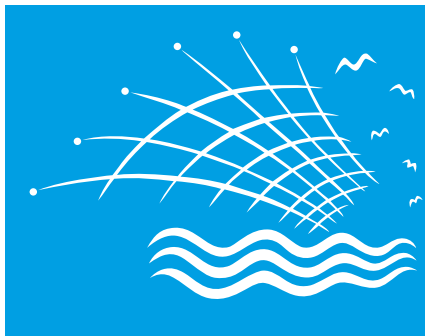




The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 79, SEPTEMBER 2022

PRICE - £1.50 /€2.00



Gift of Hope - Banagher.



Scalp Camino - Fahan.



Prayer Festival for Families - Omagh.



Generous First Communicants - Errigal.



Thousands stepped path of hope through Quigley's Point sunflower maze.



Youth 2000 - Derry City.



HOPE Summer Camp - Claudy.



Garden Fete - Buncrana.

People in focus



Declan & Gemma Laverty – Lavey



Fr Brian Brady – PP Clonmany



Fr Paul Farren – Adm St Eugene's



Aoife O'Hagan, Aimee Carlin, Matthew Doherty & Bethany Doherty – Derry City

Also featuring: Galliagh Youth Mass & Young Adult Prayer Group; Young Writers' Section; Termonbacca Captivating Retreat; Diocesan Vocations Weekend; Bishop Edward Daly Exhibition; Claudy Bombing 50th Anniversary Memorial Service; Omagh Native Launches Holy Land Guide; Journeying in Hope Reflections; Listen to Voice of Creation; Children's Catechism Club, Quiz...and much more...

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Copies of 'The Net' will be available in parishes again in the coming months

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Fr Peter McCawille SMA reflects on the Pope's prayer intention for September... "We pray that the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country"...

A matter of life and death



Fr Peter McCawille SMA

THE acceptance and approval of capital punishment by the Catholic Church has varied over the centuries. However, in modern times the Church has actively discouraged the imposition of the death penalty and, since Vatican II, the Church has been opposed to the imposition of capital punishment.

The death penalty, also known as capital punishment, is a State-sanctioned practice of killing a person as a punishment for committing a crime. The sentence ordering that an offender is to be punished in such a manner is known as a death sentence, and the act of carrying out such a death sentence is known as an execution.

At the outset, it should be stated that in any debate about the abolition of the death penalty, we have always to keep in sharp focus the victims and their families.

Pope Francis' prayer intention re-echoes the Church's opposition to the death penalty as reflected in a revised 2018 edition of the Catholic Catechism (No. 2267). The Catechism is the Catholic

Church's official compilation of teachings on a wide range of issues. In August, 2018, the Vatican announced that it had formally changed the official Catechism of the Catholic Church on the death penalty, calling capital punishment "an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person," and regarded it as "inadmissible" in all cases.

This change on the part of the Vatican is a consequence of an increasing awareness that the dignity of the person is not lost even after he/she has committed a serious crime. In addition, it is felt that more effective systems of detention have been developed which do not deprive the guilty of the possibility of rehabilitation and redemption. This new understanding should mean that the Church is committed to work "with determination" to abolish the death penalty worldwide.

In his third encyclical (the highest form of papal communication which offers guiding principles to help the faithful to better apply the teachings of scripture and the Catholic tradition), entitled 'Fratelli Tutti' ('All Brothers and Sisters') issued on October 3, 2020, Pope Francis restated the Church's position that the death penalty is "inadmissible" and that "there can be no stepping back from this position". He insisted that the Catholic Church is committed to the worldwide abolition of the death penalty.

Pope Francis' prayer intention for September resonates with me for a particular reason, which is associated with the

years I spent as a missionary in Nigeria. My role as chaplain to the local prison involved an uncomfortable, and yet strangely fulfilling, two-hour weekly session interacting with both the wardens and prisoners. The prison was outrageously overcrowded (those in the condemned cells had scarcely room to sit, let alone lie down), mosquito-infested and decidedly unhygienic.

A number of the inmates had been on death row for years and daily lived with the uncertainty of not knowing if they were destined to languish in prison for the rest of their lives or when the fateful day of execution might be announced.

One morning, I had an unexpected visit from the prison authorities to inform me that my presence was required the following day to minister to Anthony, a Catholic, who was one of six selected to face the firing squad, three marksmen for each prisoner. When I indicated that I would feel more comfortable if I could pray with him that evening, I was told it wasn't possible since they would not be informed about their execution until the following morning. I will spare you the gory details of the execution itself, which was attended by a few thousand onlookers who took some delight in being able to satisfy their lust for vengeance. I blessed Anthony, who remained surprisingly calm and continued to maintain his innocence. I then walked back to my car without looking back, appalled at the

barbarity that was about to be unleashed on a man whose only crime was to break into a shop using an iron bar (a somewhat bizarre definition of 'armed robbery').

In those years in Nigeria, these public executions were televised nationally on a weekly basis, and the argument most frequently cited to justify them was that the threat of execution would influence criminal behaviour more effectively than imprisonment. Not unexpectedly, evidence emerged over a period of time that the application (and televising) of the death penalty actually led to an increase in crime. Over the last 20 years, criminality has escalated to a more horrendous extent with the emergence of one of the world's deadliest jihadist groups called Boko Haram, an Islamic terrorist organisation based in North-East Nigeria and active

throughout the country. Boko Haram has threatened security throughout the country and led to unprecedented human rights abuses.

While it is encouraging to know that there is a downward trend in the number of death sentences and executions worldwide, it is still very depressing to learn that the world's top death penalty enforcers include China (according to Amnesty International China consistently executes more people than the combined total from other countries), Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Egypt, the US, and Pakistan. Nevertheless, we join Pope Francis' in this month's prayer intention and light one candle for the abolition of the death penalty. It is equally important that in our daily lives we accompany our sincere words with caring and compassionate actions.

Derry Youth Scholarship Programme

DERRY Youth are taking expressions of interest for the Derry Youth Scholarship Programme, which is a year-long programme for young people in Sixth Form or doing their Leaving Cert.

The programme provides opportunities for young people to meet others from across the diocese, to come together to explore their faith, to meet new friends, gain training and learn new skills, and work with a charitable organisation.

If you are interested in this programme or would like more information, message @Derry youth or email Niamh at niamh.mclaughlin@derrydiocese.org.



Diary Dates

Diocesan Knock Pilgrimage

The Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Knock takes place on Saturday, September 24. The programme will begin with Outdoor Stations of the Cross and a Rosary Procession at 2 pm, followed by Concelebrated Mass and the Anointing of the Sick at 3 pm.

Youth 2000 Barn Dance

Youth 2000 are holding a 'Country Barn Dance' and are hoping many will come along for a night of craic, food and dancing in the Mellon Hotel, Omagh, on Saturday, September 24. Doors will open from 6 pm with a 6.30 pm start.

The organisers promise to teach you how to throw a few moves before dinner and after dinner you will be able to "dance 'til the cows come home"!

The suggested dress style is 'Wild West', but not necessary. This is an Over 18s event, with the entry fee £30/€35.

The plan for evening: Dance lesson 6.30pm; Meal 8pm; Country Barn Dance 9 pm.

There are discounted rates on the hotel when you quote 'Youth 2000'.

Email any questions to Emma on office@youth2000.ie

Search Weekend

Derry Search Youth Group is holding a Search Weekend in Termonbacca from October 14-16. For further information contact Ceava on 07950326838 or Clare on

07712571086, or via email - derrysearchyouthgroup@gmail.com or Facebook - Derry Search Youth Group.

Novena of Healing

A Novena of Healing to St Pio of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio) is underway in St Mary's Church, Creggan. It is running from September 15, the Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, until September 23, the Feast of St Pio of Pietrelcina.

Week day Masses are at 7 and 10am, with Confessions at 5pm and Devotions at 7.30pm.

Reading with the Carmelites

The Carmelite Fathers at Termonbacca hold a monthly session of 'Reading with the Carmelite Saints', to explore learning friendship with Christ through the example of the Carmelite Saints.

The next gathering will take place on Thursday, October 6, at 7.30 pm.

Carnhill Holy Hour

The Abraham Community lead an hour of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament for the National Synodal Pathway in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, on the last Saturday of each month, following the 6 pm Vigil Mass.

Vocations Holy Hour

There will be Vocations Holy Hour in St Mary's Church, Creggan, on the second Friday of each month, running from 8-9 pm.

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.

Sr Clare Rosary

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

The ministry of

The NET

was dedicated to Our

Lady, through the

intercession of

St Maximilian Kolbe, in

a ceremony celebrated

by Bishop Donal

McKeown

on August 14, 2019.

 **The NET**
Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

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

Pilgrims on Scalp Camino to celebrate 90th anniversary of Eucharistic Cross erection hear...

Path to Heaven open to all but demands commitment and self-denial



BISHOP Donal joined walkers of all ages for the Burt, Inch & Fahan Parish Camino up Crocknahane Mountain, at Scalp, to celebrate the 90th anniversary of the erection of the Eucharistic Cross there.

The pilgrims, including young families, set out praying the Rosary as they climbed towards the Cross, where Mass was celebrated by the Bishop, with Fr Francis Bradley PP and Fr Kevin Mulhern concelebrating.

Delivering the homily, Fr Francis noted that it was Fr Michael O'Mullan PP who had chosen the mountain location for the cross, "to remind the generations who have come since of the great International Eucharistic Congress which took place in Dublin on 26 June 1932".

"At that Congress, and the International Eucharistic Congress which took place in Dublin again eighty years later in 2012, and at every Mass since", he added, "our great and heroic leader, Jesus Christ sacrifices Himself so that we might live, and live life to the full".

He also highlighted that those who had built the cross had made sure that it faced the altar in St Mura's, "for the cross always points us to Heaven, reminding us of the glory that is still to come and the blessings that shall be".

Referring to the Gospel message about entering through the narrow gate, Fr Francis remarked: "The way to eternal life in Heaven is narrow because, like climbing the hill here, it is demanding, requires commitment and the denial of our own selfishness. What does the 'narrow gate' mean? Why do many not succeed in entering through it? Is the way reserved for just a few so-called 'elect'?"

"It is often a trap and a temptation to interpret this Gospel passage as a reference to religious practice as the source of privilege or security. But in reality, the message of Christ is actually quite the opposite: His message is that all can enter eternal life, but for everyone, the door is narrow! They are not the privileged few, they are the blessed multitude.

"The path to Heaven is open to all people, but it is narrow because it's demanding, it asks

for commitment, self-denial, and the refusal to be mastered by selfishness and sin.

"It takes effort, but those who built this cross, Father O'Mullan, Walter McGrory's grandfather, or Neil Doherty (Neilly the Scalper), who carried two hundred-weight bags of cement, one on each shoulder all the way up, and did it many times, these and many more are the giants of faith and devotion on whose shoulders we can now stand and take in an even better view".

He added: "To pass through the narrow gate, means we must commit ourselves to being small, that is humble of heart like Jesus, like Mary, His mother and ours too. We Catholics call Mary 'the Gate of Heaven', we ask her to guide us in our daily choices and take us to the path that leads to 'Heaven's Gate'.

"Christ, our Redeemer, invites us to His feast of eternal life, but on one and only one condition: that of following and imitating Him, bearing as He did, our own cross, whatever it is, and devoting our life to our brothers and sisters.

"This is the single, universal condition to join the heavenly life. On the day of judgement, it will not be on the basis of alleged privileges that we shall be judged but on the merits of what we have done. Those who do good deeds, at the cost of personal sacrifice, will be welcomed".

"As we look about us here, we see the beauty of God's creation, the lovely part of the world in which we live," said Fr Francis, "We ask God to always keep our vision clear and our focus straight, that in the words of the opening prayer, He will keep our hearts fixed on that place above us still, but around us too, where true gladness is to be found".

Delighted to take part and impressed by the numbers that had gathered for the walk and Mass, from age 10 months upwards, Bishop Donal told 'The Net': "Walking together is the meaning of the word Synod. I hope that we can rediscover the joy of journeying together as God's people, facing tough climbs together and seeking to get a divine glimpse of the world in all its beauty".



Embracing 'Belonging' theme, HOPE Claudy-Craigbane had family-feel for campers and volunteers



Volunteers and campers singing the ending hymn, This Little Light of Mine, at the Camp closing Mass.

HOPE Camp made a welcome return to the Claudy Parish for a fun-filled week in early August, during which many new friendships were made and faith-related activities gave some time to help the young people not only grow in their faith but also in hope.

As well as day trips to Inish Adventures, in Moville, and Oakfire Adventure Centre, outside Claudy, over 100 young people enjoyed playing various sports, taking part in workshops on dance, drums, Indian cooking, and mental health awareness, as well as archery, tug 'o' war, minibeads, arts and crafts, and faith formation sessions.

Based on the HOPE Limavady model founded 10 years ago, this was the third HOPE Claudy-Craigbane and it was made possible through the financial support of many individuals and businesses, who were happy to help get it back up and running after the awful experience of Covid-19, and also through the many parish volunteers who so generously gave their time, energy and talents, particularly the young volunteers who really embraced their roles as team managers and encouraged the young campers during activities, and looked out for them like a little family, doing their best to ensure each felt that they belonged.

The main sponsor of the Camp jersey this year was Robinson Concrete, and the HOPE Claudy-Craigbane Committee deeply appreciated this and the funding from other sponsors, including the Drummond Hotel, Kercon Construction Ltd, Roxy Construction, Allstate NI, Derry City & Strabane District Council, T:buc and Derry Credit Union, and to Coastal Core for providing medical cover.

The Camp was launched with a special ceremony in St Patrick's

Church, in Claudy village, which was led by the parish priest, Fr David O'Kane, and began with the youngest camp members, twin sisters, Ellen and Nora Sharkey, lighting the HOPE candle for the intention of Helping Our Parish Evolve throughout the week of Camp and beyond.

The guest speakers for the launch were Bishop Donal and Oonagh McAlister, of the Derry Search Youth Group, who referred to this year's HOPE Camp theme – 'Belonging'. Remarking that hope is "in short supply in many places", Bishop Donal went on to say: "But hope can burst into flames when people discover they have talents that can help build up their community, and this brings with it a sense of belonging."

"HOPE Camp is a week when we come together to do marvellous things. In the face of so much competition, this Camp says belonging can work little miracles."

Hero

The Hope Claudy-Craigbane Camp is dedicated to St Dominic Savio, who was an Italian adolescent student of St John Bosco, who was studying to be a priest when he became ill and died aged 14. A wonderful hero for young people today, St Dominic's way to holiness was to live simply by doing the everyday duties of life in an extraordinary way. The ceremony ended with Bishop Donal giving those gathered a general blessing with a second-class relic of the saint.

The very successful week of fun, faith and friendship was brought to a close on the Friday with Mass celebrated by Fr David, during which the young volunteers and campers took an active part. A procession of gifts relating to activities during the camp showed how the mission of HOPE Camp had been very much to the fore.

The gifts included: a HOPE Camp jersey, symbolising the sense of togetherness and community among the children, young adults, volunteers and committee members, as well as representing the parish community of Claudy and Craigbane; a football, symbolising the teamwork, encouragement, enthusiasm and support that had been shown by all members of the Camp during all the sporting activities; pieces of art work, symbolising the creativity and imagination that the children have, which can help the parish to evolve in the future; positivity poems that were written by the children, representing the positive attitudes that were shown throughout the week and symbolising the joyful, happy and optimistic attitudes that everyone in the Camp showed during all activities, workshops and free time; prayers of Hope, which were written during a time of faith formation by the children, volunteers and leaders about their hopes for the Camp, their futures, their family and friends, and any hopes that they would like God to help them with, symbolising their relationship with God.

Encouraging the young people to say their prayers at home for their families, friends and themselves, and not give up on their faith as it will help them, Fr David was delighted to tell them that the priests who had helped to hear their Confessions during the week had been very impressed by them.

After Mass, the Camp 'St Dominic Savio Perpetual Cup' was presented to the Camp House of the Week, which was St Joseph's. The other Camp Houses were named after Saints Patrick, Brigid, Dominic Savio, Bernadette, Therese of Lisieux, Francesco, Jacinta, Francis of Assisi and Blessed Carlo Acutis.



The St Joseph's team receiving the St Dominic Savio Perpetual Cup.



Importance of hope and hearing you are loved

SPEAKING at the launch night of HOPE Claudy-Craigbane, Oonagh McAlister, of Derry Search Youth Group and youth worker for around 30 years, expressed the wish that during the week of the camp the young people would come to know more fully that they are loved and be filled with hope.

Saying that while some may “have the luxury of being from a family that is together and builds each other up, and has the openness to tell each other that they are loved”, the mother of five young sons pointed out: “A lot of people do not hear that they are loved”.

She went on to say that, after being asked to speak at the launch night, she did some research and found a few current references to ‘hope’: “I discovered there was a Novena of a Journey into Hope on at Knock, and that the Columba Community had a night of prayer in memory of the late Fr Neal Carlin, which had an hour for the youth and prayers for hope. I was also handed a leaflet about ‘hope’ when I was up the town.”

Reflecting on the impact of her own faith journey on her life, Oonagh spoke about how, after experiencing healing of wounds on her Search weekend as a teenager, she got “a real thirst for everything to do with God” and began reading the Bible.

“I would encourage you to read a line from the Bible and let it stay with you all day. It is powerful how that word will stay with and impact you,” she added, going on to quote from Jeremiah 29:11, “For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”.

“It is very evident on social media that all generations, not just young people, are losing hope,” continued Oonagh, noting: “Twenty per cent of people living in Northern Ireland have developed serious mental

health; that is higher than the UK and that is the world that we are living in”.

She added: “I encourage you to ask God to let you see the miracles that we do not notice. Some people say that God isn’t real, that you need to have a drink to have fun, that you need to be in a relationship to be really loved. This is the battle that is going on in our heads. If you are constantly listening to all these negative things, then you are surrounding yourselves with the wrong people”.

Urging the young people to not let the past be their future, the mother of five young sons spoke of the importance of realising that parents are people and not perfect, adding: “If there is something in your life that needs healing, hand it to God and do not carry it on into your life and into the next generation”.

She also shared with them her discovery that DNA code “is a three billion character description of who you are written in the language of God; a model that has never been written before and won’t be repeated.”

“Each of you is a miracle. I would take around 96 years to read God’s description of you, if I was to read your DNA code”.

Encouraging the young people to think about their talents and how God wants them to use them, Oonagh said: “We do not look at what God has given us. You have a job to do with your gift and no one else can do it... that is hope”.

Using her artistic talent, Oonagh finished her contribution to the Hope Camp launch evening by painting what turned out to be an image of Our Lord’s face, using black paint on a white canvas, and asking those gathered to listen to the words of the song ‘A Million Dreams’, from ‘The Greatest Showman’, as if it was God singing them, while she painted.



Generous Banagher parishioners thanked for gift of HOPE to parish youth



THE first week of August saw Banagher Parish hold its HOPE camp for the parish youth, aged 10-15yrs, and this year, unlike last, it was blessed with good weather!

Over 100 children took part in a range of activities, which included Archery, Fun with Drums and Volleyball, as well as the old favourites.

Local businesses, including Claudy Cycles, The Rainbow Tearoom and Conor Johnston PT, provided activities for the children, giving up their time and expertise to introduce interested children to their passions.

Brother Chris Gault, from Belfast, who trained as a doctor and is now studying for the priesthood with the Dominicans, came to speak to the children. He told them his faith story and used some practical examples that

captured their attention.

Parish faith formation coordinator, Charlotte Gormley prepared a varied programme of faith formation activities for the rest of the week, including guided meditation, Adoration, Confession, and culminating in the celebration of Mass with Bishop Donal, on the final day of the camp.

The children also went on two trips, to Foyle Arena and The Lake, in Kilrea, which was one of the highlights of a busy week.

Over 50 volunteers were on hand throughout the week to ensure that all went well. The committee wishes to thank sincerely all the sponsors, local business and parishioners who supported the fundraising efforts so well during the year, giving the gift of HOPE to the children of the parish.

Speaking at the closing Mass for the camp, Bishop Donal commended the Banagher HOPE committee for developing “the great idea” that first came from the Limavady Parish and then was introduced to the Claudy Parish, for a week of fun, friendship and an element of faith.

Commenting on the readings, in which the prophet, Jeremiah had felt he was too young to do what was asked of him, the Bishop told the young people: “I think the message that Jesus wants us all to know is that we are all worthy...we can do wonderful things.”

He went on to mention the Sr Clare prayer cards that the young people had been given, and the story of Sr Clare, “the good time girl who then gave her life to God as a religious sister in Ecuador”.

“Expect to do great things in your life,” said Bishop Donal, “expect to be a blessing on everyone”.

He added: “Greatness doesn’t mean thinking that you are great. You have unique talents and gifts, and so does everyone else. None of us is as smart as all of us. Sr Clare and Carlo Acutis believed in Jesus and that they had unique gifts to bless the world. Be filled with hope and bring hope to others who are sad or in despair.”

Fr Micheal McGavigan, Banagher PP, concelebrated the Mass with Bishop Donal and thanked him and the parishioners for coming, as well as all the volunteers and sponsors who helped to make the Camp possible, and invited all gathered to enjoy the tasty BBQ afterwards.



continued from page 6

Fun time for all at Buncrana Garden Fete

THE Buncrana Parish held its summer Garden Fete on the last Sunday of August in the grounds of Scoil Mhuire.

The day of fun and competition included athletic races, children's games, bouncy castles, face painting, novelty games, Rickety Wheel, tractor reversing and mini digger competition, vintage cars, and dog show.

There were also delicious tray bakes and teas available for refreshments, which were greatly enjoyed by the many people who welcomed the opportunity to meet others in the happy, fun-filled setting.



Celebrating Galliagh Youth Mass and spending time in conversation with the fledgling Young Adult Prayer Group, Bishop Donal encouraged them to...

Practise discerning what the Lord is calling you to do

ST Joseph's Church, in Galliagh, is the setting for a Sunday Youth Mass initiated by a group of young people who lead a weekly prayer gathering for young adults in Pio House, within the grounds of the White Chapel.

The weekly Mass on Sunday evenings at 6.30 pm is usually celebrated by Fr Francesco Gavazzi, cfr, and attracts young families as well as young people in their teens, 20s and 30s. Afterwards, any young adults in the congregation are welcome to join the youth group in Pio House for refreshments, prayer and conversation.

Recently, the young leaders of the group, Matthew Doherty, Aoife O'Hagan, Aimee Carlin and Bethany Doherty, felt privileged to have Bishop Donal celebrate the Sunday Youth Mass and join them afterwards at the Young Adult Prayer Group, for a cup of tea and a chat, as well as a time of prayer.

On that occasion, they were also joined by over 20 young Spanish people, who had come to Derry with their parish youth group's spiritual director, to visit Sr Clare's home city and to pray at her grave. Speaking to 'The Net' afterwards, Bishop Donal said: "It was great to celebrate Mass with young people at the 6.30 pm Sunday evening gathering. The local group

was complemented by 25 young Spaniards, with a priest and a Franciscan brother.

"There was an impressively meditative participation in the Mass. These are young people who want to pray and to enter into the mystery of faith that we celebrate in the Mass.

"As I discovered afterwards, at a Question and Answer session, their main concern is how they can evangelise their peers. They know the pain and suffering of so many young people and want to bring Jesus to them and them to Jesus.

"This group is one of the signs to us about where God is at work!"

Adding that the synodal pathway is not about us deciding what way we want to go, Bishop Donal said: "Discernment in the early church, as we see in the Acts of the Apostles, meant looking to see where God was already at work and leading the way.

"The recently formed youth group in Galliagh, based at St Joseph's Church and the Pio Centre, are a great example of where young people are coming together because they are fascinated by Jesus and His teaching.

"These are not young people who are merely using a religious context as an excuse for socialising. These are young people who want to

celebrate and share their faith in Jesus".

He continued: "The Friars of the Renewal have taken to support this ministry and that is a great outreach which goes to schools and beyond.

"I hope and pray that our Diocesan Church can see where God is at work in our midst, and promote these signs of Resurrection and new life. That is what synodality is all about".

In his homily during the Mass, Bishop Donal pointed out to the young congregation: "Jesus said He came not to be served, but to serve...that was the kind of leader He wanted to be, and it is what He wants in our Christian communities".

He added: "Our parish communities should be the face of the Father's Mercy".

Telling the young people that Mass was an invitation by God to gather around the altar, the Bishop went on to say: "We are invited to enter into the mystery of God. People seeing us should see people loving Jesus. When people gather each week for Mass, they are not just gathering to hear the Gospel, but to get a glimpse of what Heaven will be like."

He finished by saying: "Expect big things from your God".

Responding to questions from



the young people afterwards, at the gathering in Pio House, one of which was what he felt they could do to help their peers, Bishop Donal said: "It is not a question of what are you able to do. Jesus said get out and do it. Just talk to people about love and forgiveness and mercy. Speak into the reality of their lives".

He added: "What you are doing is important at this stage. You are coming together. Through prayer and talking, the Lord will tell you what He wants you to do, which will be much greater than anything I could suggest. Sometimes it is

about resisting the temptation to do something too quickly. Practise discerning what the Lord is calling you to do."

Commenting on the power of prayer, Eucharistic Adoration and Confession to change the world, Bishop Donal recalled the experience of St John Vianney as the Cure of Ars, before saying to the young people: "Your contemporaries are plagued by doubts and mental illness.

"We have to believe that our contemporaries want to see Jesus. It is not a matter of telling them that they have to go to

Mass on a Sunday, etc, because nothing happens until they have a relationship with Jesus. It is a long-term project. Take people where they are. Be a friend to them. Little things can go a long way".

He went on to remark: "This is not a time to be pulling back the boundaries, it is about getting out there. The harvest is rich but the labourers are few".

Bishop Donal also spoke to the young people about World Youth Day in Lisbon next year, at which he hopes to be joined by a group of young people from the Diocese.



I didn't practice my faith but I loved Bible stories and reflecting on them - Aimee

WHEN Aimee Carlin was growing up she wasn't much interested in the Catholic faith she was born into, with her family not actively practising it, but she loved her Religious Education classes when she was a pupil in St Cecilia's, especially when it involved Bible stories, and it was this connection with her faith that led to a wonderful conversion experience at Camp Veritas.

The eldest in a family of three, Aimee, from Galliagh, recalls her grannies being "into their faith", and her family attending Mass on Christmas Eve mostly for her granny's sake.

She added: "I was very close to my Granny Philomena and she would have bought me religious things, but because I didn't really practice the faith, I didn't care much about them.

"Mass at school didn't really interest me either, though I did sit down and question why this is so important and what was going on."

"I did Religious Education

and loved it", continued Aimee, saying: "I loved the Bible stories and would have thought about them. While I didn't much try to learn my RE, I still did really well in it, which was down to my great interest in the Scriptures".

Recalling her first introduction to Camp Veritas five years ago, Aimee said: "My whole school friendship group fell out the month we were leaving school. My friends out of school were going to Camp Veritas and so I found myself faced with the situation of having to spend that week they were away on my own, as I had no one else with the fall-out at school.

"I decided to go to the Camp and found it a bit weird. I was judging it on the set-up, all the holy songs and hand clapping, etc. I just thought it was really strange but, by the end of the week, I loved it".

She continued: "There was a healing night and when the priest was going around with the Blessed Sacrament, I remembered the Bible story about the healing of a

woman who was haemorrhaging, so I knew what was going on.

"When it came to my turn, I grabbed the humeral veil that the priest was holding the Monstrance with and I felt a heat, a warmth in my heart, and I thought, 'Wow!'"

Sad to return home after such a special week, Aimee said: "I was back to reality. The lifestyle that I experienced at the Camp wasn't sustainable at home.

"Every day at Camp, we were going to Mass and were around people praying, but back home I was around people not going to Mass or praying. I did go back home with the intention of practising my faith, but then I thought it wasn't my life".

However, the special experience she had at the Camp drew her back the next year and those following, up until the arrival of Covid.

"I returned to Camp Veritas in 2021 and got talking to Matthew Doherty there. We chatted about the definite challenge we would face back in Derry with regards to

practising our faith there.

"This led to us starting a youth prayer group in Matthew's house, along with Aoife O'Hagan and Bethany Doherty, and through this it was easier to practice my faith when back home. I kept going to the First Friday healing services by the Friars".

This year, when they returned to Camp Veritas, Aimee and her faith friends brought over 30 other young people with them, whom they knew from the Young Adults Prayer Group; 15 were young adults and the rest 12-17 year olds.

Delighted now to have the Young Adults Prayer Group, following the 6.30 pm Youth Mass in Galliagh on Sunday nights, Aimee is also a member of the Youth 2000 Group that meets for prayer before the Blessed Sacrament in Our Lady's Chapel in Galliagh Church on Monday nights, from 8-9 pm, and is excited about what the future holds for the nourishment of the faith of more and more young people in her home City.



Aimee Carlin

Come in front of Jesus in Adoration and feel His peace, love and mercy - Aoife



Aoife O'Hagan

WHEN Aoife O'Hagan turned 17, she decided that she didn't have to go to Mass anymore. The second youngest in a family of 13 hadn't liked feeling 'forced' as a teenager to get out of bed on a Sunday morning to go to Mass

when she was growing up in the family home in Galliagh, if she hadn't been to the Saturday Vigil, but when she finally let her guard down and Our Lord in, as a 20-year-old, she began to feel a love and joy that brought colour

to the world around her.

Appreciating now the faith that her parents loved to practice and pass on to their children, the 25-year-old realises that God had protected her during that period when she had embraced the party life: "I didn't drink or smoke, but I went out to night clubs, and I can see now that while I hadn't taken the time to get to know God, He still guided and protected me".

She continued: "In 2015, I got the opportunity to go to Medjugorje through St Brigid's College and the Franciscan Friars, and I went on it for a holiday and to get out of Derry. It was the first group that St Brigid's took on pilgrimage to Medjugorje

"When I came back, my friends said to me about going to Camp Veritas. I asked them what happened at it and when they said it was about 'Jesus', I told them that I had already done one Catholic thing and I wasn't doing another.

"The following year, when the date for Camp Veritas was coming up on the last week of June, I realised that I would get a week off school if I went to it, and that when we returned it would be the summer holidays. The school encouraged us to go, so I went along. And I went to it the year after that too, for the same reason,

and it didn't have any real impact on me.

"When it came to what would be my third Camp Veritas, I was at the Tech. I now realise that Satan was tempting me not to go, but I was fed up with the life that I was living, going to parties, because it was not bringing me life. So, I went to Camp Veritas for the third year".

"I had always thought the others at the Camp were weirdos praying to Jesus," recalled Aoife, "but, this time when I was there I thought, why not join in and open my heart to Jesus. I didn't care what anyone thought anymore, so I decided to open my hands and sing too. And when I did it willingly, I could see so much colour in the world. I felt sheer joy. Our Lord gave me joy and love straight away.

"But, when I came back there was nothing here. I didn't practice my faith. I knew the name of God but I didn't really know Him yet in my heart. Since then, I returned to Camp Veritas every year it has been on and it began to have impact on my life".

She added: "In between camps, I didn't know that I should be going to Mass every Sunday, but I found myself stopping if I was passing a chapel, and going in to pray. Then I began to realise that I needed to start going to Mass, as I

was saying that I was Catholic but I wasn't practising the faith. I was so embarrassed as I didn't know any of the responses, but I kept going."

As her faith deepened, Aoife signed up for two missionary years in Ireland with Net Ministries, which she found very rewarding.

She commented: "I had great priests on my team who I could question about why we are Catholic and why we do the things that we do in our faith. They had the answers and if they didn't, they would find out. So, it was very formative for me in my faith.

"During that time, I realised that I had a lot of wounds and that the Lord could heal me. So, I gave my heart of stone to Our Lord and He smashed it and gave me a heart of flesh".

This year when Aoife, who is a part-time youth worker, returned from Camp Veritas with her friends from the Young Adult Prayer Group she is in, Aimee Carlin, Matthew Doherty and Bethany Doherty, she felt in prayer that the Lord was inviting her to start a Youth Mass and, with the help of the others, it happened.

Now living in the Creggan, she is also in the Derry City Youth

2000 Group, which was set up a week or two after the Young Adult Prayer Group had moved to Pio House.

"Before all this happened," said Aoife, "Aimee and I were keeping an eye out for when Youth 2000 events were on to go along to for the craic, as we didn't know Jesus then. But now, we want to be part of Youth 2000 prayer for the Adoration".

She added: "Our Young Adults Prayer Group in Pio House on Sunday evenings is more a chill out, doing what we want, and then on Monday nights we have the structured Youth 2000 Prayer from 8-9 pm, during the Adoration in Our Lady's Chapel in Galliagh Church.

"Our Lord wants everyone to come to know who He is and to feel the love He wants to give them. You can't get what the Lord offers out there in the world and so people feel loneliness and darkness. But they can come in front of Him in Adoration and feel peace and love and mercy".



I wanted fellowship with people my age who wanted to grow in their faith - *Bethany*

KNOWN by many in Derry and beyond as a member of the 'I Am' Worship Band that packed St Columb's Hall and the Millennium Forum at special times in the Church calendar, Bethany Doherty is delighted to be able to use her musical talents in leading the praise and worship during the Galliagh-based Young Adult Prayer Group on Sunday nights.

Her Catholic faith has always been very important to the 27-year-old St Eugene's parishioner and her older sister, Lauren, with their parents, Gerry and the late Jacqueline bringing them regularly to Mass when they were growing up and encouraging them to join the Cor Youth Group at Termonbacca.

Saying that the couple of years she attended the weekly Cor faith gatherings had helped develop her faith life, Bethany added: "I have always been a deep thinker and wanted to be around like-minded young people, and it definitely helped my faith to see that the other young people in Cor were into their faith too".

A former pupil of St Cecilia's, where she was encouraged to

develop her musical talents, Bethany recalled singing at the school Masses and having great Religious Education teachers nourishing further her budding faith life.

And she feels blessed to have had this followed by those special times with the Derry worship band, 'I Am', from 2016-2019, during which Bethany had the opportunity to travel to Germany and New York with the band and the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, and take part in praise and worship events there.

She recalled: "We had the opportunity to play at the Catholic Underground in New York City, which is a monthly worship music event for all ages, held in a space under a church. We also played at the 'GIG' (God is Good) Festival in Germany, which is held every summer.

"These experiences opened my eyes to other Catholic groups and events, and gave me opportunities to meet loads of like-minded people to strengthen and encourage me in my faith".

When her mother passed away three years ago, Bethany said that the grief she went through had her

asking questions: "I could have turned down a different path, but in losing someone so close I feel that God has brought me closer to Him. He has been at the forefront for the last few years".

Having graduated with a Degree in Music from Ulster University, Magee, in 2016, Bethany, who teaches guitar, has a strong desire to work with young people and children, and this has been heightened after experiencing Camp America in 2018 and then Camp Veritas at Clongowes Wood College, in Kildare, this year.

Commenting on her Camp Veritas experience, she said: "I was a camp counsellor, which was amazing. I just loved the whole structure. It is so well thought out - each hour of the day the young people are drawn into their faith and time with Jesus. The speakers and priest were great at explaining things in a youthful way. I learnt so much and am hoping to go back every year".

Feeling blessed to have met faith friends, Matthew Doherty, Aoife O'Hagan and Aimee Carlin, and helped form the Galliagh-based Young Adults

Prayer Group with them, Bethany said: "I wanted fellowship with people my age who wanted to grow in their faith and so did they. We wanted community and started to commit to meeting on a Sunday night in Matthew's house for a bit of fellowship, music and conversation about our week and how Our Lord was working in it.

"Aoife was feeling that Our Lord was calling her to reach out to other young people, so we slowly started to invite other young people along and we soon outgrew Matthew's house. We were preparing for Camp Veritas, trying to fundraise and encourage other young people to come too.

"After this Camp, we felt a desire to help these young people keep coming to Mass and growing in their faith. We have now moved to Pio House, where there is great space. The idea was to have a Youth Mass and we had our first in July. We are also in the process of getting vetted to work with under 18s, and then we are going to have an under 16 prayer group. The hope is to keep working with young people and keep encouraging them in their faith".



"Through all of these experiences that I have had over the years, I truly believe that Our Lord has been walking right beside me and guiding me closer and closer to Him every day.

"He wants to journey with us and give us all His heart's desires, if we trust, surrender, believe and receive! I'm so glad that He has me where I am right now, and I can't wait for what He has in store for

me next! God is Good."

She added: "Through my experience with our Young Adults Prayer Group, I feel like I have been given a pair of glasses to see the world the way God wants me to, and I want to give everyone a pair of glasses so that they too can see the world the way God wants them to. Our Lord has big plans!"

We're just going to keep bringing people to the foot of the cross - *Matthew*

OPENING his Derry home as a space for his peers to gather for prayer and conversation about their Catholic faith, 20-year-old Matthew Doherty shares his life-changing experience in front of the Blessed Sacrament which wakened him up to the great gift he had received at his baptism but hadn't appreciated until his teens, when he was encouraged to spend a week at Camp Veritas.

The eldest of three children, Matthew grew up in Galliagh in a family which he said didn't go to Mass or practice their Catholic faith, though he did receive the sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation.

It was as a 13-year-old pupil at St Brigid's College that Matthew discovered what he was missing out on, when his Religious Education teachers encouraged him to go with a group of his peers to Camp Veritas towards the end of the 2015 school year.

"I didn't really want to go," he recalled, "but it completely changed my life. That was 2015. I was about 13 years old".

Saying that he experienced the power of the Eucharist for the first time during a healing night of Adoration at the Camp for 12-18 year olds, which was held in Maynooth then but is now in Kildare, he continued: "It was the first time that I found God reaching out into my heart and

healing the wounds that were there. I was that overwhelmed, I passed out.

"Worship music was being played as the priest went around with the Blessed Sacrament. He was standing in front of the person before me, when an overwhelming sense of emotion came over me and I passed out. There was a really warm feeling in my chest and I just passed out.

"When I woke up again I felt I had to say the Rosary, and when I started praying it was like God speaking in my ear. I heard a voice telling me how loved I was and there was an overwhelming amount of love pouring into my soul. I felt like I was being born all over again.

"The Camp lasted seven days and we had two days left after my experience, and I gave it my all, offering to read at Mass and to be involved in the music".

He added: "When I came back to Derry I was very sad, as I thought this would just be a once-a-year experience, but no, there was actually a small youth group, of about three or four people, held in the White Chapel, in Galliagh, which included Mass and talks, and I got involved in the worship music as I play guitar.

"The Franciscan Friars were involved in this group, but it was mostly led by Rachel McLaughlin. That was on for about a year and kept me going until the next Camp

Veritas. I have been at every Camp since, except for the two years of Covid restrictions, and with every visit my faith just got stronger and stronger".

Wake-up call

Returning to the Camp last year for the first time since Covid, Matthew described it as "a big wake up call". During previous attendances at Camp Veritas, he had got to better know a number of other young Derry people who were also there, including Aimee Carlin and Aoife O'Hagan, and when they returned home to Derry they felt it was time to start a youth night.

He recalled: "We had been going to an Alpha study group that was held in Magee, but we found that it wasn't feeding us, so after we got home from Camp Veritas, myself and Aimee, Aoife, and Bethany Doherty, whom I knew from the White Chapel Youth Group, decided to start up our own group on Sunday nights in my house.

"We started with prayer, praise and a session plan. We had a rota every week and it was whatever was on your heart that you wanted to share. So it was fairly spontaneous, but with some planning. We decided that it would last an hour and a half, but we always started at 7pm and finished around 11.30 pm! The Holy Spirit was with us and the time just flew by.

"It was through constant prayer

about bringing more people to the foot of the cross and building community that we went from four to 44...though we never actually had 44 there at the one time!"

"Once the numbers started to grow and more wanted to come, we thought that we needed to find a bigger venue," said Matthew, adding: "We knew Roisin Doherty from our times at Camp Veritas, and she was happy to help us find a venue, which turned out to be Pio House, in Galliagh, and we have been meeting there since we came from back Camp Veritas in June, this year.

"One of our hopes is to encourage more young people to come and experience Camp Veritas, and they may then want to join our Young Adult Prayer Group on Sunday nights. Last year, just three of us went to Camp Veritas, but this year about 30 of us went from our youth prayer group, and our numbers to continue to grow.

"I am gobsmacked at how it has grown. We didn't think it would grow like it has done and we're just going to keep going, bringing people to the foot of the cross. It is not about what we want anymore; it is about what God wants".

Saying that they had a desire to bring the Youth Mass back to Derry, Matthew continued: "When we started to meet in Pio House, we couldn't have asked for a better venue with it being so close



to the chapel, as we could have the Youth Mass in St Joseph's Church then go over to Pio House for our Prayer Group gathering.

"We have had a Youth Mass every Sunday since, celebrated by Fr Francesco, but Bishop Donal celebrated our sixth one and joined us afterwards in Pio House, where he welcomed any questions we had. He also spoke to us about World Youth Day in Lisbon next

year, and we're hoping to go.

"As it turned out, there was a Spanish Youth Group in Derry at the time, to visit Sr Clare's grave, and they joined us for the Youth Mass celebrated by Bishop Donal and the Youth meeting afterwards. We have exchanged contact details and hope to visit them. We also have friends in Medjugorje and we are planning to go there as a group too".

Feeling blessed to be able to set up a Youth 2000 group in their parish, Lavey couple say...

Once you experience what Youth 2000 has to offer you want to share it with others

YOUNG Lavey couple, Declan and Gemma Laverty have grown so much in their faith through their experience of the Youth 2000 hour of prayer, in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament, that they have now set up a Youth 2000 Group in their home parish.

Started last December, just before Christmas, the group has grown to around 10 members at full strength, with most of them in their 20s or older and delighted to be able to have faith discussions with other like-minded young people.

Married just two years ago, during the first summer of Covid, Declan and Gemma, who are both 28 and grew up in the same parish, encountered Youth 2000 when they started going out together six years ago.

"Gemma saw a notice about a Youth 2000 group in Magherafelt and thought it would be good to go to," recalled Declan: "We didn't know too much about it at the time, but after attending our first prayer meeting we thought it was great to be in a group of like-minded people around our age group, who were genuinely interested in their faith and in you."

"When I was at university in Derry, at Magee, I would have loved if there had been a young

Catholic Community gathering. So, I thought this Youth 2000 group in Magherafelt would be good to belong to. I think there are other people out there who want that too and Youth 2000 has it".

He added: "The main and most important thing about Youth 2000 is that you are spending time together with Our Lord in the Eucharist. That made a definite impact on my life when I started and I looked forward to going back each week. It is a real experience".

Declan explained that the Magherafelt Youth 2000 Group had access to an oratory used by nuns who had been based in the town, but following a series of events, including the impact of Covid, that group ended.

He continued: "Gemma and I wanted to keep it going as we felt blessed with it and wanted to try and get a group set up in our home parish of Lavey. There were people interested, so we asked our priest, Fr Eamon Graham, if we could use somewhere in the parish and he let us use part of the Parochial House on Friday evenings for the group to meet. That was in December, just before Christmas, and it has been going every Friday evening since, even over the summer, with a good mix of males and females."

"Our Youth 2000 session is

similar to what it was before but more informal and I find that there is something nice about that. When the hour of prayer is done and the Blessed Sacrament is taken away, we sit and have a chat and a cup of tea. We socialise a bit."

"Currently, there are between 5-8 people coming along each Friday night, and at full strength we would have about 10 people, with some who come now and then. It is what suits people on any given Friday evening. Some of those who have been coming live close, while others travel from further afield, with one coming from Dunloy. We seem to be blessed so far and if God wants to use it, let His Will be done".

Pray

Saying that the practice of the Catholic faith had been important in both families, when he and Gemma were growing up, Declan added: "Our parents and grandparents definitely taught us the faith in the home, and the need to pray."

"I lived in Greenlough until I was nine, when we moved to the neighbouring parish of Lavey, and I served on the altar in both parishes. When I was on the altar, I was more aware of what was going on during Mass."

"When I went to secondary

school, there were more challenges. People out there wouldn't have had the same strength of faith and would challenge you. You need fellowship with other young Catholics to strengthen you".

Recalling that he had thought of priesthood at one time, he said: "Through prayer and thinking about it, I knew I preferred to get married. I think it is important that young people should be aware that priesthood and religious life is an option and give it serious thought."

Noting that the Youth 2000 motto is 'Youth leading youth to the heart of the Church', Declan has found that it is very effective in this: "Going to Youth 2000 has been great in helping to strengthen our faith, through having peers we could talk to about it and find out things we didn't know, and vice versa. But, what really deepened our faith was spending time in front of the Blessed Sacrament. It just comes alive."

He added: "We have been to the national Youth 2000 retreats and people from around Ireland say the same thing: that the real power of it comes from spending time in front of the Blessed Sacrament in prayer. It is transformative and very good."

Commenting on the experience



of their first national retreat in 2019, in Clongowes College, Kildare, Declan recalled: "Gemma and I were sitting in the beautiful little chapel and we could hear singing approaching and then in the chapel, as people came in singing 'O Sacrament Most Holy'. They were holding little red candles as part of the procession with the Blessed Sacrament into the chapel for Benediction. We didn't know that was going to happen and it was so beautiful and touching."

"We have been going to all the retreats since and were at the summer festival in Clongowes in August. It is held over a few days and there was a very good turnout, with most people coming for the Saturday. It is so moving to be amongst 1,000 young people on their knees in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament."

"I have been trying to get others to go and experience this. It is something you love to experience and you just want to share it with others".

Highlighting that Youth 2000 is aimed at the 16-35 age-group, Declan said: "We mostly have people in their 20s and older coming so far, but it is open to whoever wants to come within the 16-35 age range, from wherever they want to travel, not just the Lavey Parish. We have found that the people who are interested and value it, and want to try it, are willing to travel".

The Lavey Youth 2000 group meet in the Parochial House, across from the chapel, every Friday night, with the time of prayer and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament from 7.30-8.30 pm, followed by a social time.

Derry City Youth 2000 set up by faith friends with great love for Adoration

NEWS that the Diocese now has two newly set-up Youth 2000 groups, one in Lavey in the Co Derry Deanery and the other in Derry City, has been warmly welcomed by Bishop Donal, who is always encouraging youth initiatives.

He told 'The Net': "For some time, I have been hoping for a Youth 2000 prayer group to start up in the Diocese. Now, thank God, we have two."

"There is a huge need for a place where young, adult Catholics can gather to pray and share their journey of faith. These are the sort of places where God can do great work with enthusiastic, generous hearts that want to love Jesus."

The Youth 2000 Derry City Prayer Group was set up during the summer, after a group of young people who had experienced Camp Veritas, in Kildare, returned home with a deep desire in their hearts to continue this experience of meeting and praying with other young people. Aware that Youth 2000 Prayer Groups offered a similar prayer experience, they decided to start one in their home town.

With the help of the mother of some of the young people, Roisin Doherty, and Fr Francesco

Gavazzi, of the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal based in Galliagh, a Youth 2000 hour of prayer and praise now takes place from 8-9 pm, on Monday nights, during the 24-hour period of Eucharistic Adoration in Our Lady's Chapel, within Galliagh's White Chapel.

One of the leaders of the time of Youth 2000 prayer is 18-year-old Culmore parishioner, Plunkett Roarty. Talking to 'The Net' about the faith journey that has led him to this point, the Lumen Christi A'level student remarked that his faith really began to come alive for him during his first experience of Camp Veritas, which his sister had told him about.

Founded in 2008 by American couple, Ryan and Elizabeth Young, in response to the crisis of young people leaving the Catholic Church after Confirmation, Camp Veritas is a fun-filled Catholic summer camp for 12-18 year olds which primarily focuses on Eucharistic-centred worship and evangelisation. Supported by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, as well as other religious orders, there are about four camps in America and one in Ireland, at Clongowes Wood College, in Kildare.

Recalling his first Camp Veritas

experience last summer, Plunkett said: "It was great. We spent quite a bit of time in Adoration, which was very powerful. I had experienced time in Adoration before this when I went to it as part of my Pope John Paul II Award, but it had more of an impact on me at Camp Veritas doing it with so many other young people."

So good was the experience that Plunkett returned to this summer's Camp Veritas, where he met and became good friends with other young people who were there from Derry, including Roisin Doherty's family, and Aoife O'Hagan, who is one of the young leaders of the newly established Galliagh Youth Prayer Group, which Plunkett has joined since returning from Camp Veritas.

He also went with some of the Galliagh Youth Prayer Group members to this year's Youth 2000 summer festival, which was held at Clongowes Wood College as well.

Impressed by the structure of the Youth 2000 Prayer Group, Plunkett explained: "It has the three pillars of devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, devotion to Our Lady through the Rosary, and Sacred Scripture".

He added: "Youth 2000 prayer is a Holy Hour of Adoration and we

just wanted to set that up, as we love spending time in Adoration and spending time together. So, with the help of Roisin Doherty, we got organised to have an hour of Youth 2000 prayer on Monday nights in Galliagh's White Chapel, followed by a time to chat together while having some refreshments."

"We have fantastic support from the friars as well, and Fr Francesco usually does the Gospel reflection for us during the Holy Hour. We also have music for some praise and worship, as we have musicians in the group too".

Hoping that other young people will be drawn to join them, Plunkett shared more about his experience, saying: "I get a great sense of peace from spending time in Adoration. It re-orders your heart, and so you can re-order your life with a re-ordered heart. Being involved in Youth 2000 engages me in my faith in an active way, through praying the Rosary, reading Scripture and a time of praise and worship."

"At the start, I was co-leader with Owen Doherty, but then Owen joined Net Ministries so I am now co-leading with his younger brother, Eddie. We have 12-15 members, with a good mix of ages between 16 and 35, which is the



age-group Youth 2000 is for.

"My hopes are for the group to grow and for more young people to come into contact with their faith and practice it with others in their community, and I am looking forward to going on more retreats together."

"Young people from the City, or any other part of the Diocese, are more than welcome to join us on Monday nights from 8-9 pm in the White Chapel, and they can

follow our Instagram account on @youth2000doire".



FOLLOWING the tragic deaths of two young members of the Syro-Malabar community as summer drew to a close, we offer sincere sympathy to the families and friends of Joseph Sebastian and Reuven Simon, from the Waterside area of Derry.

One of The Net's young writers, John Augustine Joseph knew the boys well and writes a tribute to them in this month's youth section.

John also writes about the great strength of faith of Catholics in Korea, who he discovered were evangelised more through the written word than by missionaries, while Jodie reflects on the Pope's call for digital evangelisers to reach out to those who have not yet encountered Christ, and Bronagh shares her thoughts on what Pope Francis said about going on mission, and noting that carrying out God's mission is to love and care for others in our parish as well as further afield.

Niamh writes about Pope Francis' message to the youth who gathered in Medjugorje during the summer for the annual Youth Festival there, and Zara shares her love for the Blessed Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

Reflecting on exams and the stressful time of results day on young people, Peter, who is off to university to study Agricultural Science, expresses his best wishes to all his peers who are starting off a new chapter in their lives, encouraging them not to be afraid to stand out from the crowd.



Hollie Frystal, Co Tyrone Deanery. Bronagh Doherty, Co Derry Deanery. Peter Grant, Inishowen Deanery. Jodie Kennedy, Derry City Deanery.



Niamh O'Kane - Co Derry Deanery. John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery. Zara Schlindwein, Derry City Deanery.

Pope to youth in Medjugorje: "Trust in Jesus and find peace"

by Niamh

POPE Francis delivered a message for the young people who gathered in the Parish of Medjugorje for the annual Youth Festival.

He said that Jesus addresses all those who are weary and oppressed as He understands how tough and challenging life can be, as we can see through His words, "Learn from me and you will find peace".

Through this, Jesus sends the message to trust in Him and to follow His Word, as this will enable all to trust in each other and to believe in His example.

The Pope entrusted the youth to the loving care of the Blessed Virgin Mary, our heavenly Mother, "so that, through her intercession and by her example,

you may take upon yourselves the gentle and light yoke of following Christ.

"May the gaze of God the Father, who loves you personally, accompany you every day, so that, in your relationships with others, you may be witnesses of the peace you will receive as a gift".

Those who follow the example of Jesus and Mary will become more inclined to treat others with respect and dignity, trusting in Jesus and finding peace. (Source: vaticannews.com)



Paying tribute to the two 16-year-old members of his Syro Malabar community, Joseph Sebastian and Reuven Simon, who tragically died in Enagh Lough as the summer holidays drew to a close, John writes...

Joseph and Reuven lived good and praiseworthy lives



AS Christians, we are called to live our life oriented towards God and His will. However, we often find ourselves in situations where the will of God is a difficult pill to swallow. In these situations, we ask ourselves how a merciful and just God can allow these difficult situations to happen. It is in these situations that the Gospel reminds us that God gives more to us than He takes away.

Joseph and Reuven were two boys who were joyous and loved their lives. They excelled in the activities that they did, and they loved their families and their friends. We all loved them. Having known these boys, since I was a young child, I can say for certain that they lived good and praiseworthy lives.

Needless to say, the condolences presented after Qurbana (Mass) at St Mary's Church, in Ardmore, that Friday afternoon, showed the positive legacy that Joseph and Reuven's lives had on our small community, as well as the Derry community in general.

Even though I had known Joseph and Reuven as kids, as they were the same age as my sister, I really only got acquainted with them once they joined St Columb's College. It was on those bus journeys back to home that I saw them slowly maturing from young lads to good men.

Joseph, or as we call him Joppu, had a gentle character. He was always relaxed and above all was a gentleman to all who knew him. His meekness also provided a balance to the background of chaos that surrounded us on the bus.

Joseph also was an Altar Boy

and had served at many Qurbanas from a young age. He would be always there to serve when asked, and he would prayerfully complete the tasks that he had to do. I remember those days after 'Lockdown', when he had grown to more than six feet, we had to search the sacristy for a Kotina (Alb). Those were joyous days.

Reuven was a very active person. He was very outgoing and wasn't shy to talk to others. He made sure that no one felt excluded. He wasn't afraid to have good craic on the bus back home with his friends.

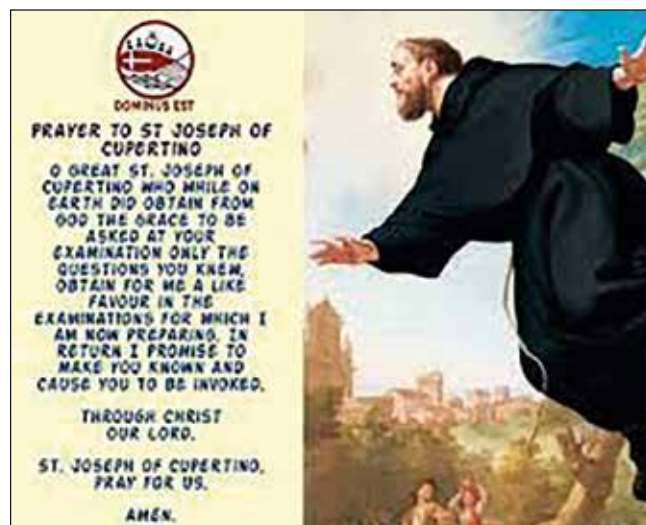
As Reuven and I lived close by, we would get the same bus to school and back home, most of the time anyway. In these times, I got to know a young man who wanted to make his family and his friends proud. Reuven was a good Christian and he loved God and his neighbour, as we know well.

The boys were exceptionally diligent and had received top grades in their GCSEs. They were extremely grateful for their results and were completely humble about it as well.

In the Little Office of the Dead in the Syro Malabar rite, more commonly known as Cheriya Oppees, a particular hymn called 'Qambel Maran' is sung. I'd like to end my tribute to Joseph and Reuven with this hymn and prayer:

"Receive O Lord (Qambel Maran), In Thy presence This sacrifice which Thy servants Have offered Thee with sincere faith". Amen.

It's only an exam! by Peter



AFTER a wonderful and stress-free summer, I had the long awaited D-Day for any student in their exam year, results day!

On the morning of my results day, I woke up knowing that the results I was going to receive would shape my future, but I always think of St Joseph of Cupertino, who is the Patron

Saint of Exams.

From reading about his life, I discovered that while St Joseph of Cupertino had not been gifted with great knowledge, he had been gifted with many other talents by God, such as having the ability to levitate in prayer, which no other human being could.

He wanted to become a priest

and study for the priesthood in the early 1600's, but felt that his poor knowledge would prevent him from achieving his dream. On the day of his exam, the examiner happened to ask him the only thing he knew by heart, and so, he became a priest and expressed his gifts and talents to the world through his teachings.

His teachings and prayers are still very commonly used today by many young people, like me, before they begin their exams and receive their results.

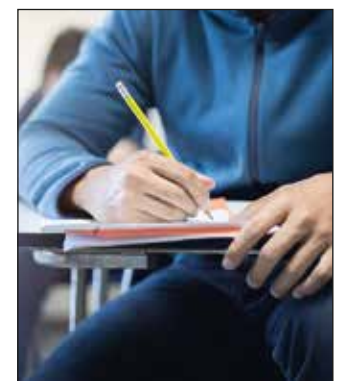
I know some people will be disappointed with their results, but what I have learnt from St Joseph of Cupertino is that you are not defined by your knowledge or grade, and no one should judge you by that, and that you should use your gifted talents to the best ability to help others.

As a school principal in Singapore said: "There is an entrepreneur who doesn't care about History or English literature. There is a musician

whose Chemistry marks won't matter. There's an athlete whose physical fitness is more important than Physics, and do not think that doctors and engineers are the only happy people in the world."

It can be a happy or stressful time for young people, but it is not the end of the world.

So, to all the young people who are off to start a new chapter in their lives, I wish them all the best of luck for the future. Don't be afraid to stand out from the crowd like St Joseph of Cupertino did in his teachings and talents.





Mission Possible

by Bronagh

GOD wants us to share our faith and use it for God, to help those less fortunate than ourselves, and missionaries do just that.

I was taught from a very young age to always help others. The whole way through primary school, we said this prayer as a family before bed each night, “God bless all the world’s children, anyone who is sick, sad or poor. Amen”.

This was the earliest, most simple explanation of what God wanted us to do with our faith, and what the Pope still, to this day, reminds us to carry out each day of our life.

Pope Francis says: “Going on mission means giving the best of ourselves and God’s gifts”.

There are so many missions going on currently and so many ways to get involved. Carrying out God’s mission is to love and care for others in our parish and further afield. It can be simple or complex.

Jesus told us: “This is my commandment, that you love

one another as I have loved you”. Jesus loved us endlessly and wants us to do the same to each other. This can be in the form of the missions.

Recently, the Pope addressed an Argentinian parish group on a mission amongst tribal communities. Thirty Argentinians spent a week in Wichi helping the indigenous families; celebrating Masses and spreading the Word of God.

They travelled to the borders of Paraguay and Bolivia, for a stretch of over 5,000 km, assisting with malnutrition and lack of clean drinking water. They worked under the motto of ‘Dreams are built together’. Together, through the Word of God, we can help the people in the world who need help the most.

‘God bless all the world’s children, anyone who is sick, sad or poor. Amen’.

“Be kind, compassionate, and forgiving to each other, in the same way God forgave you in Christ” (Ephesians 4:32).

Korean Catholicism by John

IN today’s world, many people, young and old alike, became Catholics by encountering the faith via articles and books. They became Catholic because they became convinced of a transcendent reality through the words on a book.

I know of a good few people who became Catholic after reading Chesterton’s Orthodoxy or many other similar books. It seems like a novel way of evangelisation, but the word on paper led to a Church blossoming in a part of the world where missionaries did not go. The Word of God reached Korea, not through a missionary but via books.

The faith grew in Korea due to sheer intellectual curiosity. Even though the first converts were nobles and scholars, it was mainly people from the lower classes of Korean society who made the church.

What made the Catholic faith distinct from the society of Korea at that time was the fact that all people, regardless of social class or status, were equal because they were children of God. Nobles sat with potters, scholars prayed with servants.

But this alone was not the only reason that the Faith blossomed in Korea. The unwavering belief and conviction of the Korean Catholic was a witness to many others, causing many Koreans to convert, despite persecution.

I’ll quote from a homily by Pope Francis during the Beatification Mass for Paul Yun Ji-Chung and the 123 Martyr Companions, who quoted St Paul: “Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor



Above: Korean Martyrs, Painting at Jeju Island Shrine. (Source: Wikipedia)



Myeongdong Cathedral. Taken by my friend Mr Tim Puszczewicz



Myeongdong Cathedral. Taken by my friend Mr Tim Puszczewicz

principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:38-39).

The endearing love of Our Lord was present in these Korean Catholic communities, and it was that which allowed them to flourish even when they were most heavily persecuted.

The question now is, what can we learn from this? I think that St Andrew Kim Taegon’s words might give us some inspiration. He said: “We have received baptism, entrance into the Church and the honour of being called Christians. Yet what good will this do us, if we are Christians in name only and not in fact?”

When he died at the age of 25, he was the first Korean priest, and

he was only a priest for just a few months. He took his Faith as if it were the greatest treasure that he ever possessed. He wasn’t afraid of what would happen to him, as he said: “It is for Him that I die”.

As one of my good friends said: “This sentiment would be expected from any martyr – they are among the most visible examples of ‘actions speak louder than words.’”

This willingness to die for the faith came not from vanity but from the ‘incorporation of Christ into people’s everyday lives’.

The story of the Korean Church is one of conviction and of belief. In our modern society, this sort of conviction is deeply attractive, so much so that many become Catholics after reading about, or seeing, the deep faith of others.

I pray that you and I may have

the courage and conviction that these martyrs had, so that we can be the “light of the world and the salt of the earth”, as we are called to be.

Holy Korean Martyrs, pray for us!

(I thank my friend, Mr Tony Perez for helping me with this article.)



The Blessed Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help by Zara

OUR Lady of Perpetual Help - this title was given to the Blessed Virgin Mary emphasizing her unfailing eagerness to pray for the welfare of human beings, especially those who seek her intercession.

The image of Our Lady of Perpetual Help is an icon, painted on wood, and seems to have originated around the 13th century. The icon depicts our Blessed Mother Mary holding Jesus as an infant.

In addition, the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, hovering in the upper corners, hold the instruments of the Passion, with St Michael holding the spear, the wine-soaked sponge, and St Gabriel holding the cross and the nails.

The intent of the artist was to portray the Child Jesus contemplating the vision of His future Passion. In my opinion, the attention to detail is extraordinary, with the anguish He feels being displayed by the loss of one of His sandals. Nevertheless, the icon also conveys the triumph of Christ

over sin and death, symbolized by the golden background, a sign of the glory of the resurrection.

In a very beautiful way, Jesus grasps the hand of the Blessed Mother, as He seeks comfort in the presence of the foreshadowing of His future. Through the icon, Mary is represented as the ‘Hodighitria’, the one who guides us to the Redeemer. She also is our Help, who intercedes on our behalf with her Son. The star painted on her veil, highlights her role in the plan of salvation as both the Mother of God and our Mother.

This icon is my favourite holy image, as it equally represents suffering and consolation. Mary’s eyes are centred perfectly, allowing the impression that she is focused on whoever is looking directly at the picture.

In my own personal life, the Icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help has randomly appeared at times when prayers were needed and, consequently, my prayers to her have never been left unanswered.

According to popular tradition,

a merchant acquired the icon from the island of Crete and had it shipped to Rome towards the end of the 15th century. During the voyage, a terrible storm arose, threatening the lives of all on ship. The passengers and crew prayed to our Blessed Mother, and were saved.

Once in Rome, the merchant, dying, ordered that the image should be displayed for public veneration. His friend, who retained the image, received further instructions: In a dream to his young daughter, the Blessed Mother appeared and expressed the desire for the image to be venerated in a Church between the Basilicas of St Mary Major and St John Lateran in Rome.

The image, consequently, was housed at the Church of St Matthew. Pilgrims flocked to the church for the next 300 years, and great graces were bestowed upon the faithful.

After Napoleon’s troops destroyed the Church of St Matthew in 1812, the image was transferred to the Church of St Mary in Posterula, and remained

there for nearly 40 years. There, the image was neglected and forgotten.

By Divine Providence, the forgotten image was rediscovered. In 1866, Pope Pius IX ordered that it be displayed and venerated in the newly built Church of St Alphonsus. As a boy, he had prayed before the image in the Church of St Matthew and had found great peace through it.

In 1867, when the image was being carried in a solemn procession through the streets, a young child was cured, the first of many recorded miracles attributed to Our Lady of Perpetual Help.

To this day, the Church of St Alphonsus displays the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help and welcomes pilgrims for prayer.

Such pictures are also found today in many Orthodox churches, such as the Cathedral of Rethymnon on the island of Crete. The Passion Madonna has been widely recognised throughout the world, for its beautiful details and divine capabilities.



The Internet and Christianity *by Jodie*

THE internet has become a massive part of our day-to-day lives, and can even tie in with our religion and how it is spread and perceived by others everywhere.

Pope Francis recently sent a video message to participants in a conference in Mexico, urging “digital evangelizers” to reach out to people in digital spaces who have not yet encountered Christ.

The internet is always a great platform to learn about new and different things, so it can be seen as a good thing when we see Christians seeking to evangelise online.

The international conference took place in early August in Monterrey, Mexico, and brought

together ‘digital evangelizers’ to encourage them to be active members of the Church in the digital space.

When being openly Christian online you can definitely find a big sense of community as seen in this situation. The Pope said to the young people, as part of the ‘Hechos 29’, or ‘Acts 29’ event, “May this meeting help you to feel you are a community, as a part of the missionary life of the Church, which has never been afraid to go towards new horizons and frontiers”.

As Christians, at the end of the day we can all come together with our religion and faith in Christ, so imagine if there were even more

people being able to become a part of this togetherness.

Pope Francis stated: “We must find new ways to proclaim the heart of the Gospel to those who have not yet encountered Christ”.

Surprisingly, there are people out there who have never heard of Christianity or never thought of giving it a go. However, with these ‘digital evangelizers’, this could be the new and most efficient way to introduce the Gospel to those who haven’t been introduced.

Sometimes posting online can be scary and can have a negative impact on people, but the Pope encourages young Christians not to feel this fear. He further goes on to express his hope that

digital missionaries might make the internet and social media places that are “full of humanity”, as they act as Good Samaritans toward others.

I’ll finish with the Pope’s words: “Go and take the hope of Jesus, especially to those who are most distant, giving them reasons for the hope that is in them”.

The hope of Jesus has helped numerous people, yet there are still people out there who could really do with this hope but just haven’t encountered it yet. So, with these ‘digital evangelizers’, who knows what could change and improve.



Great talks and prayer in Drumragh Parish to celebrate Family

THE 10th World Meeting of Families 2022 was held in Rome at the end of June and, to mark the occasion, Drumragh Pastoral Council held a Prayer Festival for the Family in Sacred Heart Church, Omagh, at the same time.

Commenting on the Omagh festival, Dymphna Kelly, of the Parish Pastoral Council, told ‘The Net’: “In 2018, there was great excitement around Pope Francis’ visit to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families. That year, we held a week-long Lenten Family Mission in preparation for the event, and had guest contributors at each of the Masses to mark the various aspects of family life.

“As a Parish Pastoral Council, we thought it important that the World Meeting of Families this year should also be marked. We organised a Prayer Festival for the Family, during which we had speakers offering reflections at our evening Masses over a four-day period, which also incorporated the Feast of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus. We prayed for all families as they face life’s challenges and celebrated family life in all its forms.”

On the Feast of the Sacred Heart, the speakers for the evening were Julie Laird, a young parishioner, and Paddy McMahon, a grandfather.

Noting that all gathered had experienced the value of family life in some way, Julie said: “We can rely on each other for support, love and continued nurturing into the people we are today. Through my childhood years and now the start of adulthood, I can without doubt say that I have matured not only mentally but also spiritually.”

Referring to Pope Francis stating in his ‘Joy of Love’ Encyclical that “through love the vocation of the family is unique and irreplaceable”, Julie remarked: “My dad and mum are my biggest role models, as they are the kindest and most genuine people I know. They have guided me on a great path and taught me how I

should show kindness, love and patience to others in my life.”

Saying that she had experienced some challenges due to the pandemic, Julie recalled: “I struggled to engage with my friends and found it difficult going back to school to my A’Level exams. Stress was prevalent amongst all young people over the past two years.

“Despite this, I enjoyed family life as I was able to spend valuable time with my family, we got to know each other better and we have become a closer family unit. I was able to manage my exam stress through going out on daily walks with my parents. We visited the Church to pray and light candles. I also played the piano and cello as this put my mind at ease.”

Julie went on to quote a comment by Pope Francis on World Youth Day 2016: “Following Jesus demands courage and readiness to trade in the sofa for a pair of walking shoes and to set out on new, uncharted paths.”

“This passage resonates with me,” she explained, “as I will hopefully be moving on to further education with the hope of becoming a teacher of Religion. I am aware that I will be presented with challenges and new experiences, but I know my faith will guide me”.

Paddy McMahon, father of six and grandfather of 10, shared his experience of family life with his wife, Cath, referring to Pope Francis’ message to grandparents and the elderly, entitled, ‘I Am With You Always’.

He noted: “The Pope calls for young people to be present in the lives of older people, but equally too grandparents and elders have a mission to encourage young people on their faith journey. He says that the vocation of grandparents is to preserve our roots, to pass on the faith to the young and to care for the little ones”.

Paddy went on to say that the Pope “acknowledges difficulties the elderly can face when growing

older and made reference to the devastating impact of the pandemic on the elderly, but nevertheless continued to say ‘you are needed in order to help build, in fraternity and social friendship the world of tomorrow; the world in which we, together with our children and grandchildren, will live once the storm has subsided’.”

Pillars

Noting that the Pope identified “three pillars to build this new world; dreams, memory and prayer”, Paddy remarked: “I would say I owe so much to the prayers of my mother for the events that have happened in our family life, more than our efforts to do so ourselves”.

Reflecting, as a grandparent, on his views about the importance of faith in family life and how to encourage and give witness, “living in a world and being part of a church that is challenged by so much in the present time”, he said: “For Cath and I, as grandparents, the family of faith is a sanctuary from all the worries and woes of this world. I come back to Pope Francis’s message about grandparents and the importance of memories. Cath and I have shared with our family memories of our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents, and the love and care we experienced ourselves, growing up in faith families through their example.

“So we are keeping alive a tradition that our parents, grandparents and great-grandparents handed down from their ancestors. There is a connectedness going back to the 1800s, nearly two hundred years ago. These are the richest of memories which families carry through the generations and the common denominator running through these generations was that devotion to their faith, to belief in God and to the Gospel message.”

“There aren’t many references to grandparents in the scriptures,” he remarked, “but the heart of



Fr Eugene Hasson, PP Drumragh (right) and Fr Peter O’Kane, curate, with some of the parishioners who took part in their parish celebration of the Family.

the family surely is love which embraces God’s simple gospel message, love of God, love of neighbour, charity, compassion, mercy, giving thanks and forgiveness, and we all know how difficult it is to tick all these boxes, as it were”.

He continued: “To give love I suppose you have to receive love and there is no limit to how much love can be given. There is no limit to God’s love. Family is the sanctuary of love. It is where love is given and received freely. At the hub of this unit are the parents, grandparents and great-grandparents”.

Considering “the wonderful witness grandparents all over the world show to their families through their support”, Paddy highlighted the endless opportunities in all their interactions “to encourage respect for all, to be kind, to do good, to share, to have empathy for others, to give thanks, to say sorry, to know the boundaries between right and wrong, to witness God’s presence in our lives”.

He went on to say: “The importance of treasuring and passing on this faith to the young through the role modelling of grandparents and great grandparents is that it gives families a compass, a way to live that thinks of others, not self. It gives coherence and purpose to life, an acceptance of what God’s plan is for all of us, even suffering, and no family escapes suffering

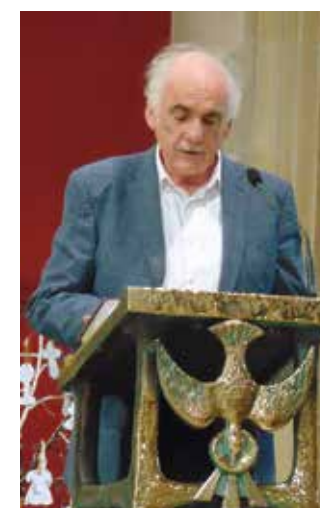
of one kind or another. And of course, the faith family live out the practice of their tools of faith, participating in the sacraments, going to Mass, the Eucharist, confession and most importantly of all, putting their faith into action by their deeds.

“This is the example I believe grandparents set and as a grandparent I acknowledge the brilliant example of sacrifice and charity shown by parents, local faith schools and voluntary community and parish organisations, helping young people negotiate their pathway through childhood and adolescence. And if the family is a sanctuary for its members, this Sacred Heart Church is a sanctuary for all people. I think of it as a great equaliser because whoever steps over the threshold

of this magnificent church, status, riches, age does not matter. You are at home with the family from Nazareth”.

Paddy finished by sharing that his dream as a grandparent “is the hope that our children’s vision would be that they have the courage to stand up, as Christ did, against injustices carried out by the greedy, the selfish, the powerful against those who are poor and marginalised.

“So, grandparents and fellow pilgrims of our age, it is true as Pope Francis says. We have a powerful role to play. How? By our example of Christian living and by our prayers. As Padre Pio says, the rosary is the weapon. There is much encouragement in Padre Pio’s advice - Pray, Hope and Don’t Worry”.



Paddy McMahon.



Julie Laird.

Termonbacca lady retreatants discover captivating women God created them to be



Sinead Doyle

OVER an August weekend a group of 24 ladies journeyed together into the deep mysteries of our feminine souls. This experience was hosted in the setting of beauty and tranquillity of Termonbacca Carmelite Retreat Centre and was designed to help women recapture their heart. This experience was based on the book 'Captivating', by John and Stasi Eldredge. Through teaching sessions, prayer time, and guided periods of reflection, we discovered together that the "more" that women have been longing for in life is available!

Kicking the weekend off, Amanda Kelly Young spoke about the heart of a woman and her three core desires placed there by God: a desire for romance, a

desire to play an irreplaceable role in a grand adventure, and a desire to unveil her own unique beauty. She looked at the fall of Adam and Eve and how that has affected the heart of women ever since. Fr Michael McGoldrick then celebrated Mass. The first evening finished with a time of Adoration and guided meditation led by Aoife O'Neill.

On the Saturday, the ladies were joined by Sinead Doyle, who spoke to them about the ways in which women can be wounded and the enemy's special hatred for woman and her ability to bring life.

Sinead is currently a postulant with the Apostles of the Sacred Heart and was home on summer break, so it was a great privilege to be able to have her join us in leading this retreat. The group enjoyed deep discussions and sharing on the themes so far, and the remainder of the morning saw the ladies all participate in a creative session, where each designed her own candle holder, some wrote poetry and did paintings.

The weather was absolutely glorious, so the group took advantage of the breath-taking, panoramic views of the city by spending some time outdoors.

Following lunch, Fr Patrick Lagan came to give a talk on healing the wound. He reflected on the parable of 'The Prodigal



Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd

Son' and how we are all on a journey back to the Father which began at our Baptism. He explained how, when we really come to know ourselves, we come away from our woundedness and we come to know that God is so intimate, and that His plan for the world involved each and every one of us and that it was very good.

Fr Patrick told the women how each are just like Peter and have the desire to come to God despite our weaknesses, that we all have a desire for healing and that this healing is always a choice, and that just because things were a particular way yesterday, it doesn't have to be that way tomorrow.

He added that the bad news

was that there is nothing we can do to change the fact that we are made for happiness, and that there is always going to be tension between the world and a disciple. The world will always present us with many complexities, however, quoting Marie Curie, he said: "Nothing is to be feared, it is only to be understood."

Tears

Fr Patrick told the ladies that just like many Bible stories, God comes and asks: "What do you want?" He challenged us to tell God what we want, what the problem is, and to take the courage needed to be vulnerable with the Lord and allow our tears to become the pillow where the Lord rests.

After his talk, Fr Patrick did a question and answer session with the ladies. A big theme coming from this was the need people felt for Catholic accompaniment. Some ladies shared how they felt priests had so much on their shoulders and even confession slots were not long enough for them to properly address their needs and issues. Fr Patrick left the ladies with the reminder: "You are your Father's princess".

After a tea break, Amanda led another guided meditation with the Blessed Sacrament. The ladies had an opportunity for journalling with the Lord, through which they could pour

out their hearts to Him, telling Him what it was they needed healing and His help with.

The group shared a beautiful dinner together, which was followed by a Eucharistic Healing Service led by Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd. He gave space for meditating on how God's love is unconditional, unchanging and unending, and various scripture references where the women could insert their own name, eg, "Do not be afraid, for I have redeemed you, I have called you by your name. You are mine".

Finally, inviting the ladies, just like the women with the haemorrhage, to reach out and touch Jesus' cloak Fr Michael gave individual blessings with the Blessed Sacrament. Confessions were then available for all, followed by Mass celebrated by Fr Francesco cfr.

The evening finished off with a time of fellowship and friendship. The ladies gathered at a fire pit, with their personally designed candleholders and joined in a candle lit Rosary. Following this, they made s'mores and enjoyed a singsong in the beautiful summer night atmosphere.

Sunday morning had a beautiful start, with Sinead leading a guided meditation on God, the romancer of our soul. As women, we are all made to be romanced and God is the one who can do this perfectly.



Fr Patrick Lagan

Following this, Aoife O'Neill gave the final talk of the weekend, drawing out the ways women unveil beauty and the need for female support and friendship. Fr McGoldrick finished the weekend off by celebrating Mass.

The entire weekend had an atmosphere of beauty, and many friendships were formed and strengthened among the women who came along. This experience helped them to allow the Lord to draw them near to His heart, revealing the desires and dreams He has placed in them, healing every wound, and letting every woman see herself as the captivating woman He created her to be.



Errigal pupils' First Communion donations to feed hungry children for a year

CHILDREN in the Errigal Parish have managed to feed 22 children in the world's poorest countries for a year by donating some of their First Holy Communion money to charity.

Speaking to the P4 children of St Patrick's & St Joseph's PS, parish priest, Fr Brendan Crowley suggested that they consider giving a donation to charity from the gifts of money they would

receive from family and friends to celebrate making their First Holy Communion.

The school staff was overwhelmed with the generosity of the pupils, when they donated £432 in total.

Cariosa McNicholl presented a cheque for £200 to Shauna from Children in Crossfire, and £232 was donated to Mary's Meals.



Congregation at Clonmany thanksgiving Mass for parish priest's Golden Jubilee hear...

Word and Sacrament at core of Fr Brian Brady's ministry for 50 years

ST Mary's Church in the parish of Clonmany was filled with many of those who have been blessed down the years through the ministry of Fr Brian Brady, when the Derry-born priest celebrated the 50th anniversary of his ordination on Saturday, August 13, which was his mother's anniversary.

Bishop Donal presided at the Golden Jubilee Mass, which was also attended by a number of Fr Brian's fellow priests, members of his family and close friends, including Colm O'Doherty, who had been ordained along with him in St Columba's Church, Long Tower on June 18, 1972.

Originally from the Waterside area, Colm served as a priest in the Diocese for 20 years and now lives in Ballina, Co Tipperary. Happy to make the journey to Donegal for Fr Brian's 50th anniversary celebration, he reflected on his friend's priesthood at the end of the ceremony.

Addressing those gathered, Colm remarked: "In the Mass

this evening, we celebrated God's presence in the Word and Sacrament. These two words, I think, have been at the core of Brian's ministry for 50 years – Word and Sacrament. God's Word: the Scriptures...the stories of God's love for us and the story of our struggle down through the ages to receive that love.

"It is impossible to do justice to Brian's curiosity and appetite for the Scriptures going back over 50 years. It is his passion, whether in his own personal prayer or in prayer with groups, to listen and reflect on God's Word. It was never an intellectual exercise nor was it a casual interest. God's Word has been knitted into the very fibre of his life. His commitment is to meet God in the Scriptures. Brian took on God's Word. The Word has become flesh and lives amongst us."

Going on to speak about the word 'Sacrament' in relation to Fr Brian, Colm said: "Those here of a certain age may remember the answer to 'What is a Sacrament?'



A visible sign of invisible grace. In this sense, the word 'Sacrament' can extend beyond the official seven sacraments. We can be sacraments enabling God's presence to be more visible and available through the way we choose to live; enabling God's presence to be more and more on earth. In his ministry, Brian has been Sacrament – a visible sign of invisible grace".

He went on to say that Fr Brian could have chosen other forms of ministry, such as the intellectual life, which he was well able for, but he chose pastoral ministry, the blessing of which has been felt in many homes and parishes in the Derry Diocese.

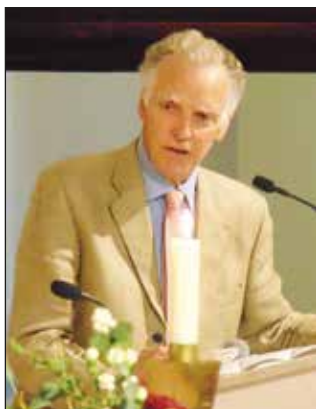
"We give thanks to God for Brian's priesthood and ministry, and for those whose lives he touched and graced throughout his life," said Colm, adding: "We give thanks to God for all those who helped Brian enrich his ministry, including his parents, Barney and Maggie, and sisters, Mary and Kathleen."

Bringing the ceremony to a close, Fr Brian thanked all the priests of the Diocese for their brotherhood, saying that he had found them to be great to work with over the years. Saying

that he has greatly enjoyed his priesthood, Fr Brian ended by sending the congregation out with a blessing of St Columba: "Lord, be a bright light before me, a guiding star above me, a smooth path below me, a kindly shepherd behind me today, tonight, and forever".

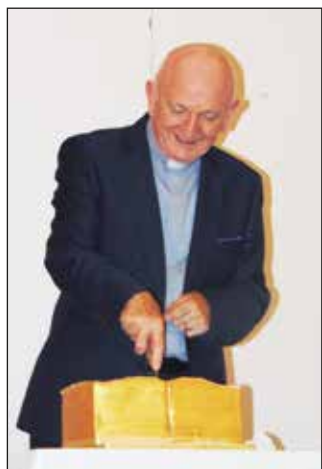
All were invited to refreshments and entertainment in the hall afterwards, where Fr Brian was presented with a gift from his parishioners, and Fr Peter Devlin, PP Malin, paid tribute to him on behalf of the clergy, saying: "We all have a deep respect for Brian and for what he contributes to the Diocese. He likes to read and think and keep up with the Church worldwide, and he has always brought it back to the Diocese and to whatever parish he was in at the time".

Speaking to 'The Net' afterwards, Bishop Donal remarked that jubilees provide an opportunity to acknowledge the work of priests, adding: "Fr Brian Brady has given 50 years of service across the Diocese, and is now working hard to prepare his current parish for much more lay involvement in the mission and prayer life of the parish."



Celebrating 50 years of priesthood, Fr Brian Brady reflects on his ministry and his desire to help parishes prepare for the future, remarking...

Real transformation must rise from grass roots, for it can only happen one heart at a time



REFLECTING on 50 years of priesthood, Fr Brian Brady told 'The Net' that each parish he has served in has been a blessing to him.

"People have been very welcoming and seem to have a place for priests in their lives," he remarked, "I also felt that what I was doing was somehow helping Christ's Kingdom a bit".

Fr Brian's experience is reflective of his father's relationship with priests, as he recalled: "My father had an extremely respectful appreciation of priests. He would have been a very good parish worker and found it a privilege to work alongside the priests of the parish".

Born and bred in the Brandywell area of Derry, Fr Brian was the only son and youngest of three children born to Barney and Maggie Brady.

He remarked: "My family were very religious. There was prayer in our home and Church practice was important. We read missionary magazines that were brought home and these would have given us a feeling of the Church in other lands, and of being part of something big and noble. Missionaries seemed to be doing good work wherever they went".

This appreciation and admiration for the work of missionaries sowed a seed for a religious vocation to grow from, and Fr Brian recalls thinking of the Missions as a young boy.

"The idea of priesthood was with me for as far back as I can remember, and it has never left me," he said, adding: "When I went to St Columb's, I was the only one in the class in first year to choose Greek. I thought it was needed for priesthood. The attraction of the Missions was strong because of the books I had been reading and so that is where I was intending to go, but the priests in the College and my mother persuaded me otherwise".

Some years later, as a priest ordained for the Derry Diocese, Fr Brian finally got a taste of missionary life when he visited his sister, Mary, who spent three years on the Missions in Ecuador in the 70s. It turned out to be

his one and only experience of Mission work.

He recalled: "My sister took me out to the mountains and I stayed one night in a derelict parochial house. Mary would have talked about rats running across their beds at night, and so I hardly slept a wink worrying about rats coming up the toilet and snakes coming in the window. I was so glad that I hadn't taken the Missions route as I had always wondered if I should have gone, but that certainly put paid to that illusion".

After enjoying life as a seminarian in Maynooth, Fr Brian was ordained by Dr Neil Farren on June 18, 1972, in his home parish church of St Columba, in the Long Tower. His memories of the occasion include being addressed as 'Father' by people three times his age and many queuing for hours to receive his blessing.

Initially assigned to the Waterside, where he ministered for two years, Fr Brian went on to spend seven years in Buncrana and another seven in Maghera, before moving to Carndonagh for four years. He then spent six years as administrator in the Creggan, before being appointed as parish priest of Malin, where he ministered for 10 years. This was followed by seven years as parish priest in Errigal, and he is now seven years in Clonmany.

Challenges

"The times were not that easy regarding the Troubles and sex abuse scandals and the diminishing relevance of the Church in so many people's lives. All of these were challenges and it was difficult to know how best to work with this", he remarked.

He went on to share that he had hoped, as a priest, to be someone who could relate to people in a friendly, warm, welcoming way, to be open to listening and trying to respect that every person has a sacred story, no matter how hard life has been on them, and that he had a precious human being before him whom he needed to cherish, respect and understand.

"That is the type of priest that I hoped to be", said Fr Brian, adding: "It's up to the people to decide whether I have been".

Commenting on the need of care for priests too, he noted: "Present day living is wearing on priests because of the lack of priestly numbers and the more secular attitude of a lot of the people. Being a priest is even more challenging than ever, so it is important that we, priests, treat seriously our need for some kind of help along the way. I do feel there is a need for mentoring or guidance to face into the new challenges that are arising on the

pastoral horizon".

Saddened that so few are undertaking what he considered to be a wonderful vocation in life, Fr Brian encouraged those considering priesthood to go for it: "I have had very good years and I would love that for others. It is challenging, demanding and difficult but, ultimately, you are at the heart of humanisation – enabling people to become more wholesome human beings, to grow more into the wonder of a human being; the idea that God had in mind for us when we came into this world".

At 74 years old now, Fr Brian will be retirement age next year and he has been looking at ways of helping both of the parishes under his care prepare for future lay leadership. Since January, he has been leading the Pastoral Councils of Clonmany and Culdaff in a course that aims to inform regarding the various aspects of parish life and relations, faith formation, and the skills required, and look at how to enable the parishes to accept and work with this new leadership group.

The programme will continue up to June 2023, when Fr Brian hopes to retire and do this kind of work in the Diocese, such is his love for the Church and education. His inspiration for the course came from his interest in Brazilian educator and philosopher, Paulo Freire, who was a leading advocate of critical pedagogy, which is a teaching philosophy that invites educators to encourage students to critique structures of power and oppression. He believed that education was a means to building a 'critical consciousness' that would enable people to create change in their lives.

Liberate

Sharing some of Freire's insights into education, Fr Brian noted: "No education is ever neutral – it either helps to maintain the values of the power people, producing conformity to what is the prevailing culture or it is designed to liberate people, enabling them to become critical, creative, free, active and responsible members of society.

"People will act on issues on which they have strong feelings. There is a close connection between emotion and motivation to act, for example, mica. The secret is to identify issues which generate excitement, hope, fear, anxiety or anger.

"All participants are recognised as thinking, creative people with a capacity for action. Those taking part are recognised as the greatest educational resource available; they are seen to have many years of practical experience and

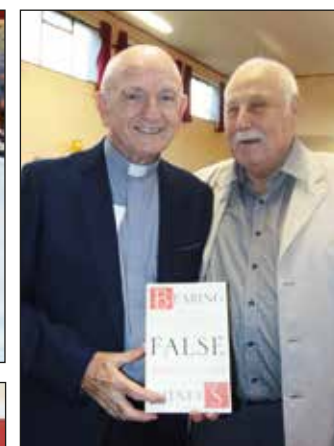
wisdom, and education is about providing the forum which will allow this experience to emerge and be shared."

He continued: "There are two main approaches of education, both necessary: (a) The Banking Approach, in this the 'teacher' is recognised as the one who possesses all the essential information and the 'pupils' are seen as empty vessels needing to be filled with knowledge. (b) The Generative Approach, where the 'animator' provides a framework for thinking, creative, active participants to discuss a common issue and allow the insights that emerge to broaden their vision and galvanise into action. This form of education affirms people as beings who are capable of transcending themselves, who move forward and look ahead, and only look back to understand more clearly who and what they are, so that they can more wisely build the future. To discover the truth, everyone needs to be both a teacher and a learner, and education must be a mutual learning process.

"The 'Banking model' of education is needed to pass on information from one person/group to another. We all need knowledge to understand how things work and provide solutions to problems. The 'experts', those who have concentrated on particular disciplines – health, religion, politics, social services – are required to give others instruction and scholarship in how their particular speciality might impinge upon the participants, helping them to be equipped to better deal with their own situation.

"The 'Generative model' brings about 'transformation' which the 'Banking model' can never effect. It leads people along the pathway to becoming more fully human, giving them a new freedom to have a say in their future, a confidence that each has a contribution to make in building a new church and the courage to become more and more capable of and committed to the service of the community and the transformation of society.

"In this setting, education is not an academic exercise, but a dynamic process that can only be carried out with each other, not for anyone else. Real transformation must rise from the grass roots, for it can only happen one heart at a time."



Celebrating 25 “wonderful” years of priesthood, Fr Paul Farren feels... Blessed to have met so many people who have revealed the face of God to me

ST Eugene’s Cathedral was almost full on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee Mass for Fr Paul Farren, parish administrator, with many of his friends and acquaintances joining his family and local parishioners to give thanks to God for his 25 years of priesthood.

Several priests from the Diocese joined Fr Paul in celebrating the Mass, and amongst the congregation was his good friend, Archdeacon Robert Miller, Church of Ireland.

The Clonmany native, son of Pat and the late Margaret Farren, was ordained in 1997 in St Eugene’s by the late Bishop Seamus Hegarty on July 6. Noting that this was the Feast of St Maria Goretti, and that he had been ordained a deacon in 1995 on May 13, the Feast of Our Lady of Fatima, Fr Paul told those gathered that it had taken him “a long while” to realise the relevance of these two Feast Days to the priesthood.

St Maria Goretti is known for her purity and Our Lady is the Queen of Peace, and Fr Paul highlighted how peace and purity were at the heart of priesthood and Christian life.

“Purity”, he said, “leads to peace”.

Saying that the gift of priesthood had enabled him to see God in many ways, he added: “I have been blessed in my life so far to meet so many people who have revealed the face of God to me”.

He continued: “To see God, we need to be pure in heart. To be pure in heart is to be completely open to God in every part of our lives. If I have not done that over the last 25 years, I struggled to see God, and it wasn’t the fault of priesthood but my fault”.

Commenting on worries about the management of the Church, Fr Paul said: “We don’t have any right to declare the size of the church in the future. It is not for us to curtail the Holy Spirit. We

have to truly believe that Jesus will save the whole world”.

“When I was sent out from this altar 25 years ago,” he added, “it was to proclaim the Gospel not to manage the Church. When we focus on the Gospel we are proclaiming God’s action. I was sent out, and we are all being sent out as Church, to proclaim that God is close at hand. He is coming to save us. The Good News that we are all called to proclaim is that we can have the right to feed from the tree of life and that we can come through the gates of the City of God”.

Commenting on the importance of quiet time in contemplation with God to discover our true call, Fr Paul said: “It is life-giving when we know that we are doing what God wants us to do.

There is nothing that we can’t do when we know it is God’s Will.

“My prayer is that our hearts will be pure so that we will recognise God more and more, and that we will always be grateful to God for the gift of priesthood.

“Priesthood is the most wonderful gift that anyone could be given and I thank God that He gave it to me”.

In the absence of Bishop Donal, Fr Paul McCafferty VG congratulated Fr Paul, on his behalf and on behalf of all the priests of the Diocese, on the Silver Jubilee of his priesthood and presented him with a Papal blessing for his 25 years of priesthood.

Dedicated

He went on to say: “We give thanks for the action of God in the life of Fr Paul over 25 years of ministry – a ministry that has been dedicated and varied: firstly, his parish ministry, which is dedicative, imaginative and collaborative; and he is also working in the area of catechesis and faith formation, especially in our schools.



“In a healthy priesthood, behind all this doing, there must be a living relationship with Jesus Christ, and we are marking that living relationship in the life of Fr Paul”.

Expressing appreciation to all for their presence, including his sister, Marie and her family, Fr Paul had a special word of appreciation for his father: “He has always guided me. He is steadfast and determined and he has done marvellous work, and I am very grateful to God for him”.

“It is still very hard to believe that 25 years have passed,” he added, “but they were wonderful and I loved them. I thank those in all the different schools in the parish, and the Catechetical Centre, and the people of the Parish, who have listened and put up with me.

“I thank you for the support you are to me and my brother priests, and together we are going into the future with confidence”.

All were invited to refreshments afterwards in St Mary’s College, and the following morning, Fr Paul’s Silver Jubilee celebrations continued with him celebrating Mass in St Mary’s Church, Clonmany.

The parish priest of Clonmany, Fr Brian Brady spoke to ‘The Net’ about how Fr Paul’s 25 years of ministry had been “characterised by a deep commitment to priesthood and selfless service of the people of God”.

Describing Fr Paul as a “man of immense talent”, who has “imaginatively and generously worked tirelessly sharing the

‘good news of Jesus’ with all with whom he comes in contact”, Fr Brian went on to say: “His literary style and communicative expertise are evident in his relevant and memorable homilies. He has authored a number of books that have attracted international acclaim and he is eagerly sought as a speaker at important conferences.

“His most significant contribution has been in the area of catechetics, enlarging and resourcing the diocesan outreach to young people, especially through the John Paul II Award programme. This challenges the young to deepen their faith, realise their responsibility to the community, and gives them a sense of belonging to church at a time when it would be easy for them to drift away. The programme has been adopted by dioceses throughout the country and elsewhere, and has provided a valuable connection with our young who are the future of our church. We wish Fr. Paul many more years of faithful and visionary ministry among us”.

Expressing his congratulations, Bishop Donal told ‘The Net’: “Fr Paul Farren has been very energetic in developing both the life and mission of the Cathedral and the services offered by the Diocesan Catechetical Centre, as well as in Youth Ministry”.

He added: “I thank all the priests for their dedication and love of Christ. This is a time to pray for people to step forward and offer their lives to Christ for the mission of the Church”.





Diocesan 'Come and See' vocations weekend very worthwhile

THE Derry Diocesan Vocations Council hosted its first ever weekend-long 'Come and See' retreat in the Drumalis Conference Centre, in Larne, from August 26-28, for seminarians and those currently contemplating a vocation to the priesthood. Eight aspiring seminarians attended, as well as our two diocesan deacons and one of our two other existing seminarians.

Bishop Donal McKeown joined the group on the Saturday, and had a chance to speak with everyone, as well as celebrating Mass and preaching. Over the course of the weekend, two of the priest members of the DVC attended, along with the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan.

The weekend was led by Fr Francis Mitchell, secretary to the Archbishop of Tuam, whose first talk concentrated on the call of Isaiah and the call of the disciples. He pointed out the similarity between those invitations to serve the Lord - the initial call comes from God; the person called usually resists, citing their unworthiness or sinfulness; but God persists in calling those He wishes to serve Him. Most priests, and those already in formation, would probably agree that their experience of feeling called by the Lord is exactly the same.

On the Saturday morning, Fr Francis' talk concentrated on

"the holiness of the priest", which comes from his fidelity to the Prayer of the Church (the Divine Office) with its call to prayer five times a day. Other helps to priestly holiness are: daily Mass; frequent Confession; devotion to Our Lady, and an annual retreat.

On Saturday afternoon, the participants made an Emmaus Walk. Having listened to the story of the journey to Emmaus from St Luke's gospel, chapter 24, verses 13-35, they were encouraged to go for a walk in pairs, just like the two disciples in the story, who were walking away from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus on the first Easter Sunday. They were talking about Jesus and all that had happened in the previous few days when Jesus met them, although they failed to recognise Him. Later they sat together to share a meal, and it was only when Jesus had taken bread, blessed and broken it, that they recognised Him, but He had disappeared from their sight. They hurried back to Jerusalem to share the Good News with the other disciples. Those taking part in the 'Come and See' weekend were invited to share their own personal vocation story, knowing that the Lord Jesus would be walking with them.

Later on Saturday, Fr Francis gave another talk, this time on Our Blessed Lady. Being a priest of the Archdiocese of Tuam, he spoke at

some length about Our Lady of Knock. He shared an interesting anecdote about Pope Francis' visit to Knock when he was in Ireland for the World Meeting of Families in 2018 and how, when the Holy Father saw a picture of the Mother of God in the sacristy of the Apparition Chapel, he pointed at Our Lady and said to Archbishop Michael Neary, "We need Her". Fr Mitchell reminded us all of the necessity of Marian devotion, particularly the Rosary, in the life of a seminarian or a priest.

After tea, Evening Prayer and the Rosary, the group gathered to watch 'Father Stu', a film on the life of Fr Stuart Long, a boxer-turned-Catholic priest who suffered from an incurable progressive muscle disorder, which led to his death at the age of 50, in 2014.

On Sunday morning, Fr Francis gave his last talk, linking the life of seminarians and priests to the Synodal Pathway, which the Church has undertaken as we prepare for the Synod which is due to take place in Rome in October 2023. By the time of the retreat weekend, the people of Ireland had met in their parish and diocesan groups, and had submitted their thoughts on the future direction of the Church to the national Bishops' Conference, which then synthesised all the information submitted to them in a document which has been forwarded to



Standing, are some of the participants in the 'Come and See' weekend in Drumalis Retreat and Conference Centre, Larne, including Fr Patrick Lagan, and Deacons Michael McCaul and Shaun Doherty. Seated, right to left, are Fr Francis Mitchell, Bishop Donal McKeown, and Fr Pat O'Hagan, Diocesan Vocations Director.

Rome and will play its part in informing the deliberations of the Synod next year.

During Mass, Fr Mitchell preached on the gospel story of the wedding guest being invited to 'move higher', having shown great humility in taking the lowest place. He invited seminarians, and the prospective seminarians in particular, not to be afraid when the Lord calls them to 'move higher', to come forward and present themselves for priestly formation.

Everyone present in Larne for the weekend was in agreement that it was a very worthwhile exercise. The time they spent together was punctuated with the Prayer of the

Church (Morning, Evening and Night), which is a vital element of seminary formation and also in the life of deacons and priests. There was plenty of time for private prayer and reflection, as well as occasions when the group gathered together to chat and socialise. There was a general agreement also that Fr Francis Mitchell's talks and presentations were delivered with gentleness, while being stimulating, inspiring and challenging, and that Drumalis was an ideal location for such a gathering. It was spacious and comfortable; the food was very good, and the grounds were very pleasant for walks. The participants were invited to

offer feedback to the Diocesan Vocations Council, which will inform any decisions they may make about a similar event in the future.

While the Diocesan Year of Prayer for Vocations continues, you are asked, please, to pray for an increase in vocations to the priesthood, as well as to religious life and consecrated life. The Vocations Council will host a Holy Hour for Vocations on the second Friday of each month, broadcast from the different deaneries and parishes of the diocese of Derry. Information about this will be published in diocesan and parish websites.

'A Man for all Seasons' a welcome tribute to Derry's beloved Bishop Edward Daly



THE exhibition held in the Cathedral Hall, to commemorate and celebrate the life, influence, work and legacy of the late Bishop Edward Daly, was warmly welcomed and viewed by many people from the city of Derry and beyond.

Bishop Daly's sister, Anne and other family members were invited to the launch of the week-long exhibition and were greatly moved by the various displays, which had been so lovingly put together by Grainne McCafferty, former principal of St Cecilia's College.

Sponsored by Derry City & Strabane District Council, the idea for the exhibition was initiated by Emmet Thompson, the pastoral development coordinator for the Templemore Parish, who then asked Grainne to take the lead in the project.

Feeling privileged to have been asked, Grainne was amazed at the sheer diversity of Bishop Daly's ministry, leading to the title of the exhibition, 'A Man for all Seasons', to illustrate the wide and varied contribution he had made to peace and reconciliation in Ireland, to the Church, to Derry and its Diocese, to the search for justice and to healing the differences that divided Northern Ireland.

Speaking at the launch, Grainne explained that the exhibition aimed "to attempt to capture the essence and spirit of Bishop Edward Daly, to celebrate and mark the many facets of his life and the multiplicity of ways he left his mark and influence,

centring on Derry but reaching out in ever widening ripples to include Ireland as a whole, Britain and the USA."

She added: "Centrally driven as he was by his faith in the message of Christ, he also allowed room for many other diverse and wide-ranging facets of his life".

Giving a summary of these other aspects of his life and legacy, Grainne highlighted Bishop Daly as a man who: was "a theatrical impresario", bringing international stars to the Derry of the 50s and early 60s; founded two theatre companies, one in Castlederg and one in Derry, the 71 Players; founded the Colmcille Ladies' Choir, which has performed everywhere, from the Vatican to Capitol Hill; was a theatre producer, occasionally stepping in as actor when one of the actors fell ill; led the Diocese in a time of major changes in the Church itself; and actively promoted, pursued, led, developed and lived out the ideal of a shared space and community by his visible and warm relationships with other churches and, in particular, in his lifelong friendship with the Church of Ireland Bishop James Mehaffey.

She added: "He challenged and spoke out about the social injustice he saw around him; was fearless and courageously outspoken in his condemnation of violence from whatever source it emanated; was involved in championing and supporting the victims of violence and injustice from Bloody Sunday to the Birmingham Six prisoners; was a lifelong supporter of Derry City Football Club and regularly attended many of their football matches; involved himself in community development through the Inner City Trust, raising hopes from ashes, buildings from dereliction, providing work and opportunities for young people when this city was on its knees; visited prisoners, both known and unknown, in Ireland and in the UK; became chaplain to the sick and dying in the Foyle Hospice; wrote two autobiographies and ensured

that the historical records of the Derry Diocese were collated, systematised and digitised to ensure access for future generations of researchers; and led this city and Northern Ireland to hope rather than despair, and lit a candle in the darkness and was a visible, known and trusted presence wherever he went".

Words

Grainne went on to point out that, in seeking to illuminate the essence of Bishop Edward Daly, they had focused on the words of Bishop Daly himself, visible on the exhibition boards, and in the film footage of interviews which were included in an audio visual presentation.

Welcoming the exhibition as a celebration of the significant ministry of Bishop Daly in the Diocese over many decades, Bishop Donal McKeown said: "It is good to remember him, his pastoral work and his peace-making courage. But there is also another important reason that we remember him. Many books have been written about the role played by politicians, paramilitaries, the police, the secret services and the army. But there is little literature on the contribution that parishes and clergy played during the Troubles.

"Priests worked quietly on the ground. They had to deal with bombs and bullets, terrible deaths and shattered families. They were called out to get young men out of custody and to accompany prisoners to family funerals. They were wakened at all hours to deal with bomb scares and hostage situations. And they then went back to the ordinary pastoral work of dealing with births, deaths and marriages".

Remarking that the exhibition was "an attempt to tell some of the story of this remarkable pastor", Bishop Donal continued: "We know from the huge crowds at his wake and funeral that he was much loved and admired, though he had lived for 22 years after his retirement. He was gone from diocesan leadership and worked quietly in the Hospice. But he was most certainly not forgotten by

the people of Derry and beyond.

"Thankfully, he was highly organised and was able to leave a well-ordered archive of his material. That will provide an insight into his own life and times. But I hope that it will also enable scholars to tell the story of how so many priests, religious sisters, parish organisations and parishioners held communities together, faced awful dilemmas and were unsung heroes".

He added: "I know that there were clergy who let their colleagues and parishioners down in terrible ways. That is part of our story and one that Edward Daly found very hard to come to terms with. But the offences of some should not overshadow the role of many. And that honest evaluation is important in a time when a new ideology would jostle for dominance by rubbishing all of the past and promising a banal glorious future based on very little".

Hoping that the exhibition would enable visitors to "give thanks for the contribution that Bishop Edward Daly made to the life and hopes of this country", Bishop Donal said: "When we can give thanks for the past in all its imperfections, we can face the future with confidence.

"His motto was 'Pasce oves meas' - 'Feed my sheep'. He would invite all of us to do our best - as he did - in the different circumstances that we face. 'Feed my sheep' was Christ's instruction for all generations of His followers. His memory challenges us to do that in our place and in our time".

Moved by the love and admiration that the people of Derry had for her brother, Bishop Daly's only surviving sibling, Anne Gibson remarked that he had felt the same for them, recalling that when he came home to visit "he would talk about the Derry people all the time" and loved their great sense of humour.

She added that she was delighted to be accompanied by her little grandchildren, so that they could "read and learn about their great Uncle Edward".



Gathering to mark 50th anniversary of Claudy bombing, bereaved prayed to be able to...

Seek to find comfort in God and with each other



FIFTY years on from the devastation in the village of Claudy, when three ‘no warning’ car bombs exploded taking the lives of nine men, women and children innocently going about their daily lives, the buildings destroyed in the attack have been restored, but the scars from lives shattered still cause pain for the families bereaved and those who survived their injuries.

On Sunday, July 31, the sun shone its warm, comforting rays upon the gathering at an open-air 50th anniversary service in middle of the village, close to a Memorial erected in the year 2000 to those who were killed – Patrick Connolly (15), Kathryn Eakin (8), Arthur Hone (36), Joseph McCloskey (39), Elizabeth McElhinney, James McClelland (65), Rose McLaughlin, David Miller (61), and William Temple (16).

The parish priest of Claudy, Fr David O’Kane joined clergy from across the main local churches in conducting the service, which involved members of the bereaved families in reading Scripture, prayers and reflections, and members of the Altnagelvin Hospital Choir in leading the singing.

Rev David Slater, Church of Ireland, welcomed all to the service, which he said reflected “the Christian faith and values that we all share and that allows

us all to begin by remembering that it was Jesus who said, ‘Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls’ (Matthew 11:28).”

He went on to say: “As human beings, there is always the temptation to politicise the events and happenings that go on around us as we try somehow to make sense of our world and to make sense of what has happened to us.

“But what is beyond politicising is heartfelt pain, suffering and loss, the personal and heartfelt pain, suffering and loss that was inexplicably visited upon the people of Claudy on July 31, 1972, the legacy of which has cast a dark and long shadow over this village for the past 50 years, a day that is as real to those who lost loved ones and to those who were injured and suffered as if it had just happened, a day that the people of Claudy have lived again and again and again every day for the past 50 years.

“It has been a day that broadly the people of Claudy have had to deal with themselves. This is not the ‘forgotten atrocity’ to the people of Claudy, this has for 50 years wearied and burdened the people of this place and it continues to do so.

“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.”

During the service there was a special Act of Remembrance, when the names of those who had died were read out and family members laid wreaths and floral tributes at the Memorial, featuring a bronze sculpture of a kneeling girl, and at the name plaques for each of the deceased on the wall behind it. Two minutes of silence were respectfully held before the music of a lone piper filled the air.

Presbyterian Minister, Rev Hibbert delivered the final blessing and sending out, saying: “At the end of this act of worship and reflection, we remind ourselves that it is the pain and loss of terrible experiences in our lives or in the lives of those for whom we care and whom we seek to support that has brought us together.

“In these moments, we have looked again into the darkness and acknowledged that terrible things have happened. We have reminded each other of the possibility of God’s presence in our suffering, of his grace and love, and of the hope and possibilities of experiencing the joy of life again.

“Let us go from here with a sense of renewal, knowing that in spite of the loss and suffering of the days that have passed, we can begin or continue to live anew, that we can rise above the sorrows of the past and once again experience joy in living.

“Let us intend to bear our losses and our enduring pain through a keen sense of the closeness of God, by raising our hearts, and by finding in each moment, each person we meet, each act of

kindness or moment of beauty, hope for today and the strength to go on”.

Following the ceremony, refreshments were served in the nearby Diamond Centre, where a book entitled, ‘Remembering the innocents of Claudy’, including reflections from members of the bereaved families, was launched.

In addition, a Claudy Schools ‘Past and Future’ Art Project was unveiled, with the title ‘Remembering Our Past – 50 Words for 50 Years – Looking to the Future’. Pupils from St Colmcille’s PS and Cumber Claudy PS were involved in the project, which got them thinking about concepts of being a good neighbour, what type of community they wanted to live in, and what values were important to live by. The 8ft x 4ft structure is on display in the Diamond Centre.





Journeying in hope with the Scriptures

RETURNING to its traditional format for the first time since 2019, the theme of the National Novena to Our Lady of Knock this year was 'A Journey in Hope'.

Hope was also at the heart of the faith, fun and friendship camps for young people that were held in the parishes of Limavady, Claudy, Banagher and Templemore, during the summer.

Reflecting on the message of Hope to be found in the Bible, a number of people from across the Diocese have shared pieces of Scripture that have impacted them most in giving them hope.

God's grace is at work in all circumstances – Bishop Donal

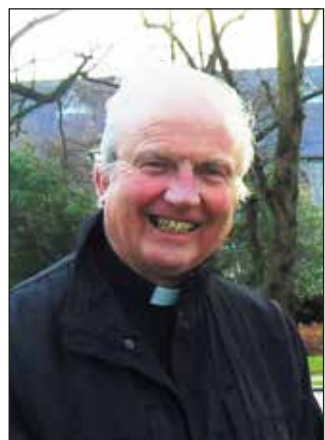
THE Lord is always planning for the redemption of His people, even when things seem dark.

Things have always been changing for God's people, but I begin with the conviction from the words to the Prophet Jeremiah: "I know the plans I have in mind for you, plans for peace, not disaster, reserving a future full of hope for you" (Jer 29:11).

God's grace is at work in all circumstances, pruning the vine or remaking the pot, just as a potter does when something does not come out right (Cf Jer 18:1-6).

As Jesus said to His apostles at the Last Supper: "In the world, you will have trouble; but be

brave, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33).



Bishop Donal

Burning hearts by Patricia Casey

I allow my heart to be calm and receptive, I see the love of the Lord's gaze as He looks upon me, desiring His message to reach into my heart as I read His Word.

Now that very day two of them were going to a village seven miles* from Jerusalem called Emmaus, and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred. And it happened that while they were conversing and debating, Jesus Himself drew near and walked with them, but their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him.

He asked them, "What are you discussing as you walk along?" They stopped, looking downcast.

One of them, named Cleopas, said to Him in reply, "Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know of the things that have taken place there in these days?"

And He replied to them, "What sort of things?" They said to him, "The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over to a sentence of death and crucified him. But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel; and besides all this, it is now the third day since this took place. Some women from our group, however, have astounded us: they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find his body; they came back and reported that they had indeed seen a vision of angels who announced that he was alive. Then some of those with us went to the tomb and found things just as the women had described, but him they did not see."

And he said to them, "Oh, how foolish you are! How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary that the Messiah should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets, He interpreted to them what referred to Him in all the scriptures. As they approached the village to which they were

going, He gave the impression that He was going on farther. But they urged Him, "Stay with us, for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over."

So He went in to stay with them. And it happened that, while He was with them at the table, He took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them. With that, their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, but He vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?" So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem, where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"

Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how He was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

As I go through this passage, I stop and ask myself, "Is there a place in my heart that had hoped but finds it difficult to hope anymore?"

I allow Jesus, the divine pilgrim who walks with me on the road, to know what is on my heart, what has happened that causes me to feel heavy and deflated with the diminishing of hope and life being more difficult now than it had been previous to this unique path that I now walk.

Having had a loving encounter with Jesus, have you ever felt, "This is it; I've found the secret to happiness in this life? I understand love and sacrifice. I'm happy to choose this new path that I've found and never return to the former."

Have you ever felt that you are now one of the 'chosen ones', holier than others, apart from the world? Then reality hits, the overzealous feelings calm down and life is pretty much normal again in terms of feelings at least.

Unless you have been called to radical discipleship, life in the

world as a devoted Christian is, well more or less, the same day-to-day monotonous journey as most. We sleep, we work, we meet friends, we exercise and we eat. We attend Mass and pray during the week, and hopefully also attend Mass and Adoration if life permits it, but what was once super exciting about being a 'transformed Christian' is now back to a feeling of "I'm the same now as I was before my special encounter with Christ."

So, what's the craic with being this so-called hope-filled zealous Catholic? I'm a laywoman who loves God, heads to work and tries to be faithful. I don't have a powerful role within the Church. I don't have much say with anything in terms of enlivening the Church in my time.

Or do I? Without Christ, I can do nothing. The thing is, life is what you make it. I believe in the Risen Lord, so that means my 'normal life' is now a supernatural life with Christ.

I can go to work without Jesus or with Him. I can be virtuous when there is a bit of juicy gossip. I can lend an extra hand, especially when I don't need to. I can smile and be pleasant when it feels good to complain. I can unite with Jesus and offer all my work to Him and I can call to mind that Jesus Himself lived an ordinary life for 30 years in Nazareth.

I have every reason to be happy and joyful. I have fresh air to breathe, beautiful food to eat, and I am blessed with a loving family and a very small circle of faithful and faithful friends.

I am strengthened when I fall, by my willingness to go to confessions, and I am healed and transformed through the Eucharist. Love never gives up, so the more I am untied to God's Love through prayer, then I can love Him back by serving others, which is the key to happiness and fulfilment.

I suppose, yes, it is easy to be a gloomy pilgrim, or I can be a pilgrim with a burning heart, and



Patricia Casey, Kilrea.

my heart can only burn if I am faithful in prayer and persevere each day.

I finish with this poem by French poet, Charles Peguy...

The Little Girl Hope

The faith that I love best, says God, is hope.

Faith doesn't surprise me.

It's not surprising

I am so resplendent in my creation...

The charity says God, that doesn't surprise me.

It's not surprising.

These poor creatures are so miserable that unless they had a heart of stone, how could they not have a love for one another?

How could they not love their brothers?

How could they not take the bread from their mouth, their daily bread, to give it to the unhappy children who pass by...

What surprises me, says God, is hope.

And I can't get over it.

This little hope seems like nothing.

This little girl hope.

Immortal

It's she, the little one, who carries them all.

Because Faith sees only what is.

But she, she sees what will be.

Charity loves only what is.

But she, she loves what will be.

A Song of Hope by Edel O'Connor

"HOPE is the thing with feathers that perches in the soul, And sings the tune - without the words, and never stops at all".

Emily Dickinson's words assert that a song of hope can be found within oneself. Hope is a response to life's trials and tribulations. Fr Dermot Lane maintains "hope does not ignore the realities of failure, tragedy, evil, suffering and death; on the contrary hope arises out of the presence of such negativity within our lives."

Hope facilitates the person to deal with their darkness not by eradicating the pain and suffering, but by going through it. Hope does not signal the end of darkness in one's life; rather, it offers a way of seeing in the midst

of the darkness.

Hope can be linked with trust, to trust in the present and the future and to believe it is worth moving forward.

The following words have impacted me the most in giving me hope: "O sacred heart of Jesus, I place all my trust in thee".

Faith and hope are inseparable companions. God is a companion both in times of love and in times of suffering. Christian hope embraces suffering and death as intrinsic elements of Christian existence. Hope confronts suffering and darkness but doesn't eliminate it.

However, maintaining hope in the midst of suffering remains an arduous challenge. One inspiring

woman who has shown us all the power of hope is Geraldine Mullan, who lost her husband and two children in a car accident two years ago. I was one of 15,000 people who visited the 'Field of Hope' in Quigley's Point, in August. The beautiful sunflowers streamed hope and light into our lives as we journeyed through the sunflower maze planted in the shape of the letters of HOPE. This 'Field of Hope' illustrates all that is best in humanity.

The work of all the great prophets in the Bible is work filled with imagination, full of promise and hope. Hope relies on imagination to enable one to take that next step forward. In the Gospels, Jesus never advocated

a life which is confined behind safe and complacent walls, but challenged people into the beyond. He challenged people to use their imagination to look and move ahead.

Geraldine Mullan and the local community's initiative to develop this 'Field of Hope' challenged people to consider the role of imagination and hope in their own lives.

Brendan Kennelly noted: "Though we live in a world that dreams of ending, that always seems about to give in, something that will not acknowledge conclusion insists that we forever begin."

The Holy Spirit is continually in the hearts of people insisting that



they forever begin and remain on that journey of hope. The Holy Spirit encourages people to continue to sing that song of hope within their souls.

As I left the 'Field of Hope',

in the background I could hear Geraldine Mullan singing. I placed my trust in the Lord that the song of hope would live long in her heart.

Hope allows us to keep on praying and trusting that all will be well *by Ann McCay*



Ann McCay, Columba Community.

I remember studying Luke's Gospel in my first year as a student at Loreto, Coleraine. Our teacher that year, Mother Mary of the Angels, would read the scripture text with us in class, explain its meaning and we, class J1B, had to learn the first two chapters off by heart for our homework, bit by bit.

For me, one of the most hope filled passages in scripture is at the beginning of Luke's Gospel, describing the Visitation of Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. Perhaps, my early experience shaped how I view it now. It is a story of two women, both called by God, to play their part in Salvation history.

While Zechariah was fulfilling his duty of keeping watch in the Temple Sanctuary, an angel appeared to him and told him that his wife, Elizabeth was going to have a child in her old age. This was something they had been hoping and praying for over a long period of time. They were to call the child, John and he would be great in the sight of God. Zechariah just couldn't believe what he was hearing, couldn't take in the angel's message and was, therefore, rendered speechless until the happy event

would occur.

The Angel Gabriel also appeared to Mary and announced that she was to conceive a child by the Holy Spirit. The child was to be given the name Jesus. He would be great and would be called Son of the Most High. Gabriel also told Mary that her kinswoman, Elizabeth was pregnant in her old age, "for nothing is impossible to God".

Although apprehensive, Mary accepts the special mission God has laid out for her in the angel's message and declares herself ready to be the servant of God. Mary sets out to visit Elizabeth in the hill country, and Luke tells us that she went as quickly as she could. This would have been a challenging journey at the best of times. Mary wants to connect with someone in the same position as herself. She seeks the company and support of her cousin and advice from an older and more experienced woman. She wants to share her joy.

Imagining the meeting between the two women, I think of Elizabeth surprised and delighted to see her young cousin, Mary relieved to have arrived safely, tired after her journey but overcome with joy. Elizabeth so elated that something she and her husband, Zachariah had hoped for, prayed for, over many years was to happen, and the younger woman so happy to share in her cousin's good news and still coming to terms with her own situation.

As the two women greet one another, the child in Elizabeth's womb leaps for joy. John, even in his mother's womb, sensing the presence of his Saviour, the hope of the world. There is absolute

joy at seeing each other and rejoicing in the presence of new life within them both. Elizabeth asks, "How is it that the mother of my God should come to visit me". She utters these affirming words to Mary, "Yes blessed is she who believed that the promise made her by the Lord would be fulfilled".

Singing

Mary rejoices in the goodness of God, singing out her hope for the future. How can she do this in such uncertain circumstances, still absorbing everything that she has heard from the angel? Because, alongside carrying the uncertainty of her own situation and what it will mean for her, she carries the Christ within her, The Hope for the future of mankind.

Overcome with joy in that moment, she begins to praise God: "My soul glorifies the Lord and my Spirit rejoices in God my saviour, for He who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is His name..."

Let us be aware of the Christ within us and within the church and the world. As we, too, face uncertainties, let us keep alive Hope now and into the future. "For nothing is impossible to God" (Luke 1: 37).

What does it mean to Hope, to have a feeling of expectation and desire for a particular thing to happen? Even when someone puts a spanner in the works, or complications arise, hope helps us to keep on believing that what was promised will happen. We can trust God, Psalm 131 says: "Israel, put all your hope in God, place your trust in Him now and ever more".

There were many challenging moments ahead for Elizabeth and

for Mary; both women suffered the loss of their child. We see Mary at the foot of the cross, holding the broken body of her son. Life will be different for her now but it continues. She hears the good news that Jesus has risen from the dead, and we read in the Acts of the Apostles that she is there among Jesus' followers in the upper room at Pentecost for the coming of the Holy Spirit, the helper, the advocate whom Jesus promised to send.

During the height of the pandemic, it was hard to have hope. Everything was so uncertain, even for people of faith, but many throughout the world put their trust in God despite there being no answers, despite the fear of not knowing what might befall us all.

Hope allows us to keep on praying and hoping and trusting that all will be well, even though the whole world seems to be falling in on top of us and we feel powerless and helpless. Many in time of great loss and suffering turn to God, cling to their faith, trusting that God will see them through. They say with Peter: "Lord, to whom else shall we go? You have the message of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6:68-69).

As Jesus hung on the cross He cried out, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit". He put His trust in the Father in the sure and certain hope that He would take care of everything.

In the final verse of the Psalm for Good Friday, we read: "Let your face shine on your servant. Save me in your love. Be strong, let your heart take courage, all who hope in the Lord" (Psalm 30).

This beautiful poem by Emily Dickinson captures the essence of Hope...

Hope is the thing with feathers

*"Hope" is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul
And sings the tune without the words
And never stops at all*

*And sweetest in the gale is heard
And sore must be the storm
That could abash the little bird
That kept so many warm*

*I've heard it in the chilliest land
And on the strangest sea
Yet never in extremity,
It asked a crumb of me.*

Hope is something that stands alone in the midst of darkness and despair. It is fragile, very fine but extremely strong and durable like a silk thread. It's a gift really. It's not something that we can make happen but, like Faith and Love, it is a gift.

When everything else falls/fails these three remain: Faith, Hope and Love, and the greatest will always be Love.

"Yes, my soul, find rest in God; my hope comes from Him. Truly He is my rock and my salvation; He is my fortress, I will not be shaken" (Psalm 62:5-8).

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

When I think of hope, I often think of the Passion of Christ *by Ciara McAlister*



Ciara McAlister, Kilrea.

nothing can come with us. There are no pockets in the shroud. So, in the face of death and grief, I feel I found much hope. It was only after my Father's death that I understood and empathised with others the pain of suffering the loss of a loved one. I also began to think more deeply about the resurrection and the belief that, one day, we will be resurrected and reunited with our loved ones in the glory of Heaven, with all the angels and Saints.

When I think of hope, I also have fond memories of my two late grandmothers, Mary Ellen and Sarah. They had tremendous faith. It was both of them that helped plant the seed, the mustard seed of faith, throughout the years. As a young child, they taught me the Rosary and the importance of Mass. I have fond memories of them both praying the Rosary and having the beads tightly wrapped around their hands daily.

Granny Sarah often said: "Be on your guard, be ready, we do not know the hour or the minute when God will come knocking". She would also say "...and you cannot say hold on until I have a cup of tea".

I often laugh as I reminisce on past events. I can only imagine that many grandmothers passed their faith onto their grandchildren and gave them hope. It wasn't until later years, when my faith grew stronger, that I thought how right they both were. It is important to attend Mass, receive Jesus in the Eucharist, adore Him in the Blessed Sacrament and confess at least monthly, to be on our guard, be ready in the hope that when God comes knocking we can be in a state of Grace.

"Therefore stay awake, for you know neither the day nor the hour" (Matthew 25:13).

One of my favourite pieces of scripture is John 15:2, 'Jesus the True Vine'. Every time I read it I feel hope and joy in my heart.

Summer of Hope *by Rory McGilligan*

MOST Saturday mornings, I take part in the Limavady Park run and afterwards I generally buy the groceries for the week in the local supermarkets. Last Saturday morning started much the same, Park run done then over to the shops. As I was wandering around the aisles of one of the supermarkets, I bumped into Leo McCloskey, one of the architects of the Hope Summer camp.

A few years ago, a group of people came together in Limavady to create a faith-based camp with lots of different types of activities for a wide range of children. Leo and the other volunteers worked hard to make Hope a success, and he told me how much the parish of Limavady has bought into the camp. Over the years, he has got so much help and support in many different ways, which has helped make the camp a success.

Word has spread within the Diocese of how successful the camp has been and now Leo helps other parishes to set up and run the Hope Summer camp.

The camp undoubtedly helps teenagers learn about and develop their faith. I suppose, it is the way our faith should be lived out. The problem within our society is that it can offer many things, but hope is not one of them. The opposite of hope is despair and it doesn't take long to see how much despair and hopelessness there is. This usually manifests in crime, addictions, to name a few.

As Catholics living out our faith, there are many passages within sacred scripture that can give us hope. A favourite of mine is when Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4: 1-39). In this passage, Jesus does not conform to the social etiquette of the day, as Jews and Samaritans did not mix, when he asks her for water from the well.

Here, God shows His love is for all of mankind. No one person or nation is thought less worthy of His love. Jesus tells the Samaritan woman that He can give her living water, and she replies: "Give me this water".

Our Lord and Saviour asks the woman to call her husband and she explains that she does not have a husband. Jesus agrees and lets the woman know that He is aware that she had five husbands and that the man she was with was not her husband. Christ letting her know that He knew her history shows that He did not judge her or ridicule her. He accepted her and loved her where she was at in life.

This woman had been searching, looking for something; her life had an emptiness, a void that she could not fill. Every time she married, she had hoped this void would disappear but it did not. She had been filling her life with men, hoping that they would bring her happiness. It didn't matter how many men she married, none could compete with God and His divine love for her. Her void, her emptiness up until the day she met Jesus, was her soul searching for God.

Maybe some of us are searching for God, maybe some of us are



Rory McGilligan, Dungiven.

afraid or unsure of how to form a close relationship. Maybe some of us think we are unlovable or just do not want to let our guard down, but God wants to get us to drink the living water.

We are made for God by God. He wants us to spend eternity with Him. He wants to be united to us forever. This gospel passage will hopefully fill you with hope too.

Scripture as a Field of Hope *by Noel Bradley*



Noel Bradley, Buncrana.

I have been asked what line of Scripture has most impacted me in giving me hope. There are many texts, but if I had to choose one I would say Isaiah 49:15 - "Does a woman forget her baby at the breast or fail to cherish the son of her womb? Yet even if these forget, I will never forget you".

This is a very warm and re-assuring image for me. A mother cannot forget the child of her womb. God says to me,

"I will never forget you". God's attachment to us in love is like that. God loves and cares for us, and an image like this brings it home to us. But it needs to be imagined and pondered affectionately. Then we feel re-assured to continue the journey and struggle that life is. It can give us hope.

This text reminds me immediately of another re-assuring text in Matthew's Gospel: "Do not be afraid...Can you not buy two sparrows for a penny? And yet not one falls to the ground without your Father knowing. Why, every hair on your head has been counted. So there is no need to be afraid; you are worth more than hundreds of sparrows".

Again, we have an image; this time of two little sparrows worth a penny and yet God cares for them. God is so intimately involved and caring for us that He knows even the number of hairs on our head. God is infinitely concerned about the details of the world and the universe, down to the number of hairs on our heads. The infinite care is not negated just because

we are bald!

I see Jesus re-assuring us in images like this. You can also recall His words "look at the birds of the air and the flowers of the field. They do not sow or reap and yet your heavenly Father looks after them. How much more will He look after you? Oh you of little faith".

Again, we have Jesus re-assuring us. I believe He was able to do this because He himself had been re-assured in experiences like the ones He had at His baptism and at His transfiguration, where He heard the words "you are my beloved son" deeply within Himself. Did He also feel this re-assurance when He went up the hills to be by Himself to pray? I would say 'yes'.

All through our lives as Christians, we have numerous opportunities of hearing various words of Scripture that can nourish our hope. For most of us, it will probably not be just one text or line of Scripture but many over a period of years.

One very popular text is Psalm 23, "The Lord is my Shepherd, there is nothing I shall want/

fresh and green are the pastures where He gives me repose/ near restful waters He leads me, to revive my drooping spirit".

Then in the New Testament, we have Jesus saying: "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd is the one who lays down his life for his sheep" (John 10:11).

I have been deliberately referring to images or symbols in the Scripture text, eg, mother, birds, flower, shepherd, rather than to direct teaching as in "love your neighbour as yourself" or "forgive your brother (or sister) not seven times but seventy times seven". This is because images and symbols can evoke feelings and it is at the level of feelings that we need re-assurance. How else can we resist the vast pressures of social decay that surround us night and day, except by the religious hope that is offered us in Scripture?

If the images of hope do not evoke any feelings of re-assurance or hope at a certain time in our lives, then I think we are left with holding on to the basic truth and fact of our faith that God loves us unconditionally, no matter how we feel.

Gathered at the Heavenly Banquet

There is one key image or symbol that is offered often in Scripture that I did not mention and that is the image or symbol of the Meal together or the Banquet in the Kingdom, or 'reign', of God.

In numerous texts in the Old and New Testament, we are told that all the nations and peoples of the world will be gathered together around the table of God's banquet, with an abundance to eat and drink, like the scene in the movie 'Babette's Feast'. "The last shall be first and the first will be last". God will be letting His Sun/Love shine on the good and the bad, and His rain fall on the just and unjust alike. "There will be not more death and every tear will be wiped away" (Rev 21:4).

There will be a communion of love and friendship flowing fully between us all and even with the rest of creation, the universe, "all in heaven and on earth", for we will be brought into a unity in Christ under His universal reign of love (Eph 1:3-10).

As I began writing this, I had just returned from 'The Field of Hope' in Quigley's Point. This is a field, normally used to grow potatoes and barley, of thousands of Sunflowers that was open to visitors to walk around. It was created by Geraldine Mullan in memory of John, her husband, and Tomas and Amelia, her

children, following a tragic accident there in August 2020, in which she was the sole survivor.

The sun was shining and everything was colourful. The flowers face and try to follow the sun. When the sun sets, they try to turn to each other. It is a good image of the Kingdom, where we try to follow the Son/Sun and also try to face one another.

There is a poem, 'The Kingdom' by R S Thomas, a Church of England minister who ministered in the Hebrides in the northwest of Scotland, which catches some of the hope that we have for the Kingdom or reign of God...

The Kingdom

It's a long way off but inside it there are quite different things going on: festivals at which the poor man is king and the consumptive is healed; mirrors in which the blind look at themselves and love looks at them back; and industry is for mending the bent bones and the minds fractured by life. It's a long way off, but to get there takes no time and admission is free, if you will purge yourself of desire, and present yourself with your need only and the simple offering of your faith, green as a leaf.

How much more majestic our journey would be if we all "held steadfast to hope" *by Jacklyn Roberts*



Jacklyn with Columba Community founder, the late Fr Neal Carlin.

HOPE...the sweetest word in this life, for it rolls off the tongue like honey from the comb, releasing a powerful and majestic knowing that God will make all things new again, in His time and in His way.

It provokes emotion that forms a golden thread from the heart of Jesus to the depth of your soul; an inner belief in the truth, an inner peace in His presence, and an inner transformation that despite "the darkness the light shines and will not be overcome", if only we hold firm to faith and hope (John 1:5).

There are so many scriptures readings that have provoked hope in my heart over my 37 years of this life, but most I have received since joining the Columba Community

in 2014, after attending many Masses, retreats and prayer experiences in Columba House, St Anthony's Retreat Centre and The Celtic Prayer Garden, under the spiritual guidance of my late, great and dear friend in Christ, Fr Neal Carlin.

We all have our own story, our own personal testimony, a witness to the greatness of the Divine, and a favourite scripture of mine, that first came to me back in 2010 when I truly began to explore my faith on a deeper level, is 1 Peter 3:15: "Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks a reason for your hope."

Throughout my faith journey, I have experienced many trials from mental health struggles to multiple miscarriages to sickness, but this scripture has always remained steadfast in my heart, so much so that on August 18, 2015, when I received a miracle and the doctor questioned how could this happen, my response was and will always be: "Because I have Jesus!"

Hope in Jesus is a whispering from the silence of your heart, where no words need to be spoken. It is a connection and bond that transcends time and space, an encounter that nourishes our soul with faith rooted in our Spirit.

Like a fountain of Living Water that flows from Jesus' heart to yours, hope is always there, to strengthen, to sustain and restore our belief in the truth that life can

be beautiful again, no matter the circumstances.

"As Christians, we are called to evangelise, to share our witness to bring hope to others walking the path of life. But the questions we must continually ask ourselves are these..."

Do we lean on God? Do we only hope in Him amidst the storms of life when we feel weak or abandoned? Or do we hold onto hope in the ordinary everyday moments of life, trusting He is always there as our shelter?

We have a wonderful Waymaker and lean-to in God, whose heart continually welcomes us in every moment and provides refuge for us always, but do we profess our hope in Him to others? The hope of Resurrection? The hope of restoration? The hope of revival? Do we evangelise as Christ wants us to? Is hope engrained in our hearts?

My time with Fr Neal and the Columba Community have taught me many things: 1, You are never alone on the journey, "For I will send you a helper from the Father" (John 15:26); 2, Pray with expectant faith, there are miracles all around us, if only we have open eyes to see, open ears to listen and open hearts to be filled with the Holy Spirit; 3, God will never be outdone in generosity, for God hears and answers every prayer from those who seek Him faithfully with hope in their hearts.

It is in our darkest of times that hope allows the light to shine through. On New Year's Eve of the year 2020, when hope was lacking in so many people's lives, I asked God to reveal His Word to me. The scripture reference was Phillipians 1:6, "Since God began such a good work in you, I am certain He will complete it in the day of Christ Jesus".

For each of us carries a unique gift of the Spirit. We are a link in the chain, wounded disciples walking each other home. How much more majestic would that journey be if we all "held steadfast to hope. For He who promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).

Let us walk forward together with infinite hope in our hearts. Let us, as Pope Francis so encourages us to do, be lay people standing up and missioning together in building new Christian communities filled with hope in God, that rise to build His kingdom here on earth with fire in our Spirits and love for all in our hearts. For that is the heart of the Church.

In the words of Fr Neal, "Lord, teach me to sit before You and just know Your ways will lead to new life. To hope in You, God is the most Christian act we can do because it means recognising that You can never fail us, however painful or pitiful the circumstances. Are we a people of hope?"

I have found scripture comforting in times of trial *by Anne Kelly*

HOPE dwells in the hearts of all of us. We look forward to the future with hope and positive anticipation. The Bible speaks of this hope which the Holy Spirit gives us at Baptism. Linked to the virtue of Faith, it grows in us and enkindles the practice of charity.

In times of personal trials, I have found scripture comforting and assuring. The verse from the Old Testament that stands out for me is: "And you will have confidence because there is hope" (Job 18:11).

Job was confused and complained but, despite his many afflictions, he held on to his hope in God. This helped me to understand that God's timing is not mine and gave me the determination to persevere in prayer.

In the New Testament, I was enlightened after reading, "Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering for he who has promised is faithful" (Hebrews 10:23).



Anne Kelly, Omagh.

Hebrews reminds me of the constant protection of God, who is always present, and how important it is to hold on to the virtue of hope. This, of course, is easier said than done but, for me, each day presents a new opportunity to strengthen my faith by praying the living word of God and walking the pilgrim journey with my faith community.



Christians cannot keep silent about the fact that Christ is their hope and their life

by Robert Glackin

ACCORDING to the words of Christ, the Gospel is for all humanity: "Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to all creation" (Mark 16:15). But the idea of mission is embarrassing to many of us. Must the entire world adopt the Christian religion? Does not missionary activity conceal a desire to dominate?

Many Christians have become prudent. We have learned not to judge other religions and we, as Christians, are the first ones who have to take the Gospel seriously.

Gospel means 'Good News'. News is not something that is taught but rather communicated. The Gospel assures us that, in spite of short-term appearances, the future belongs to those who love and who forgive.

Proclaiming The Gospel does not mean spreading a religion that is superior to other ones. It simply means not keeping silent about our hope of peace. We share with our friends what causes each one of us to hope and to live. Christians cannot keep silent about the fact that Christ is their



Robert Glackin, Waterside, Derry.

hope and their life.

"Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you the reason for the hope that is within you" (Peter 3:15).

The presence of God comes in personal terms; in being thankful, hopeful and neighbourly, living out faith in our lives. Each one of us can say: "I have hope because God walks with me".

He walks and He holds my hand. God does not leave us to ourselves. He has opened the path of life for us.

Living in hope

by Sharon Gorman

WHAT is hope to me? It is the unfolding of a beautiful gift, a friendship unlike any other, a love beyond anything we can comprehend.

Hope is me placing my life in His hands and knowing He does all things for the best of me. Hope is asking for guidance and protection and knowing the Lord will never fail me. Hope is me surrendering everything into His control because of my faith, which He blessed me with.

Hope is my trust in His written word, Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God" - what a soft and powerful line from a most faithful God. The Father is simply saying, My child, my love, I have you in the palm of my hands, no harm will come to you, all I ask is that you place all your hope in me. Who could deny the Almighty



Sharon Gorman, Galliagh.

such a small request?

It is the greatness and goodness of God to reveal Himself to us in the simplest of ways in our life. Everywhere God is present in our life. He will seek us to the end of time. God is my salvation. God is hope.

Humbled to win a Community Champion of the Year Award, Geraldine Mullan is thankful for all the love and support that is keeping her going through the deep pain of her family loss, and for the overwhelming response to the Field of Hope, which has led to...

Sunflowers spreading rays of hope around Diocese in church floral displays

HOPE is one of three key words in the life of Geraldine Mullan as she faces each day without the three main people in her life - her husband, John, and children, Tomás and Amelia, who died when the family car plunged into Lough Foyle two summers ago, as they made their way home to Moville after a fun day out before the start of another school year.

Her hope is fuelled by the other two key words; her 'faith' in God and the tremendous 'love' of her husband and children that she carries within her, and that of her family, friends and many others from within her local community and beyond.

And the extent of this love and compassion for Geraldine was made overwhelmingly clear when she opened a two-and-a-half acre sunflower-filled 'Field of Hope' to mark the second anniversary of her family's passing, and 15,500 people made a point of coming along over a three-day period to walk amidst the beauty of the scene she had created at Quigley's Point, in Co Donegal, a short distance from the scene of tragedy just two years before on August 20.

Having a maze carved out within the field of flowers to spell the word 'HOPE', and planting messages of hope here and there, Geraldine's dearest wish was that those who followed the pathway through it would feel the power of hope in their lives too.

Touched by Geraldine's courageous and inspiring example, the thousands of men, women and children who patiently queued for long periods to reach the beautifully bright field of sunflowers, showed their appreciation for the great community project she had created in turning her husband's

garden centre into the Mullan Hope Centre, to mark the first anniversary of her family's passing, by generously donating funds to develop the facility further.

Speaking to 'The Net' afterwards, Geraldine commented on how the numbers that had visited the field had far exceeded all her expectations: "We had 1,500 visitors on the Friday, 4,000 on the Saturday, and 10,000 on the Sunday. When we started out, we didn't think that we would have numbers like that. Everyone who walked through the field was on their own journey; hopefully they all went away with a bit of hope as that is what the Sunflower stands for...hope."

"The oldest person who came was 95 years old and the youngest was a couple of weeks old. It was wonderful to see the young and old enjoy the experience. But it was also very poignant. I had mixed emotions on the day, with it being the second anniversary since John, Tomás and Amelia passed away. So it was very difficult, but the great support and love from everyone got me through the weekend."

"There were lots of tears but it was a nice way to mark the second anniversary, and I want to thank everyone who helped to make it possible, especially the farmer, John McCarron, who usually planted barley or potatoes in the field."

Smile

As well as doing her best to smile through the tears, Geraldine also sang, with those passing the spot where she stood amongst the sunflowers stopping to hear her sing so beautifully some of the songs that her brother, John Connaughton had penned, or rewritten, in memory of John,

Tomás and Amelia.

One called 'Hey there little Sunflower' was written especially with little Amelia in mind, and another was a rewrite of the song 'Fields of Gold' to reflect the Field of Hope.

"Singing is one way for me to get out difficult feelings, it's like talking," said Geraldine, adding: "I like singing. For me, singing is part healing too, as there was always music and singing in our house. Now, when I visit their grave, I pray, chat and sing to them".

The funds raised from the generous 'Field of Hope' donations will go towards further improving the non-profit Mullan Hope Centre as a facility for the community.

"The Centre is my way of giving back to the community for all the love and support I have received", remarked Geraldine, "It was originally a garden centre and with these funds we can make it more functional for various courses, such as horticulture, to be held there, or whatever the community wants to do."

"People were very generous, so the money is there. We are still waiting on the final tally, with some money still coming in, but it will be a substantial amount".

Geraldine's focus on making the once-busy garden centre a hub of well-being, socialising and productivity for the community, as a thank you for their great love and support to her, led to her being nominated for two Derry Journal People of the Year Awards - one being 'Charity Person of the Year' and the other, which she won, being 'Individual Community Champion'.

Commenting on the Award, she said: "I was very humbled and honoured to be nominated, as



all in the category were deserved winners. It was a very poignant night. Again, the three I would have wanted to be there, weren't, but it was because of them that I was there.

"Tomás loved 'Derry Girls', and now I feel that I am an honorary 'Derry Girl' with this Award. I was overwhelmed to receive it and by the standing ovation. It is all this love and support that has kept me going, and I accepted the award on behalf of everyone who has helped with the community projects".

While thousands of the sunflowers were given to those who visited the Field of Hope, there were thousands more still standing tall after the weekend of visits came to an end, so it was decided to distribute them to the churches of the Diocese for floral displays to celebrate September as harvest month, and Geraldine has been receiving some beautiful photographs of these.

"My faith is important to me," said Geraldine, adding, "Faith, Hope and Love are the three words that I hang on to".



Words and words...travelling light

-A personal lexicon by Fr John McLaughlin ssc

WHILE on Mission in Valparaiso, in Chile, I had the privilege of a visit from Fr Seamus Farrelly, the PP of Carn whom I had known from Moville days and from Maynooth years later on. Fr Seamus travelled lightly in his many journeys around the world during holiday time: a small bag around his shoulder and all in the rack on the aeroplane journeys. He was also sparse and concise with words when he needed to be!

During his short stay, I invited him to join on us on the Deanery outing, which was to be held beside a pool and included a meal-barbeque in those surroundings. Padre Olivier, a genial French priest, was the Dean at the time, but insisted in getting through some deanery business before lunch and Fr Seamus sat in. Asking him afterwards what he thought, he remarked laconically enough, "There are some wild serious men in there!" The fact that only one of them joined me in the pool afterwards seemed to confirm that for Seamus. He, too, had his personal lexicon!

No tengo pelos en la lengua...no se me muerde la lengua.

The opening of my first chapel on the side of the hill there, in Valparaiso, was a source of great joy and anticipation for all of us. Bishop Gonzalo, a Sacred Heart priest, understood young people and could take in some of the disorder on that day for the Virgen Peregrina and the Sagrada Familia communities. The welcoming 'monitores' for the ceremony were two young people, Francisco being almost self-appointed and his mother a constant presence amongst the catechists, though somewhat lacking in sparkle. And in the 'Evaluacion', which was always a part of the Council meetings, the subject had to come up, though hopefully not from me, in the chair.

Francisco had shown a certain disdain for the young community of which he was only half an active member, his remarks were off the mark, and his appearance in jeans and open necked shirt and unshaven beard, had got under people's skin. Fortunately, Rosa was present and, in good 'chilenese', she 'no tenia pelos en lengua...ni se mordía la

lengua'... "Can I say something"? And she proceeded to dress down Francisco and his demeanor and dress, in no uncertain fashion. It was a letting off for all of us...a timely 'desahogo'...and I would have loved to have that Bishop present to witness it. 'Cometh the hour, cometh the woman!'

Never put off till tomorrow, what you can do today, because if you enjoy doing it today, you can do it again tomorrow. (James Michener)

On ever so many occasions, I invoked that little 'dicho' or refrain, with the Michener codicil to add urgency, on the need for action in preparing the ceremonies for Holy Week - a procession, protest, campaign, retreat, vigil, assembly - as I tried to counter the attitude of 'al lote', as if it would prepare itself, as it were! And we followed up with the similarly apt phrase or jargon... 'al tiro'...right now!

No tan adentro que se queme... ni tan afuera que se resfrie.

Catholics come in all colours everywhere I have found over the years. 'A mi manera' represented the majority, it often seemed. While others remarked "Soy católico, pero no fanático!" And it's the way in modern Ireland also. Hence, the manner in which we pushed Retreats and Movements that questioned that for youth or married couples. And the language changed as people adapted to the New Man in Christ, as St Paul would have it, and used the corresponding language of immediacy and vocation and mission and the Gospel. To do a little more than 'navigate', the word that Maynooth seminarians used in those days, and grasp the nettle of our own identity as Catholics, Disciples and Missionaries, as

Pope Francis constantly stresses.

'Odio la mediocridad'... 'I hate mediocrity' (Film: Amadeus)

Which is a little on the same line, as when I think of the Ken Loach film 'Amadeus' telling of a plagiarist/fan of Mozart, where the villain is faced down on his misdeeds and he declaims is a disgusted voice, "I hate mediocrity!" I have heard the voice in my head many times over the years. Pope Francis, in referring often in these times to the "culture of indifference", may well have in his heart the Peruvian song, "Solo le pido a Dios que (el futuro-la Guerra-el dolor-el engaño-lo injusto)...no me sea indiferente".

The F-word....groserías, tonterías...huevones!

One of the graces, or whims, or outlets, of working in another language or culture is the richness of the language of the street, as it might be called. It makes me feel so deprived as at times I am limited to just the multi-toned F-word and not so much humor attached. The synonyms often seem so inadequate (at least in the inner forum!) to express the indignation or the frustration at what is happening around-about, or just let out the irritation that is better ventilated in an ever more angry society, like that of modern Ireland. Maybe a later-life workshop could be set up for some of the margined senior citizens of today!

Pobre de uds!

Not everyone wants to be brought inside when a new course of action or attitude is proposed. There is the danger or temptation of allowing yourself to feel superior and hold off. One of my Columban brothers in the USA told recently on FB where a member of a group, over which he was presiding, chided him for standing above the group like a wise man and not getting involved in the messy bits. He took it on board and changed, in fairness to him. 'Pobre de ud' represents that attitude and the challenge of not sitting on the fence. At my age, I suppose I can indulge myself and recognize that I simply would not have the mental or emotional energy for the kind of 'chuchoca', as the Latins would say.

It's just amazing! Lo comido y lo bailado.

It seems to be the buzzword for today, even if it is only learning how to sew in a button! Maybe at this part of my long life I would prefer the Spanish phrase: 'lo comido y lo bailado...nadie se lo pueda quitar' (what you have lived, eaten and celebrated no one can take away from you!)

If you seek love, put love and you will find love (St John of the Cross)

I go back a bit with that one to the International Charismatic Assembly gathering in Dublin's Ballsbridge. I think it was Cardinal Suenens of Belgium, a great supporter of the Charismatic movement, who quoted it in his warm address on that occasion. I have quoted it on occasions later, as people stood back and waited to receive recognition or applause from their brothers or sisters, who seemed to pass them over. It happens in every group, where some person seems to have the whole world in their hands.

A little knowledge is a dangerous thing...Get a little knowledge...Live dangerously! (Woody Allen, would you believe?)

The summer and winter courses in many of the pastoral institutes offered a huge opportunity to initiate and confirm young catechists, and youth and group leaders, in liturgy, music, care of the elderly. And it was a joy to have those just graduated gathered together for an afternoon tea, to share their new awareness and insights and enthusiasm. There was a buzz to share this or that dynamic in the liturgy, the catechetical meeting, the parish or the community council. Knowledge is power, as Brazilian Pablo Freire had long been preaching in the material we imported from that very pastorally-alive Continent. And, for a while, based on some of the liturgy courses from a priest, like the bubbling and often-militant Padre Mariano Puga, the Liturgy of the Word might take a while longer as groups were formed to discuss the implications of the Gospel, or to stand up in the congregation, open-bible in hand, to read aloud one of the verses of the responsorial psalm of the Mass that Sunday. And people took note as the refrain of the psalm was sung by the general congregation. A little knowledge was indeed living dangerously, for some who just wanted a quick Mass! The dinner had still to be cooked after a quick run to the feria, or street-market.

El quinto pato del gato

Committee people come in all sizes and guises. Some have been persuaded to come to the Council of the chapel, or the parish, for the first time and sit quietly trying to breathe in what is happening and pluck up courage to venture forth with their comments or criticism. There are those who tend to hog it because that is the way they are, seeking 'the fifth paw of the cat', as the saying goes, and refusing to be persuaded till their proposal



or viewpoint gets at least a good airing. They don't give up easily and newcomers find it all rather stressful. Even at this distance, I can put names on some of them, men and women, and wonder why I did not always intervene from the chair. 'Mañoso/a', they were spoken about, under the breath often. 'Cada loco tiene su tema (every so and so has his own agenda) and the meeting might be prolonged for another quarter of an hour for a now hungry attendance. There was no point in entering some of those gatherings in a bad mood, or with heartburn, or a desire to prevail through the power of the Church!

Caminante se hace camino, se hace camino al andar

Everyone knew the song of Juan Manuel Serrat, the Catalan trovador, from the poem of Spanish poet, Antonio Machado. And even with a glass of wine in me, I would never dare to attempt to replicate the tone of Serrat, having attended a couple of his concerts, when he felt free to come personally to Chile after the dictator August Pinochet had finally stepped down. It represents getting down and getting on with it, often in faith, and accepting that the project might not win the allegiance of the members of the parish or wider community, like a Workers' Day gathering and with themes on work, or the Labour Laws, or history, or a spontaneous procession on Easter Sunday morning, singing hymns and sprinkling Easter Water on the households in the locality.

¿Qué haría Cristo en mi lugar?/

The Chilean Jesuit, St Alberto Hurtado was canonized in my time there on mission. He figures highly in many aspects of modern Chilean life in the works and writings that he left behind, being both an activist and a contemplative in his short life. The month of August is dedicated to his life and works of Solidarity and it is named the 'Month of Solidarity', when his Homes ('Hogares') are promoted and there is a public march to his large foundation in the southern part of Santiago. "What would Christ do if he were in my place?" and "Give until it hurts" come readily

to the tongues of most Christians in that part of the world.

Tonterías...pintar monos... cabezas de pescado

There are always going to be present the first-timers, the naive or novices, or 'the foolish virgins', as in the Gospel. Starting off in a parish, or starting a parish off, there is little advance warning, and I learned on the hoof, occasionally I had the wit to listen and gets my cards marked, to find out who were the doers and who were just the talkers, or the revolutionaries in harder times; 'un pajarito/a - a little bird, someone might whisper in your ear. And in the violent days of the dictatorship in Chile, it was important to know who might be the radical in the assembly, or just the person spouting off doctrine, or might be using the chapel or the community, for ideological ends and sabotage in some form. So these little phrases, or Lexicon, of the sub-language not taught in language school, were vital to judge, or suggest, or locate where the energy was and from where, or from whom, it was coming.

Levántate...y mire la montaña

In some of those heady days, that was just the phrase that would spark off the activist. The Chilean folk-singer, Victor Jara, was one of those assassinated in the Coup of 1973, with his guitar-fingers chopped off, it is said. A country-boy from the south, his songs in working men's and union groupings were on the tips of the tongues of men and women of that period. Columbans of a certain period will remember forever the expulsion from the country of some of our group. In one of those moments, that song of Victor Jara was intoned in a moment of great emotion. Just a couple of years back, during an extended visit to Santiago, I was present at the funeral in the Jesuit Church of Padre Jose Aldunate (101), activist and opponent of the dictatorship, and in the final procession towards the door of the chapel there arose the ever-louder murmur from the generation present of that 'Levántate'...and look at

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Omagh native's pilgrimage guidebook brings Holy Land to life

Photographs by Chai Brady

PRIMATE of All-Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin has encouraged Irish Catholics to consider making a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. The Archbishop pleaded with Irish groups to also engage with the local people in the Holy Land, particularly the small Christian community.

Archbishop Eamon was speaking at the launch of 'An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to the Holy Land' by Omagh native, Michael Kelly, in Killyclogher, Co Tyrone. He praised Mr Kelly for undertaking the book and working to help more people experience the riches of a trip to the Holy Land.

"It's wonderful that Michael has brought his own immense experience and study of the Holy Land to the pages of this Irish pilgrimage guide.

"He does so in an easily accessible style - he has a great gift for communications," the Primate

said of the editor of 'The Irish Catholic' newspaper.

More than 100 people packed the Cappagh Parish Centre for the launch in Michael's home parish.

Parish Priest, Fr Kevin McElhennon welcomed parishioners and people who had travelled from other parishes, saying that he was proud to "celebrate one of our own" referring to Michael.

Archbishop Eamon also remarked that the guide "vividly communicates the privilege of walking in the footsteps of the Lord in the Holy Land".

Michael told the launch that the book had been for him a "labour of love", borne of the fruit of many years leading pilgrimages to the Holy Land.

Archbishop Eamon took up the theme of a "labour of love", saying: "He brings alive the places and the people of the Holy Land, and the

good and even the drink of the Holy Land!

"He does so in a fresh and engaging way, shedding light on the places and communities that call that place home".

Referring to the Christian community in the Holy Land, Archbishop Eamon described them as the "living stones", and said that their presence is an ongoing reminder of the continuity of those who followed Christ from the beginning.

Commending the book, he added: "You can read this book if you're preparing to go to the Holy Land, you can read this book if you're out in the Holy Land visiting the places - but even if you never go there, just read this little

book and it's almost as if you can go on pilgrimage to the Holy Land. If you read this book - it will really bring it to life for you".

Copies of 'An Irish Pilgrimage to the Holy Land' are available from Top News in Omagh, all good bookshops and www.columbabooks.com



Martin and Mairead Morris with author Michael Kelly.



Odhran McNamee and Mary Kate Johnston.



Eoghan and Daithi Kelly get their books signed by their uncle Michael Kelly.



Conor, Carmel, Shane and Michael Kelly.



Fr Kevin McElhennon PP of Cappagh parish speaks to the crowd about the new book, An Irish Pilgrimage Guide to The Holy Land.



Vonnice McElhatton and Anne McBride.



Bernie Gormley and Sophie Scott get their An Irish Catholic Pilgrimage to The Holy Land signed at a book signing in Omagh.

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the mountain...at the hands to grow...shake it to your brother... together we will be united in blood...today is the time that can be tomorrow...bring us your kingdom of justice and equality... may the will be done on earth!" And, as my country of mission - my second homeland - debates these days the new and very radical Constitution that the left-wing government is proposing for the September vote, that is the refrain that the YES voters will be invoking, wherever it is going to lead!

Recently, on the internet Sunday liturgy reflection, I came across this piece that will surely enter my Lexicon: Saint John Climacus (from the Ladder of

Divine Ascent)...

"Let your prayer be entirely simple. One word was enough for the publican and for the prodigal son to obtain God's forgiveness (cf. Lk 15, 21). No pretentiousness in the words of your prayers; how often it is that the simple and unadorned stammerings of children sway their father! So don't launch into long discourses lest you weaken your spirit through verbal affectation.

A single word from the publican moved the mercy of God; one word full of faith saved the good thief (Lk 23, 42). Proximity in prayer often fills up the spirit with images and dissipates it, whereas a single word often has the effect of recollecting it.

Do you feel consolation, gripped by a word of prayer? Remain there, for it is then that our angel prays with us. Don't be too sure of yourself, even if you have attained purity; rather, have great humility and you will then feel greater confidence. Even if you have scaled the ladder of perfection, pray for forgiveness for your sins; pay heed to Saint Paul's cry: 'I am the foremost among sinners' (1Tim 1, 15). If you are clothed with gentleness and free of anger little else is required to free your soul from its bondage".



Fr Declan McGeehan and Fr Gerard Mongan.



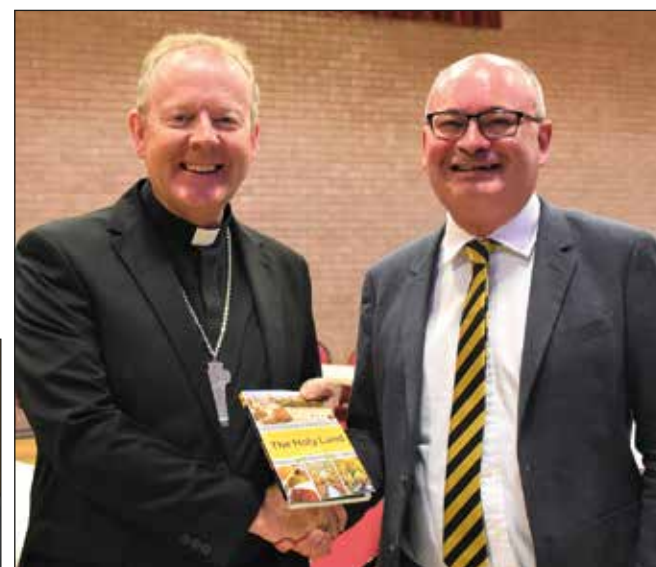
Local MP Oifhlaith Begley standing with Mary Garriety.



Lorraine, Daithi, Damian and Eoghan Kelly with Padraig Taggart.



Sharon Fee with Paula and Clement Kennedy at the book launch.



Archbishop Eamon Martin poses with author Michael Kelly.



Fr Kevin McElhennon PP of Cappagh Parish with Thomas Kilduff and Peter McGovern of the Knights of the Holy Sepulchre and Seamus McDonald from the Knights of St Columbanus.

Saints we celebrate in September *by Fr Michael McGoldrick ocd*



St Gregory the Great

St Gregory the Great

Gregory was born around 540 in Rome into a very wealthy family. He was well educated and became an expert in law. After his father died, Gregory had the family villa in Rome converted into a monastery. In 590, Pope Pelagius II died, and Gregory was proclaimed pope by acclamation. He was pope between 590 and 604 AD. He referred to himself as a servant of God, a custom that remains in practice to this day.

Pope Gregory was famous for his emphasis on missionary work. He sent St Augustine (of Canterbury) to Kent in 597. Pope Gregory's name became associated with the chant known as Gregorian Chant, though his association with it is not clear. Pope Gregory was well known for his alms to the poor. He ordered his clergy to go out into the streets to find and care for the poor in person. He also made certain to dine with a dozen poor people at each meal. He was a prolific writer. He died on March 12, 604 AD. He was immediately proclaimed a saint by means of popular acclaim. His feast day is September 3.

Saint Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta)

Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu was born on August 26, 1910, in Skopje. Moved to pursue missionary work, Gonxha left home at the age of 18 to join the Sisters of Loreto, in Ireland. She received the name Sister Mary Teresa after St Therese of Lisieux. She was appointed in 1929 to serve in India.

On September 10, 1946, during a train journey from Calcutta to Darjeeling for her annual retreat, Mother Teresa received her "inspiration, her call within a call." Jesus asked her to establish a religious community, Missionaries of Charity, dedicated to the service of the poorest.

On August 17, 1948, dressed in a simple sari, she entered the world



Saint Teresa of Kolkata (Calcutta)

of the poor, visiting families, washing the sores of children, caring for old people lying sick on the road and nursing men and women dying of hunger and tuberculosis. After some months, she was joined by her former students.

Her interior life was marked by an experience of a deep, painful, and abiding feeling of being separated from God, which lasted until the end of her life. She died on September 5, 1999. Mother Teresa was beatified in 2003 and canonized on September 4, 2016. Her feast day is celebrated on September 5.

St Peter Claver

A native of Spain, the young Jesuit, Peter Claver left his homeland in 1610 to be a missionary in the colonies of the Americas. The slave trade had been established in the Americas for 100 years, and Cartagena was a chief centre for it. Ten thousand slaves poured into the port each year.

Claver declared himself "the slave of the Negroes forever." As soon as a slave ship entered the port, Peter Claver moved in to minister to the ill-treated and exhausted passengers. He helped them with medicines and food. With the help of interpreters, he gave basic instructions.

During the 40 years of his ministry, Claver instructed and baptized an estimated 300,000 slaves. After four years of sickness, which forced him to remain inactive, Claver died on September 8, 1654. Peter Claver was canonized in 1888, and Pope Leo XIII declared him the worldwide patron of missionary work among Black slaves. His feast day is September 8.

St Ciaran of Clonmacnoise

Ciaran is referred to as one of the Twelve Apostles of Ireland. He was born around 512 in an area that is



St Peter Claver

in the present-day Roscommon.

As a young boy, Ciarán helped his family herd cattle and studied his lessons while out in the fields. Later, he went to study with St Finian at Clonard, with St Enda on Aran and with Senan of Scatterry Island, where he was ordained a priest.

After spending time in various monasteries, Ciarán founded a monastery at Clonmacnoise in January of 544 and became its first abbot. Ten companions joined him.

He became ill from a plague and died at the age of 33, while the monastery was still being built. Despite the early age at which he died, he had managed to found a monastic school whose fame would speak all over Europe and endure down the centuries. His feast day is September 9.

SS Cornelius, Pope and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs

In the third century, the emperor Decius decided that all who would not give up their Christian faith should be killed. The pope, Fabian, was martyred along with many others. Emperor Decius thought that without a pope, the Church would die, so he prevented the election of another bishop of Rome.

Cornelius was secretly elected pope. After two years as pope, Cornelius was arrested under the emperor's rule and sentenced to banishment. He died in exile in 253.

Saint Cyprian was born to wealthy pagans around the year 190 and was educated in the classics and in rhetoric. He converted at the age of 56, was ordained a priest a year later, and made bishop two years after that. He was a friend and supporter of Cornelius.

As bishop of Carthage for 10 years, Cyprian had only one year of peace. There were persecutions under the Emperors Decius and



St Ciaran of Clonmacnoise

Valerian. Cyprian was arrested and tried for being a Christian. He was martyred in 258. His writings are of great importance, especially his treatise on The Unity of the Catholic Church.

Their feast day is September 16.

St Robert Bellarmine

Born at Montepulciano, Italy, October 4, 1542, St Robert Bellarmine was the third of ten children. Robert entered the newly formed Society of Jesus in 1560. He was appointed as the first Jesuit lecturer at Louvain (1570-1576), where he became famous for his sermons.

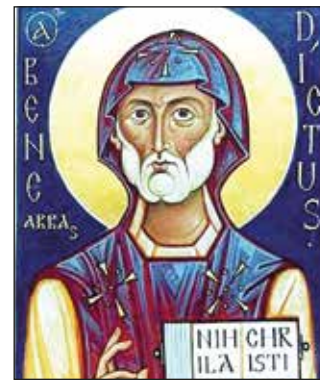
In 1576, he was appointed a lecturer at the Roman College, becoming Rector in 1592; he went on to become Provincial of Naples in 1594 and Cardinal in 1598. In 1602, he was appointed archbishop of Capua.

Throughout his life, he followed the example of his mother, leading a very austere and simple life with great devotion to the poor. He composed a major apologetic work against the prevailing heresies of his day. He was spiritual director to St Aloysius Gonzaga and helped St Francis de Sales obtain approval of the Visitation Order. In 1616, he had to admonish his friend, Galileo on behalf of the Holy See, but he also cautioned against too severe a penalty on him.

He died in 1621. His feast day is September 17.

St Hildegard of Bingen

Born into a noble family, Hildegard was instructed for 10 years by the holy woman, Blessed Jutta. When Hildegard was 18, she became a Benedictine nun. Ordered by her confessor to write down the visions that she had received since the age of three, Hildegard took 10 years to write them. Her visions caused her to see humans as "living sparks" of God's love, coming from God as daylight comes from the sun.



St Benedict

Like all mystics, Hildegard saw the harmony of God's creation and the place of people in that. She was no stranger to controversy. The monks near her original foundation protested vigorously when she moved her monastery to Bingen. She confronted Emperor Frederick Barbarossa for supporting at least three antipopes.

Between 1152 and 1162, Hildegard often preached in the Rhineland. She died in 1197. This multi-talented woman was abbess, artist, author, composer, mystic, pharmacist, poet, preacher, and theologian.

Pope Benedict XVI canonized Hildegard and named her a Doctor of the Church in 2012. Her feast is celebrated on September 17.

St Matthew

Little is known about St Matthew, except that he was the son of Alphaeus, and he was born in Galilee. He worked as a tax collector, which was a hated profession during the time of Christ. According to the Gospel, Matthew was working at a collection booth in Capernaum when Christ came to him and said, "Follow me." With this simple call, Matthew became a disciple of Christ.

Many years following the death of Christ, between 41 and 50 AD, Matthew wrote his gospel account. He wrote the book in Aramaic in the hope that his account would convince his fellow people that Jesus was the Messiah and that His kingdom had been fulfilled in a spiritual way.

St Matthew's feast day is September 21.

St Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)

Francesco Forgione was born in 1887 into a family of poor farmers in southern Italy. At the age of 15, Francesco joined the Capuchins and took the name of Pio. He was



SS Cornelius, Pope and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs ordained in 1910 and was drafted during World War I. After he was discovered to have tuberculosis, he was discharged.

In 1917, he was assigned to the friary in San Giovanni Rotondo. On September 20, 1918, he received the stigmata while making his thanksgiving after Mass. In 1924, and again in 1931, the authenticity of the stigmata was questioned. Padre Pio was not permitted to celebrate Mass publicly or to hear confessions. Thankfully, these decisions were soon reversed.

Padre Pio rarely left the friary after he received the stigmata. However, busloads of people began coming to see him. He heard confessions for up to 10 hours every day. Padre Pio saw the need for a hospital in the area and, at his urging, it was built. This "House for the Alleviation of Suffering" has 350 beds today.

Padre Pio died on September 23, 1968 and was beatified in 1999. In one of the largest canonization ceremonies in history, Pope John Paul II canonized him on June 16, 2002. His feast day is September 23.

St Vincent de Paul

St Vincent de Paul was born to a poor peasant family in Pouy on April 24, 1581. The Franciscans provided his first formal education. He was ordained in 1600. In 1605, while on a ship travelling from Marseilles to Narbonne, he was captured, brought to Tunis, and sold as a slave. Two years later, he and his master managed to escape, and both returned to France.

St Vincent went to Rome to continue his studies. While there, he became a chaplain to the Count of Gigny and was placed in charge of distributing money to the deserving poor. From that point forward, he spent his life preaching missions to and providing relief to the poor.

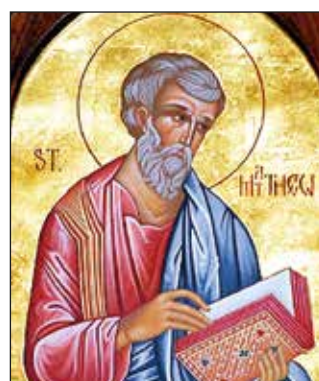
He later extended his concern



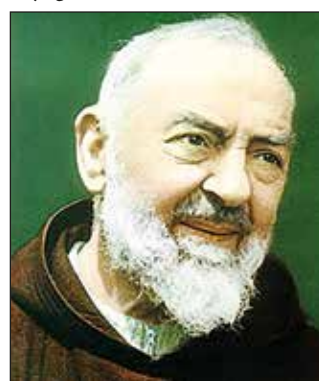
St Robert Bellarmine



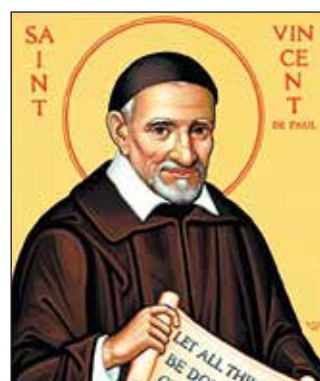
St Hildegard of Bingen



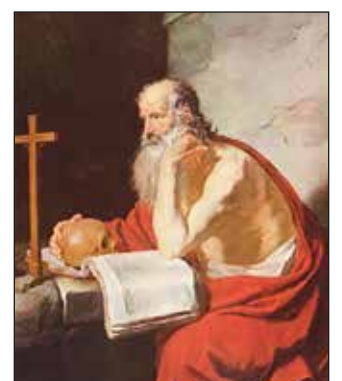
St Matthew.



St Pius of Pietrelcina (Padre Pio)



St Vincent de Paul.



St Jerome

Clerical and structural changes for the Diocese

THE summer Diocesan appointments have seen a few parishes get a new parish priest, and a few priests having to spread their wings to cover more parishes. Commenting on the clerical changes and a change of structure, Bishop Donal has said: “This is a major time of change for the Church in Ireland. Renewal does not mean changing teaching. But it does involve changing how we preach the Gospel to our society, and reviewing our structure so that we are more fit for purpose”. “Due to the death of a number of priests”, he added, “we have had to begin moving to a situation where parishes are clustered, and some will not have a resident priest. However, every parish will still have a priest responsible for celebrating all the Masses and other services for the people of the parish. “I thank priests for moving and taking on new responsibilities. That is never easy. I thank parishes for having to come to terms quickly with unexpected changes. “We do not know what the future holds, but the Lord is calling us to face the future with confidence”. The clerical changes included Fr David O’Kane, PP Claudy, being appointed as Vicar Forane for the Derry City Deanery, following the retirement of Fr Colum Clerkin. Fr Brian Donnelly, PP Newtownstewart and Plumbridge, is now also Administrator for Gortin and Greencastle, and is assisted in all four parishes by curate, Fr Roland Colhoun, who resides in Newtownstewart. Fr Pat O’Hagan, former PP Moville, has now been installed as PP Ballyscullion, as well as being the Administrator of Lavey and Greenlough, and Diocesan Vocations Director. Fr Brendan Crowley, PP Errigal, is also now Administrator for Kilrea, and he is assisted in both parishes by Fr Dermott Harkin, formerly

curate of Lavey and Greenlough. Fr Edward Gallagher, formerly PP Gortin and Greencastle, has now been installed as PP Moville, while Fr Joe Gormley, formerly PP Creggan, has been installed as PP Holy Family, Ballymagroarty. Fr John McDevitt, PP Steelstown, is also now Administrator for Culmore, and Fr Gerard Mongan, formerly CC Three Patrons, is now Administrator for Long Tower. Fr Daniel McFaul, who was serving as curate in Creggan, has now been installed as parish priest there. Fr Eamon Graham, formerly PP Lavey and Greenlough, is now CC Ballyscullion, Lavey and Greenlough, and Fr Patrick Baker, who was Administrator for Long Tower, is now CC Burt, Inch & Fahan, and Buncrana. Fr Patrick Lagan, formerly CC St Eugene’s Cathedral, is now CC Waterside and Strathfoyle, and Fr Sean O’Donnell, who was CC Waterside and Strathfoyle, is now CC Three Patrons, while Fr Ignacy Saniuta, formerly CC St Eugene’s Cathedral is now CC Creggan. Fr Roni Zacharias, formerly CC Waterside and Strathfoyle, is now CC St Eugene’s Cathedral, and Fr Joshy Parokkaran, formerly CC Three Patrons, is now CC Waterside and Strathfoyle, in addition to his appointment with the Syro-Malabar Church. Fr Joseph Varghese, on loan from the Archeparchy of Changanacherry, has made a welcome return at CC Dungiven. Rev Michael McCaul, who had been serving as deacon in Cappagh after his ordination to the Diaconate, is now Deacon at St Eugene’s Cathedral. Mgr Andrew Dolan, the long serving parish priest of Ballyscullion, has retired, while Fr Chris Ferguson continues his leave of absence and Fr James Devine has taken leave of absence.

Continued from p28

and ministry to convicts. The need to evangelize and assist these souls was so great, and the demands beyond his own ability to meet, that he founded the Ladies of Charity, a lay institute of women, to help, as well as a religious institute of priests – the Congregation of Priests of the Mission, known today as the Vincentians. In addition to his order, St Vincent cofounded the Daughters of Charity with St Louise de Marillac. He died in Paris on September 27, 1660. His feast day is September 27. **St Jerome** St Jerome was born around 342. Around the age of 12, he travelled to Rome to study grammar, philosophy, and rhetoric. By his own admission, he spent a lot of his time pursuing pleasure. Around the year 366, Jerome decided to become a Christian and was baptized by Pope Liberius.

Christ the King by Vera McFadden

MY mother died on the Feast of Christ the King. I remember what Sr Aloysius said at the wake, “What a lovely day to die, on His special feast day. It is as if He had come for her Himself.” Years later, my oldest sister-in-law also died on the Feast of Christ the King. There is a saying, “God has no favourites”, and that is very true, but we can grasp at any consolations at times of bereavement. Whenever any of us was going through a testing time of illness, or some other difficult problem or situation, my mother would say, “The bigger the cross, the greater the crown”, to encourage us in our endurance. Of course, the word ‘crown’ in this old saying means some kind of reward for having tolerance. Jesus suffered a lot, and the only crown that He got in this world was a crown of the thorns. There had been prophecies about His coming. Three very wise men, who knew a lot about astronomy, had come together to watch for the special sign in the sky that showed that the time was now. They shared their knowledge. When they saw the star in the sky, they set off to follow where it led. It led them to Jerusalem and then it disappeared. When they went to King Herod’s palace to enquire, “Where is He who is born King of the Jews? We have seen a star in the east and have come to adore him.” The King asked his learned men who knew the prophecy about Bethlehem, and the wise men set off again, after the scheming King had asked them to return and let him know how they had got on, pretending that he too wished to adore Him. The wise men found the Child and His mother, and they adored Him, and offered gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh; gold because he was King, frankincense because He was God and myrrh because He was man. The carol, ‘Oh, Holy Night’ tells “the King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger” and “behold your King, before Him lowly bend. Because the wise men had called Jesus ‘King’, the Holy Family had to leave Bethlehem and go to Egypt for safety, for Herod wanted to kill the child, and very sadly many infants were slaughtered as Herod tried to ensure the eradication of the little King. He did not know of the divine intervention which had led the Holy Family to escape to Egypt. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph returned years later, but His kingship was to lead to more suffering. When, at the age of 33, He was captured and sent to Pontius Pilate, the governor asked Him, “Are you the King of the Jews?” Jesus answered with another question – was he asking this of his own accord or had others influenced him? When Pontius Pilate remarked, “So you are a king”, Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world.” Then He was scourged and, dressed in a purple robe, mocked and crowned with thorns, and brought back before the people. When Pontius Pilate said “Behold your King they cried, “Crucify Him!” His throne in this world was the cross to which He was nailed. Indeed, His kingdom was not of this world. After this, He was scourged, dressed in a purple robe, crowned with thorns, spat upon, struck, and mocked. Later, Pilate brought Him before the people and then He was taken away to be crucified. The cross to which He was nailed was His only throne in this world. Pilate had a placard made with the inscription, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews” When he was approached and asked to change the wording, he said, “What I have written, I have written.” Jesus gave His life for us on that cross with that proclamation of His true identity attached to it. Don Bosco had many prophetic dreams. In one, he saw St Peter kneeling at the front of a church. There was no altar. Don Bosco asked, “Where is the altar?” and Peter replied, “There was only one altar, at Calvary.” That was where Jesus fulfilled His father’s Will. At the last supper He said, “This is my body which shall be given up for you”, and “This is my blood”, and then He told the apostles, “Do this memory of Me”. **Privilege** His instruction is still obeyed every time Mass is celebrated. In obedience to Jesus’ direction so long ago, this is done. As the Earth continually turns, and it is day at one part and night at another, the Mass is being said somewhere in the world at every hour in the day. What a wonderful privilege for our priests to be able to fulfil Our Lord’s request. The last supper, Calvary and the consecration at Mass are one. One of my favourite hymns is: *Hail redeemer, King divine! Priest and lamb, the throne is thine, King whose reign shall never cease, Prince of everlasting peace.* *Chorus: Angels, saints and nations sing, Praised be Jesus Christ our King, Lord of life, earth, sky, and sea, King of love on Calvary. King whose name creation thrills, Rule our minds, our hearts, our wills, Till in peace each nation rings with thy praises, King of Kings! Chorus: Eucharistic King, what love Draws thee daily roam above, clad in form of bread and wine, feed us, lead us, keep us thine! Chorus.* This hymn reminds us that Jesus was not only King of the Jews, but that He was also King of heaven and earth. Jesus told Sr Faustina that the average efficacy of an image

would not be because of the artist’s skill but through His grace. Several images of Christ the King, sometimes with his mother, have proved to be very efficacious. St Luke was a very skilled artist. He painted the original picture of our Lady of Perpetual Succour. It shows the Child Jesus wearing a crown, clinging to His Mother’s hand, and looking carefully at the cross, the reed and the lance, which are held by one of the angels. The picture shows that our Lord’s kingship in this world was to be one of suffering and torture. It also shows that Mary was there to support Him and, as our Mother also, she is there to support us. I was fortunate enough to live across the road from the Redemptorist Church at Clonard Street, in Belfast. The novena to our Lady of Perpetual Succour was attended by people of different denominations and there were many requests granted, some of them little miracles. Another image which shows the child as a king is that of Mary Help of Christians. This was Don Bosco’s favourite and he constantly sought the intercession of Our Lady by this title. The picture shows Mary holding the Child Jesus, who is wearing a crown. His arms are stretched out to us, welcoming us. Another well-known image of the Child Jesus is the statue, or picture, of the Child of Prague. A lady had this statue made and later gave it to a poor Carmelite Monastery, where the monks found that their extreme poverty improved to sustenance level. God had allowed this type of grace to be attached to the veneration of the little statue. The Child is dressed in royal robes, wearing a crown, and holding the orb on His left arm and the sceptre in His right hand. There are more images of the Child Jesus as King. My aunt had a huge picture of the Sacred Heart in the middle of her living room wall. It showed Jesus, the Sacred Heart, with a triple Crown on His head and holding the orb on His left arm and the sceptre in His right hand. Everyone in that house knew who was King of their home. I have a picture of Christ the King. It shows Him crowned by a halo, as the Sacred Heart, holding the orb on His left arm and holding the sceptre in His right hand. I love that picture, and as it is in my hall I see it very often. It reminds me of my mother and sister-in-law who both died on His special feast day, and it makes me wonder at the, not coincidences but, God incidents of life. justice, love and truth. Bless, in a special way, Your servant Father, Send your Spirit upon him So that he may always walk in the path of faith, hope and love, in the footsteps of Christ, the eternal priest, who offered Himself on the cross for the life of the world. Amen. **Remember in prayer:** Fr Pat O’Hagan (Sept 1st) Fr David O’Kane (2nd) All Priests (3rd) Fr Peter O’Kane (4th) All priests (5th) Fr Arthur O’Reilly (6th) All priests (7th) All priests (8th) Fr Michael Porter (9th) All priests (10th) Fr Ignacy Saniuta (11th) All Priests (12th) Fr Gerard Sweeney (13th) Fr Joseph Varghese (14th) Fr John Walsh (15th) Fr Alex Anderson (16th) Fr Patrick Arkinson (17th) Fr Patrick Baker (18th) Fr Declan Boland (19th) Fr Eugene Boland (20th) Fr Francis Bradley (21st) Fr Manus Bradley (22nd) All priests (23rd) Fr Brian Brady (24th) All priests (25th) Fr Thomas Canning (26th) Fr Michael Canny (27th) All Priests (28th) All priests (29th) All priests (30th)



Pope’s monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during September for:
For the abolition of the death penalty:
We pray that the death penalty, which attacks the dignity of the human person, may be legally abolished in every country.

Prayer for Priests

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

The Gospel Truth *by Fr Johnny Doherty, CSsR*



Fr Johnny Doherty

EVERY now and again someone promotes the idea that 'outside the Church there is no salvation'. The same people would often give you the impression that inside the Church it is almost impossible also!! The Liturgy of the Church challenges us to look at our whole idea of God, of ourselves, of what life is about, of where we are going. St Paul says in one of his Letters: "It is the will of God that all people would be saved and come to a knowledge of the truth". We put our trust in God's will because of Jesus Christ.

The way of Christ

One of the lovely features of the Gospels is that Jesus did not have

any great trouble in being with and accepting what we would call sinners - prostitutes, adulterers, thieves, murderers, and so on. He did not in any way condone their actions. But he always had great compassion, as he said things like: "Go and do not sin anymore"; "Today you will be with me in paradise".

The other side of this - and there is always another side! - was that Jesus had a lot of trouble with the good people, those who were virtuous, hard-working, law-abiding, self-righteous. So much of His energy seemed to be spent on them, trying to help them into freedom to worship God rather than themselves. That is still the struggle that Jesus has among us.

Hypocrites

A hypocrite is not someone who does not live up to his/her word, to what he/she says they believe. That is ordinary human weakness. That is what being a sinner is. We are all guilty of that and we all need forgiveness.

A hypocrite is one who does not really believe what he/she says, is not willing to be changed by God's Spirit, demands the right to be in control. A hypocrite is basically one who, while professing faith in God, worships himself of herself,

or some system of belief or way of life. We, the Church, are always in danger of the condemnation that Jesus spoke to the scribes and Pharisees in the Gospels: "You hypocrites, you brood of vipers, you whited sepulchres, all shiny on the outside and inside full of dead people's bones". We are forever making ourselves, our doctrines, our way, the centre of our faith and the source of our salvation, rather than Jesus who is Lord and who brings us into the freedom of God's immense love for us and for all of humanity and all of creation.

The Sunday Liturgy week-by-week

Week 1: September 4- 10.

He gives, and asks, for everything

Jesus said to the crowds: "None of you can be my disciple unless you give up all your possessions".

Sometimes the teachings of Jesus seem impossible to follow, and this is certainly one of them! Because of this difficulty, some people give up while others simply ignore it and go on their way. When Jesus talks about possessions, He is not condemning them as evil but rather calling on us to look at the negative effect that they have on

our hearts and lives and, because of that, to put them in their proper place. Possessions possess us so easily. The more we have, the more of our energy and attention have to go into protecting what we have. We can become very self-centred and forget our responsibility to care for one another. Even within our homes and families, our possessions can become more important than the people we love. They certainly become more important than taking care of the poor of our world.

Week 2: September 11 - 17
He welcomes sinners

"This man", the scribes complained, "welcomes sinners and eats with them".

One of the lovely features of the Gospels is the number of meals Jesus shares with people, culminating in the Last Supper with His disciples. When we think of a meal, we immediately focus on food. For Jesus, in His time, the main focus was on the people with whom He shared food, as a meal was a sign of friendship and a pledge of friendship. No one was excluded from this sign and this was a source of scandal to the good people when they saw Him eating with sinners. But His

message is loud and clear - He is there for everyone.

One of the major challenges for us today is to restore this sense of the meal as an occasion to constantly renew our relationships, especially in our families. The regular family meal will do more to unite us than any other action we can take, as it helps us to include each other in our lives.

Week 3: September 18 - 24
Lord of the oppressed

Jesus said to His disciples: "You cannot be the slave both of God and of money".

Thank God, all of us are much better off today than we were in past generations and even better off than we ever expected to be. This brings with it a sense of security and lessens people's anxiety about the future. But it also can bring with it a sense of self-sufficiency in which we think that we are in need of no one, not even God. We become selfish, and the more we have the more we want.

The challenge of the Gospel today is to be thankful for all we have and to learn to share it with those who are in need. When we become selfish with our money, we also become selfish with our

time and this has a serious effect on our marriage and family relationships, and the quality of our lives together becomes less loving. We also refuse to give time to building up our parish community because we are too busy or too important.

Week 4: September 25 - October 1
A witness for the truth

"If they will not listen to either Moses or the prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone should rise from the dead."

These words of Jesus were spoken to the Pharisees, who were very good living people but who were missing the point. They are also for us today, as we, too, so often miss the point of our faith. The core of our Christian faith is that Jesus has risen from the dead and is living among us.

This knowledge should give us great energy for living, great reverence for every person, great joy and freedom. Instead we make the living out of our faith a duty, a task, a burden, a lot of the time. We do the same in our intimate relationships of marriage and family life. It is time to catch the spirit of Jesus and let our love shine out to the world we live in, and to the faith community we are part of.

Listen to the voice of Creation

by Mary Bradley - Diocesan Laudato Si Group

WE are once again in the midst of the Season of Creation. Throughout the Christian world from September 1 to October 4, the Feast of St Francis of Assisi, churches celebrate the joy of Creation but with an awareness that the world is suffering deeply from numerous environmental crises and on-going conflict in many regions.

These global crises are interconnected and affect millions of people, but especially the poor and vulnerable. The theme for Season of Creation 2022 is 'Listen to the Voice of Creation', and takes the story of Moses and the Burning Bush as its inspiration.

Year 2022 has seen Creation shout at us

Fires have raged for months in California, Spain, Portugal, Italy, and Greece. Heat waves have scorched the land across the world, destroying crops, drying up rivers, reservoirs, and killing human beings in their intensity. And now the devastating floods, washing away all before them, particularly in Pakistan.

Those who have ears let them hear

We are at a crucial time for "our common home", the Earth, with both climate change and biodiversity loss already

impacting the lives of many, many people, their livelihoods, and all life. Here, too, in our own towns and parishes, we are worried. We worry that this winter will be a crucial time for us and many others. How will we cope? Our dependence on fossil fuels is staring us in the face as prices rise higher and higher. We are beginning to feel trapped or, perhaps, beginning to understand more clearly the necessity for revision and change to be at the heart of local, national and international legislation to bring about a sustainable, just future.

Without change, we face a fiery future. Moses was asked by God to remove his sandals as he stood "on sacred ground". The burning bush was not consumed but burned with the Spirit of God.

Below is a prayer for Creation composed by Pope Francis - it is full of tenderness, love and wisdom. We would ask that every reader of 'The Net' pray this prayer, slowly and meditatively, during the Season of Creation and beyond. Prayed thoughtfully, day after day, it will help shape us for the individual and community changes we need to make.



A prayer for our Earth

All-powerful God, you are present in the whole universe and in the smallest of your creatures.

You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.

Pour out upon us the power of your love, that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with peace, that we may live as brothers and sisters, harming no one.

O God of the poor, help us to rescue the abandoned and forgotten of this earth, so precious in your eyes.

Bring healing to our lives,

that we may protect the world and not prey on it,

that we may sow beauty, not pollution and destruction

Touch the hearts of those who look only for gain at the expense of the poor and the Earth.

Teach us to discover the worth of each thing

to be filled with awe and contemplation, to recognise that we are profoundly united with every creature as we journey towards your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.

Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle for justice, love and peace.

Amen



Listen to the Voice of Creation
SEASON OF CREATION 2022

The Burning Bush
Ex 3, 1-12

(Resources for the celebration of the Season of Creation are available at www.derrydiocese.com and on Facebook Laudato Si' Derry Diocese.)

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

Hello children. Welcome to the month of September. The summer holidays are over and we are all ready to begin the new school year. This month is dedicated to the Seven Sorrows (or Dolours) of Mary. The Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows, which is celebrated on September 15, recognises the sadness experienced by Mary, the Mother of Jesus.



Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.

There are different traditions across the world which are connected to the Feast of Mary's birthday. In the wine growing regions of France the birthday of Mary (September 8) is also known as 'Our Lady of the



Grape Harvest'.

The best grapes are brought from the vineyards to the church where, after being blessed, some are tied to the hands of the Statue of the Blessed Virgin and this is followed with a festive meal.

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



Mary's Birthday

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

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



rhyme in Austria reads:

"It's Blessed Virgin's Birthday, the swallows do depart; Far to the South they fly away, and sadness fills my heart. But after snow and ice and rain they will in March return again."

Saints of the Month

St (Mother) Teresa of Calcutta – September 5

St Matthew – September 21

St Pio – September 23

St Jerome – September 30



Feast of the Holy Cross

The Feast of the Holy Cross is celebrated on September 15. This feast recalls three historical events: (1) The finding of the True Cross by St Helena, who was the mother of the Emperor Constantine; (2) The dedication of the churches built

by the Emperor Constantine on the site of the Holy Sepulchre and Mount Calvary; (3) The restoration of the True Cross to Jerusalem by the emperor Heraclius II. Although this feast recalls these historical events, we also celebrate the True Cross as the means of our salvation.

Jesus suffered death on a cross to save us from our sins. Crucifixion was the Roman death penalty, given as a punishment to the most dangerous criminals. The Cross is important for us because, on the Cross, Jesus silently suffered a horrific death for our sins in order to win our salvation.

Jesus tells us in Scripture that anyone who wants to follow Him must take up his cross daily and follow Him (Luke 9:23, CCC 1435). This means more than simply giving ourselves to the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross. Sometimes things happen in our lives which make us feel sad and cause us great hurt. We should offer up the pain we experience with the sufferings that Jesus endured on the Cross for the sins of the world, and remember that in God we place our trust.

Traditions

September 29 – Feast of the Archangels or Michaelmas.

The days between the feast day of the Archangels and October 2 (Feast of the Guardian Angels) are known by children as "the angel days".

Angels are servants and messengers of God (CCC 329). Angels are signs of God's care and love and they remind us of how God knows each one of us. God loves us so much that He gave each one of us our own

Guardian angel as "a protector and shepherd" (CCC 336) to watch over us.

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

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

The Archangel Raphael: Raphael appears in one book only, in the Old Testament – the Book of Tobit. This is a beautiful story of guidance, healing and love. Tradition claims that in the Gospel of John, where Jesus healed the man at the pool, it was Raphael who stirred the healing waters.

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

Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. What fashion fad is said to have been started by the movie 'Flashdance'?
2. In what year was the first iPhone released?
3. What is the hottest planet in our solar system?
4. From which club did Manchester City sign Erling Haaland?
5. Which 2016 bestselling novel, later made into a film, was written by Paula Hawkins?
6. In which fictional holiday town was Dad's Army set?
7. Of which country is Baku the capital city?
8. How many players (excluding horses) are there on a field polo team?
9. In which Irish County would you find the picturesque town of Connemara?
10. In which Indian city is the Taj Mahal situated?
11. 'Starbuck' is a character in which bestselling Herman Melville novel?
12. By what term is a female donkey known?
13. What country holds its National Day on July 1 each year?

14. Whose face was said to have launched a thousand ships?
15. What side of a ship is known as 'Starboard'?
16. What is Dendrophobia the fear of what?
17. Where in the body is the 'Zygomatic' bone?
18. For what sport are Hove, Wimbledon and Perry Barr stadia regularly used?
19. What is the capital city of New Zealand?
20. Who did England Women beat in the final of this summer's European Football Championship?
21. Which iconic comedy film star claimed he once entered a look-a-like competition for himself, and finished third?
22. Who is the current manager of Derry City Football Club?
23. Who recorded the album 'Still crazy after all these years'?
24. Which TV sitcom features the lives of Scottish pensioners Jack and Victor?
25. What is the currency of Poland?

Quiz Answers: 1, Leg warmers. 2, 2007. 3, Venus. 4, Borussia Dortmund. 5, The Girl on the Train. 6, Walmington-on-sea. 7, Azerbaijan. 8, Four. 9, Galway. 10, Agra. 11, Moby Dick. 12, A Jenny. 13, Canada. 14, Helen of Troy. 15, The right. 16, Trees. 17, The cheek. 18, Greyhound racing. 19, Wellington. 20, Germany. 21, Charlie Chaplin. 22, Ruaidhri Higgins. 23, Paul Simon. 24, Still Game. 25, Zloty.

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

Let Your Light Shine!



LIFE Camp 2022 Living In Faith Everyday

“There are many signs of life and God-given creativity in the Diocese. As well as the LIFE Camp in the Cathedral Parish, we have HOPE camps in Limavady, Banagher and Claudy. These are lay-led initiatives which attract large numbers of young people to days of fun, faith and friendship”. (Bishop Donal)



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

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

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