano, Solemnity of Saints Peter and Paul the Apostles, June 29th, 2024*



A section of the thousands of young people attending one of the many prayer gatherings during this year's Youth Festival in Medjugorje

*(Around 35 young people from the Derry Diocese travelled on pilgrimage to Medjugorje for the Youth Festival in the first week of August, accompanied by Diocesan Youth Leaders and Bishop Donal.)*

*Drumragh parishioners encouraged to be pilgrims of hope as they celebrated...*

# 125th anniversary of Sacred Heart Church Omagh – a time to remember and renew

THE on-going celebration in the Church this year, of the 350th anniversary of the first manifestation of the Sacred Heart of Jesus to St Margaret Mary Alacoque, has been particularly timely for the faithful in the Parish of Drumragh, who have been celebrating the 125th anniversary of the dedication of Sacred Heart Church, in the heart of Omagh town.

Bishop Donal helped to launch the time of celebration, which began with a series of liturgical events, when he visited the Parish to celebrate Mass on the Feast of the Holy Trinity, Sunday, May 26. Native priests and some of those who previously served in the Parish were also in attendance.

In his homily, Bishop Donal referred to the theme for the 2025 Jubilee Year in Rome, 'Pilgrims of Hope', saying: "The builders of this wonderful church were such pilgrims. They had no idea what would happen even over the next 25 years – a World War with perhaps 40 million dead, the so-called Spanish flu that killed tens of millions, and the political division of this island.

"If they had known that all those events would happen in an eight-year period, many would have been terrified. But we, their descendants, are pilgrims of hope, trusting that, when things seem at their most difficult, that is the time when good news is most needed, and grace most active."

The actual 125th anniversary, on Tuesday, May 28, was marked by the celebration of Mass in the Church by Archbishop Eamon Martin, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland. It was Archbishop Eamon's predecessor, Cardinal Michael Logue who celebrated Mass on the opening of the church on May 28, 1899.

This was followed by a Triduum of Prayer on June 4, 5 and 6, to prepare for the Feast of the Sacred Heart. Each evening had a different theme, with the first being 'Faith', which Fr Paul Farren, Adm St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, spoke on. The second theme was

'Hope' and Fr Peter McAnenly PP, Termonmaguirc (Carrickmore), in the Archdiocese of Armagh, spoke on that, while Mgr Joe McGuinness, executive secretary of the Irish Episcopal Conference, spoke on the third theme of 'Love'.

During the Triduum, Masses were celebrated at 7.30 am and 10 am, and again at 7.30 pm. There was also an opportunity for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Confession, and a Mass for Healing.

Then, on the Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Friday, June 7, Archbishop Dermot Farrell, Archbishop of Dublin and Primate of Ireland, came along and celebrated Mass for the Parish.

In the midst of the liturgical celebrations, there was an opportunity to view the very interesting historical Sacred Heart Church Exhibition, in St Mary's Hall, and enjoy refreshments and conversation in St Joseph's Hall.

The Exhibition included artefacts, photographs, and film on Sacred Heart Church, and was hosted by young people from The Golden Apples Drama Group, Omagh. The Knights of St Columbanus Omagh were greatly involved in helping the parish priest, Fr Eugene Hasson and parishioners put the exhibition together, as were Mary Maguire, of the Drumragh Parish Office, Declan Norris, Sacred Heart sacristan, and Leanne Daly, of the Golden Apple Drama Group.

The Knights were also involved in organising The Culture Show Night along with Gerarda McCann and Bob Quick from The Culture Show. The evening of conversation and music took place on Wednesday, May 22, in St Mary's Hall, behind Sacred Heart Church, and featured local artists and native priests. This event was hosted by Gerarda, who interviewed priests who had once ministered there about their memories of Sacred Heart.

The programme of celebration for the 125th anniversary included a Logo Design Challenge, with Bishop Donal having the hard job of choosing the winners from amongst the many excellent

entries from pupils from the parish schools. All were displayed in the front porch of the Church.

**Restoration**

In this anniversary year, the Parish is also involved in planning a restoration project for Sacred Heart Church, as well as the development of a heritage exhibition, and, in a great boost for these projects, has been successful in its first-round funding bid to the National Lottery Heritage Fund. In preparation for its second-round bid, parishioners were encouraged to attend a series of community consultation events throughout July and August.

The ambitious Sacred Heart Church Restoration Project aims to address stonework and roof issues, enhancing the church's aesthetic appeal, and ensuring it remains a central place for worship and community activities.

Grateful to all who helped organise the 125th anniversary celebration, and those who attended the various events marking this special year for the Parish of Drumragh, including all the parish schools, the parish priest, Fr Eugene Hasson described Sacred Heart Church as "a significant physical and spiritual presence in the heart of the town of Omagh", with its spires in sight from all directions in approaching the town, serving "as guiding beacons pointing us toward our heavenly aspirations."

Amongst those who attended the celebratory ceremonies were civic dignitaries, including current and former members of the Fermanagh and Omagh District Council, as well as members of the Omagh Churches Forum, representing local church communities and fostering ecumenical unity.

Numerous priests, both natives of the Drumragh parish and those who have served there over the years, as well as clergy from neighbouring parishes and dioceses also attended, and Fr Eugene remarked that their presence "underscored the strong bonds of faith and community that have sustained our parish through the years".

He added: "Music played a vital

role in our celebrations, with Paul Pritchard, our church organist and music director, leading the choir in sacred hymns. Marie Campbell and the choir from St Mary's Church Drumragh contributed their talents too, enhancing the solemnity of our liturgies."

Young parishioners also participated actively in the anniversary events and Fr Eugene paid tribute to them and the parish schools for encouraging them, adding: "We owe much to the Christian Brothers and the Loreto Sisters, whose contributions to education in Omagh are immeasurable."

He also expressed deep appreciation for the contributions of the dedicated Parish staff, including sacristan, Declan Norris, groundsman, Tommy Sharkey, and parish secretaries, Mary Maguire and Orla Kelly, as well as Parish volunteers, such as lectors, extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist, collectors, ushers, cleaners, and flower arrangers, and to curate, Fr Michael McCaul for all his input.

Fr Eugene highlighted the key roles played by the Parish Pastoral and Finance councils too, along with St Eugene's Band, and St Joseph's Hall, where refreshments were hosted, while the Knights of Columbanus curated the exhibition of significant artefacts and organized cultural evenings.

Other projects in the pipeline include the republishing of Fr J.J. McGlade's historic journal 'Five Years Tour in America', which was first published in 1906. Anyone wishing to secure a copy is asked to use the special email address to order, and a sufficient number of orders are required by the beginning of September to make this project viable. There are also plans to publish an anniversary edition of the parish magazine to record as many moments from this year for future generations.

This is the link to The Culture Show Sacred Heart...

[https://youtu.be/UuiqFLPvC4?si=huXThknsy\\_ajTenL](https://youtu.be/UuiqFLPvC4?si=huXThknsy_ajTenL)





# Great interest in Sacred Heart Church historical exhibition

THERE was great interest in the exhibition marking the 125th anniversary of Sacred Heart Church, and amongst those who enjoyed viewing the artefacts and old photographs on display was parishioner, Jacqueline Cullen, whose great grandfather and his brothers had been involved in building work around the church in the 1920s.

Jacqueline's father is 83-year-old Cathal Cullen, who first came to Omagh in 1970, with his wife, to take up a teaching post in 'The Tech'. Cathal recalls that his maternal grandfather, Peter McNally, from Armagh, and his brother, Jack, had been stonemasons and had worked for Mallon & O'Hare, of Newry, going around the country building churches.

While Cathal was unsure if Mallon & O'Hare had been involved in the building of Sacred Heart Church, he recalled his uncles and grandfather talking about it, and said that they had worked on the building of the perimeter wall around the chapel, staying in Donnelly's boarding house across the street from it, where a lot of the workers had stayed.

The anniversary celebrations were not only a time for Jacqueline to think about and appreciate her family involvement in structural developments associated with Sacred Heart Church, but to also become more aware of the history of her parish and to enjoy celebrating that as a parish family.

She remarked: "The celebrations were lovely. It was a wonderful time for the parishioners and the town, and it was a great opportunity to learn more about the history of Sacred Heart Church."

"I found myself taking a closer look around the church building

and discovered a plaque on a wall with the name of Archbishop John Hughes, a young emigrant from Co Tyrone in the 1800s, who went on to become the Catholic Archbishop of New York and founded St Patrick's Cathedral there. I also came upon a letter displayed from Cardinal Timothy Dolan, the current Archbishop of New York, expressing a hope to one day visit."

A central figure in the history of Sacred Heart Church is Mgr Bernard McNamee, who realised his ambition to have a church of great grandeur built in a dominant location overlooking the town of Omagh, before he died in 1905.

The contract for the primary plan of the building was awarded to Joseph Colhoun, of Strand Road, in Derry, and the architect was William Hague, who is widely believed to have been greatly influenced by the beautiful Gothic design of France's Notre Dame Cathedral.

The foundation stone was ceremoniously laid in 1893, and the church was opened in 1899, on the Feast of the Holy Trinity, with its Cavan-born architect dying in that same year. Over the years, the Church, underwent developments, with its second spired completed in the early 1900s, and restorations.



# Celebrating 90 years of Pennyburn's St Patrick's Church

THE 90th anniversary of the opening of St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, in the Parish of the Three Patrons, in Derry, was celebrated with a lovely gathering of parishioners for morning Mass there and in the nearby Emmaus Room afterwards, for a cuppa and a slice of the beautiful anniversary cake.

The main celebrant, Fr Michael McCaughey PP, was joined on the altar by Fr Paul Fraser, a native of the Parish now ministering in the parishes of the West Tyrone Pastoral Area, and Fr Sean O'Donnell CC, Three Patrons.

Fr Michael welcomed all for the Mass of Thanksgiving to God "for the life and love influences of the many people who have ministered and worshipped in this church over the years, and to ask for God's continued blessing."

He recalled that the foundation stone had been laid by Bishop Bernard O'Kane on February 25, 1932, with the Church then dedicated by the same Bishop two years later, on Pentecost Sunday, May 27, 1934. The Church bell, which bears the inscription - 'In honour of the Mother of God and St Patrick' - was installed some

years later, on Sunday, April 24, 1949, by Bishop Neil Farren.

Fr Michael went on to speak about the remarkable achievement the building of the magnificent church on the Buncrana Road site had been 90 years ago, at an estimated cost of between £18,000-20,000.

Saying that the St Patrick's Church had been a place of comfort for him over the years, he added: "So many people pass this church every day, and it is lovely to see many of them making the Sign of the Cross in blessing themselves.

"This building of 90 years is of great significance. However, we are not community simply because of a building, but because of the faith that has sustained us throughout the years. This church is that sacred place at the heart of our community, bringing comfort to people dealing with sickness, pain, struggle, as well as a source of joy for the gifts of life.

"New members of God's family are welcomed here at baptism, children receive the sacraments of Confession, Holy Communion, and Confirmation, couples exchange marriage vows, and we bring our loved ones for burial.

"The Sanctuary light continues to burn as a sign of God's presence

with us; the flame of faith sustained over the last 90 years. We trust that, in the spirit of St Patrick, we will be nourished for many years to come."

Fr Michael went on to thank the parishioners for the witness of their faith and passing it on, saying: "We pray that the faith that brings us here today will inspire many others for years to come."

Delighted to have Fr Paul Fraser join them for the anniversary celebration, Fr Michael remarked: "I remember being here for Fr Paul's First Mass. This place has been enriched by many vocations, through the influence of so many good people. We need renewal of vocations again. Thank God for our Religious too; we have Sr Ethna McDermott with us this morning as well."

Expressing thanks to Fr Sean for his work in the Parish, and all the parish staff and volunteers who help out in the church, he invited all to come along to the Emmaus Room afterwards, for a cup of tea and anniversary cake.

Mass came to a close with all joining in singing the 'Hail Glorious St Patrick' hymn. Mementos of the occasion were also available, with bookmarks featuring St

Patrick's Prayer and little bottles of Holy Water marking the 90th anniversary.

The Church was built by Mr Felix G O'Hare, Warrenpoint & Derry, with the architect being a Mr Teye. On the day of the official opening of St Patrick's, as a Chapel of Ease, the Administrator of the Cathedral, Fr Bonner thanked the many people who had contributed, particularly the factory workers of the City, who he said had gone beyond the call of duty, in contributing "a cloth of gold vestments", two chalices and £100 donation towards a new organ.



# Returning to Tyrone roots

DURING the compilation of this coverage on the 90th anniversary celebration for St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, it was announced in the Clerical Changes for the Diocese that Fr Michael is to leave Three Patrons at the end of August to be PP of Camus, Clonleigh and Leckpatrick...St Mary's Cloughcor, Immaculate Conception, Camus, St Joseph's Glenmornan, and St Patrick's, Murlog, with Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road, Strabane, having the same name as his home parish church in Omagh, where he was ordained 37 years ago, in June 1987.

Reflecting on this after 14 years' ministering in Three Patrons, Fr Michael expressed his deep appreciation of all the faithful parishioners, for their support, prayers and loyalty over the years.

Looking forward to his new mission, he noted thoughtfully that a number of the saints who are patrons of the churches he has ministered in over the years in the Waterside and Cityside, are awaiting and interceding for him in the

"A big part of my life as a priest has been in Derry, both in the Waterside and Cityside, and I have been blessed by the wonderful faith of the people there," remarked Fr Michael, adding, "Now I am heading back to my Tyrone roots!"

May he go with the blessing of St Patrick, in the words of the prayer printed on the bookmark to celebrate the 90th anniversary of St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn...



## St Patrick's Prayer

May the strength of God pilot us.  
May the power of God preserve us.  
May the wisdom of God instruct us.  
May the hand of God protect us.  
May the way of God direct us.  
May the shield of God defend us.  
May the host of God guard us  
against the snares of the evil ones,  
against temptations of the world.

May Christ be with us.  
May Christ be before us.  
May Christ be in us.  
Christ be over all.

May thy salvation, Lord,  
always be ours, this day,  
and evermore. Amen



### SAINT PATRICK'S CHURCH PENNYBURN DERRY

90<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY 1934 - 2024



Stained Glass Window



Parochial House



Church Front Door



Pennyburn Church in the 1930's

**SAINT PATRICK: Our Church Patron**

A more pertinent celebration of St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn which we will happily celebrate on Monday, 19 May, will be to pray for all the people who have welcomed us to the Parish.

The more people who have welcomed us to the Parish, the more people who have welcomed us to the Parish. The more people who have welcomed us to the Parish, the more people who have welcomed us to the Parish.



Eucharistic Cross

**The Bell and Tower**

The Bell and Tower of St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, which we will happily celebrate on Monday, 19 May, will be to pray for all the people who have welcomed us to the Parish.



Stained Glass Window

# “Why have you come? Where are you in the story?” by Fr Peter O’Kane

THE month of July began and finished with diocesan pilgrimages. The first week saw the journey of flights that brought pilgrims to and from Lourdes, while the final weekend was more local, with a short bus journey to St Patrick’s Sanctuary at Lough Derg.

At Mass on the final morning on Lough Derg, the Prior, Fr La Flynn told the story of a young girl who, in response to a question from the visiting ecclesiastical inspector to her class, said, “Our teacher always encourages us to ask: Where are you in the story?”

Reflecting on the experiences of pilgrimage and journey over this month, the words of the Prophet Jeremiah ring true: “For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope.” The story of God’s people is to discover His plans by listening to His word, walking in His ways, sharing His word with others and resting in His presence – and then getting up and on with it! This certainly has been my experience with many people of the diocese since the beginning of July, and has invited me to consider the question: “Where are you in the story?”

## Fellowship

It all began early in the morning of Monday, July 1, when some 200 pilgrims gathered at the airport to make their way to Lourdes, following the invitation given by Our Lady to St Bernadette: “Come here in procession.” There was great energy and enthusiasm as pilgrims boarded the flight that brought them to that holy place, surrounded by thousands of other pilgrims from France, other parts of Europe and all over the world, united by word and song, ritual and prayer, the Eucharist and the Rosary, and, of course, the fellowship experience around the restaurant tables and the sharing of musical gifts and talents.

This year the pilgrimage was made all the more special with the presence of 40 young people and their leaders. For the gathered pilgrims, for some it was a return to familiar places, for others it was their first time, yet the invitation given by Bishop Donal was the same to every pilgrim: “Why have you come?”

## Gathering

When we turn to the Scriptures, there are many moments when the two questions can be put together: “Why have you come? Where do you find yourself in the story?” In the early pages of the Gospels, we discover the beginnings of Jesus encountering people and gathering them to Himself. The great precursor, John the Baptist is the holy one who first points people towards the Lord...and, in turn, it is the Lord who chooses and calls them to come with Him. They will discover who Jesus is and, in turn, they will be like John and point out Jesus to others.

As they commit their lives to Him, they will witness Him preach and teach, work miracles and transform lives. Yet they will also

see the rejection of the Lord by those whose hearts are hardened, those whose minds are closed to who He is. As Jesus goes to the Cross, they too will be tested and tried. They will be called to follow where He goes – and to give all for the salvation of all, in imitation of Him. At this first moment, little do these disciples know that this is what “following Jesus” will entail for them. At times, their faith is not without moments of weakness or sinfulness. And yet, even with their faltering and imperfections, they are called and chosen to follow the Lord – and they are invited to freely respond.

## Invitation

And so, it is at the beginning of the encounter that, as the first ones are following Him, Jesus turns around and asks them: “What do you seek?” In other words, “Why have you come?” A question without words for the answer – it is not that they do not know, but rather they are unable to express it through words. So they ask Him where He is staying, and He invites them: “Come and see”. What an invitation, for they will see the Lamb of God enacting the drama of salvation and they will look into the heart of the Messiah! We don’t know what went on between them, simply that they spent the rest of the day with him. But that experience convinced Andrew that he had found God’s anointed One, the Messiah, the true servant and messenger of God. And it was a find he could not keep to himself, so he went to find his brother and bring him along, and Jesus saw who Simon was and gave him his real name: Peter.

## Identity

The same question is given to each of us in our time and place. The Lord asks: “Why have you come”, as He invites us to “Come and see”. This opportunity for encounter leads us to discover His presence in our own lives as He lives in us. In this discovery, we will receive from God our true identity. The encounter with God will change us and challenge us, give us a name and identity which we might not otherwise have chosen for ourselves. And, in turn, as we live in God, we will invite the others on the road to also come and see, since “Look, there is the Lamb of God!”

## Encounter

It is only when we are in relationship with Christ that the next question can be: “Where are you in the story?” As we come to Christ in the circumstances and varied states of life, the story unveils itself in our daily living so that we can comprehend God’s word of love, hope and mercy. These moments come to us through the life of the Church, especially in the Sacraments. In Baptism, we are welcomed into the family of God, through the Eucharist we are nourished by the gift of Christ’s Body and Blood, and we are sealed with the Spirit’s gifts in Confirmation. In the sacrament of Marriage, man and woman are united in a bond of love blessed

by God that brings joy and peace, rooted in the past yet looking always towards the future. Through priesthood and consecrated life, God shows His care for His people as men and women open their hearts to following Christ and serving His brothers and sisters through the public witness of promises and vows. In the sacrament of penance, the Lord invites us to be reconciled with Him and in those places of our lives fractured by sin and weakness, so that we might be instruments of love. Through the anointing of the sick, God’s abundance pours forth as people experience His power and healing.

As we grow in our relationship with Jesus, these are particular sacred moments of encounter as we discover Him in the Scriptures, the Sacraments, most profoundly in the Eucharist and in one another. Every time we ponder these moments of faith, Christ is the Truth who speaks to us in the Scriptures, the Love who nourishes us in the Eucharist.

## Restless

When we celebrate the Church’s Sacraments, embraced by the Ultimate Mercy and Truth, the One Love and Hope, we are asked again: “Why have you come? Where are you in the story?” We are in the story as searchers for God, we have come because we want to discover Him. The words of Saint Augustine ring true: “You have made us for yourself, O God, and our hearts are restless, until they can find rest in you”. We choose God and travel the path towards holiness, increasingly filled with grace – this is the story, this is the reason, this is the joy of the Gospel. It is by asking, “Why have you come?” that we are brought to an encounter with Christ. In this encounter, we ask the deeper question of “Where am I in the story?” that leads to teaching, action and pilgrimage. Teaching in the ways of faith, action in the manner of prayer and service, and pilgrimage that leads us in the paths of old to be rooted in a living faith into the future.

## Community

Encounter, teaching, action and pilgrimage are privileged places where we discover that God is at work in the small ordinary moments of our lives: in our homes and places of work; times of recreation and charity; as we grow in our relationships with family and friends, colleagues and acquaintances, even with the stranger and the anonymous. We never walk this path alone, but rather as members of the one community which is of Christ.

‘A Rule for a New Brother’ speaks of the importance of community: “Accept with gratitude the companions God gives you to go with you on the way. Your task is to serve and upbuild one another as members of one body. Give instead of demanding, serve instead of being served, bless instead of cursing. So be attentive to the others, in order to work for their happiness discreetly and effectively and to build them up in all the riches of faith and love. And



you, accept from them the help you need.” In God’s generosity, we do not travel alone but rather know of His presence through the varied ways in which He is made known.

## Compass

The final pilgrimage of the season for the Diocese was not on Lough Derg, but a group of young people on the road with Bishop Donal, and Lizzie and Niamh from the Diocesan Youth Team. As thousands of pilgrims gathered for the annual youth festival in Medjugorje, Pope Francis said to them in a message: “I encourage you to establish a close relationship with the Gospel and to keep it with you, so that it serves as a compass indicating the path to follow.”

This is the message for all of us as pilgrims on the journey to God’s Kingdom: as we ponder the Word of God, celebrate the Sacraments and seek God in the daily circumstances of life, may we discover the compass who leads us on the path to glory. This gives us confidence that God is at work, as CS Lewis writes at the end of ‘The Chronicles of Narnia’: “The things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us, this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page; now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read, which goes on for ever, in which every chapter is better than the one before.” (The Last Battle, 210-211) This is why we have come and this is where we find ourselves in the story! Enjoy your pilgrimage of life every day!



## Greenlough bonfire and Rosary celebration on St John’s Eve

IN the Parish of Greenlough on St John’s Eve, June 23, there was the annual gathering at Den’s Hill for the lighting of the bonfire and the recitation of the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.

All-in-all, about 100 people attended, including a lady who celebrated her 100th birthday last year.

The bonfire was blessed by Fr Pat O’Hagan, the Parish Administrator, who led the Rosary, ably assisted by a few parishioners, with the flames leaping heavenward as the sun set.

In his final blessing, Fr Pat prayed that the flame of faith would burn brightly in the hearts of each one present and that, with the assistance of St John the Baptist, we would all live out our faith every day as we try to spread the love of God with one another.



# Eangach

## An Benedictus

Moladh leis an Tiarna, Dia Iosrael:  
óir rinne sé a phobal a fhiosrú agus a fhuascailt;  
agus thóg sé dúinn slánaitheoir neartmhar:  
i dteaghlach Dháiví, a sheirbhíseach.  
De réir mar a labhair sé fadó:  
trí bhéal a fháithe naofa –  
Mar shaoradh dúinn ónár naimhde:  
agus óna lámh siúd uile ar fuath leo sinn.  
Ag déanamh trócaire mar sin ar ár sinsir:  
agus ag cuimhneamh dó ar a thiomna naofa –  
go gcuirfeadh sé féin i ngníomh:  
an mionn a mhionnaigh sé d'Abrahám, ár  
n-athair,  
go dtabharfaidh sé dúinn  
déis ár saortha as lámh ár naimhde:  
bheith ag fónamh dósan gan eagla,  
i gcrábhadh agus i bhfíréantacht ina láthair:  
gach uile lá dár saol.  
Agus tusa, a leanbh, glaofar ortsa:  
fáidh an Té is Airde.  
óir rachaidh tú roimh an Tiarna amach:  
a réiteach a bhóthar dó.  
A thabhairt eolas an tslánaithe dá phobal:  
chun go maithfear a bpeacaí dóibh.  
De chionn trócaire chroí ár nDé:  
nuair a thiochfaidh an láchaint ó neamh  
orainn,  
chun a soilsithe siúd atá ina suí  
sa dorchacht agus faoi scáil an bháis,  
d'fhonn ár gcosa a sheoladh:  
i slí na síochána.

## Naomh Oilibhéar Pluincéad

Inár gcreideamh, is iontach an rud é go bhfuil na naoimh againn. Mar chaitlicigh, tá a t-ádh orainn go bhfuil an iliomad acu ann, daoine a thiochfadh leat glaoch orthu le cuidiú a thabhairt leat, atá ábalta d'achainíocha a thabhairt do Dhia ar do shon agus, níos tábhachtaí ná sin, a chuidíonn dul chin cinn sa tsaoil spioradálta, agus feabhsú, le héirí níos cosúla le hÍosa. Tá a fhios againn go bhfuil seo fíor, ó fhocail an Chrí: "Creidim...i gcomaoín na Naomh". Tá siad mar a bheadh 'cairde' againn, atá beo go fóill le Dia, agus is luacmhar an cuidiú uathu sa tsaoil seo.

Amharcaimis inniu ar dhuine acu – Naomh Oilibhéar Pluincéad – atá suntasach ní amháin ós rud é gur fógraíodh é a bheith ina naomh ní i bhfad ó shin, ach ba é ceann de na chéad naoimh Éireannacha a fógraíodh go hoifigiúil le thart fá seacht gcéad bliain. Rugadh Oilibhéar in 1625 i Loch Craobh, Co. na Mí. Ba bhaill den uasaicme a mhuintir, síolraithe ó na hAngla-Normanaigh a tháinig go hÉirinn

roinnt chéadta roimhe. Ba chaitlicigh láidre iad, in am nuair a bhí na Sasanaigh ag iarraidh an Reifirméisean a chur i bhfeidhm. Bhí an Plandáil ag titim amach ag an am, agus ina óige. Chuaigh sé chun na Róimhe le staidéar a dhéanamh le do ndéanfaí sagart de; sa bhaile, bhí cogadh briste amach mar thoradh ar chaitlicigh ag éirí amach in éadan riail Shasana. Bheadh tionchar ag na coimhlintí seo ar a shaol níos moille.

Sa Róimh, chuaigh sé isteach i gColáiste na nGael. Ba ansin a oirníodh é. Agus é thall, rinne Oilibhéar Cromail (Oliver Cromwell) ionradh ar Éirinn agus chuaigh rudaí go mór in olcas do chaitlicigh. Mar gheall ar an ghearleánúint agus na cúinsí dáinséaracha, ní raibh an tAth. Oilibhéar ábalta filleadh ar Éirinn go fóill, ach theagasc sé an diagacht sa Róimh. In 1699, roghnaíodh é mar Ardeaspag Ard Mhacha, ceannaire na hEaglaise in Éirinn. Fán am seo, bhí cúrsaí giota níos fearr le go dtiocfadh leis filleadh

ar a thír dhúchasach. I ndiaidh a choisreacan mar easpag in Ghent, chuaigh sé ar ais go hÉireann le haoireacht a dhéanamh ar a thréad.

Cé nach raibh cúrsaí chomh holc agus a bhí, ní raibh siad furasta go fóill don Ardeaspag agus ba mhinic a bhí air a bheith cúramach agus é ag obair. Rinne sé obair mhaith in Éirinn. Rinne sé athbheochan ar dhisiplín na shagart, ós rud é gur scríosadh struchtúr na hEaglaise go mór fán am seo. Síltear gur bhunaigh sé an chéad scoil mheasctha in Éirinn i nDroichead Átha, ar ar fhreastal caitlicigh agus protastúnaigh araon. D'oibrigh sé gan sos le freastal ar a thréad go forleathan, ag tabhairt na sacraimintí do dhaoine a bhí gan iad le fada. Aithníodh gur duine maith a bhí ann i measc móráin in idir an phobal chaitliceach agus an phobal phrotastúnach sa tír.

Faraor, ní bheadh sé ábalta fánacht i measc a thréad go síochánta. Níor aontaigh sé glacadh le péindlí mar gheall ar a chreideamh agus druideadh a scoil. Chuaigh sé i bhfolach. Ligeadh dó ar feadh tamaill go dtí gur éirí na húdaráis i Sasana buartha go raibh comhcheilg mhór na gCaitliceach – an Chomhcheilg Phápnach – ar



Naomh Oilibhéar Pluincéad

siúl (sa deireadh, ní raibh bunús leis seo). Rinneadh príosúnach den Ardeaspag Oilibhéar agus tugadh os comhair na cúirte é in Tyburn, Londain. Bhí éagóir mhór ag baint leis an triail in Londain agus fuarthas ciontach é as ardtreás, cé go rabhthas gan aon fhianaise leis sin. Daoradh chun báis é, agus bhí sé crochta, tarraingthe agus gearrtha ina gceathrúna. Ba eisean an mairtíreach deireanach a daoradh chun báis in Tyburn mar gheall ar thréimhse gearleanúna. Inniu, tá taise dá chuid – a cheann – á choinneáil in Eaglais Naoimh Pheadair in nDroichead Átha, áit ar féidir le daoine é a fheiceáil inniu.

## Ná Bíodh Eagla Oraibh

Ní dóigh liom gur áibhéal é go bhfuil muid ag maireachtáil i ndomhan ina bhfuil cuid mhór dúshláin ag críostaithe agus iad ag iarraidh maireachtáil de réir an chreidimh. Thiochfadh leis seo a bheith soiléir má chuirtear saol ár linne i gcomparáid le ham ár seantuismitheoirí, mar shampla, nó fiú glúin ár dtuismitheoirí. Le fada an lá, ba é an gnáthrud é go raibh muid inár gcríostaithe agus gur mhair achan duine i sochaí Críostúil. I ndiaidh na n-athruithe móra a thit amach in Éirinn agus san Iarthar níos ginearálta, tá muid ag maireachtáil i sochaí anois a dhiúltaíonn a fréamhacha Críostúla. Mar sin de, is minice a bhíonn críostaí in áit dheacair, nuair a bhuaileann sé nó sí le rud éigin a théann in éadan an chreidimh, ach atá inghlactha ag an sochaí níos forleithne, agus b'fhéidir brú a bheith ar an duine glacadh leis fosta.

Is cinnte, go bhfuil rudaí ag éirí deacair ar bhealach nach raibh siad roimhe, ach cuimhnigh, go raibh ar ár sinsir a bheith dílis i lár chruatan agus gearleánúintí. Tá na críostaithe sa Róimh, i luathlaethanta na hEaglaise, ina sampla maith, agus

d'ainneoin achan rud, tá an Vatacáin lonnaithe sa Róimh inniu, suite ar an láthair inar cuireadh Naomh Peadar chun báis. Bhí an bua ag Dia – mar a tharlaíonn i gcónaí. Ábhar mór dóchais atá sa mhéid seo! Agus is iomaí comhartha dóchais atá le sonrú inár ndomhan inniu. Níl le déanamh ach amharc ar na sluaite a théann chuig Lá Domhanda na nÓg, curtha ar bun ag Naomh Eoin Pól II ní i bhfad ó shin. Bhí dóchas aige san óige, todhchaí na hEaglaise.

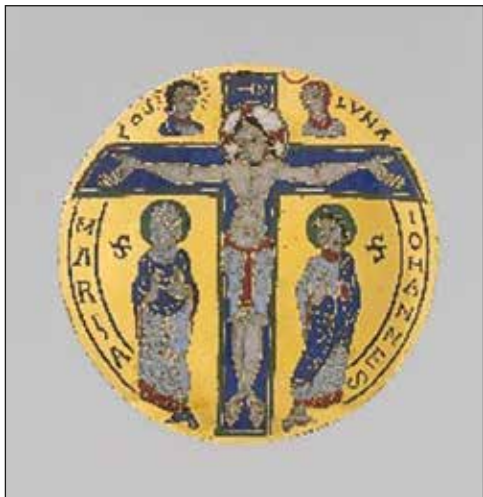
Caithfidh muid fánacht dóchasach agus dílis d'ainneoin aon rud a thitfeadh amach. Tá an spiorad atá i réim inár ndomhan in éadan an chreidimh, rud atá le feiceáil go soiléir i searmanas oscailte na gCluichí Oilimpeacha le déanaí, inar léiríodh easpa iomlán measa ar an Eocairist .i. ar Íosa! Is deabhóid í an ceann a bhaineann leis an Chroí RóNaofa a thug an Tiarna do Naomh Maighréad Máire Alacoque mar leigheas san am ina bhfuil muid, agus grá móráin do Dhia ag éirí 'fuar'. Ní i bhfad ó shin, ba bheag teach in Éirinn nach raibh pictiúr den Chroí RóNaofa in airde. Mar chuid den deabhóid seo, déanann muid leorgníomh ar son na ndaoine



atá i bhfad ó Dhia ina gcroíthe, go háirithe trí ghuí agus na Chéad Sathairn a dhéanamh. Faigheann muid grá agus trócaire do-inste óna chroí tollta atá ar lasadh le grá dúinn. Nach iontach an rud é seo a thig linn a dhéanamh?

Mar fhocal scoir, is tábhachtach ar

n-aird a choinneáil dírithe ar Íosa. Bímis ag guí. Bímis lán le dóchas. Bímis áthasach óir is le hÍosa a fhaightear an fíoráthas, agus is finnéithe muid os comhair an tsaoil mhóir. I bhfocail ár dTiarna, inste arís go minic ag Naomh Eoin Pól II 'ná bíodh eagla oraibh'.



## Feast of St Clare marks anniversary of Sr Clare Crockett entering Home of the Mother in response to Christ's call to...

# Come follow me

THE Feast of St Clare on August 11 is also the 23rd anniversary of the date famous Derry nun, Sr Clare Crockett entered the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother, in 2001, beginning a journey in faith that would lead to giving her all in the service of God as she learned to respond more fully to the call to follow Him.

Sr Clare's story of conversion continues to impact more and more lives not only in the Diocese and around the island, but around the world too, and eight years after she died in the devastation of an earthquake in Playa Prieta, Ecuador, on April 16, 2016, aged only 33 years, the annual retreat established in her home town of Derry to reflect on her inspiring life continues to draw large numbers of people of all ages.

This year it ran from April 15-21, in St Columba's Church, Long Tower, examining life in the seven Sacraments in relation to the theme, 'Come Follow Me/ New Beginnings', and reflecting on the call that Clare answered on entering the Home of the Mother as an 18-year-old, and how her new role changed her from a limelight seeking, budding actress to a self-less servant of God, with the religious name of Sr Clare Maria of the Trinity and the Heart of Mary.

The retreat began every morning with 7 am and 10 am Mass, followed by Benediction and a guest speaker at 7 pm in the evening, and each day saw increasing numbers coming to share in this powerful time of prayer, which included a healing service on one of the evenings, led by Fr Michael McGoldrick, and many opportunities for Confession, which were greatly availed of.

The guest speakers this year included Fr John Hogan ocd, Fr Stephen Quinn ocd, Myra McLaughlin, James Bonner, Stephen Gallagher, and Jennifer Kearney, with Bishop Donal McKeown celebrating the closing Mass on what was Good Shepherd Sunday.

In his homily, Bishop Donal spoke about how Sr Clare "was helped to discover that following

Jesus does not just mean keeping the commandments and living a prayerful life."

He added: "It also involves knowing the voice of the one who calls you to become a saint and to make difficult choices. Sometimes we think of God's calling as being to a particular way of life or a job – a vocation to priesthood or religious life, a vocation to marriage, a vocation to be a teacher, a vocation to the single life. But each one of us has a primary personal vocation to become a saint – and to believe that the Good Shepherd is accompanying us, in charge, wherever He leads us on the path to holiness. That is what we understand by the personal call to holiness that each of us has."

"On this Good Shepherd Sunday," said Bishop Donal, "can each of us look at our lives and say, 'Yes, Lord, I believe that you are at work in all of my life, calling me to holiness.' Can you believe that God is active, even in illness and loss? Only a church that believes in the God who is calling us all to holiness will be able to call individuals to make radical choices – as young Clare had to do each day over a period of 16 years. And a church that does not encourage radical choices will never inspire young disciples for Jesus."

### Powerful

Delighted with the turnout and reverent participation in the retreat ceremonies, Fr Gerard Mongan, Adm Long Tower, expressed thanks for such "a special and powerful week of prayer."

He continued: "What can we say, only thank you to every single person who helped to organise it and all who participated in it - we are deeply grateful. We just pray that with Sr Clare, we have all felt something of God's love for us and drawn a little closer to God."

In his homily the previous evening, Fr Gerard spoke about how Sr Clare had seen everything "as so much rubbish compared to having Christ in her life, of getting to know Him and the power of His resurrection and sharing in His sufferings - forgetting what



lay behind her and straining forward to the goal, the prize. She's asking us to wake up and stay awake to the things of God and stand ready to face the attacks that come our way."

"Clare's constant mantra was to fight against the obstacles that impede us from growing," he said, "even if it means a huge change in our lifestyle – a radical change of life, to not settle for a mediocre, half-hearted way. And we do it with humour! Sr Clare never lost that sense of humour – through her songs, skits, pranks and jokes, she naturally made people laugh, not out of attention seeking but out of love to lift people's spirits and to feel at home. Saints aren't sad. Saints are joyful and happy, and we know Clare's joy was infectious."

"Her joy in her vocation was summed up in her words: 'I am so so happy! Even though there are days when many things are hard for me, it is worth giving one's life to God...This is what my heart has always desired and that no human love, plan or thing could ever fill'. Her joy was complete in Jesus."

Posing the questions, Have I been sleep-walking...Drifting... Just lukewarm...Going through the motions, Fr Gerard noted: "Sr Clare struggled like all of us. She too experienced emptiness and inner sadness and felt God was far away. But as she told her Mother Superior, 'I have written a blank cheque for God'. She invested everything she had, laid down her life and gave it to Jesus for love of Him and others. We pray today that we'll not be walking in our sleep but like Sr Clare, to pray be awake to the things God is doing in our life."

The closing Mass was followed

by refreshments in the school hall, giving people the opportunity to share their experiences of the week of retreat.

Sr Clare's sisters, Shauna and Meghan, continue to be overwhelmed at the worldwide attention that she continues to draw, and at the popularity of visits to her grave in the City Cemetery, and at the many people who ask her to intercede for them.

"When people say that Clare, our big sister, should be declared a Saint in the Church, we just can hardly take it in," remarked Shauna, who greatly appreciated in particular the talk by Fr John Hogan about the process for canonisation.

"Meghan and I only know so much about this process, so it was great for us and everyone interested to hear what was involved. It is a long process but Fr John, with his experience of it, gave us all hope for the opening of Clare's cause. From the stories people tell us, she is changing people. It was great to see the hundreds of men, women and children every day of the retreat. We are very thankful for that and for all who spoke during the week, and those involved in any way."

Next year the Retreat will begin on Monday, March 31 and close on Sunday, April 6.



*Fr John Hogan ocd, Postulator for the Cause of the Servant of God, Fr Willie Doyle SJ, spoke at this year's Sr Clare Retreat on...*

# The process of the Causes of Saints



I am the Postulator for the Cause of the Servant of God, Fr Willie Doyle SJ, the renowned Irish military chaplain whose life of intense holiness and service, and his heroic death, has inspired countless people of all faiths down the years. I have been asked to share with you some elements of the Church's process of 'saint-making' as it is sometimes called; it's a process we devotees of Fr Willie are in the middle of, and a process which is beginning for Sr Clare. I have often noted, as has Sr Kristen, the Postulator for Sr Clare, in our conversations that Willie and Clare have a lot in common – both shared not just a profound faith, but a warm and attractive humanity and were real apostles of joy.

## Holy Spirit

First of all, it needs to be noted that the Church does not 'make' Saints, rather she examines the life of a person, around whom a reputation for holiness and granting favours has grown, to see if God has singled out that individual to be recognised as an exemplar of the Christian life, an intercessor, and is to be publicly venerated in the Church. Secondly, the first step is not usually taken by the Church – the pope or a bishop doesn't decide that a person should be canonised and starts a process.

The first movement, we might call it, occurs in the midst of the faithful: ordinary Catholics who have been touched by a person's life and have come to believe the person was a saint. We might see this as part of the 'sensus fidelium' (the sense of the faithful), and if this sense is authentic, it is actually the work of the Holy Spirit leading people to see the person's holiness and inspiring them to pray to the person, and then desiring to see the person raised to the altars.

## Petition

Once five years have elapsed from the person's death, a Cause can be opened. Any group of the faithful, or indeed an individual, can petition the Church to initiate a Cause, it's not confined to dioceses or religious orders. With

Fr Willie Doyle, an approved lay association was founded to take on the role of formal petitioner, so his Cause is not actually a Jesuit Cause, even though the Jesuits support it. The foundation of approved lay associations to serve as petitioners in Causes has become common in the Church, though so far, the Father Willie Doyle Association is the only Irish lay association founded to serve this purpose.

Sr Clare's congregation is the petitioner for her Cause, so they are taking the more traditional route. However, if a group of the faithful believe someone is a Saint, they can form an association and approach their local bishop to petition an investigation. Some people have complained to me at times about a Cause not being opened for certain people: 'Why is that person not a Saint?' That provides an opportunity to explain that they could step up and explore the initial stages and form an association with other like-minded people to present a Cause for consideration.

## Reputation

So far, none of those who complained to me have taken up the suggestion. However, it needs to be said, the petitioner assumes all responsibility for the Cause, including all financial obligations. The petitioner appoints an official, the Postulator, to approach a bishop with a formal petition to open a Cause.

In this petition, the Postulator must provide evidence of the person's reputation for holiness and intercessory signs, some evidence of heroic virtue (or the person dying for the faith if the candidate is thought to be a martyr), a list of witnesses who can testify to this, and other materials including any published materials on or by the person.

If a bishop agrees to open a Cause, he must first consult with the other bishops in the country and with the Holy See, through the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints, which must give its permission. If the dicastery sees there are no obvious problems, the bishop opens the Diocesan Inquiry to carry out an exhaustive examination of the person's life. This Inquiry could take quite some time depending on how much material has to be gathered and examined.

## How long?

People sometimes ask, how long does a Cause take? The answer to that is simple, if technical: how long is a piece of string? Every Cause is different, and the length depends on how much work has to be done, how quickly it's done, how long it takes to get through the various stages, and how long it takes to get miracles.

Some complain that organisations with lots of money

can get their candidates through much quicker. That is not true, progress on a Cause depends on how quickly work is done, how quickly miracles occur, and then on energetic petitioners, postulators and devotees, who promote the candidate and keep checking with the Dicastery on a regular basis to see if the candidate can move on up the queue.

## Fees

There are bills to be paid, mostly administrative and producing promotional materials; but in terms of the Dicastery, only three fees are to be paid to cover administrative costs and pay stipends to experts who will examine the official biography and details of the two miracles required. Beatification and canonisation ceremonies will also incur financial contributions to the sponsoring diocese and then to Rome to cover the costs of the ceremony. The exhumation of the candidate's remains and preparation of relics will also have to be pencilled in on the balance sheet.

The work in the Diocesan Inquiry is divided up among experts: two theologians examine the candidate's writings to see if they are orthodox; an Historical Commission gathers writings and all materials to allow a proper assessment of the person and the time they lived in; a formal tribunal is set up to take evidence from witnesses, not just those who believe the person was holy, but also those who did not. The process must hear all sides in order to come to an objective judgement. The number of the witnesses can vary: 30, 40, 50, 60, depending on the candidate, their length of life, their work etc – the Cause of Pope St John Paul II, for example, took evidence from 120 witnesses.

## Rome

When the Inquiry is complete, all materials are sent to Rome, a Roman Postulator is appointed, one who lives in the city, and a formal biography and thesis is composed: the 'Positio'. This will argue for the person's holiness and/or martyrdom, and will be closely examined by expert historians and theologians, and the cardinals attached to the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints.

Only when each group of experts give their approval is the Cause presented to the Pope. If he is convinced the person lived a life of heroic virtue or was an authentic martyr, he will approve and the person is declared Venerable. A martyr can be beatified immediately, a non-martyr needs a miracle. Once a miracle has been identified, it is first investigated in the Diocese in which it occurred - in a Diocesan Inquiry of its own, and

then all materials sent to Rome to be compiled into a 'Positio on the miracle' to be examined by medical professionals, theologians, the cardinals of the Dicastery, and then the pope. Once approved, the Venerable can then be beatified and called Blessed. Another miracle is then required for a Blessed to be canonised.

## Diocesan Inquiry

The Diocesan Inquiry into Sr Clare is due to start soon; her congregation has received the permission of the Dicastery of the Causes of Saints to proceed. So what can you do to help her Cause? Well, first of all, pray; pray for miracles and for the success of the Cause. Promote the Cause and be willing to cooperate if asked. Be prudent in your devotion – the Church keeps a careful eye on devotees to make sure they are obedient to the Church and not publicly venerating the person before the Church has come to its conclusions.

Support the Cause financially so the sisters can pay the bills the Cause incurs. As we know in the Father Willie Doyle Association, raising money is a challenge. And when it comes to finance, keep everything above board; the Dicastery for the Causes of Saints will need to see things are in order there too.

## Evidence

Some of you who knew her may be called to give evidence; if you are, be honest: don't ignore the negatives nor over-exaggerate the positives: Saints do not suddenly pop down in front of us fully formed; they grow holy in our midst. If Sr Clare is seen to have grown in holiness, despite her flaws and foibles, the Church will see an authentic process of sanctification, that's what they need to see.

## Objections

And if you know people who didn't like her queuing up to have their say, don't take them to Donegal for 'a little break' until the officials are gone and it's safe to let them out – they too must be heard. If Clare is, indeed, a Saint, any objections should be easy to answer when the 'Positio' is being written.

Finally, when praying for a miracle, be careful to ensure that you are praying only to Sr Clare. If other Saints or candidates are being invoked, attribution of a miracle may prove difficult. When praying for someone, trust in God.

Causes are exciting and offer many evangelical possibilities; they can gather the faithful to work and pray together in a common cause. For us in Ireland, new Saints are a sign of hope – that is why Fr Willie Doyle and Sr Clare are so important. And of course, for you, the people of



Derry, to have a Saint emerge from your community in these times, one who was a child of these times, that is the most wonderful gift of God and source of great pride and joy.

## Rejoice

I think with Clare and Willie, spiritual siblings that they are, we in Ireland are on the verge of something marvellous. So let us pray that these two Irish people, the children of St Patrick, will one day, very soon, be raised up among the greatest of the Saints, so we in Ireland, but most importantly, the universal Church may rejoice

in the light of their holiness and their beautiful humanity.

Thank you, Derry; thank you, Long Tower Parish; thank you, members of the Crockett family, for giving us Clare. I have no doubt that I will not be the last person to say that. I believe, one day, the Church herself will say it as this daughter of Derry is raised to be counted among the Saints of the Church.

*(Talks by the other guest speakers at this year's Sr Clare Retreat will feature in the next few editions of The Net.)*

*From hugging Teddy Bears to supping tea and singing a few favourite tunes...*

## Daniel O'Donnell goes down a treat at St Eugene's Afternoon Tea

*by Anne Marie Hickey*



hall, before taking to the stage to sing some of his well-known songs.

People came from all over Ireland for this fundraising project in aid of St Eugene's Cathedral. Groups travelled from Limerick, Mayo, Omagh and Ballymena to listen to the great music and enjoy the experience of an Afternoon Tea.

Lauren Doherty, the Parish Schools Liaison Coordinator, and I sang a few songs together to warm up the crowd for Daniel.

Parish volunteers, along with friends and family, were drafted in to help on the day. Nearly 40 volunteers worked to ensure everyone had a memorable and enjoyable day.

ON Sunday 14 July, St Eugene's hosted nearly 400 people for Afternoon Tea with international star, Daniel O'Donnell.

St Mary's College, one of our Parish post primary schools, was the venue we were lucky to be able to use.

Daniel chatted to everyone in the

Daniel was very kind with his time and was in no rush home. He greeted fans of all ages after the show.

All-in-all, it was a wonderful parish event which we will remember for a very long time.



## Time to prepare for this year's Season of Creation

*by Patricia McCormack*

RESOURCES to help parishes, groups and individuals to celebrate the Season of Creation 2024 are now available.

These have been compiled by the Laudato Si' Working Group of the Irish Bishops' Conference and Trocaire, and can be accessed online at: <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/laudato-si/season-of-creation-2024/>

The Season of Creation starts on September 1, which Pope Francis has established as an annual World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, and continues until October 4, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi.

The Season of Creation is marked throughout the Christian World and celebrates the joy of creation, as well as encouraging awareness-raising initiatives to protect the natural environment.

This year's theme is 'To Hope and Act with Creation'.

We hear the cry of the Earth

all around us – polluted rivers, lakes and oceans, forest fires and scorched earth, heat waves and droughts, storms and flooding. We are witnessing the mass extinction of many species... all part of the vital web of life. Yet all is not lost. There is hope that things can change, that we can change. To hope in a biblical context does not mean to stand passively still and quiet, but rather striving for new life amidst the struggles.

"Future generations will never forgive us if we miss the opportunity to protect our common home. We have inherited a garden; we must not leave a desert for our children." (Joint statement from Pope Francis, Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew and Archbishop Justin Welby of Canterbury.)

For further information please email the Derry Diocesan Laudato Si' Group at [laudatosiderry@gmail.com](mailto:laudatosiderry@gmail.com)



# Gathered for re-dedication of Claudy bombings memorial site on 52nd anniversary... Resilient Claudy community commended for nurturing spirit of peace

ON the 52nd anniversary of the Claudy Bombings, Wednesday, July 31, a service of prayer was held in the Co Derry village, with the rededication of the Memorial site following its restoration and re-development.

Just as on that day in 1972, when the people of Claudy were going about their normal activities before three car bombs exploded that claimed nine lives, the sound of a lawn mower, along with passing tractors and cars were the backdrop to the memorial service in the village car park. Life goes on, and while the Catholic and Protestant families of the bereaved and those injured and still bearing scars from that day of devastation have been swept along with that flow, life for them was changed forever. And so, the memorial ceremony on this painful anniversary gives them an opportunity to stand still together and pray for each other and their loved ones whose lives were so violently ended.

The time of prayer was led jointly by Rev David Slater, Church of Ireland, and Fr David O’Kane, PP Claudy. Welcoming all on what was a beautiful, calm summer’s evening,

Rev Slater remarked on how the passage of time “does not soften the hurts of the past.”

He added: “For anyone who has suffered a grievous hurt and loss, as this community and its families have, as you have done, time is irrelevant, because the sense of loss and unfairness and the pain of grief is something that has to be dealt with every day.

“This evening’s act of dedication and remembrance is part of the continuing journey in dealing with what has happened to those you love and with what has happened to you, the families of those we remember this evening. Jesus still calls the heavy-hearted and offers them comfort. We gather in response to His invitation. We seek to find comfort in Him and with each other.”

Following a prayer, hymn and Scripture reading, floral tributes were laid in remembrance of Rose McLaughlin (52), Joe Connolly (15), David ‘Davy’ Miller (60), Kathryn Eakin (8), Joe McCloskey (39), Elizabeth ‘Lizzie’ McElhinney (59), William Watson Temple (16), Artie Hone (38), and James ‘Jim’ McClelland (65).

In the prayer of dedication, those gathered prayed: “God of the living and the dead, we continue to honour the lives of those we love. Remembering past times and our relationships with those now gone from us, we dedicate this memorial and wider site to their memory. As we honour their lives we will continue to tell their stories in our families and in our community. This memorial is a sign of remembrance, but we dedicate it also as a sign of hope. Let its presence be a sign of Your grace to us all.”

The families greatly appreciate the investment by Derry City & Strabane District Council in the Claudy memorial, which they feel has created a more intimate and dignified area of remembrance, and the Mayor, Lilian Seeno-Barr joined them for the time of prayer and dedication.

Addressing those present, the Mayor took the opportunity to “pay tribute to the strength and resilience of the Claudy community, where the shadow of this awful act of terror has not been allowed to permeate, but where people have instead chosen to nurture compassion, promote reconciliation, and foster

the spirit of peace.”

Remarking that the little memorial garden was “a welcoming shared space for quiet reflection”, the Mayor extended her sympathy and support to the bereaved and their on-going campaign to seek justice for the victims.

“As we stand here today,” she said, “let us reaffirm our commitment to peace and unity, ensuring that the memory of those we have lost inspires us to build a future free from violence and filled with hope. Together, we can honour their legacy by continuing to work towards a more compassionate and just society.”

Speaking on behalf of SEFF (South East Fermanagh Foundation), Advocate, David Hallawell paid tribute to the families and their desire to have the original memorial redeveloped and enhanced.

“This memorial,” he said, “is now a fitting legacy to the people of Claudy, a place of reflection where anyone can come and educate themselves of the terrible events of July 31, 1972, or to simply sit and remember.”



## A tribute to the late Joan Harte by Fr Roland Colhoun

WITH enormous sadness, we learned of the death of Joan Harte on June 23. Joan was one of the pillars of the Legion of Mary in Tyrone. It was her husband, Brendan who asked me to commence a praesidium in Newtownstewart. Consequently, in May 2018, Joan helped to launch the Legion at our parish Oratory. Better still, she came to every meeting for months on end, to instruct us and to set the praesidium on a firm footing. She proved to be a great friend, attending our annual Acies Mass and rejoicing in the fruitfulness of our endeavours for the Mother of God.

Joan was an extraordinary woman. Born on July 19, 1950, in Eskra, Co Tyrone, she grew up in a household of 14. Her parents were hardworking, faith-filled Catholics, who imparted a great love of the Church to their children.

Having trained as a primary school teacher in Liverpool and London, Joan began her working life at Chapel Road Boys’ School, Derry, in 1971. Her social concern prompted her to become an overnight volunteer in the city’s

first women’s refuge. In 1978, she married Brendan Harte (brother of Mickey the GAA player, later manager) and they settled in Omagh. The same year, she transferred to teach at St Patrick’s PS, Eskra, her native parish, where, in time, she was appointed headmistress.

Joan was a gentle and joyful teacher and a kind and highly organised school-leader. She carried these responsibilities dutifully for 39 years in the classroom, 20 of these as teaching-principal (1990-2010). During these busy years, Joan completed a Master’s degree in Education in the University of Ulster, at Magee College. She also sat on the Board of Governors of St Joseph’s Convent Grammar in Donaghmore and St Mary’s University College, Belfast.

Spare time was at a premium, and this busy mother and teacher devoted lots of it to the Legion of Mary. Joan joined the Legion in 1986 and gave 36 years’ service, interrupted only by maternity leave. She and Brendan were dedicated officers in the two Drumragh praesidia. They promoted the Legion at great



Joan Harte (front row, second from left) with Fr Roland Colhoun and visiting members of the Legion of Mary, Newtownstewart, Friday, May 11, 2018.

length and set up several branches, re-establishing Eskra in 2017 and Newtownstewart in 2018. No one knows the mammoth effort and the myriad sacrifices on the part of this devout couple to build up the Legion of Mary in the Diocese of Derry, the Diocese of Clogher and the Archdiocese of Armagh. They also undertook the PPC programme (Peregrinatio Pro Christo) across the water during three summers, to spread the Faith in English parishes. In

December 2022, realising that her health was waning, Joan wrote her final Legion meeting minutes.

Her many educational and ecclesial duties notwithstanding, Joan was unfailing in her principal vocation, wife and mother, and dedicated herself to her seven grandchildren who were completely devoted to her. She leaves behind her beloved husband and three children, Emma, Grace and Peter (captain of the Tyrone Senior GAA team).

At the age of 73, Joan died peacefully at home on the morning of Sunday, June 23, 2024. For everyone who knew her, she was a treasure. With her gracious personality, she reminded us of Our Lady. My last time to meet Joan was almost three months ago. Because her sickness was intensifying, she invited our praesidium for a visit. It was Easter Thursday, April 4. Majella, our president, Ethna, our secretary, and I spent an unforgettable afternoon in Joan’s home at Killnaheary, Eskra. She has left us the most beautiful memories and we will miss her for the rest of our days. May the Lord reward her good, kind and gentle soul with abundance. And may she rest in peace.

*(Joan was also a source of great encouragement with regards to ‘The Net’ publication each month, and her words of appreciation and support will be greatly missed. Deepest sympathy is expressed to her family and all those who loved her.)*

## Fr Pat O'Hagan, Diocesan Vocations' Director, shares his vocation story... Despite challenges...serving God's people as a priest is wonderful calling and opportunity to witness



Fr Pat O'Hagan, Diocesan Vocations' Director.

I suppose it is fair to say that my Vocation story began on the day I was baptised – almost 66 years ago – if not even before then. I was blessed to have the parents I had, people for whom faith, and the practice of the Faith, meant a lot. It wasn't something added on to their lives; it was an integral part of their lives, of who they were as children of God. Faith – our Catholic Faith – was something they instilled in their eight children.

At home, we learned to pray and to believe in an all-seeing and all-powerful God. We honoured the picture of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, the images of the Saints, and the signs of our religion in every room of our house. We went to Mass every Sunday (back in the days before the Saturday night Vigil Mass), even if it meant walking the mile both there and back in all kinds of weather, and we prayed the family Rosary every evening, no matter what might have been on the TV or going on in our neighbourhood.

I grew up in the Glebe, which was then a part of the Parish of Mourne (Melmount) and which later became, as it still is, part of the Parish of Sion Mills. I attended the (old) Glebe Primary School for three years, and Sion Mills PS for four years, before heading to the Christian Brothers' School in Omagh for my secondary education. Looking back on those 14 years, I can honestly say that they were a happy period in my life – a time of learning and, hopefully, maturing in terms of education and in terms of exploring my faith and my vocation in life.

At that time, like many, if not all, of my contemporaries, I wouldn't have used the word 'vocation', but would have talked about my future career or job opportunities. Having said that, it is true to say that thoughts of a religious /priestly vocation featured from time-to-time. I considered becoming a Christian Brother, as it would have meant combining a desire to serve

God with the thoughts of becoming a teacher, but nothing came of that. On one or two occasions it was put to me that I might consider becoming a priest but, again, that idea never really developed in my personal thoughts about the future as my second level education progressed.

I found that I was good at languages. I loved learning them and using them as much as possible. When it came to choosing a university course, I discovered a programme at the University of Bath that would have allowed me to study French and Italian, spend time in both France and Italy, and then specialise in interpretation and translation. I knew then that this was going to be the life for me. I pictured myself living abroad and working for the European Union or United Nations. I was interviewed for Bath and offered a place in my chosen course, and had my heart set on pursuing that dream.

And then – I remember it well – it was Palm Sunday 1977. I was sitting at home with the rest of my family. We were watching 'Songs of Praise'. Towards the end of the programme, the congregation and choir sang 'Jerusalem', and something stirred within me. I heard the words, "Why don't you become a priest?" I said nothing to anyone. I was preparing for my A'Levels and for heading to Bath /Europe for four years, and I was more than happy with the choices I had made. I decided to put thoughts of priesthood not just to the back of my mind, but out of my mind completely. But try as I might, the thought wouldn't go away.

Looking back now, 47 years later, the memory that sticks out in my mind is that I lost my appetite to some extent – people would have probably thought that was caused by nervousness or anxiety leading up to my exams. I don't recall praying about it, but it was with me 24/7, even when I went to Rann na Feirste, in the Donegal Gaelteacht, during the Easter holidays that year and tried to engage fully in everything that was going on there, and when I came back for the last few weeks of class and revision before the exams.

### Discernment

Going to weekday Mass during Lent and at other times of the year wasn't unusual for me, and I decided to go to Mass one Saturday morning in St Mary's Church, Melmount, about a three-mile walk from home. It was on my way there, with the thought of priesthood in my mind and the anxiety it was causing in my gut, that I said to myself, "Why not give it a go?" Without any exaggeration, the anxiety lifted immediately! I know now, from my study and practice

of Ignatian Spirituality, that that was a moment of discernment, a sign from the Lord that this was the right choice for me. The Holy Spirit was telling me to go ahead and "give it a go."

My problem then was not knowing how to go about it, but I was lucky to know Fr Michael Doherty who was then a Curate in Omagh and Chaplain to my school. So, I approached him after the 10 am Mass on the last day of my exams. I told him what I was thinking and he put me in touch with Fr Pat Crilly, who was Diocesan Vocations Director at the time. I then plucked up the courage to tell my parents and family, who were all very supportive. After meeting with Fr Crilly, and later with the late Bishop Edward Daly, I was in a position to tell friends and classmates about my decision and the fact that I had been accepted to begin studying for the Diocesan priesthood in Maynooth that September.

One of my classmates reacted with a phrase that has stuck with me these 47 years, "I'm shocked, but not surprised." I guess the shock came from the change of a well-considered and 'definite' plan to go to Bath and become an interpreter / translator. The lack of surprise was, I suppose, from something he and others had seen in me over the years.

So, off I went to Maynooth on September 6, 1977, along with four other young men from the Diocese of Derry, and 57 others from all over the country. My mind was opened up almost immediately to the wider Irish Church. I heard the names of dioceses that I'd never heard of before – Ossory, Ferns, Cloyne, to name but a few. I took part with my classmates in a three-week Introductory Course, which covered words and topics that were new to all of us. We learned some rudimentary things about Liturgy, Meditation, Retreats, Prayer, the Divine Office (the Prayer of the Church), and we were encouraged to share our stories, particularly our vocation story, with one another. We formed friendships which have endured to this day, with some who were eventually ordained and with others who chose a different path in life.

Studies began in earnest at the end of September, and the rhythm of seminary life became part and parcel of how we were being asked to live for the next six or seven years – Morning Prayer, Meditation, Mass, talks by the Dean and by one or other of our Spiritual Directors, as well as regular meetings with a personal Spiritual Director, and the encouragement to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for two hours on a

Saturday evening, as well as the somewhat 'high' liturgy of Mass in the College Chapel on Sunday mornings, were regular features of life during that time. All of that was sown into a timetable of lectures, essays, seminars, and exams. So, mid-term breaks at home, as well as the long summer holidays, were very welcome.

Looking back now, after 40 years of priestly service in the Diocese of Derry, having held appointments in Coleraine, Buncrana, Camus, Mourne, Moville, and now in Bellaghy/Ballyscullion and Greenlough, those seven years in Maynooth seem to have passed by in the blink of an eye. There are, of course, some stand out moments which bring back a host of happy memories – graduations, receiving the various Orders (Reader, Acolyte, Admission) and being ordained a deacon in the College Chapel, not to mention a few memorable concerts and other productions. I won't say it was all plain sailing or that there weren't moments when I asked myself if this was still the right choice to make, but I thank God now for the grace of perseverance to get me through those times, as well as the staff members, friends, classmates, and the other men from the Diocese who were a tremendous help and inspiration to me during my seminary days, and since then.

Archbishop Francis Duffy, of Tuam, said recently that right now is a great time to be a priest in Ireland. I agree. Despite the challenges, the opposition to the Church and to those who are proud to say they belong to the Catholic Church at this time, despite the rejection of Church teaching by many in our own country and, perhaps, in our families and among our circle of friends, serving God's people as a priest is a wonderful calling and an opportunity to witness to something above and beyond ourselves but which lies deep in our hearts, planted there by the Lord on the day of baptism, nourished by faithful Catholic parents, families, friends, and parish communities. That same 'something' is the faith that gives hope, meaning, and direction to the people we serve, especially at times of suffering, bereavement, and doubt; we try to encourage faith through our homilies, in our celebration of the Mass and the sacraments, and in how we live our lives.

We need the prayers of God's people to help us to fulfil our priestly vocation, just as we need prayers for vocations to the diocesan priesthood here in the Diocese of Derry. Please, in the words of Jesus, "Ask the Lord of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:38).



Fr Pat in a joyous encounter with Pope Francis during a photo opportunity with the Holy Father while in Rome celebrating 40 years of priesthood. Photo copyright of Vatican Media.



Fr Pat with fellow members of the Maynooth Ordination Class of 1984 in Rome for 40th anniversary. Photo copyright of Vatican Media.

# IS GOD CALLING YOU?

**DERRYVOCATIONS.ORG**

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

# Fr Pat's 40th Jubilee celebrations in Bellaghy, Greenlough & Ballyscullion



## Clerical Changes...Reshaping how we are church in order to be effective in our time – Bishop Donal

THE 2024 Clerical Changes for the Diocese announced by Bishop Donal are effective from August 31.

Commenting on the changes, he told 'The Net': "The moving of clergy can be seen as mainly an administrative task, seeking to cover parishes and weekend Masses. But it is also part of a reshaping how we are church in order to be effective in our time.

"Thus, in the past, most parishes had more than one priest and collaboration was essential. The increase in one-priest parishes can promote loneliness and isolation. Thus, I believe that team ministry - between priests and with laity - is not merely a response to

changing clergy numbers but also a spiritual antidote against isolation and stress."

"I thank the priests," added Bishop Donal, "for their generosity in accepting either new challenges or not being moved, and I ask parishes to give time for new clergy and new arrangements to bed in.

"These are challenging times for all of society. But Jesus calls us to be missionary church. Our parish structures are aimed at building Eucharistic communities, which are nourished by the Bread of Life and who will feed the deep hungers of our time. We have no other purpose."

This year's changes are as

follows...

- Rev Seamus Kelly, PP Dungiven, to be Priest-in-Residence Dungiven.
- Rev Declan Boland, PP Camus, to be Priest-in-Residence Camus, Clonleigh and Leckpatrick.
- Rev Michael McCaughey, PP Three Patrons, to be PP Camus and PP Clonleigh and PP Leckpatrick.
- Rev Colm O'Doherty, PP Clonleigh, to be PP Moville Lower.
- Rev Gerard Sweeney, PP Leckpatrick, to be PP Dungiven.
- Rev Dermot McGirr, CC Ballinascreen and Desertmartin, to be PP Banagher.

- Rev Micheál McGavigan, Adm Banagher, to be PP Three Patrons, in addition to his existing appointments as Judicial Vicar, Director of the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, and Instructor for the Armagh Inter-diocesan Marriage Tribunal.
- Rev Edward Gallagher, PP Moville Lower, to be CC Camus and CC Clonleigh and CC Leckpatrick.
- Rev Michael McCaul, CC Drumragh, to be CC Ballinascreen and Desertmartin.
- Rev Joseph Varghese, CC Dungiven, to be CC Drumragh.
- Rev Oliver Crilly, Priest-in-Residence Urney and Castlefin, to retire.



become for everyone an ever more visible sign of compassion and hope.

**Political Leaders (August)**  
Let us pray that political leaders be at the service of their own people, working for integral human development and the common good, taking care of those who have lost their jobs and giving priority to the poor.

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

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

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

Himself on the cross for the life of the world. Amen.

### Remember in prayer:

- Fr John Gilmore (July 1st)
- Fr Joseph Gormley (2nd)
- Fr Eamon Graham (3rd)
- Fr Dermott Harkin (4th)
- Fr Karl Haan (5th)
- Fr Eugene Hasson (6th)
- All Priests (7th)
- Fr John Irwin (8th)
- Fr Charles Keaney (9th)
- All Priests (10th)
- Fr Gerald Hasson (11th)
- Fr Michael Keaveny (12th)
- Fr Seamus Kelly (13th)
- Fr Edward Kilpatrick (14th)
- All Priests (15th)
- Fr Charles Logue (16th)
- Fr Paul McCafferty (17th)
- Msgr Bryan McCanny (18th)
- Fr Michael McCaughey (19th)
- Fr Andrew McCloskey (20th)
- Fr Patrick Lagan (21st)
- All Priests (22nd)
- Fr Noel McDermott (23rd)
- Fr Eamon McDevitt (24th)
- Fr John McDevitt (25th)
- Fr Christopher McDermott (26th)
- Fr Kevin McElhennon (27th)
- Fr Declan McGeehan (28th)
- Fr Dermot McGirr (29th)

- All priests (30th)
- Fr Brian McGoldrick (31st)
- Fr Neil McGoldrick (Aug 1st)
- All Priests (2nd)
- Fr James McGonagle (3rd)
- Dr James McGrory (4th)
- Fr Daniel McFaul (5th)
- Fr Edward McGuinness (6th)
- Fr Micheal McGavigan (7th)
- Bishop Donal McKeown (8th)
- Fr Con McLaughlin (9th)
- All Priests (10th)
- All priests (11th)
- Fr Peter McLaughlin (12th)
- All priests (13th)
- All priests (14th)
- Fr Peter Madden (15th)
- Fr Anthony Mailey (16th)
- Archbishop Eamon Martin (17th)
- Fr Gerard Mongan (18th)
- All Priests (19th)
- Fr Sean O'Donnell (20th)
- All priests (21st)
- All priests (22nd)
- All Priests (23rd)
- All Priests (24th)
- All Priests (25th)
- All Priests (26th)
- All Priests (27th)
- Fr Colm O'Doherty (28th)
- Fr Kieran O'Doherty (29th)
- All Priests (30th)
- Fr Francis P O'Hagan (31st)

## Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during July and August for:

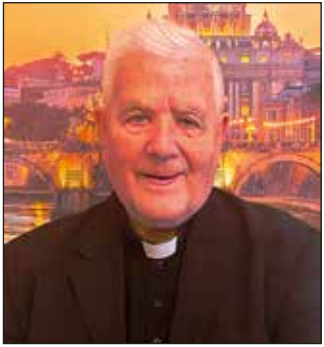
### Pastoral Care of the Sick (July)

Let us pray that the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick grants the Lord's strength to those who receive it and to their loved ones, and that it may



## Lavey celebration of Diamond Jubilarian, Fr Liam Donnelly...

# A beacon of faith and constant reassuring presence for many



THE people of Lavey turned out in strength to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Fr Liam Donnelly's ordination to the priesthood, on Friday, June 21.

Parishioners were joined by members of Fr Liam's family, and many friends and priests, for the anniversary Mass in St Mary's Church, where the main celebrant was the parish priest, Fr Eamon Graham.

Unable to be present himself, due to contracting Covid, Fr Liam asked for the Mass to go ahead and he followed it online, watching proudly as his nephews and nieces took part in the Readings, Prayer of the Faithful, and Offertory Procession. Some family members were in the Parish Choir that added so much to the ceremony, with its beautiful music and singing.

Close family friend, Joe McGurk had the honour of paying tribute to the much-loved, 85-year-old priest on his Diamond Jubilee, remarking: "This milestone is not merely a testament to the passage of time, but a reflection of unwavering commitment, boundless compassion, and a life dedicated to the service of both God and community."

Telling Fr Liam's story, Joe noted that he was born in the townland of Drumlamph on May 12, 1939, to Frank and Minnie Donnelly (nee Scullion), and was one of twins, though his twin sister, Marie sadly passed away on September 1, 2007.

After attending Rocktown Primary School, he went on to board in St Columb's College, Derry to complete his secondary education.

"On arrival at St Columb's," said Joe, "Liam was allocated a cubicle in the dormitory along with Seamus Heaney, the late poet and Nobel prize-winner from Bellaghy. It is fascinating that the pair lived barely two miles from each other, in adjoining parishes, and met for the first time 40 miles away in the boarding school. Thus began a lifelong friendship with Seamus and Marie Heaney, which endured over the years until the poet's death in 2013."

He added: "When Seamus Heaney's connections with his old school, St Columb's College, Derry, were celebrated at the opening of the Seamus Heaney Homeplace in 2016, three past pupils were invited to reminisce about their schooldays - historian and Irish ambassador to Australia, Japan and Russia, and Chair of the Human Rights of the

Council of Europe, James Sharkey; singer-songwriter, Phil Coulter, famed for his Eurovision songs and writer of four Number 1 hits for the British pop charts; and Fr Liam, the priest and perfect raconteur.

"And when Seamus published his poetry collection 'District and Circle', which won the prestigious T S Eliot prize in 2006, critics praised Heaney for 'saying something extraordinary while, line by line, conveying a sense that this is something an ordinary person might actually say'.

"Perhaps, he was referring to Fr Liam, the raconteur. It was no surprise that Heaney signed and sent one of the first copies of his anthology to him with the message - 'For Liam, who knows the district utterly and will always be in the circle - with great affection and regards Seamus, June 2006'.

Remarking that life in a boarding school in the 1950s "for the boys from South Derry, was not entirely a place of incarceration as some viewed it", Joe went on to say: "Stories emanated of the inventive pastimes of the boarders in their dormitories during the long winter evenings. No mobile phones, no reading materials apart from the academic, and no access over the walls of the boarding school.

### Imaginary

"There was little to amuse them, so on various occasions they would hold a mock 'wake'. Some victim would be laid out on a bed, face covered with talcum powder, beneath a white sheet, whilst others in the role of relations and friends of the poor deceased would come into the cubicle expressing their sympathies, saying they were sorry for their trouble and commenting on how well the corpse looked, how very like himself, whilst drinking imaginary cups of tea, passing around imaginary cigarettes and discussing such contemporary gossip on 'the best ways of footing turf, or how to build a haycock without tumbling it or the price of dropped calves at Swatragh market'.

He went on to note that other boarders of the period were: Seamus Fay; Hugh Bredin, formerly Queen's University Scholastic Philosophy Lecturer; Seamus Deane, the poet; Tom Scullion, Bellaghy and Derry County footballer; and Leo O'Neill, Kilrea, former Derry footballer, brother of Martin, the Celtic manager.

He told how, whilst at St Columb's, Fr Liam had been "driven by a profound calling to serve", and progressed to St Patrick's College, Maynooth, where eminent classmates were Cardinal Sean Brady, Primate of All Ireland and Archbishop of Armagh, and Kerry man, Dermot Clifford, Archbishop of Cashel. A further colleague in his class was Eugene O'Connor, son of the founder of Lavey GAA, Mayo man, Willie O'Connor.

Describing Fr Liam's Maynooth years as being marked by "rigorous

theological study and a deepening spiritual practice", Joe added: "He was ordained at the tender age of 25 in the Convent chapel in Buncrana, on June 21, 1964. Bishop of Derry, Dr Neil Farren carried out his ordination on the same day as the Bishop's grand-nephew, Fr Brian McGoldrick was also ordained."

He continued: "Fr Donnelly then embarked on a mission that would see him become a beacon of faith and guidance for countless individuals: first to Coleraine parish as CC, from 1965 to 1970; and then as curate in Derry city, in the Glendermott and Pennyburn parishes, between 1970 and 1981."

"From the very beginning," said Joe, "Fr Donnelly exhibited a unique blend of humility and strength, qualities that would define his ministry. His years in Derry, between 1970 and 1981, were the most challenging and defining years in his spiritual ministry, during this period euphemistically called the 'Troubles'.

"On Sunday, January 30, 1972, Fr Daly, later to become Bishop Daly, rang Fr Liam and asked him to go to Altnagelvin Hospital to check the number of bodies in the morgue, then to the Casualty Department to find out how many were wounded in the hospital (about 32). He was approached by a man, who was wounded and attending casualty in Altnagelvin Hospital, to go and visit his wife, who had suffered a heart attack on the night before. The man told him that his son had been shot dead in the Bogside that fated January day in 1972. This was Bloody Sunday. It was the highest number of people killed in a shooting incident during the 'Troubles', and is considered the worst mass shooting in Northern Irish history.

"To say that this incident was traumatic is an understatement, yet Fr Liam survived Bloody Sunday, and much further distress during this period, "with his spirit bruised but never broken," as Phil Coulter put it. His strong faith and resilience, imbued with an innate understanding of the history of Ireland, taught him that you can be conquered but you can never be owned, and you can still be free and still have your culture, religion, history, heritage and your spirit intact, even after years of oppression and subjugation."

Joe went on to speak about how Fr Liam's efforts in Derry had "transformed lives, giving young people the opportunity to break the cycles of poverty and fear, and to build a better future."

"He is, no doubt," remarked Joe, "one of the unsung heroes of the conflict in Northern Ireland."

He went on to note that Fr Liam returned to South Derry in 1977, to Bellaghy Parish for four years, until he went on to Ballykelly and then Strathfoyle as Parish Priest. He served as Parish priest in Errigal (Ballerin) for 14 years, before going to Ballykelly, in the Limavady

Parish, and retiring in 2015 back to Drumlamph and Lavey.

### A pillar of the community

"Throughout his 60 years of service," commented Joe, "Fr Donnelly has been a constant, reassuring presence wherever. He has the knack of being good company and has tended to the spiritual needs of his congregation. His influence extends far beyond the walls of the church.

"On the other hand, for many years, Fr Donnelly's loyal housekeeper of 34 years, Brigid, who sadly passed away a few years ago, looked after his personal needs, preparing meals and looking after the parochial house. On one occasion, when the Bishop of Edinburgh came to say Mass at the funeral of Fr Rafferty of Glenullin, he was presented with a cake by one of the local parishioners. The Bishop asked Brigid if she would like to have the cake, to which Brigid retorted, 'Bishop, I don't eat cake and Fr Donnelly doesn't need cake!' All of which goes to show that Brigid also paid strict attention to Fr Liam's dietary requirements."

Joe went on to share that as Fr Liam reflects on his 60 years of service, "he remains humble and hopeful."

He added: "He has continued to nurture the spiritual and social well-being of many of the parishioners in South Derry. His sermons, generally brief, but always heartfelt and thought-provoking, address the core of human experience, touching on themes of love, forgiveness, and resilience. He has a rare gift for making scripture accessible and relevant, connecting ancient teachings to local anecdotes and contemporary life in a way that resonates deeply with his congregation."

Joe continued, describing Fr Liam as: "Erudite, an avid reader, unique in that he has an incredible memory



and a keen historian to boot, particularly the history of Ireland, an accomplished chess player who took no prisoners when he played with his late brother, Jim, crossword puzzler and Sudoku expert, a priest with a low golf handicap and a great sense of humour, a fountain of knowledge about Lavey parish and, indeed, about most parishes in Derry diocese."

Very proud of his nephews and nieces and close family circle, having a good relationship with them, talking proudly of their achievements, Joe spoke about how Fr Liam, in his early years, liked nothing better than to "head off to Barry's amusements in Portrush during the summer with the 'tartleys', his affectionate term for his nieces and nephews", and made sure that everyone, including granny, got a trip on the ghost train.

Joe added: "He has carried out the marriages of all his siblings and nieces and nephews, christened all 19 of his siblings' children as well as a significant number of his nieces and nephews, in total 45 at the last count.

"Overall, to quote a family member, Fr Liam is 'a fantastic

uncle, who is the pillar of the Donnelly family and is partial to wee buns out of Ditty's in Castledawson, despite Brigid's protestations, God rest her."

"The Maynooth class of 1964," noted Joe, "consisted of 64 priests, 34 of whom are still alive and 15 of whom met up recently for a reunion in Maynooth. This proud Lavey man is one of the 34 and he has never forgotten where he came from...a true Laveyite."

Wishing Fr Liam many more anniversaries, Joe concluded with the inimitable words coined by a former Lavey Parish priest: "Onwards, upwards!"

In a comment afterwards to 'The Net', Fr Graham paid his own tribute, saying: "Fr Donnelly has ministered in the Diocese for 60 years, sometimes in the most difficult of situations. He has never sought publicity of acclaim, just the reward of knowing that he has made Christ present in the lives of so many; a gentle breeze of the Spirit of God."

The community celebration of Fr Liam's Diamond Jubilee continued with refreshments in Lavey GAC centre.

## Vocations Day to offer special time of prayer and discussion about seminary and diocesan priesthood

THE Derry Diocesan Vocations Team will host a Vocations Day in Buncrana, Co Donegal, on Sunday, September 8, the Feast of the Birthday of The Blessed Virgin Mary. The Day will be dedicated to Our Lady, Mother of the Church, Mother of Priests.

The Vocations Day will begin with Mass in St Mary's Oratory at 12:30 pm and will end with a Holy Hour for Vocations in the Oratory, from 5-6 pm. The details for the middle part of the day will be finalised soon, but will include opportunities for anyone interested in the diocesan priesthood to meet with priests and seminarians, to discuss any questions they may have about seminary training and about the life and ministry of the diocesan priest.

Whilst the Vocations Day is being organised by the Derry Diocesan

Team, it is open to men from other dioceses who are considering a vocation to the priesthood.

Over the past few years, the Derry Diocese celebrated a Year of Prayer for Vocations to the diocesan priesthood, and this was followed by a National Year of Prayer. Prayer is at the heart of the promotion of vocations in the Diocese of Derry. Every week a prayer, based on the Sunday readings, is sent to each parish, encouraging the people of the Diocese to pray that "...the Lord of the harvest will send labourers into His harvest." (Matthew 9:38).

Without a shadow of a doubt, the prayers being offered by the people of the Diocese, from Malin Head to Killyclogher, from Aghyaran to Bellaghy, have been, and are being answered, by the Lord.

At present, we have four men in seminary; two in St Patrick's

College, Maynooth, and two in the Pontifical Bede College, Rome. A number of men have applied to begin their seminary studies this year and will be undergoing psychological assessments and interviews over the next few months. A number of others are currently meeting regularly with a priest-mentor and with the Diocesan Vocations Director.

We invite the readers of 'The Net' to keep our seminarians and those discerning a vocation in their prayers, and to pray for an increase to vocations to the diocesan priesthood.

Anyone interested in attending the Vocations Day in Buncrana on September 8 should contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan, by email at pgoh2111@gmail.com or by telephone at (+4428) 79386259.

# New Archbishop of Ardstraw by Fr Roland Colhoun



THE ancient Diocese of Ardstraw, Co Tyrone – the original Derry Diocese – has a new bishop, an Archbishop. He is Séamus Horgan of Ennis, Co Clare. The Ordination took place on Saturday, July 27, 2024, in Ennis, in the Cathedral of St Peter and St Paul.

Archbishop Horgan was consecrated by Cardinal Pietro Parolin, Vatican Secretary of State, with Cardinal Luis Antonio Tagle, Pro-Prefect for the Section of Evangelisation, and Bishop Fintan Monahan, Killaloe.

Archbishop Horgan has been appointed Apostolic Nuncio to South Sudan, in East Africa. A nuncio is the Pope's representative, akin to an ambassador. He is the one who chooses the new bishops for his designated territory. Archbishop Horgan will be the very first nuncio to South Sudan because it's the world's newest nation, established in 2011 when it gained independence, after decades of civil war.

### Archbishop of Ardstraw

I was invited to the Ordination because I live in the Parish of Ardstraw (Newtownstewart) and the new nuncio has been given the title, Archbishop of Ardstraw (in Irish, Ardeaspag Ard Sratha). He won't live in Ardstraw nor have any practical link with Ardstraw.

The explanation is this. Every bishop must have a diocese, but an Apostolic Nuncio is not in charge of a diocese. The long-established solution is for the Holy See to bestow the 'title' of diocesan Bishop on the Nuncio, using the name of a diocese that no longer exists. Canon Law then calls him a 'titular' bishop (CCC 376). The same system is applied for an auxiliary bishop. Ardstraw hasn't functioned as a Diocese since the 12th century. However, the name endures, and the title continues to be given. The previous Titular Bishop of Ardstraw was Most Rev Karl Reger, Auxiliary to the Diocese of Aachen in the state of North-Rhine-Westphalia, western Germany (1986-2006). He died four months ago, on March 27, at the age of 93 (!), and the Ardstraw title became available once again.

### History of Ardstraw

The first Bishop of Ardstraw was installed by St Patrick, according to the historian, Tírechán. Patrick founded a church on the River Derg and left it in the care of Bishop Mac Erce<sup>1</sup>. This was a century before the arrival from Leinster of the great St Eugene, who established his monastery on the same site, perhaps around 550AD. Details are scant but it's certain that Eugene's monastic church superseded the original diocesan church<sup>2</sup> For more than half a millennium, unlike western Christendom in general, the Irish Church did not have a territorial diocesan episcopate<sup>3</sup>. The centres of influence in the Church were the large monasteries, situated in the principal tribal kingdoms or 'tuatha'<sup>4</sup> Ireland had no towns or cities until they began to be established by the Viking invaders in the 10th century<sup>5</sup>. Rural monastic abbots rather than urban bishops were the principal figures of ecclesiastical authority. A perfect example is St Eugene, who was both abbot and bishop<sup>6</sup> in the kingdom of 'Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha'<sup>7</sup>, subordinate to the larger regional kingship, the Cineál Eoghain<sup>8</sup>, a branch of the Northern Uí Neill dynastic family<sup>9</sup>. In the early 12th

century, presumably to honour the long tradition of bishops in St Eugene's monastery, Ardstraw was chosen as the Seat of this Diocese<sup>10</sup>. It was the time of nationwide transition from monastic dominion to diocesan governance. The boundaries were drawn up in 1111AD at the Synod of Ráth Breasail, in Munster<sup>11</sup>. Accordingly, the renowned cloistered church on the banks of the Derg served as the cathedral for the Diocese of Ardstraw, the forerunner to the Diocese of Derry.

### Ardstraw to Maghera

History can be cruel not only to personages but to places. Ardstraw began to decline in political status due to the loss of tribal battles, not least the slaying of the King of 'Uí Fiachrach Ard Sratha' in 1076.<sup>12</sup> By the mid-12th century, the sub-kingdom had fallen.<sup>13</sup> This must be central to the demise of Ardstraw's episcopacy. Although bishops had resided in Ardstraw for six centuries, its status as cathedral parish drew to an abrupt close. The Synod of Kells in 1152 named Maghera the new Seat of the Diocese.<sup>14</sup> What prompted the change? In a dramatic development, around the year 1150 – probably for his own safety during tribal conflicts<sup>15</sup> – Bishop Muiredach Ó Cofaigh left Ardstraw and moved to his native Maghera-Rathlury, in modern-day Co Derry.<sup>16</sup> We can determine the timing of the changeover by the dates of the bishops' tenures. Bishop Ó Cofaigh (c.1149-1173) succeeded Bishop Ó Gormaille, who died in 1149<sup>17</sup>, and Bishop Ó Cofaigh was the first Bishop in Maghera.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, we know his move had taken place by the time the Synod of Kells concluded, March 6, 1152, because Bishop Ó Cofaigh 'assisted at the synod'<sup>19</sup> that renamed the See. Considering that it was he who made the move to Maghera, it was in his interest to be at the synod, to ensure that his transfer became official and that the diocesan See was no longer registered as Ardstraw. The synod lists him 'Bishop of Cineál Eoghain',

acknowledging the tribal rulers of the territory,<sup>20</sup> because 'the eventual layout of the new dioceses ... would closely mirror the political boundaries of the time'.<sup>21</sup> In any case, Kells placed the Seat of this diocese in Maghera-Rathlury.

### Maghera to Derry

Like Ardstraw, Maghera was a prominent location because it too is a sixth-century ecclesial foundation, that of St Lurach (Machaire Rátha Luraigh – 'the plain of the fort of Lurach').<sup>22</sup> It had a venerable monastery as well and was probably a more peaceful place than Ardstraw had become.<sup>23</sup> A century afterwards, in 1254, the Holy See gave approval for a successor Bishop, Germanus O'Carolan (1230-1279), to move the Seat of the Diocese again, this time to Derry Colmcille,<sup>24</sup> the sixth-century monastic foundation of St Columba, now called Derry City, and there it has remained. Faithful to its roots, the diocese has retained St Eugene of Ardstraw as its Patron. In Derry Cathedral, St Eugene is visible in a statue on the spire and in the stained-glass window above the high altar. The Diocese of Derry began life in Ardstraw and the title Bishop of Ardstraw is used to this day, albeit now for the Papal Nuncio of South Sudan, by the unpredictable design of the Holy Spirit! To honour the historic connection, at the Nuncio's Ordination in Ennis, the bishops wore the vestments from the Diocese of Derry.

### Ardstraw

Although Ardstraw lost its status as a diocese in 1152, the large monastery flourished for another four and half centuries. Were it not for the Ulster Plantation of 1609 and the concomitant suppression of the religious houses,<sup>25</sup> it might well be under the prayerful charge of a mitred abbot to this day. Anyhow, the new Titular Archbishop of Ardstraw needs our prayers. Being Apostolic Nuncio in East Africa will be a considerable challenge. Please God, the people of South Sudan will



cherish his ministry. May St Eugene of Ardstraw intercede for him.

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2. John R. Walsh, "The Early Church", p. 43  
3. John R. Walsh, *Noble Story: Short History of the Diocese of Derry* (Strasbourg: Editions du Signe, 2001), p. 30  
4. Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation of the Diocese", in Henry A. Jeffries & Ciarán Devlin, Editors, *History of the Diocese of Derry from Earliest Times* [Dublin: Four Courts Press, 2000], p. 87  
5. John Grenham, *An Illustrated History of Ireland* (Dublin: Gill & Macmillan, 1997), p. 32  
6. Anne O'Sullivan (ed.), *Book of Leinster*, vi (Dublin, 1983), pp. 1650, 1667n, in Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation of the Diocese", p. 96  
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8. John R. Walsh, "The Early Church", p. 44  
9. John R. Walsh, *Noble Story: A Short History of the Diocese of Derry* (Strasbourg: Editions du Signe, 2001), p. 10  
10. Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation of the Diocese", p. 94  
11. Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation

of the Diocese", p. 92  
12. Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation of the Diocese", p. 97  
13. Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation of the Diocese", p. 103  
14. John R. Walsh, *Noble Story: A Short History of the Diocese of Derry* (Strasbourg: Editions du Signe, 2001), p. 31  
15. Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation of the Diocese", p. 101  
16. Bishop Edward Daly & Rev. Kieran Devlin, *The Clergy of the Diocese of Derry: An Index – 2nd Edition*, p. 6  
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20. Synod of Kells, *Ex-Classics Website*, <https://www.exclassics.com/ceitinn/for83.htm>. Accessed 28th July 2024  
21. Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation of the Diocese", p. 91  
22. Rev. Ciarán Devlin, "The Formation of the Diocese", p. 46  
23. John R. Walsh, *Noble Story: A Short History of the Diocese of Derry*, p. 31  
24. Bishop Edward Daly & Rev. Kieran Devlin, *The Clergy of the Diocese of Derry: An Index – 2nd Edition*, p. 7  
25. Rev. Philip Donnelly, *A History of the Parish of Ardstraw West and Castlederg* (Strabane: Mourne Art Printing Company, 1978), p. 47

## Ceili Catholic Community launches new School of Evangelisation

BUNCRANA native, Fr Patrick Lynch, founder of the Ceili Catholic Community based in Kilbeggan, Co Westmeath, has been sharing exciting developments with 'The Net' about the establishment of a residential School of Evangelisation from September 2024 to May 2025.

Run by the Ceili Community at its Kilbeggan premises, the school has been set up in response to the call of the Church for priests, religious and laity to be actively involved in the New Evangelisation and formed and trained as missionary disciples.

It is open to Catholics, aged 18 and over, who have a heart for evangelisation and are eager to grow in their faith and discern their vocation in life. It is ideal for those seeking a career break or a sabbatical year, and for those thinking of priesthood or religious

life.

The Community see an urgent need for the School of Formation in Evangelisation and Discipleship to provide solid Christian faith formation to young adults, and a community environment and experience for young men who feel a call to the priesthood, and young women feeling called to religious life.

They also see the School responding to the urgent need of forming and training lay ministers to be of service to the Church, especially in parishes and schools, and of encouraging and developing people's gifts, talents and skills through training and missioning evangelisation.

The first 7-8 months will focus on teaching, studying, building community, personal development

and prayer ministry, followed by one or two months outreaching in various missions in schools and parishes.

Formation will be in the four primary areas of life: Spiritual; Intellectual; Personal Development; and Relational.

Spiritual study will cover: Trinitarian, the relationship with each person of the Holy Trinity; Celtic & Patrician; Faith formation and maturity; personal and community prayers; the Sacraments; and an introduction to the Scriptures.

Academic study will cover: Vatican Council II documents; an introduction to the Catechism of the Catholic Church; Christology; an introduction to Church history; Biblical theology; Sacramental theology; Evangelisation;

Discipleship & Pastoral Care; and Morality & Ethics.

Personal Development will cover: Team building; Recognising one's personal talents and gifts; Christian leadership; Communication & Listening Skills; Psychological elements in Ministry; and Discerning one's vocation in life.

Training in Evangelisation will cover: Church documents on Evangelisation; the Evangelising stages from befriending people to conversion; Starting and engaging in conversations; Using the Scriptures in Evangelisation; Contemporary world views and evangelisation; Creativity in evangelisation through drama; and Role play, with outreaching scenarios.

A Youth Leadership Programme is also included within the School,

with a Certificate issued accredited by St Mary's University College, Queens University, Belfast, subject to satisfying the assignment qualifications of the Programme.

The School will offer a great experience of residential living in a safe environment, with participants from different nations and cultures.

The fee for the year is €5,500, which includes accommodation, tuition, food and excursions to Irish Heritage Sites. It does not include travel to and from the Community,

Health Expenses or Health Insurance, personal expenses and books.

For further information email: [school@ceilicommunity.net](mailto:school@ceilicommunity.net) or WhatsApp: 00353 87 9789150.

Working under the authority of the Irish Catholic Bishops, the Ceili Community is a community of priests, religious, and lay people, praying and working together to preach parish, school, and youth missions throughout Ireland.



# Truth *by Fr John McLaughlin ssc*

JUST as I sat down to write this finally, there appeared a notice on Vatican News that on Friday (June 12) the Pope would be receiving in audience a large delegation of comics and humourists in the Vatican. The text included the remark that His Holiness prays regularly that, like St Thomas More, he will never take himself too seriously and maintain his sense of humour. And I recalled sitting in the front seats, upstairs, in the Teatro Belarde in Valparaiso, Chile, accompanied by the two parish secretaries, and the moment in which they convulsed into laughing when the great comic, Coco Legrand, a Church admirer be it said, made a great take-off of a solemn celebrant (or Church official witness to be correct) of the sacrament of marriage. There was nowhere to hide up there at a moment like that!

Sooner or later most have us have our moment of Truth, and for some it will be a regular testing, in any walk of life. Our Christian/Catholic upbringing may be there to illuminate and alleviate the decision we have to take, as perhaps we marvel later on at the way the burden was lightened for us. Upbringing (nurture) and culture and personal examples can all appear on the instant screen that flashes before us in those moments, as maybe we thank the Lord who said "my yoke is sweet and my burden is light" in apparently looser moments.

Through the weeks that this piece has been on my mind, the Church in her liturgy has been offering us the story of Job (chs 2, 6, 7 ej) and the 'encrucijada', or pressure, situation into which he is led as he refuses to declare himself guilty before the advocacy of his three soul mates, and the words that the Lord throws in. Back in the day, the Abbe Kushner unveiled for many Catholics this story in his book, 'Bad things happen to good People'. I recall very clearly, in the Parish of St Mark's in Tallaght, facing a congregation of very young people whose schoolmate had died in her sleep. The night before, I spent a couple of hours reflecting again on the insights of Kushner and how I might try to respond to the questions those young people would surely have in their minds. The Word of God so often has lifted me outwards in moments of that intensity. Truth comes as a gift which we must take, and share it often, it seems to me.

Another moment in my ministry in Chile, in Valparaiso, brought me back to the anguish of a frequent Mass-goer, who asked me for a moment at the end of a weekly, morning Mass. We prayed together as he faced into his moment of truth, having to lay-off some friends and members of staff due to orders from above. That was at a time in Chile when Government propaganda had everywhere the slogan, 'Vamos bien, mañana mejor' ('We're doing great and tomorrow will be even better!')

The ideology in that country and

Continent at the time was based on some 'big Lies'. Milton Freedman's Capitalism was the doctrine of the day in many countries, and 'the Poor' would only have to wait. So also was the ideology of National Security, which was inculcated in the School of the Americas to the security forces of many of the countries of the southern hemisphere, and thence civil and communal liberties and freedoms were trodden into the ground on many occasions. Cases like the assassinations of Letelier, a diplomat and activist in Washington, and Ttucapel Jimenez, a prominent and honest trade unionist, where an obscure carpenter, Juan, was tortured to confess a deed he had no notion about, all come back to my own memory-set.

I was long enough around to savour the results of the 'Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' (Mgr Valech and respected jurist, Raul Rettig), where the truth about many abuses like those above mentioned was all brought to light. When this will happen in Ireland seems still to be a long way down the road! Also, it needs to be said that these situations are not just of the Past, as whole nations, as for example Nicaragua, are currently engaged in that ideological trampling of Truth! How many others do we know or want to know about?

## Seditionary

The phrase 'Option for the Poor' was seen as sedition, even by many practising Catholics. Our Catechetical programmes at all levels came under fire, and our lay leaders were aware that the word 'solidarity' was far less acceptable than say, fraternal help, or works of mercy. Helder Camara in Brazil put it well when he remarked that when you ask, 'What is poverty?', you get one answer, but when you ask, 'Why is there so much poverty?', you are a revolutionary marxist! (When I give food to the poor they call me a Saint, but when I ask why the poor have no food they call me a Communist)

An article by Sr Sheila Campbell, MMM, came to hand, recalling to



me my own visit to Recife in the 1970s, and is surely worth quoting for a generation who may never hear of him:

"Born in 1909 in the city of Fortaleza in northeast Brazil, Hélder Câmara was the eleventh of thirteen children. Five of them had died in the terrible 'flu epidemic which hit that region in 1905. From the beginning of his priesthood, (he was ordained a priest at a young age, 22), he devoted himself to social issues, including the reform of education. During his whole life, the struggle to defend the rights of the less privileged and marginalized, the forgotten and the excluded, shone like a beacon before him. His nickname was 'bishop of the slums'.

He was influenced and encouraged greatly by Pope Paul VI, whom he first met in 1950. As soon as Dom Hélder was ordained bishop in 1952, he played a major role in the founding of the Conference of Bishops of Brazil and of CELAM, the Latin American Council of Episcopal Conferences. At the same time, he was deeply involved in the growth of the Brazilian Catholic Action, which played such an important role in the linking faith and the everyday problems of life during the time when the power of repression tightened upon the people. At the Latin American Episcopal Conferences in Medellin in 1968, and again at

Puebla in 1979, his voice in favour of the world's poor was heard. Dom Hélder has left 7,600 written meditations. More than 350 books have been published about him.

Now Dom Helder is on the road to canonisation and sainthood, but for many people, myself (Sister Sheila) included, any formal process is unnecessary. He has touched our lives and taught us a valuable lesson:

'If I joyfully spend the rest of my life, of my powers, of my energies in demanding justice, but without hatred, without armed violence, through liberating moral pressure, through truth and love, it is because I am convinced that only love is constructive and strong.'

"It may come as a surprise to you that one of the most popular courses at an Irish university this year is on Bullshit. More precisely, the course is about On Bullshit, philosopher Harry Frankfurt's pithy essay on speech 'unconnected to a concern with the truth'.

There is so much of the stuff swilling about and clogging up the pipes of public communication. It is something Frankfurt puts down to our increased opportunities today to comment on things of which we have limited understanding.

"The production of bullshit is stimulated whenever a person's obligations or opportunities to speak about some topic exceed his knowledge of the facts that are

relevant to that topic,' Frankfurt says. (From Joe Humphries, Irish Times, Monday Oct 16\* 2023)

In my days at UCD, there was a course on Logic, which did not exactly excite our minds, though on reflection it left us with some tools in regard to a more-intense listening process. Words like Argumentum ad hominem, Ignorancia elenchi, Petitio principia came back to mind when listening to many debates, interviews, and intense discussions, in Spanish as well as in cultured English presentations. Truth was not always forthcoming and had to be sought and surgically extracted, as it seemed. Jeremy Pascott, on BBC 2, was one of those dogged interviewers who would not let any of the above pass easily, and he will be remembered for that.

In a slightly lighter tone, I can recall on RTE when Brian Farrell, on a 'Face to Face' programme, asked the celebrated TD James Dillon, "Mr Dillon, what would you say to a young man who aspires to go into politics?" "I would say to that young man...to think beforehand if he is prepared to lose his immortal soul!"

## Humour

On the Politics area, and a life-long interest, I recall with admiration the columns of Backbencher in the Irish Times, which we discussed and enjoyed in Class reunions and family gatherings. Written in a more gentle and respectful tone than that of today, and with a certain humour to help its digestion, phrases like Rent-a-Crowd, The smoked-salmon socialists, The Golden Boy, Government-by-tailwind...from John Healy, gave me a lexicon even for later musing in a harsher regime in Chile.

In the Office of Readings (May 29th), St Augustine, in his 'Confessions', puts Truth right where it should be:

"As for the rest of this life's experiences, the more tears are shed over them the less they are worth weeping over, and the more truly worth lamenting the less do we bewail them while mired in them. You love the truth because anyone who 'does truth' comes to the light. Truth it is that I want to do, in my heart by confession in your presence, and with my pen before many witnesses.

But the abyss of the human conscience lies naked to your eyes, O Lord, so would anything be secret even if I were unwilling to confess to you? I would be hiding you from myself, but not myself from you."

And that faces me into moments of my own life where Truth, or its grasp, opened before me as a life-choice. On the occasion of a particularly dense pastoral situation in one parish, where I felt myself almost alone holding the 'flag of the Church' for a period, choices had to be made and some

lay people trusted sincerely. As the situation eased, I can vividly recall, even to the exact spot on the church grounds, asking the Lord to leave me my humanity, while not withholding my ministry. This in a much more clericalised-Church, where the measures of success and ambition were more pronounced than in the present day. Or so it seems to me, in comfortable retirement!

Again, and in retrospect, I now value the occasions in my ministry when I had to 'live out'. There was no room in the local presbytery in Bootersown in Dublin, so I went into digs with the Burkes in Booterstown Avenue, and later with Mrs Greene in Mt Merrion Avenue, in company with Fr Joe Dunne, later recognised as an inspiration behind the 'Radhairc' series on RTE. It occurred once more in Santiago, Chile, with the Olvares-Hein family, who became firm life-friends; and also living and praying with the male members of a Secular Institute, 'Los Hermanos Oblatos'. Both brought me moments of grace and growth; living with and amongst families brought a real insight into living and where Truth was no longer a matter of conjecture or speculation.

Chilean Jesuit, Fernando Montes, a contemporary of Pope Francis, once had a series of articles in the Jesuit periodical 'Mensaje', where he took on the Questions of Jesus in the New Testament as his leaders... "What man amongst you would...Whose image is this... How many loaves have you?" And it made for a challenging read on many levels. I think today, as people open themselves to scripture reading again in Catholic circles through Lectio Divina, that it would be a valuable aid in spiritually-guided living.

## Born to manifest the Glory

*Our deepest Fear is not that we are inadequate.*

*Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.*

*It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.*

*We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented and fabulous?'*

*Actually, who are you not to be?*

*You are a child of God.*

*Your playing small does not serve the world.*

*There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you.*

*We are born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us.*

*It's not just in some of us, it's in everyone.*

*And so we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same.*

*As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others.*

(By Marianne Williamson and used by Nelson Mandela in his 1994 Inaugural Speech)



Eternal Echoes... Timeless Truth for today's hearts by Regina Deighan

The Four Marks of the Church: A Series (Part 4)...

The Church is Apostolic

SOMETIMES repetition, or even complacency, causes us to miss important aspects of our faith. When responding at Mass, we can become so used to rattling off the appropriate responses that we can become desensitized to what we are actually saying and its underlying meaning.

Every Sunday, following the homily, we recite the Nicene Creed, a statement of belief developed by the Early Church Fathers (early bishops) during the ecumenical councils of Nicaea (325AD) and Constantinople (381AD) to combat heresy. The text of this prayer includes the words: "I believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church." While perhaps a small statement, it is key to salvation because this is the means which Christ provided us to enter Heaven - through His Church.

We know that Christ is God, who founded His Church and promised it would endure until the end of time. He gave specific qualities to this Church so it could be easily identified, namely those we list in the Creed: one, holy, catholic, and apostolic. Of all the Churches that exist, the Catholic Church is the only one that possesses all these qualities.

Thus, we are faced with a serious moral choice: we must enter this Church through baptism and live

according to its teachings, because this is the instrument through which Christ provides His grace for us to be saved.

This is the last of four articles, in which each of these marks has been summarized to better understand the words we are reciting, and to recognize that the precious faith we have been given is the one that will guide us on the most direct path to Heaven.

The Church is Apostolic

To say that our Church is 'apostolic' means that it is rooted in the teachings of the apostles, who received the 'Deposit of Faith' from Christ. This handing on of Tradition is evident in the earliest days of the Church, as noted in 'Acts of the Apostles': "And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Already, the neophytes were living according to the apostles, following their teachings, and sharing in the Eucharist. These four pillars of the life of the apostles - teaching, fellowship, the Eucharist, and prayer - sets the foundation for the whole of the life of the Church. Even the 'Catechism of the Catholic Church' is organized according to these four aspects: The Profession of Faith (apostles' teaching),

Celebration of the Christian Mystery (breaking of the bread), Life in Christ (fellowship), and Christian Prayer (prayer).

The significance of this mark is that we profess belief in the same content taught by Jesus and passed on by the apostles and their successors for nearly 2,000 years. No other Christian denomination can claim the same longevity or consistency over the years. That reality should give us confidence in the Tradition being handed on! Our Tradition has withstood the test of time, facing heresies, schisms, fallen empires, world wars, and myriad changes over the course of history, just as Jesus promised.

O Timothy

The task of catechising and passing on the Deposit of Faith was given to the apostles by Christ at the Great Commission. He gives them the duty of baptising all nations and teaching everything He has commanded (cf. Mt 28:28). The bishops, as the successors of the apostles, carry on this esteemed undertaking. Ultimately, the bishop is responsible for the faith formation of the members of his diocese. As the shepherd of that particular group, the bishop is charged with that same Great Commission; as if Christ has beckoned him to

this lofty task just as He did to the 11 so many years ago. While this task remains the ultimate responsibility of the bishop, lay catechists have been called upon to serve the extensive need for catechesis within their dioceses. They are called to serve Christ by way of their local ordinary.

While this work presents a huge undertaking, bishops are exhorted to the serious nature of this duty by St Paul in his two letters to Timothy, the young bishop in Ephesus. While both letters are loaded with advice about carrying out the mission of a bishop, according to Christ's command, there is one line, in particular, that speaks to the heart of the role of any catechist - bishop or lay. "O Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to you." This urgent appeal to Timothy, and presently, we recall that Sacred Tradition has been entrusted to the care and protection of those whom Christ calls.

What St Paul emphasises in this one line is the concept of Apostolic Tradition. As guardians of the Tradition, it is not the responsibility of the catechists, nor even the bishop, to change any of what has been passed on. Rather, to act as a protector and defender of that which he has received. This preserves the integrity of the faith that Jesus established, to ensure



there is no alteration to the Truth of Christ.

As teachers of the faith to our family and friends, we, too, are tasked with passing on only the teachings of Christ. As a guardian of the Deposit of Faith, the clergy and lay catechists must defend the teachings handed down through Apostolic Succession, as a mere instrument, and not as a creator.

Ite, Missa Est

As lay people in the world, raising families and interacting with those of different backgrounds, we each have a responsibility to share the Gospel message. While addressing moral topics can pose a challenge, we can take comfort in the reality that the teaching we guard is not our own. There is an inherent power in the Word of God to change hearts, which relieves some of the pressure. We do not have to be creators or designers.

We are able to be guardians and protectors of something very powerful and life-altering... the Gospel. We can hear this expressed in the original Latin dismissal from Mass: Ite, missa est...literally, "Go, it is sent."

This does not mean that merely humans are sent forth from the liturgy, but rather the Gospel is sent forth within us. The emphasis on the Gospel in the Latin indicates that we are instruments to bring the Gospel to the world, but do not have to rely on our own power to change hearts - that would be nearly impossible! Rather, when we act as a vessel and allow the Gospel to penetrate our hearts and lives, nourished by the Eucharist, it can be shared with others in order to bring change through its own capacity. My limitations and weaknesses as a human, therefore, cannot impede the message because the Gospel is far more compelling than me, even in my strongest moment.

If we have confidence in Christ and in His message of salvation, it will give us an even greater strength and courage to guard and pass on what has been entrusted to us. We can confidently proclaim with St Paul, "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith..." (Rm 1:16).

St Mary's Church, Bocan: Historic stained-glass treasures by Dr Seán Beattie



Stunning colours in the MacColgan window in Bocan

THE Catholic Church at Bocan, in Co Donegal, was built half-way between the ancient monastic sites of Cloncha and Culdaff in 1805, while Rev Denis O'Donnell was parish priest. It was part of a church building programme in the Diocese that took place following the easing of the Penal Laws in the 1780s. Under the Penal Laws, Catholic worship was restricted and Mass was said in the open-air at Mass rocks, which are dotted throughout the parish.

A census of the parish in 1861 recorded 4,895 persons, of whom 4,291 were Catholics, representing 88% of the parish population.

Thus, the church was crowded when Mass was celebrated.

The first church was a low-rise thatched structure. At the height of the Great Famine, the parish priest, Rev James McDevitt enlarged the building in 1846 and it was probably at this time that the roof was slated. The Commissioners of Public Works provided a loan, which was repaid in five yearly instalments of £82.6.3.

Rev McDevitt was buried within the church, as was the custom, and a plaque in his memory can be seen at the south entrance porch. It was during his time in Culdaff as parish priest that he provided a black cassock and biretta for the rebel Young Irelander, Thomas D'Arcy Magee, as he took flight at Tremone Bay and escaped to America disguised as a priest on board a sailing ship with a price on his head. Bishop Maginn of Derry, a graduate of the Irish College in Paris, supported Rev McDevitt in this escapade.

The first burial, as inscribed on a gravestone in Bocan, was in 1815, but it was used by families in the parish before this. The grave is situated near the vestry door and bears the inscription, 'Peggy Doherty 1815'.

Most of the priests who served in this Diocese were educated

at Maynooth College, but some attended the Irish College in Rue des Irlandais and the Sorbonne in Paris.

Drowning

A priest from the parish was drowned while bathing in rough seas at the Warren, Culdaff, on May 27, 1852. He was Fr Hugh Clarke, CC, aged 32, and a native of Badoney. Mrs Jane Harvey, an eye-witness who lived at the Warren, recorded the drowning in her diary.

Fr William McGlinchey (1836-1897) was parish priest between 1888 and 1897. His name is inscribed on a plaque at the south porch entrance. After his death, an interior memorial was erected beside the south porch but was removed in modern renovations. His brother, James, was prominent in local politics and bought a property at Redford, Culdaff, from Major Murray, which was used as a parochial house before the present one was built.

Fr McGlinchey travelled throughout the parish on a white steed. He baptized my father, Hugh, in 1896, and was highly revered in the parish. A holy well, now disused, at Redford beach is dedicated to his memory and the water was used for cures.

Fr John Henry McKenna (1931-41), who was nicknamed 'White', carried out extensive renovations as parish priest in the 1930s, at a cost of £3,000, which included a new roof with ridge tiles, new red pine flooring, and baptistry.

A tower was extended with stones from a quarry in Termacorragh. Joe Beatty recalled seeing Fr McKenna assisting workmen in the quarry, dressed in clerical apparel. He ignored suggestions from fellow workers to take care of his clothing. The dates 1836-1936 can be seen on the south side of the church tower and relate to renovations carried out.

The interior was painted by Dohertys of Carndonagh, known locally as the "Bunaphobails", because the family originally came from Moville (Bun a' Phobail - Moville). There were great celebrations in April 1937, when Bishop O'Kane officiated at High Mass to mark the renovations. Fr McKenna's name appears on one of the stained-glass windows in the aisle.

Fr Walter Hegarty (1885-1950) was a noted diocesan historian. His notes on the history of the parish are preserved in the Diocesan Archives in Derry. He was the author of a book, 'A Fight for the Faith', an account of church history

in the Buncrana area. He was an advisor to the archaeologist, Mabel Colhoun, a regular visitor to the parochial house, when she was doing research for her book, 'The Heritage of Inishowen'.

Fr Bernard Duffy (1917-2000) carried out extensive renovations and repairs during his time as parish priest, following the Second Vatican Council.

St Boden's Bell

One of the treasured artefacts preserved in the parish is the early medieval handbell, the Bell of St Buadan. It was in the possession of the Ua Dubhaigh (Duffy) family of Dunross. The last member of the family was Siorcha Ní Dhubhaigh. They were the 'airchinnigh' (lay custodians) of the Bell. It was later in the care of the O'Dohertys of Glacknadrummond. A relative, William O'Doherty, handed the bell over to the parish in 1928. It is sometimes used on ceremonial occasions. It is one of a dozen medieval handbells associated with Donegal that have survived, but is probably the only one still retained by a parish.

Stained-glass windows

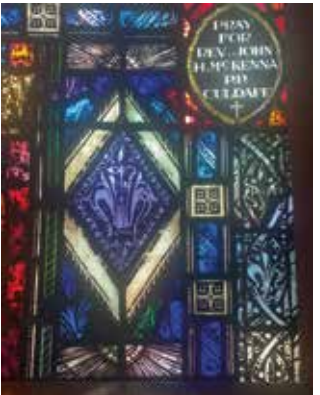
The parish is the custodian of a valuable collection of stained-glass windows. Four of them are full-

length, with vivid reds and blues and other hues which add to the beauty of the interior, especially when sunlight enters.

Two families have their names inscribed on the windows, the McColgans of the Store, Culdaff, and the family of Ellen McColgan, Cloncha.

Most of the stained glass was made in the workshops of the Earley family of Dublin, a famous craft dynasty that carried out several projects in the Derry Diocese. They installed many of the magnificent windows in the Long Tower Church in Derry.

The parish is proud of its heritage, which rolls back over 200 years of history.



Window in memory of Fr John H McKenna known as 'White' to distinguish him from his namesake and fellow classmate known as 'Black'.

Parish *Post-its*

Aghyaran

**Knock:** There will be a pilgrimage to Knock Shrine on Thursday, August 15, Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A bus will leave Castlederg at 8 am, and Aghyaran at 8.15 am. For bookings, contact Lynch Coach Hire on 028 8167 1344 or call in to the office. Cost: Adults £20 / U16's £15.

**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)

**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)1

**Adoration:** Adoration takes places in St Patrick's Gortin, after the 12.30 pm Mass until 5 pm on Tuesdays.

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

Badoney Upper

(Plumbridge-Cranagh)

**Evening Prayer:** Evening Prayer of the Liturgy of Hours (Vespers) takes place on Sundays at 7 pm in Sacred Heart Church, Plumbridge.

**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.

**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.

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

Banagher

**Blessing of Graves:** Blessing of the Graves takes place at St Peter & St Paul's Foreglen, Sunday, August 18, at 12noon; and St Mary's Church, Altinure, on Sunday, September 8, at 10.30 am.

**Adoration & Chaplet:** Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Divine Mercy Chaplet take place in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn, on Fridays, 10-11 am.

**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.

**Weekend Mass Times:** 7 pm Vigil in Bellaghy, 10 am in Ballyscullion, and 11 am in Bellaghy.

Buncrana

**Star of the Sea Anniversary:** The 60th Anniversary of the opening of Star of the Sea, Desertegney, will be celebrated at the 10 am Mass on August 25. Everyone is Welcome

**Garden Fete:** The annual Garden Fete will take place on Sunday, August 25.

**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 6 pm, 9 am and 12.30 pm; St Mary's Cockhill - Vigil 7 pm, and 11am; Star of the Sea, Desertegney - 10 am.

Burt, Inch & Fahan

**Parish Camino:** A walk to the Eucharistic Cross will take place on Sunday, August 11, leaving the water tank at 1pm. The Rosary will be said on the way up. Everyone is welcome to this parish event.

**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)

**Corpus Christi Church 70th:** Mass will be celebrated on Sunday, September 29, at 10 am, to mark 70 years since the dedication of Corpus Christi Church, Mountfield. Refreshments in the Community Centre afterwards. All are invited Any photos or memorabilia from celebrations in the church, such as baptism and wedding photos will be gratefully received. Contact corpuschristi70@outlook.com

**Eucharistic Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesday from 8-9 pm in Christ the King, Strathroy, concluding with Night Prayer, and on Sunday from 3.30-6.30 pm, in Christ the King.

**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.

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;

Castlederg & Ardstraw West

**Knock:** There will be a pilgrimage to Knock Shrine on Thursday, August 15, Feast of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. A bus will leave Castlederg at 8 am, and Aghyaran at 8.15 am. For bookings, contact Lynch Coach Hire on 028 8167 1344 or call in to the office. Cost: Adults £20 / U16's £15.

**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.

**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)

**Other Jubilee Events:** Family of Families Jubilee BBQ at Parish Community Centre, Saturday, August 24; Archbishop Eamon Martin celebrating Golden Jubilee Mass on Sunday, August 25, followed by refreshments in Clonleigh Social Centre; Jubilee Walk to old Clonleigh Graveyard in September; Celebration of parish schools, October; Annual Mass for the Dead, Monday, November 4, at 7 pm, with special remembrance of those who have died in the past 60 years; and Nativity Concert on Sunday, December 15, at 7 pm.

**Weekend Mass Times:** 6.30 pm Vigil, 10 am.

Coleraine

**Lough Derg:** A Parish Pilgrimage to Lough Derg will take place on Saturday, September 7.

**Season of Creation Walk:** To celebrate the Day of Prayer for Creation 2024, there will be a Parish Walk, beginning at Christie Memorial Park and ending at 'The Source' Monument, at Somerset Riverside Park. Walk will begin at 6 pm on Sunday,

September 1. All are welcome to attend.

**SJYP Meet:** St Joseph's Young Priests' Society 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

**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.

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

Culdaff

**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.

Donagheady

(Aughabrack & Dunamanagh)



**Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Patrick's Church after 10 am Mass on Saturdays, until 12 noon, and on Mondays from 7-8 pm.

**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)

**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:** 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. 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.

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, and 10 am, St Mary's, Ballerin, and 11.30 am in Glenullin GAA Hall.

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 after

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7.30 pm Mass on Mondays, with Confessions.  
**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**  
**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**  
**Blessing of Graves:** The Blessing of the Graves will take place in Muff on Sunday, August 11, at 3 pm, and in Iskaheen on Sunday, August 11, at 5 pm.  
**Adoration:** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Tuesdays after 10 am Mass until 2 pm in St Patrick's Church, Iskaheen.

**Divine Mercy:** Divine Mercy Devotions take place on Wednesdays after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church, Muff.  
**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.  
**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 Drumagarner. Concludes with Benediction.  
**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.  
**Weekend Mass Times:** 7 pm, Vigil, St Anne's Oratory; 10am St Mary's, Drumagarner; 12 noon, St Mary's, Craigavole.

**Killygordon**  
**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**  
**Ice-cream Sunday:** Tea/Coffee & Desserts (Knickerbocker Glory, Ice-

cream Sundaes), will be served after 6 pm Vigil Mass on Saturday, August 10, and the 11 am Sunday Mass on August 11. Tea/Coffee & Traybakes will be served after 9 am Mass. All Weekend Masses will be celebrated in Lavey/Termoneeny Centre. All Welcome! Donations in aid of the Parish Building Fund.  
**Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Fridays after 9.15 am Mass Adoration until 5 pm.  
**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm Vigil, 9 am and 11 am.

**Leckpatrick**  
**Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays after 10 am Mass until 5.30 pm.  
**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm Vigil, St Mary's Church, Cloughcor; 10 am St Joseph's Church, Glenmornan; 11.30am, Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road.

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

**Malin**  
**Graves' Blessing:** Blessing of the Graves takes place on Sunday, August 11, at St Patrick's Church, Aughaclay after 10.30am Mass, and at St Mary's Church, Lagg, at 3 pm. Sports Day: Malin Head Sports Day will be on Sunday, August 18.  
**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**  
**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.  
**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**  
**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 all day 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.  
**SJYP Society:** The St John Vianney branch of the St Joseph's Young Priests' Society (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:** 6.30 pm Vigil, 10 am & 12 noon.

**Templemore – St Eugene's**  
**Bishop Daly Exhibition:** The annual exhibition celebrating the life, influence, work and legacy of the late Bishop Edward Daly is currently on display in the Conference Room above the sacristy in St Eugene's Cathedral. Entitled 'A Man for All Seasons', it will be open for viewing, Monday-Saturday, 10.30 am until 4 pm, up until August 31. Everyone welcome.  
**Lunchtime Concert:** St Eugene's Cathedral presents a Lunchtime Concert in the Cathedral Hall, Infirmary Road, on Wednesday, August 14, at 1 pm, featuring Anne Marie Hickey, Roisin Rice and Maria Hickey. Entry is free and everyone is welcome. Eucharistic Adoration: Every Sunday, there is Eucharistic Adoration from 3-6 pm and every Tuesday from 10.30 am until 7.20 pm.

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

**Three Patrons**  
**Men's Bible Study:** Men's Bible Study takes place in the Upper Room in St Brigid's Chapel, Carnhill, on Tuesdays at 7.30 pm.  
**God Club:** God Club is an opportunity for 16-30 year olds to learn together about their faith. It takes place in St Pio House, in the grounds of St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, on Sundays from 7.30-9 pm on Sundays.

**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 8-9.15 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, within St Joseph's Church building, Galliagh. Its mission as a group is to provide a safe place where men can pray and share in a confidential and supportive setting. All men are welcome.  
**Holy Hour:** A Holy Hour for the Unborn & Expectant Mothers takes place on Thursdays at 7 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. All welcome.

**Adoration:** Eucharistic Adoration takes place in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, on Mondays after 11 am Mass, concluding with a Youth 2000 Holy Hour from 7-8 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 10.45 am – 6.45 pm.  
**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 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:** Praying for the Holy Souls, Our Lady of Montligeon Prayer Group meets on Wednesdays after 9.15 am Mass in the room adjacent to St Brigid's Parochial House, Carnhill, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.  
**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 7.30 -9 pm in the Kildare Room, St Brigid's, Carnhill. £3 per class. Spaces limited.  
**Weekend Mass Times:** 6 pm Vigil, 9.45 am & 12.15 pm, St Patrick's, Pennyburn; 6 pm Vigil, 10.30 am & 12.30 pm St Brigid's, Carnhill; 7.15 pm Vigil, 9 am, 11 am & 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**  
**Eucharistic Adoration:** There is Eucharistic Adoration in St Oliver Plunkett Church, Strathfoyle, on Monday mornings, and on Wednesday evenings from 7-9 pm. All welcome. 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 pm.  
**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; 6 pm Vigil, 11.15 am, St Oliver Plunkett; 9.15 am, St Mary's Oratory.

# Diocesan Diary

**Vocations Day:** For those considering diocesan priesthood, a Vocations Day will be held in The Oratory, in Buncrana, on Sunday, September 8, from 12–6 pm. Anyone interested should contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan by email: pgoh2111@gmail.com

**ACCORD Derry:** ACCORD Derry Marriage Preparation Courses will take place on the weekends of September 20-21 and October 18-19. These courses are now online for booking at [www.accordni.com](http://www.accordni.com) and are in person and not virtual.

# Who are we?

Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR



Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR

ONE of the loveliest sights today, as always, is that of a young couple with their new-born baby. There is usually an aura about them that speaks of joy, but even more so of awe and amazement at this wonderful person that has come into their life and through their love for one another.

All the anxiety and fear, as well as the pain of the birth, are forgotten – well, almost! The worry about the future has not yet begun. They are just caught up in the wonder of the present and the unbelievable miracle of their daughter or son.

### A new beginning

Nature has the ability of constantly renewing itself through the seasons of the year. Birds and animals have their mating seasons through which they assure the survival of their species.

Humanity renews itself every day as babies are born and a new generation begins. It is not just a new beginning for the family. It is a new beginning for the world. Each new-born is a unique person bringing to the world unique gifts and possibilities. The image and likeness of God appears again in each baby that is born and manifests itself in a new and fresh way.

### Prophets

A prophet is one who speaks about God and speaks for God. In the Gospel for the first Sunday

in July, we hear about how Jesus was rejected by His own people, His own neighbours and even His own family, when He spoke about God and for God. He said: “A prophet is only despised by his own people.” And He could not work any miracles among them because of their lack of faith.

For those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, all of nature speaks loudly of the wonder of God constantly working in the world, producing such varieties of species, of colours, of sights, and sounds, and smells. We get so used to all the beauty and wonder of the world around us that we take it for granted, and so we very seldom see the awesomeness of it all. And, of course, we cannot then recognise and worship the God who has created it, and continues to create it year after year.

### Climate change

That lack of appreciation is at the heart of our problem today with the phenomenon of climate change and the danger that this is to the very survival of the universe. Humanity has got used to seeing the earth as something to exploit for profit, rather than as the wonderful gift of life that it is. Every effort to legislate for change is blocked by political or commercial interests. And year by year the problems get worse.

### Laudato si’

In his Encyclical Letter, *Laudato si’*, Pope Francis outlines for us the issues of climate change today and how we, as Catholics, have a primary responsibility in faith to attend to the world in every way possible, and to promote all that is necessary to preserve and develop it.

In the Book of Genesis, at the beginning of the Scriptures, we hear of how God created the world and, with every part of it, God saw

that it was good. It is from there that we take our call to continue this wonderful creation rather than destroy it, as many do.

### Our common home

As Pope Francis describes it, the world is our common home for the good of humanity and the good of all the various species that exist. Only humanity – that is us! – can enable nature to speak to us about the wonders of the vast creative imagination of God. That voice is gradually being silenced as the world moves from one crisis to another.

The world we live in speaks for God today, pleading with humanity to drastically change its way of life so that life can be preserved throughout the world. This appeal is to each of us, personally, and as communities and as nations. Scientists tell us clearly that time is running out very quickly. Often, this call falls on deaf ears because we are not willing to make the changes that are necessary to turn things around.

### Human life is sacred

In the story of creation in the Book of Genesis that I mentioned earlier, the highlight is the creation of human beings.

“God created humanity in His own image; in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. And God saw that it was very good.”

Of all that went before, this was the jewel, the delight of God’s eyes. And it continues to be.

### Not just the past

The story of God’s creation of the world is not just a story of the past. It continues into today and will continue until the end of the world. Just as nature has the power to constantly renew itself because of God’s presence with it, so God’s

creation of human life in God’s image and likeness is renewed each time a baby is born. The new-born baby speaks of God and speaks for God. She or he is born a prophet.

As Catholics, we believe in the dignity of every human person from the moment of conception until the moment of natural death – and beyond into eternal life. The new-born baby speaks to us first of all for God about the nine months she/he spent in the womb of her/his mother. They were being formed in their mother’s womb. They were not just a clump of cells, as some would have us think. What they are now at birth, they were for the past nine months and will be for the years to come – fully human.

Unfortunately, a culture of abortion – the killing of babies in the womb who are not wanted – is threatening the culture of care for the unborn, and for mothers carrying their babies, around the world. More and more, it is being promoted as a right to choose the life or death of babies in the womb, not just in extreme circumstances but simply because the baby is not wanted.

It is difficult to see how violence and war and killing in our world can ever be properly opposed, when this most extreme violence against the innocent is being held as a right.

### The Joy of Love

In his Papal Encyclical, *Familiaris Consortio*, Pope St John Paul II wrote: “The future of humanity passes by way of the Family.” And Pope Francis, in

his Papal Encyclical, ‘The Joy of Love’ – officially known as *Amoris Laetitia* – gives us a wonderful exposition of the Catholic Church’s teaching on Marriage and Family Life.

Human life is very complex, even mysterious. And every human person is a mixture of all kinds of things. The one thing above all others that we believe is that every human person, irrespective of their conditions, is sacred and each one has a right to their dignity. So many things rob people of this dignity and these we oppose totally: poverty; violence; war; trafficking people for slavery; discrimination of all kinds.

### Marriage and Family Life

One of the questions that people often ask themselves is: ‘Who am I?’ Today one of the most common things that we are told is that each one can become whatever and whoever they want to be. Like everything else, there is a truth in this. But there is also a great weakness in it.

We can really only know ourselves in relationships. The most important question we have to ask is: ‘To whom do I belong?’ It is others who give me my true identity. And, ultimately, we believe that it is only in belonging to God that each one will be fully themselves.

The two great relationships of human life are marriage and family life, and this is in line with God’s Word and God’s will.

### Marriage

A good marriage is when you marry the person you love. It is a way of life that can only be chosen freely. It is chosen out of love. And it is pledged ‘all the days of my life’. In marriage, love is pledged ‘for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health’. Marriage is the great prophesy of God’s love for each one of us, and of God’s constant and complete forgiveness of each of us until we are totally united with God in Christ.

A great marriage is when you love the person you married. This means that marriage has to be worked at every day in order to experience the fullness of love. This is also true of our relationship with God if we are to experience the fullness of God’s love and God’s presence.

### Family

Family life is the prophesy of unconditional love. This is true of every family, no matter what its origin or composition. There is a true saying that you can choose your friends but you cannot choose your family! But there is a bond in a family that is different from all other bonds. However, this needs to be worked at in order to be celebrated.

And that is true for us as God’s family. We need to make it true by befriending one another as sisters and brothers in Christ in our community of faith, so that the world may believe in Christ and, through Him, in the love of God that is our origin and our destination.

## ...other Diary Dates

**Bishop Daly Exhibition:** The annual exhibition celebrating the life, influence, work and legacy of the late Bishop Edward Daly is currently on display in the Conference Room above the sacristy in St Eugene’s Cathedral. Entitled ‘A Man for All Seasons’, it will be open for viewing, Monday-Saturday, 10.30 am until 4 pm, up until August 31. Everyone welcome.

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

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

**Holy Souls Prayer:** Under The Gaze of Our Lady of Montligeon, the Holy Souls of Purgatory Prayer Meeting takes place on Wednesdays after 9.15 am Mass in the room adjacent to St Brigid’s Parochial House, Carnhill, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. It also takes place on the third Monday of each month in Termonbacca, with prayers especially for deceased priests and religious. All welcome.

**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.

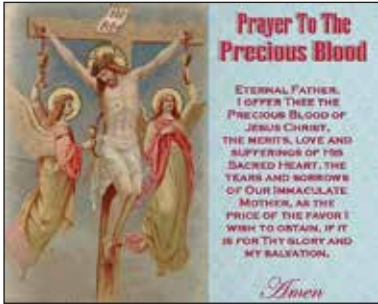
## Liturgical Calendar for August & September

|                                                                             |                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                            |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Aug Memorial of St. Alphonsus Ligouri                                     | 20 Aug Memorial of St. Bernard                                                                                             | Peter Claver                                                                                               |
| 2 Aug Optional Memorial of St. Peter Julian Eymard                          | 21 Aug Memorial of St. Pius X                                                                                              | 11 Sept Ferial (Ordinary Time)                                                                             |
| 3 Aug Ferial (Ordinary Time)                                                | 22 Aug Memorial of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother & Queen                                                                 | 12 Sept Optional Memorial of the Holy Name of Mary                                                         |
| 4 Aug 18th Sunday of the Year                                               | 23 Aug Memorial of St. Eugene (in the diocese: Feast)                                                                      | 13 Sept Memorial of St. John Chrysostom                                                                    |
| 5 Aug Optional Memorial of the Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major | 24 Aug Feast of St. Bartholomew                                                                                            | 14 Sept Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross                                                          |
| 6 Aug Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord                              | 25 Aug 21st Sunday of the Year                                                                                             | 15 Sept 24th Sunday of the Year ( <i>other years when not on Sunday: Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows</i> ) |
| 7 Aug Optional Memorial of St. Sixtus II & Companions                       | 26 Aug Optional Memorial of Blessed Dominic Barberi                                                                        | 16 Sept Memorial of St.s Cornelius & Cyprian                                                               |
| 8 Aug Memorial of St. Dominic                                               | 27 Aug Memorial of St. Monica                                                                                              | 17 Sept Optional Memorial of Saint Hildegard von Bingen                                                    |
| 9 Aug Feast of St. Teresa Benedicta of the Cross (Edith Stein)              | 28 Aug Memorial of St. Augustine                                                                                           | 18 Sept Ferial (Ordinary Time)                                                                             |
| 10 Aug Memorial of St. Lawrence                                             | 29 Aug Memorial of the Passion of St. John the Baptist                                                                     | 19 Sept Optional Memorial of Saint Januarius                                                               |
| 11 Aug 19th Sunday of the Year                                              | 30 Aug Optional Memorial of St. Fiacre                                                                                     | 20 Sept Memorial of St.s Andrew Kim Taegon, Paul Chong Hasang & Companions                                 |
| 12 Aug Optional Memorial of St. Jane Chantal                                | 31 Aug Optional Memorial of St. Aidan & Companions of Lindsisfarne                                                         | 21 Sept Feast of St. Matthew                                                                               |
| 13 Aug Optional Memorial of St.s Pontian & Hippolytus                       |                                                                                                                            | 22 Sept 25th Sunday of the Year                                                                            |
| 14 Aug Memorial of St. Maximilian Kolbe                                     | 1 Sept 22nd Sunday of the Year                                                                                             | 23 Sept Memorial of St. Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)                                                     |
| 15 Aug Solemnity of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary               | 2 Sept Ferial (Ordinary)                                                                                                   | 24 Sept Ferial (Ordinary Time)                                                                             |
| 16 Aug Optional Memorial of St. Stephen of Hungary                          | 3 Sept Memorial of St. Gregory the Great                                                                                   | 25 Sept Optional Memorial of St. Finbarr                                                                   |
| 17 Aug Optional Memorial of St. Hyacinth                                    | 4 Sept Memorial of St. MacNissi                                                                                            | 26 Sept Optional Memorial of St.s Cosmas & Damian                                                          |
| 18 Aug 20th Sunday of the Year                                              | 5 Sept Optional Memorial of St. Teresa of Calcutta                                                                         | 27 Sept Ferial (Ordinary Time)                                                                             |
| 19 Aug Optional Memorial of St. John Eudes                                  | 6 Sept Ferial (Ordinary Time)                                                                                              | 28 Sept Ferial (Ordinary Time)                                                                             |
|                                                                             | 7 Sept Ferial (Ordinary Time)                                                                                              | 29 Sept Twenty-Sixth Sunday of the Year                                                                    |
|                                                                             | 8 Sept 23rd Sunday of the Year ( <i>other years when not on Sunday: Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> ) | 30 Sept Memorial of St. Jerome                                                                             |
|                                                                             | 9 Sept Memorial of St. Ciaran                                                                                              |                                                                                                            |
|                                                                             | 10 Sept Optional Memorial of St.                                                                                           |                                                                                                            |

# Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

HELLO children. Welcome to the months of July and August. Summertime has arrived. These are fantastic months filled with fun and plenty of things to keep you amused.



## Precious Blood of Jesus – July

The month of July is dedicated to the Precious Blood of Jesus. We all have blood in our bodies, which helps us to live and stay healthy; therefore, we know how important and precious blood is. The Church and the sacraments, which we receive, have all come about through the precious Blood of Christ, which was poured out on the Cross when Jesus suffered and died for us.

**Saints of the Month - July**  
St Thomas the Apostle – July 3  
St Benedict – July 11  
St Mary Magdalene – July 22  
St Bridget of Sweden – July 23

## Saints Joachim and Anne Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

**Tradition:** The 26th of July is the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne. It is by tradition that Joachim and Anne are considered the names of the parents of Mary, the Mother of God. There is no mention of them in the Bible. What we know comes from the unofficial Gospel of James, which is an uncertain writing from the second century AD. We know from scholars that the Gospel of James was not written by Saint James. The early Church Fathers were very doubtful about the Gospel of James. All the same, there is no good reason to doubt the accuracy of the names it gives for Our Lady's parents because nothing would be gained by inventing them. Anyway, it is not important to know all the historical details about these two people. What we need to focus on is why the Church honours them. It is true that the parents of Mary did nurture Her and mould Her to be the worthy Mother of God. It was their strong faith, their teaching and guidance that assisted Mary in responding to God's request to be the mother of his Son in faith (CCC 494).

**Grandparents:** This feast day is dedicated to grandparents since Joachim and Anne were the grandparents of Jesus. It helps

grandparents to remember the important role they have within their family and community, to ensure that they remain witnesses and guardians of the faith, which needs to be kept alive for future generations to come.

**Youth:** This feast day has a special message for younger generations too. It helps them to understand that the older people who are part of our extended families or live in our communities have a wealth of knowledge, experience and a true devotion to God. Consequently, their opinions and advice should not be dismissed or considered outdated, but be viewed with respect and appreciation of the wealth and riches they continue to give us in the great gift of faith.

## The Blessed Sacrament – August



The month of August is dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament is the presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. Special times are set aside in our churches, called 'Adoration', where we can come and worship Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, the Eucharist (CCC 1178).

The Blessed Sacrament reminds us that even when Mass is not celebrated, Jesus in the Eucharist is still present in the Church.

**O Sacrament most Holy,  
O Sacrament Divine  
All praise and all thanksgiving  
Be every moment Thine**

**Saints of the Month - August**  
St Dominic – August 8  
St Clare – August 11  
St Bartholomew – August 24  
St Augustine – August 28



## The Transfiguration

The feast of the Transfiguration is August 6. On this special day, we celebrate how Jesus showed Himself to be truly divine to the three Apostles who accompanied Him to the top of Mount Tabor.

In the Gospels, we hear how Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John and went up the mountain to pray. While the disciples were there with Jesus, Elijah and Moses appeared to speak with Him. Then, before their eyes, Jesus was transfigured, completely changed, His face and clothes becoming dazzlingly white!

The Feast of the Transfiguration helps us to see, as the Apostles saw, that Jesus is really and truly God (CCC 554-555).

This same Gospel story is heard during the second Sunday of Lent every year. It is part of the Lenten readings to remind us that the Apostles were given great hope at seeing Jesus in His glory before He was put to death on the Cross. Likewise, we can reflect during Lent on the glory and joy which we will celebrate in the Easter story which will follow.

## Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The beautiful Feast of the



Assumption of Mary into Heaven is celebrated on August 15. The Assumption of Mary means that She was taken up into Heaven, body and soul. Mary's body was always pure; She gave birth to the Son of God, therefore, God rewarded Her by taking Her pure immaculate body into Heaven (CCC 966).

Mary now reigns as Queen of Heaven and Earth. She is our Mother who listens to our prayers and asks Jesus for special graces for us.

On the Last Day, in the General Resurrection, we too hope to enter Heaven with our newly glorified bodies. Our resurrected bodies will not suffer any illness nor need food or drink but, instead, will be splendid and eternally beautiful.

If we use our bodies for doing good while we are alive, we will share the heavenly reward. On this great Feast, we ask the Blessed Mother of God to guide, protect and care for us.

## The Year of Prayer 2024

The 'Youcat for Kids' tells us why we pray the 'Our Father' (Q 149). It tells us how the 'Our Father' is a very special prayer and is the only prayer that Jesus taught us. The apostles did

## YOUCAT for Kids

not know how to pray, so they asked Jesus to teach them how to pray. The 'Our Father' shows us how we should talk to God.

"Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1).



The 'Youcat for Kids' also explains to us why we turn to Mary in prayer (Q 150). It tells us that Mary is Jesus' Mother and she is our Mother too. Loving mothers help their children, so when we turn to our Mother Mary in prayer, She always helps us.



## Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. Of what European country is Ljubljana the capital city?
2. In the Acts of the Apostles, to whom did Jesus appear on the road to Damascus?
3. On a traditional roulette wheel the numbers are coloured red or black, but what colour is the 'zero' section?
4. Name the former partner of singer, Kris Kristofferson, who duetted with him on the song, 'Help Me Make It Through The Night'?
5. What nationality was the aviation pioneer, Amelia Earhart?
6. For what Formula 1 Racing Car franchise does Lando Norris currently drive?
7. America's famous 'Route 66' runs between Los Angeles and what other city?
8. Situated in the Louvre, what is the name of the iconic statue with no arms?
9. In mathematics, what is pi to the nearest whole number?
10. What popular television show is hosted by Dave Lamb?
11. In what month does King Charles celebrate his birthday?

12. What Irish county uses the car registration letters 'LD'?
13. In cricket, how much time is allocated to play an International Test match?
14. What 'Fawlty Towers' character was played by John Cleese's former wife, Connie Booth?
15. According to 'Wham's' 1983 hit single, how much were drinks at 'Club Tropicana'?
16. What is the largest single island in the Mediterranean Sea?
17. In what area of Dublin is the state residence of the President of Ireland?
18. Singer, Paul McLoone replaced Feargal Sharkey as the lead singer of what Irish band?
19. 'Mammy Two Shoes' was the lady of the house in what classic animation series?
20. With which basketball team did Michael Jordan win six NBA championships?
21. By what name was the fictional film and TV character Anne Shirley better known?
22. What is the longest river in South America?
23. What company uses 'Charlie' and his dog, 'Moose', in their TV advertising campaign?
24. What was the name of the fictional 'Vicar of Dibley' played by Dawn French?
25. What is the capital city of New Zealand?

**Quiz Answers:** 1, Slovenia; 2, Paul; 3, Green; 4, Rita Coolidge; 5, American; 6, McLaren; 7, Chicago; 8, Venus de Milo; 9, Three; 10, Come Dine With Me; 11, November; 12, Longford; 13, Five Days; 14, Polly Sherman; 15, They were free; 16, Sicily; 17, Phoenix Park (Castleknock); 18, The Undertones; 19, Tom & Jerry; 20, Chicago Bulls; 21, Anne of Green Gables; 22, The Amazon; 23, ClearScore; 24, Geraldine Granger; 25, Wellington.

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

# Let Your Light Shine!



## Vocations Day

for those discerning diocesan priesthood

**SUNDAY 8 SEPTEMBER 2024**

12.30 – 18.00

ST. MARY'S ORATORY, BUNCRANA

MASS 12.30



For more information visit

**DerryVocations.org**

or contact the Diocesan Vocations Director,  
Fr. Pat O'Hagan, at: [pgoh2111@gmail.com](mailto:pgoh2111@gmail.com)



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

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnybrook, Drumquin, Dunamnanagh, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,

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