

The NET

ISSUE 117. APRIL 2026

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

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See inside...



Exploring Divine Mercy - St Theresa's PS Glebe, Sion Mills.



Men's Lenten Talks - Gortin



Mary's Way of the Cross - Mayogall, Lavey



New Sr Clare mural in the Brandywell, Derry, blessed on 10th anniversary of her death, as a sign of hope and a call to courage. (See p3 for story.) Photograph by Neil Thornton.



St Brigid's College 50th - Carnhill, Three Patrons



Washing of the Feet - Kilrea & Desertoghill



Camino Sunday - Ballinascreen.



CBS Lourdes fundraiser - Omagh

People in focus



Frank Dunne - First St Brigid's College principal



Sean McCay - New St Brigid's College principal



Jesse Lezama - Pomeroy, Co Tyrone



Mickey Bradley - Buncrana



Fr Thomas Cusack SSC - Korean Martyr

Also featuring: Young Writers' section; Hollybush PS Easter Project; St Eithne's PS Stations of the Cross & Trocaire Copper Trail; Holy Family PS Omagh tribute to the late Fr Eugene Hasson; Children's Catechism Club; Bellaghy & Greenlough joint Lenten Programme; Buncrana Lenten Sycamore gatherings and Palm Sunday Procession; Bellaghy Stations of the Cross; Kilrea Palm Sunday and Easter Triduum celebrations; Dungiven Easter Dawn Mass; Melmount, Creggan & Buncrana Divine Mercy Devotions; Vocations News; Features; Diary Dates, Quiz... and much more...

Contents

Laity, ordained and religious to support one another to listen for breath of Holy Spirit
 - Reflection by Bishop Donal.....p2
 Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese.....p2

New Sr Clare mural blessed as a sign of hope and a call to courage.....p3

Remarkable level of satisfaction with what being provided by Catholic Schools - Bishop Donal.....p4
 Omagh CBS Lourdes fundraiser a great success.....p4

Budding Hollybush PS artists shine in Easter project.....p5

St Brigid's Mayogall pupils in powerful presentation of 'Mary's Way of the Cross' by Mary O'Kane.....p6

St Eithne's PS Stations of the Cross & Trocaire Copper Trail.....p7
 Grow in Grace with Sr Clare.....p7

Milestone 50th anniversary...
 *St Brigid's College, Carnhill, celebrates rich heritage
 *School, family, church & community at core of St Brigid's.....p8-9

Camino Sunday brings community together in remarkable show of support by Bernie Lynch, St Colm's Ballinascreen.....p10

Kilrea & Desertoghill Parish News...
 *Palm Sunday & Easter Triduum celebrations.....p11
Dungiven Parish News...
 *He is Risen!.....p11

Young writers share thoughts on...
 *Needs of young people today and Columban Young Adult Group
 *How to hold on to the joy of Easter
 *The possibility of a just war in these times
 *The importance of Christianity for morality in society
 *Miracles pointing beyond ourselves
 *The gift of peace.....p12-14

Marian Procession promotion attracting international interest by Barry Mallett.....p14
 Servant Sisters' May call to honour and celebrate Our Lady.....p14

Bellaghy Parish News...
 *Spiritual lessons from Sr Clare during Bellaghy & Greenlough joint Lenten programme
 *Behold the Power of the Cross.....p15
Buncrana Parish News...
 *Faith discussions and Palm Sunday Procession great preparation for Easter.....p15

Feast of Mercy...
 *Confession sought by many at Melmount Divine Mercy Devotions
 *Melmount Divine Mercy painting a special commission for young artist with Sacred Art mission
 *The Glebe's St Theresa PS pupils explore Divine Mercy message
 *Buncrana Divine Mercy Apostle called to live simple life, spreading Divine Mercy through deed, word and prayer
 *The Faustinum Programme
 *'Peace be with you' - Bishop Donal celebrating Divine Mercy Feast in Creggan.....p16-19

The old model of Church is dying on its feet...but the Church is not dying - Bishop Donal.....p17
 Prayer for Priests.....p17
 Pope's Prayer Intention.....p17

Knock Youth Leadership Programme.....p19

In memory of the late Fr Eugene Hasson...
 *Fr Peter O'Kane shares memories of Fr Eugene Hasson
 *Holy Family PS pupils remember their late school chaplain and parish priest
 *Tree planted as lasting reminder of a life that touched so many.....p20-21

John Paul II Men's Group Lenten Talks...
 *Men called to more by Oliver Barrett.....p22

Ruach - Breath of the Spirit
 *Ear-ache
 by Fr Eamonn Kelly.....p23
 Irish Council of Churches host Care of Creation Conference by Patricia McCormack.....p23

Vocations News...
 *Great conversation at Vocations Council Conference.....p24

Fr Thomas Cusack - the Martyr Priest.....p25
 Saints in the Derry Diocese and Donegal by Dr Seán Beattie.....p25

Parish Post-its.....p26-28

Diocesan Diary.....p28

...other Diary Dates.....p29
 Derry Diocesan Society Daily Masses.....p29
 Forty Hours - April & May.....p29

He is risen. Alleluia.
 by Fr Johnny Doherty CSSR.....ards God
 by Sinéad Strong - Catholic Mothers Ireland.....p30

Children's Catechism Club - C3
 by Veronica Harley.....p31
 Quiz Time with Lawrence.....p31

Bishop Donal reflects on the Pope's prayer intention for priests in crisis:

"Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer."

Laity, ordained and religious to support one another to listen for breath of Holy Spirit

THESE are worrying and stressful times for everyone. And Pope Leo realises this. It is interesting that the theme for April in Pope Leo's Worldwide Prayer Network contains the following lines...

"In his prayer, the Pope entrusted all priests into the Father's hands, especially those going through moments of crisis, 'when loneliness weighs heavily, when doubt clouds their hearts, and when exhaustion seems stronger than hope.' God, he said, knows their struggles and wounds as they seek to accept His unconditional love as 'humble and cherished disciples' and not as 'mere functionaries or lonely heroes'."

Those are strong words. Times of transition and change

can be very difficult and exhausting. It is not easy to respond pastorally to keeping the old system of providing services in every church - and to the need to develop lay leadership, so as to get good news to battered, young people. It is not easy to support all schools and to raise money that is needed to fix leaking roofs.

A new harvest is coming for the Kingdom of God, but now we are often doing the back-breaking work of tilling the hard soil and pulling up the weeds. Many of us will not see the fruits of what we sow. As the psalmist sang, we may go out full of tears, carrying seed for the sowing. But the Lord of encouragement is the Lord of the harvest, and we lay

ourselves open to be. In this year's Chrism Mass, we asked for the Lord to minister to us in our poverty and to free us from the straitjacket of limited imagination that often holds us as church.

It is easy to lament the problems. It is easy to blame someone else - the bishops, the clergy, the laity. We have to place ourselves, not merely among the messengers of Jesus but among those to whom He has come with His message of mercy. Jesus speaks to us in our poverty - poverty of confidence, poverty of uncertainty. He is in our midst to bind up our broken hearts and dreams. He wants to set us free from the prison of unreasonable expectations. He wants us to hear all those who



Bishop Donal with priests in the Derry Diocese during this year's Mass of Chrism in St Eugene's Cathedral.

mourn and need comforted.

The Synodal process is responding directly to that situation. It wants to move us away from angry fragmentation or a comfortable blame game. It does not allow for helpless withdrawal from working together or the choice of a privatised Jesus and a cosy

spiritualising of everything.

It challenges us as a diocese and parishes to recognise the reality that we face, and to prayerfully discern together how we can best respond to the great harvest and the reduced number of ordained labourers. That will be uncomfortable. But Jesus came to bring fire on

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

Aghyaran: Thursdays, 10.30am-12 noon.	Sundays, 2-10 pm, St Mary's Oratory.	Donaghmore: Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.	7pm, St Mary's Drumagarnier. Concludes with Benediction.	before 7 pm Mass.
Ardstraw West & Castlederg: Fridays, 10.30am-12 noon, St Patrick's Church.	Cappagh: Wednesdays, 8-9pm, concluding with Night Prayer; and Sundays, 3.30-6.30 pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.	Drumquin: Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.	Lavey: Fridays, after 9.30 am Mass until 5 pm.	Steelstown: Mondays, from after 10 am Mass until 6.50pm.
Badoney Lower: Tuesdays, after 12 noon Mass until 5 pm, St Patrick's Gortin; and Wednesdays, Mass 7.30 pm, Adoration and Confession until 9 pm, St Mary's, Rouskey.	Claudy: Tuesdays, after 10am Mass until 8 pm, St Patrick's Church, Claudy; and Wednesdays, after 10 Mass until 8 pm, St Joseph's Church, Craighane.	Drumragh: Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.	Leckpatrick: Wednesdays from 8.15 am-5 pm.	Strabane (Camus): Every day from 10.30 am-1 pm in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), at the back of the Church.
Badoney Upper: Wednesdays, after 7.30 pm evening Mass until 9 pm, St Patrick's Cranagh.	Clonmany: Tuesdays, 7.30-8.30 pm, the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin; Wednesdays, 3-4 pm, St Columbcille Village, Cleagh; Fridays, 3-6 pm (Rosary at 5.40 pm), St Michael's Church, Urris.	Dungiven: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9am-6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.	Lifford (Murlog): 9.30 am - 12.30 pm	St Columba's Long Tower: Wednesdays, after 10 am Mass until 7.30 pm Mass.
Ballinascreen: First Mondays, from 12 noon-7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.	Coleraine: Wednesdays, in St John's Church, 2-4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.	Errigal: Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Ballerin.	Limavady: First Sunday of each month from 3-5 pm in Christ the King Church (with Confessions), and on Thursdays in St Mary's Church, from 1-6 pm.	St Eugene's Cathedral: Sundays, 3-6 pm, and Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.20 pm.
Banagher: Thursdays, 10.30-11.30 am, St Mary's Church, Altinure, and Fridays, 10-11am, St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.	Creggan: Sundays 1.30 pm-6 pm; Mondays 10.30 am - 7 pm; Tue - Sat 10.30 am - 12 pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.	Fahan: Fridays after 10am Mass, St Mura's Parish Church.	Magilligan: Wednesdays, 3-7 pm; First Sundays, 3-6 pm, St Aidan's Church.	Three Patrons: Tuesdays from 11 am-7 pm in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh; Wednesdays from 10.30 am-7 pm, in St Patrick's Church, Pennyburn, and seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid's Church, Carnhill, from 8 am until 8pm.
Bellaghy: Every Friday, from 10 am until recitation of Rosary at 7.30 pm, in St Mary's Church.	Donagheady: First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St	Greencastle (Tyrone): Thursdays, 6-10 pm, St Patrick's Church.	Melmount: Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.	Urnay & Castlefin: Tuesdays, 12 noon-8 pm, St Anthony's Chapel.
Buncrana: Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, Fridays, 6 am-10 pm and		Greenlough: Thursdays, 9am-5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett's Church.	Moville: Mondays, 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, St Pius X Church.	Waterside: Wednesdays, 6.30-8.30 pm, St Oliver Plunkett, Strathfoyle; Thursdays, 1-6 pm, Immaculate Conception Church; Fridays, 1-6 pm, St Columba's Church.

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

The NET
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Contacting us:
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The NET
 Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

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

New Sr Clare mural blessed as a sign of hope and a call to courage



THE 10th anniversary of the death of Derry-born nun, Sr Clare Crockett was marked on April 16 with the blessing of a new mural in the Brandywell, in honour of the now Servant of God, and the celebration of Mass in St Columba's Church, Long Tower.

This milestone anniversary of the Home of the Mother Servant Sister, who was 33 years old when she died along with five young Ecuadorian postulants in an earthquake in Ecuador in 2016, fell during the annual week-long Sr Clare Retreat in Long Tower, which attracted thousands to hear talks and testimonies on the theme of reconciliation, as reflected in Sr Clare's faith story which is impacting countless lives around the globe.

The artistic work of Ray Bonner, Derry UV Art, the new mural features two images of Sr Clare, who grew up in the Brandywell; one focuses on the great joy she radiated in giving her life to God, and the other on her prayerfulness, keeping her close to the Lord.

With the original Sr Clare mural needing a face-lift, it was decided to restore it with the help of her many devotees in Derry and around the

world, who quickly responded to the request to help with the cost involved.

Many of those who gathered for the blessing of the mural by Fr Gerard Mongan, Adm Long Tower, and Fr Stephen Quinn OCD, wore clothing bearing the now world-wide known Sr Clare motto – 'All or Nothing'.

Fr Gerard and Fr Stephen were joined by the six Home of the Mother Servant Sisters currently residing in the Derry Diocese, in Crossroads, Killygordon, Co Donegal, and Sr Clare's family at the foot of the mural for the blessing, before which Sr Clare's family and friends released blue and white balloons into the air.

Leading the prayer, Fr Gerard said: "Loving Father, we gather today with hearts full of gratitude to unveil this image of Your servant, Sr Clare Crockett. We thank You for the gift of her life - a life that reminds us that no soul is too far from Your reach and no heart is too small for Your great love."

Before Fr Stephen sprinkled Holy Water on the new mural, Fr Gerard prayed: "Lord, look with favour upon this mural. May all who pass

by this place be struck by the joy in her eyes and the peace in her smile. May this image be a sign of hope to the broken-hearted. May it be a call to courage for the young. May it be a reminder of Your mercy to those who feel lost. As we look upon her face, remind us of her motto: 'All or Nothing.' Help us, through her intercession, to give our 'all' to You, holding nothing back, just as she did."

Anniversary Mass

After the blessing ceremony, everyone made their way back up the hill to Long Tower Church for the 10th anniversary Mass, which was celebrated by Fr Eamon Graham.

Recalling having also celebrated Sr Clare's Requiem Mass, Fr Eamon remarked: "It is hard to believe that it is 10 years since we gathered here for the funeral Mass of Sr Clare. On Vocations Sunday 2016, we awoke to the sad news of the earthquake in Ecuador. Little did we realise the sadness that would descend on the Crockett family and this community.

"That sadness touched people from far and near, of all faiths and none. In the period between the tragedy and the funeral, the family and the community asked many questions about God and His ways. We questioned our faith and felt feelings of anger and bewilderment. At the time, there were few answers. In many ways, those weeks and the terrible events gave us an insight into Clare's life and motivation. This was always expressed in her Derry directness and its joy and enthusiasm."

Paying tribute to the women of Derry, who "so often lived the Gospel by putting the needs of others above their own", he added: "Sr Clare was a striking example of Derry womanhood. Clare asked herself what she could do to make the world a better

place, how she could serve God through the most vulnerable. She did this in an exemplary manner as a religious Sister nourished by prayer, especially the Eucharist, but she did it above all as a woman who never forgot her Derry and Brandywell roots."

Noting that the St John Gospel reading at the anniversary Mass, in which Jesus is quoted as saying, "There are many rooms in my father's house", was a favourite of Sr Clare's and had also been read at her Funeral Mass, Fr Eamon said: "She saw room for all of us in the Father's House and often quoted this passage."

"Many people have spoken of how meeting Clare inspired them to change their direction in life," he added, "She continues to do this in death in ways that 10 years ago we could never have imagined. Clare always gave God the credit for all the good she was doing, and she continues to do so."

Fr Eamon went on to say: "Many people believe that the Church or the Pope has the power and authority to make someone a saint; nothing could be further from the truth. What the Church does is to declare that the person is with God already, that they can be held up as an example, and their name may be mentioned in the Canon (Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass). We all have known, loved and, indeed, lived with many saints; they have worshipped in this very church with us. No doubt, Sr Clare is among them and will soon be mentioned in the Eucharistic Prayer, The Canon of the Mass."

The Mass ended with a most beautiful rendition of what has become somewhat of an anthem amongst the Derry faithful, 'Lady of Knock', the Marian hymn written by another famous Derry girl, Dana.

(Sr Clare Retreat coverage in next edition.)



Reflection continued from p2

earth, not comfort.

Pope Leo asks us to pray for clergy in these difficult times. But he asks laity, ordained and religious to support one another to listen for the breath of the Holy Spirit, who is blowing in our time and place. The road ahead will be

rough. But the Risen Lord walks with us as He walked with the disciples on the road to Emmaus. He will not allow us to be stuck in a negative narrative about how our plans and hopes have been dashed.

We are not stuck in an empty, self-pitying, Holy Saturday. He is risen – and there is work to be done. God is in charge!

Remarkable level of satisfaction with what being provided by Catholic Schools – Bishop Donal

THE publication of the initial results of recent Primary School Surveys in the Republic of Ireland has shown strong support for Catholic education and the need for greater parental engagement.

THE publication of the initial results of recent Primary School Surveys in the Republic of Ireland has shown strong support for Catholic education and the need for greater parental engagement.

Commenting on the strong level of confidence among parents in Catholic schools reflected in these initial results, Bishop Donal told 'The Net': "The Republic is going through a process of change in how it provides education for its young people. The recent limited survey reveals a strange situation for government. Even though the majority of the population is

not church going, there is still a remarkable level of satisfaction with what is being provided by Catholic schools!

"Many pressure groups will come with ideological reasons as to why church should not play a significant role in education. But ultimately, it is voting parents who will decide what they want for their children.

"In an age of fragmentation, many parents still value an education that is not afraid to speak of faith and values, meaning and hope, community and service. The secular agenda is creaking at the seams. Parents are smarter than loud voices

would give them credit for!"

The Catholic Education Partnership (CEP) and the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA) also welcomed the publication of the initial results, with CEP chief executive, Alan Hynes-Cendrjak remarking: "Central to Catholic education is the recognition that parents are the primary educators of their children. This consultation represents an important step in ensuring that parents' voices are heard. However, the polling results are those of many local plebiscites around the State so we should prepare for clustered areas seeking change. The Department must be alert to this reality.

"The findings indicate a continued high level of confidence in Catholic schools. While a

proportion of parents expressed a preference for change, this represents approximately 16% of all eligible households, with the majority signalling support for the current model of provision.

"CEP and CPSMA acknowledge the importance of providing greater choice in education. Catholic patrons have consistently engaged constructively with State-led processes to support increased plurality in school provision, recognising that where there is clear local demand, change may be appropriate. The responsibility for ensuring such diversity, however, rests primarily with the State."

He added: "This has been an important consultation with parents and is to be welcomed. We certainly hope that it marks a move by the Department to commit to

more thorough engagement with parents, as the primary educators of their children, including on the curriculum and other areas of particular concern to parents."

General Secretary of CPSMA, Seamus Mulconry commented "The strong support shown by parents for faith-based education is very gratifying, but the right of the 16% who want change must of course also be respected and vindicated. It is now essential that the Department swiftly publish the survey in its entirety so that schools can have clarity around their future."

The Catholic Education Partnership was established in 2020 by the Irish Bishops as the umbrella body for Catholic education on the island of Ireland. It is a registered company and



charity, with a mandate covering primary, post-primary, third-level, and adult education.

The Catholic Primary Schools Management Association is a recognised school management association and represents all the boards of management of the over 2,800 Catholic primary schools in the Republic of Ireland. It also provides support and advice to primary school principals and chairpersons of boards of management.

Omagh CBS Lourdes fundraiser a great success



The six Omagh CBS pupils going to Lourdes, with Miss Oonagh McArdle, and soon-to-retire caretaker, Mr Michael Nugent

OMAGH Christian Brothers School held a very successful Coffee Morning as a fundraiser for their students going on pilgrimage to Lourdes with the Derry Diocese in the summer.

great support by coming along to St Joseph's Hall after each Mass on Sunday, April 12, to enjoy some delicious home-baking and a cuppa, and show their appreciation with generous donations.

Drumragh parishioners showed



Budding Hollybush PS artists shine in Easter project



My name is Darragh and I made this model of Palm Sunday with my sister, and it took almost five hours to make it. I made it by making the people out of modelling clay and leaves from a bush in my garden. (Darragh Devine, P7, Mr McNulty's Class.)



As a school Easter project over the last week, I did a model of some parts of the Easter Story with a little bit of help from my mum. The parts I chose were: Palm Sunday, when Jesus rides into town on a donkey; Good Friday, when Jesus is crucified; and Easter Sunday, when He has risen from the dead. It took six days to complete, and it was such fun. (Sophie McConnellogue, P7, Mr McNulty's Class.)



My piece of artwork on the Easter story was the crown of thorns. I made it from ends of a fake plant, painted brown on a stand, with flowers around it, and I wrote a poem on the Crown of Thorns. I made it at my house with my parents, and made it on Palm Sunday. I picked the crown of thorns because it shows how much Jesus loves us and cares for us by going through so much pain. (Eva Cregan, P7, Mr O'Connor's Class.)



I made Jesus's Tomb (my mommy helped me). I picked the Tomb because it is my favourite part of the Easter Story. I did this in one day. Me and my mommy really enjoyed making this project. (Ayla Coyle, P7, Mr O'Connor's Class.)



I finished this artwork on Palm Sunday, and it took me two days to finish. It's a re-enactment of the Last Supper. I made it all at home and I made it because it is a significant Bible story and it's one of my favourites. (Oisín Manktelow, P7, Mr O'Connor's Class.)



For my homework, I decided to write a poem, I called it, "The Dawn of the Eternal King." I also made a cross out of wood. To make the cross I got some wood from my garage and used some tools to join the pieces together. The reason I decided to make a cross is because I love to create things out of wood, and I like creative writing a lot. (Sam Swan, P7, Mr O'Connor's Class.)

St Brigid's Mayogall pupils in powerful presentation of Mary's Way of the Cross

by Mary O'Kane

PRIMARY 7 pupils from St Brigid's PS, Mayogall, in Co Derry, performed the very moving 'Mary's Way of the Cross' in Our Lady of Mercy Church, Lavey during Holy Week. 'Mary's Way of the Cross' tells the story of the Stations of the Cross from Mary's viewpoint - as a mother watching her Son suffer and die. Simeon told Mary at the beginning of Jesus' life, "a sword of sorrow will pierce your heart", and this dramatic story really enables the congregation to think about suffering and loss from a relative's perspective.

In 'Mary's Way of the Cross', children told the Passion story through drama and song,

with their emotional rendition including Conall Duggan as 'Jesus' carrying his cross, whilst wearing a crown of thorns. The role of Mary, superbly played by Éadaoin McCloy, had the congregation enthralled. Pilate, played by Faolan Dinsmore and the Roman Guards - Charlie Carmichael, Jack O'Neill, Cathair Scullion and Ethan Doyle - illustrated the harsh side of the Crucifixion, whilst Cara Shaw as Veronica and Paidi Holleran as Simon of Cyrene showed the humane side of the Passion; combined together these children very much brought the story of the Passion and Death of Jesus to life. These young children re-

enacted the story showing their considerable talents in music and drama. Narrators, Davinn Mullin, Cathain Grieve, and Connlaoth and Dara Mullan poignantly led the Stations of the Cross. Groups of children accompanied 'Mary' as she followed her son 'Jesus' to Calvary, their weeping and raw emotion added such realism and sadness.

The school choir added so much to the performance with a selection of Taizé chants and hymns. The school choir and pupil soloist, Riona McPeake, and group singers - Rosie Duggan, Isla-Rose Coyle, Rose Mc Peake and Isla Convery - provided an excellent

music liturgy, under the direction of Sean Scullion.

On Spy Wednesday, following their performance, Parish Priest and School Trustee, Fr Eamon Graham commended the children on their telling of the Passion and Death of Jesus from this moving perspective of Mary. He added that the pupils had created a very polished and professional performance, which delivered a strong Easter message to all.

Well-done to all the boys and girls of St Brigid's PS, Mayogall, who gave up their time and talents to this production.

(Photographs by Sara Pickering)



St Eithne's PS Stations of the Cross and Trocaire Copper Trail

PUPILS and staff of St Eithne's PS, within the Holy Family Parish, Ballymagroarty, took an opportunity to reflect on the happenings of Holy Thursday as a school community, with a very special Stations of the Cross Service.

Each class, from P1 to P7, had been asked to illustrate a Station for the Service, and these were then held up during the time of prayer and reflection.



Grow in Grace with Sr Clare

YOUNG people aged 14-24 years old are invited to come along for a day of retreat with Sr Clare in Termonbacca on Saturday, May 2, from 12-6 pm.

During this time, those gathered will look at this Derry-born Servant of God's example, and explore ways of following her

example and of helping to bring others to Christ.

It is hoped to use this day to begin planning future Sr Clare faith events for young people, so if you are passionate about faith, or even if you feel like you have no faith but are open to exploring this, please come along.



St Brigid's College – Anniversary

St Brigid's College Carnhill celebrates rich heritage on 50th anniversary



Newly appointed St Brigid's College, Carnhill, principal, Sean McCay.

THE 50th anniversary celebration for St Brigid's College, in Derry, was a joyous occasion, with staff, pupils and parents joined by former members of the school community in reflecting on and giving thanks for all that the Carnhill school means to them.

The highlight was the Mass of Thanksgiving celebrated in St Brigid's Church by Bishop Donal, who was joined on the altar by Mgr Joseph Donnelly, Fr Sean O'Donnell, and Franciscan Friars of the Renewal, Fr Antonio and Fr Joseph.

Welcoming the large congregation, Acting Principal at the time, Sean McCay, who has since been permanently appointed as Principal of St Brigid's, spoke of the rich heritage from the past 50 years and the hope to continue as guardians of the College mission to provide the best possible education for its pupils.

Amongst special guests on the night were the Mayor of Derry City & Strabane District Council, Cllr Ruairi McHugh, Cllr Sandra Duffy, and CCMS chief executive, Eamonn Broderick, and representatives of other schools.

The ceremony got underway with a presentation of symbols. Head Boy, T J Edgar, and Head Girl, Ashleen Carlin highlighted the bringing forward of the school keys and Holy Water from Medjugorje, the school's annual pilgrimage destination, representing safety; praying

hands, as central to helping others; a register representing the role of support staff in the smooth running of the school; fruit and vegetables for nourishment; a Bible to highlight the importance of Gospel values; a school blazer representing being clothed as a community in Christ; and a photo collage from the school's ASPIRE after school clubs, giving thanks for the strong links with community groups.

Bishop Donal gave thanks for "the courageous people who ensured that St Brigid's College would start in the heart of this community and for those who have worked to make it the popular College that it is, promoting not just exam success but high hopes for all the young people of this area."

He went on to say: "Catholic education is not either trying to be an exam factory or to be a dogmatic communicator of Catholic doctrine. A rounded education for young people is much more than that...A community-based education values the different skills and abilities of individuals, for a healthy society needs intelligence in all its forms – academic, musical, creative, sporting, technical and social.

"I know that you are working on the comprehensive modernising of the canteen and toilet facilities as a commitment to the students' comfort and wellbeing. And that you have plans for a new state-of-the-art, all-weather artificial pitch, which will elevate the sports programmes and provide a space for teamwork, resilience, and joy. All of this is aimed at telling young people in a dangerous world that, by working together, we can invest to create hope for the future and for that of their children. Faith in God means having faith in people and in what good people can do when they work together."

Highlighting that the religious ethos in schools was "so much more than RE and occasional holy things", Bishop Donal explained: "A faith-based school purposely

makes space to ask the big questions and to offer answers. As the liberal consensus seems to be crumbling in the face of what its free-for-all attitude has created – social fragmentation, addiction, mental stress, violence and a toxic on-line world – there is a renewed openness to asking big questions and seeking wise answers. Just when we were being told that we were being left behind and out of touch, educationalists are rediscovering the value of values.

"I know that the Friars of the Renewal have been giving ongoing spiritual guidance. That includes a visibility around the school, support for staff and the opportunity to go on pilgrimages...I understand that you have the newly refurbished school chapel as the spiritual heart of the college – a quiet place to spend time with Jesus in the tabernacle and to nourish the Catholic ethos, find peace, and gather in faith. An openness to God and to more than things can raise our eyes from the everyday and help us hope."

Acknowledging that a healthy community supports the development of a healthy school, the bishop remarked: "A healthy school community helps people to become generous neighbours, compassionate carers and keen volunteers. In our increasingly diverse society, I know that you are working on accessibility upgrades, emphasising that a Catholic school must be a welcoming, navigable, and fully inclusive home for everyone, whatever their abilities or disabilities or combination of both."

Saints

He went on to encourage the school community to learn from their patron and other saints: "St Brigid was a strong woman in her time. St Patrick was a strong man even when God seemed to be smashing all his teenage dreams. St Carlo Acutis didn't let his youth hold him back. Sr Clare Crockett became famous by letting God

take away all her plans for stardom and making her known around the world for her poverty and generous joy."

"The Derry of the future," concluded Bishop Donal, "is being built by St Brigid's College and by so many other great schools. Thank you for your faith, hope and love. Never be embarrassed about being proud of having them."

After Holy Communion, three students shared their experiences of St Brigid's College, which they had written for a "Time Capsule" to mark the 50th anniversary. Clodagh McNaught, Yr 13, who joined the school's Irish medium unit in 2019 and wants to be an Irish teacher, shared that her Irish teachers had helped her to grow in knowledge and fluency in the Irish language, and had instilled love and enthusiasm for the native language. She also shared that, as a Catholic school, they had "many opportunities to develop our faith, from Mission Week, Confessions, Mass, Adoration, the Rosary and, of course, our annual pilgrimage to Medjugorje. One of our themes for Mission Week was 'Do your best and let God do the rest'. Do our best to love God, do our best to love our neighbour, do our best to use our talents and gifts, and then simply trust in God. This is something that our RE teachers say to us, and it is a message I will keep with me for the rest of my life."

Thomas McFadden, Yr 11, shared: "I have been a pupil at this school for almost four years now and I have loved every moment of it. St Brigid's College is where I have made some of the best friends, friends for life...St Brigid's is where I have been taught to believe in myself...Our teachers really care about the pupils, always reminding us to see our worth and value in the world today. Our patron saint, St Brigid, is known as a woman who cared about everyone she encountered, and this is something we at St Brigid's College live out every day in our school. In our form classes we



St Brigid's College – Anniversary

continued from page 8

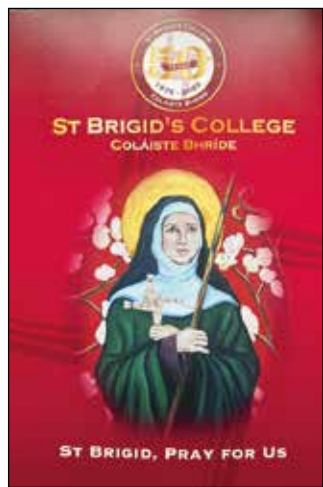
become like little families and, like every family, we have our ups and downs, but we will always look out for one another...I want people in 50 years to know that our school belongs to this community, a school that provides opportunities to give back, through singing carols in our local shopping centre at Northside, or making St Brigid's Crosses with the St Brigid's women's group and the 50+ ladies at Shantallow Community Centre."

Robyn Preston, Yr 8, shared that St Brigid's was a place of welcome: "I feel special and important when I walk through the doors of my school every morning. I never have to worry; there is always someone there with a smile on their face, offering me a helping hand. I believe that praying to St Brigid and using her as a role model has influenced how we work together as a school community. St Brigid was a woman of prayer and peace, our school is a peaceful place, and each day begins with our school prayer...we ask God to protect us, to be with us, and guide us, in making the right choices... As a school community, we are compassionate, this can be seen in the many charities we support... and in the relationships in school... We truly are one big family. I have had many opportunities to develop my leadership skills, for example I am a member of the student council, where pupil voice is not only encouraged but respected and acted upon. This can be seen

in our rewards system with pizza parties for excellent attendance, and the much-anticipated pass to go to the front of the queue in the canteen...I celebrate 50 years of St Brigid's College as a Year 8 pupil, who feels happy and valued... Every day, I am encouraged by my teachers to be the best, and I dream of being Head Girl in the future and an entrepreneur."

The beautiful celebration of Mass in thanksgiving for St Brigid's College Golden Jubilee was enhanced further by the uplifting singing of the College Choir and musical accompaniment, led by Evy McGinley, Ryan McKenna, Head of Music, and Jennifer O'Kane, Music Teacher.

All were invited across to the College afterwards for refreshments and an opportunity to view the great displays for a walk down memory lane, while Ryan Daly, Yr 11, played beautiful background piano music.



School, family, church and community at core of St Brigid's

IN a short history of St Brigid's College, in the foreword of the 50th anniversary Mass booklet, former vice-principal, Liam Gallagher (1990-2008) noted that the then named Carnhill High School was intended to cater for the growing new communities of Carnhill, Shantallow and Galliagh.

Wearing their distinctive blue and brown uniforms, the first ever pupils of the new school did not actually assemble at the Glengalliagh Road site in September 1975, as it was still under construction.

"The temporary solution," writes Liam, "was that the first-year intake, the 'K' cohort, was taught on three different sites – Pennyburn Youth Club, the Marian Hall in Shantallow, and Slievemore Primary School, itself under construction."

He added: "By the time the M year group appeared two years later good progress had been made on the Glengalliagh Road site and, after a hiccup or two, the three year groups moved in. But work was still in progress, and staff and pupils became used to moving to usable classrooms and teaching areas to the sound of hammers banging and Hilti guns popping.

"Eventually, the great day arrived, 50 years ago, when Bishop Daly formally opened the new school and ceremoniously planted the commemorative oak tree, seen in the green area beside the steps leading to the former entrance to the school...And, within a few years, the school built to accommodate 850 pupils had over 1,300 on its roll, with practically every outside space being taken over by 'temporary classrooms'."

The school soon enough became known as St Brigid's High School, strengthening the link with the neighbouring St Brigid's Parish, and went on to receive College status.

Liam writes: "St Brigid's College became a force to be reckoned with; and all the while, a succession of charity concerts and spectacular musicals copper-fastened the school's claim to be "the home of good shows."

A significant development was the expansion of Sixth Form, he added, "which enabled pupils who wished to go on to Further and Higher Education to stay with us through to Year 14, rather than go elsewhere at the end of Year 12."

The Year 2000 brought more developments, as well as

welcoming a new principal, and the staff and pupils of the Beragh Hill Road Irish Language Unit, Liam recalled that they "waved goodbye to the disintegrating 'temporary classrooms' and celebrated the formal opening of the state-of-the-art extension."

He concluded: "As we celebrate this anniversary, and look forward to the future, we give this assurance, pupils may come and go, staff may come and go, and walls may fall and be replaced; but one thing will remain constant, as it has for the last 50 years, and that is our uncompromising determination to provide the best possible education for the boys and girls, young men and women, of this community of Greater Shantallow to which we proudly belong."

Memories

The first principal, Frank Dunne shared some memories at the 50th anniversary celebration, and afterwards to 'The Net'. Born and bred in Derry, the 84-year-old recalled being the first teacher in his family: "I had a notion of teaching from my school days. There were a lot of good teachers at the Christian Brothers School,

on the Brow-of-the-Hill, near Long Tower. It is closed now. I went on to St Columb's College, and from there to a teacher-training college known as 'The Ranch' – Trench House, St Joseph's in Andersonstown, Belfast, which was later amalgamated to St Mary's. I was there from 1960-64.

"My first teaching position was at St Joseph's, in Derry, for 11 years, from 1964-1975, and then I went to Carnhill High School, now St Brigid's, for my first principal role. As the new school hadn't yet been built, I had to go between the different sites where we had temporary classrooms to check on how everything was going."

He added: "We had decided to have six classrooms of 30, but on September 1, 227 youngsters turned up! We just told the teachers that there was going to be 37 children in their classes instead of 30, and we got extra desks from the Board. We had some difficult circumstances, but we operated as well as we could. Teaching in Carnhill was great fun."

Other principals over the years were Brian Rainey (1999), Marianna Doherty (2000), Liam Ó Cuinneagáin (2013), Pádraig Ó Mianáin (2018), and now the

newly appointed, Sean McCay, who had been Acting Principal.

Pádraig Ó Mianáin was honoured by Derry City & Strabane District Council at a mayoral reception, when he retired as principal of St Brigid's in June 2025, after leading the school to a thriving position.

Proud of how St Brigid's has served the local community over the past 50 years, he commented: "It has maintained the same values since it first opened, caring for all who walk through her doors. The moment you enter, you are immediately drawn to the warmth and love that permeates the school. The school has continued to put relationships at the forefront, to see potential in all and never give up on anyone. The pupils are the life and soul of the school, and their diversity is what makes us one large family."

"Over these 50 years, we have been blessed to have such a dedicated staff who understand our children so well, and who go above and beyond to see them achieve. St Brigid's is a school at the heart of the community, and may it continue to serve this community for generations to come."

And current principal, Sean McKay remarked: "As a school community, we believed that it was important to come together to retrace the history of our school, and to celebrate the contribution of so many men, women, and young people over the past 50 years. We are not only celebrating the history of the school, but our school's ethos and core values."

"Liam Gallagher, past vice-principal, reminds us of our original mission statement which was to 'create and foster a faith community, binding together family, school and parish.' Today, we are the guardians of that mission, and it is no coincidence that our current core pillars remain as school, family, church, and community."

"In our Eucharistic celebration, we contemplated our rich heritage, we gave thanks for our spiritual roots, and we look forward to the future with confidence and hope that we will continue to serve God through the witness of our lives. We rejoice in the growth of our school community, knowing that we, like the early Christian communities, are working with one heart, centred on our faith in Jesus."

Camino Sunday

Camino Sunday brings community together in remarkable show of support

by Bernie Lynch



ON Sunday, April 12, the local community of Draperstown and the surrounding area came together for a memorable Camino event, organised by Karen McGuigan and Sharon O'Kane. Guided by the motto 'Let's Walk Together', the day captured a spirit of unity, generosity, and shared purpose.

The St Colm's High School Camino was designed to promote

both physical and mental well-being. Walkers enjoyed learning about local history en route, taking in the beauty of townlands nestled in the foothills of the Sperrin Mountains.

Participants set off along a series of scenic routes winding through Draperstown, Moneyneena, Straw, and Cahore, stopping at various local points of interest along the way. Adding to the authentic

Camino experience, walkers carried passports which were stamped at each stop, marking their journey and progress.

A dedicated group of pupils played a central role in the day's success. Members of the school's Camino group either helped organise the event or took part in the walk. They were joined by Cein Boyd, Rosie McIvor, Liam McWilliams, Eoin McGuigan, Elise Rocks, Cahir McKee, Aimee Lee Martin, along with supportive staff members.

The event concluded at St Colm's High School in Susan's Trail, where participants gathered before heading to the school hall to enjoy well-earned refreshments. The atmosphere was one of celebration, reflecting the incredible turnout and widespread community backing, with support coming from near and far.

In total, an impressive £4,500 was raised. The funds will support the

group as they prepare to complete the Portuguese Camino, part of the historic Way of the Apostle James in June. This is a network of pilgrimage routes leading to the shrine of the Apostle James (Santiago), in the Cathedral of Santa de Compostela in north-western Spain.

According to tradition, the Apostle James travelled to this region to preach and convert people to Christianity, and his remains are believed to rest there, making it one of the most important pilgrimage sites since the Middle Ages. Traditionally, people walked the Camino as an act of faith, however, nowadays it also serves as a time for self-reflection, healing, or as a break from the pace of everyday life.

St Colm's pupils are delighted to have this opportunity, and are in no doubt that it will leave a lasting impression on everyone who takes part.



Kilrea & Desertoghill Parish News...

Palm Sunday & Easter Triduum celebrations

Palm Sunday



The Lord's Supper



Good Friday

Easter Vigil



Dungiven Parish Pastoral Council News...

He is Risen!

MARY of Magdala, Mary the mother of James, and Salome went to attend to Jesus' body.

"Very early on the first day of the week, just after sunrise, they went to the tomb" (Mk 16:2)

With similar devotion, neither frost nor blizzard conditions could deter over 200 Dungiven parishioners from joining Fr Gerry Sweeney as he celebrated his first Mass on Benbradagh Mountain at 6 am on Easter Sunday.

Despite the exceptionally cold temperatures, there was warmth in the air and a great sense of joy amongst all who attended, as we celebrated the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ.

The first Easter Sunday Mass on Benbradagh Mountain was celebrated by Fr Frank Lynch on

Sunday, April 24, 2011. Annie Jo Kealey, Dungiven Parish Sacristan, recalls Fr Aidan Mullan (RIP) mentioning it the previous evening at the Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday - so unusual did it seem that not everyone took him seriously!

Fifteen years later, Mass continues to be celebrated on the mountain each Easter Sunday morning. It is hoped that this tradition will live on for generations to come, and that this marks the first of many for Fr Gerry.



Young Writers share thoughts...

THIS month sees the launch of the Columban Young Adult Group founded by James Tourish, one of 'The Net' Young Writers, following the success of An Lasair Christ Conference (Flame of Christ). Reflecting on the needs of young people today, which is leading to a growing number of young people exploring their Catholic faith, James writes about this and the hopes of the group.

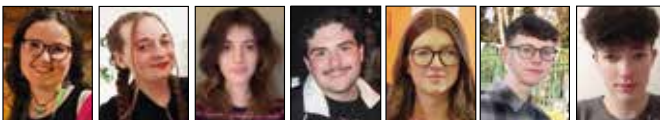
Cara-leigh writes about the joy of Easter and our mission to hold on to it in the midst of life's trials, while Conor looks at the importance of Christianity to maintain a moral society.

Clodagh reflects on the possibility of a just war in an era of such advanced technology and densely populated world.

Niamh reflects on miracles as signs of God's presence in the world, while Erin writes about the gift of peace in a world that is full of noise, and all the time changing and moving.



Farragh Ferry, Derry City Deanery
 Cara-leigh Doherty - Derry City Deanery
 Alannah Gormley, Derry City Deanery
 Nieve Browne, Derry City Deanery
 John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery
 James Tourish, Derry City Deanery
 Erin Whoriskey, Derry City Deanery
 Ryan Duffy, Derry City Deanery



Bláthnaid McMenamin - Co Tyrone Deanery
 Ellie Donnelly, Derry City Deanery
 Clodagh McDermott, Derry City Deanery
 Seán McLaughlin, Co Tyrone Deanery
 Niamh Sharkey, Derry City Deanery
 Harry Mason, Derry City Deanery
 Conor Sharkey, Derry City Deanery

Miracles are about pointing beyond ourselves to mystery, to faith, and to the possibility that something greater is at work in our lives.

Miracles point to mystery and faith by Niamh

FOR centuries, the Catholic Church has told stories of miracles; extraordinary events that seem to go beyond the laws of nature. For believers, miracles are not just impressive happenings; they are signs of God's presence in the world. But what exactly counts as a miracle, and why do they matter so much?

A miracle, in simple terms, is something that cannot be explained by science or natural causes. In the Catholic tradition, miracles are seen as acts of God that reveal His power, love, or purpose. They often inspire faith, bring hope, or confirm the holiness of a person.

One of the most well-known types of miracles in the Church is healing. Throughout history, there have been reports of people recovering from serious

illnesses in ways doctors cannot explain. For example, at places of pilgrimage like Lourdes, in France, many visitors claim to have experienced sudden and lasting healings after prayer. The Church does not accept these claims lightly; medical experts carefully investigate each case before declaring it a miracle.

Miracles are also important in the process of canonisation, when someone is officially declared a saint. To be recognized as a saint, a person must usually be connected to at least two confirmed miracles after their death. These miracles are seen as proof that the person is in Heaven and able to intercede, or pray, for people on earth.

Not all miracles are dramatic healings. Some are quieter, but still powerful. For instance, there are stories of statues weeping,

Young adults today...a search for purpose and belonging by James

IN writing this article, I confess that I take some inspiration from a homily for the Second Sunday of Easter that I listened to, delivered by Fr Paul Farren, Adm St Eugene's Cathedral, in which he spoke about being questioned on whether things like the 10 Commandments, the Beatitudes and even Biblical teachings were still relevant in today's world; a discussion that would certainly wake you up if you heard it early in the morning.

He spoke of how, in today's world, it was remarkable how so many believe that we are so much more "enlightened and intelligent than all of our ancestors going back to the beginning of time". He touched on that if this was true, we would be living as happier people in this age, more content, more secure and living in more stable times.

However, we all know that this simply isn't true; we live in a time, as Fr Paul put it, that has more and more problems with mental health, more problems with addictions, drugs, alcohol, pornography, and every other social ill that undermines the very social fabric of our society.

Though we see the so-called 'liberation' of many in this 'liberal age', we also are witnesses to the breakdown of the family in today's world, from marriages that end in the unfortunate outcome of divorce, to family members who do not contact those who should, indeed, be their loved ones.

Fr Paul put it simply, it is in this day and age, more than ever before, that we need to affirm and practice those biblical attitudes and teachings, as that is where true hope, true stability and true purpose can be found. Indeed, without Christ, Who is our cornerstone, we cannot have these values truthfully, we can have no real stability in life.

or people receiving guidance at just the right moment. Whether large or small, these events often leave a deep impact on those who experience them.

However, the Catholic Church approaches miracles with caution. It encourages people to keep both faith and reason in balance. Not every unusual event is accepted as a miracle. Investigations can take years, and many claims are rejected. This careful approach helps ensure that when the Church does recognise a miracle, it has been thoroughly examined.

For young people, miracles can be both fascinating and

I must then relate this very truthful, very apt homily to this month's article of mine. Certainly, such truths are most relevant in any domain at all, but I find it particularly pertinent to the surroundings and real-life experiences of young adults today, indeed, also to the youth more generally.

In this era of moral relativism, where we are told that there is no 'objective truth', where the goal of this life is to obtain a bigger box to live in, a nicer car to get around in, and where value and success in life is based more on where and how many holidays you take, and not on whether your life is one of fulfilment, and if you have a successful family life. The reality is that no car, house, holiday or any material possession, comes any bit close in value, to having a life that has purpose, and a family life that is loving and stable.

The lie told to young people to 'live their lives', which many times might as well be code to go out and commit mortal sin and dismiss what is truly purposeful, must be rejected and should be confronted by what is good and, indeed, what is true.

Thankfully, we are seeing a generation of young people, Gen Z, that is leading the way in many regards when it comes to faith practice and injecting the enthusiasm that the Church has always needed throughout the centuries. This youthful zeal, combined with sound doctrinal and theological knowledge, will surely propel the Church to greater heights.

In New York, the 6 pm Sunday Mass at St Joseph's Church, run by Dominican Friars, is packed with hundreds of university students and young professionals. According to a recent article from the National Catholic Register, standing room can see up to 150 people for the Mass.

meaningful. They invite us to ask big questions: Is there more to life than what we can see? How does faith shape the way we understand the world? Even if someone is unsure about miracles, the stories themselves often carry messages of hope, compassion, and perseverance.

In the end, miracles in the Catholic Church are not just about breaking the rules of nature. They are about pointing beyond ourselves to mystery, to faith, and to the possibility that something greater is at work in our lives.

Such occasions and stories must inspire us also, to have a network and community for our young adults too.

Following the success of An Lasair Christ (the Flame of Christ) Conference, a new group has been established for the Diocese, to facilitate young adults on their journey for truth, purpose and a sense of belonging with like-minded individuals.

Columban Young Adults is a group for those aged 18-35 years, who want to strengthen their faith and make friendships with those who share a similar interest and appreciation for the role of Christ in their lives. A focus on doctrinal development, creation

of friendships, and prayer, will be some of the main aims of the group.

Activities and prayer nights will happen on a monthly, or fortnightly basis, depending on the time of year. Expect beautiful evenings of Benediction, Sung Compline in community, get-togethers with food and drink, theological lectures, and a lot of prayer and fellowship!

There is now an active WhatsApp community for the group. If you, or anyone you know, are interested, please email me at Jamestourish@outlook.com, and you'll be added right away.



Young Writers share thoughts...

Importance of Christianity in the cohesion and morality of modern society *by Conor*

IN the modern society, Christianity seems to be on the decline in most parts of the West today. In Ireland, around 76% of the population is Christian compared to the 79% in the 2016 census in Ireland. This is much more than the much more shocking 46.2% Christianity today in Britain, which was much higher at 90.7% in 1960. This cultural shift will have negative impacts on our society, as most of what we take for granted about the West, such as freedoms and law, are not present in many societies around the world due to their lack of Christian philosophy.

The modern law system is influenced by the teachings of Christianity in many ways, for example, Commandments such as 'thou shall not kill' and 'shalt not steal'. Christianity promotes peacefulness and pacifism in societies, as people will follow Jesus' teachings and try to act like Him.

Much of the culture and morality of the West has originated from Christian teaching, such as removing capital punishment, that you should not lie, and honour your parents and family. Many societies do not grant their people such freedoms or are as morally strong as Christian ones, such as Saudi Arabia, where there were 356 executions in 2025, frequent amputation, such as cutting hands off, for theft, and lashings of people in public areas for being intoxicated or harassing people is common.

Another example is Vietnam, where people may get sentenced to death for drug-related crimes, and crimes deemed detrimental to national security. Although, unlike in Saudi Arabia, these crimes are being reformed. People in these countries have very little political freedoms and are often put in prison for practising them. This contrasts greatly to the more liberal crime punishments of the West, which include fines, community service and prison time, which are much less inhumane, as well as complete free speech. With a decline in Christianity, we may see regression to more cruel punishments, as people's morality may degrade with more atheism.

Church is very important in a society for factors such as strengthening communities and discouraging arguments and violence, which will increase the cohesion of a society. It regularly gets communities together, and acts as a place for people in the community to seek help or to help others in times of need. It improves the social environment of many areas, aiding families and hosting community events related to churches and Christianity. The religion is also very inclusive to all peoples.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus." This shows us the importance of Christianity to reduce racism and sexism, as in God's eyes we are all equal and made in His



image.

The survival of the family unit in the West is being broken down with the growth of atheism, as people choose to live more hedonistic lifestyles, rather than the traditional Christian lifestyle of starting a family and raising their children in the Church. This will result in a decline in morality in our society, as more people will not hear the teachings of

Jesus and will live a materialistic lifestyle.

Overall, I believe that this period of prosperity in western civilisation may come to an end with the decline of Christianity, as more people deviate from the church and live for themselves, people are, and will continue to be, more separated than ever if we don't see a return to the faith.

*"Strain every muscle in working for a time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent."
(Gaudium et Spes No 82)*

A just war is no longer possible *by Clodagh*

"WAR is a failure of politics and of humanity, a shameful capitulation, stinging defeat before the forces of evil." This is a line from Pope Francis' 'Fratelli Tutti'. Even after I put the encyclical down for the night, I found it particularly hard to stop thinking about this statement, especially as tensions rise between the West and Middle East, and we await often disheartening news of how the peace process is being handled. It is difficult for conflict to not remain at the forefront of one's mind in times such as this.

It reminded me of the 'Just War' theory set out by thinkers such as St Augustine. This is a theory that states that a war can be morally accepted if it is to fight a real and immediate danger, all other means of peacekeeping have failed, there is a proportional level of good to justify the destruction caused and no civilians are targeted.

In the time that it was written, this truly did serve to limit violence. Isolated battlefields and weapons of limited reach, allowed it to be a very possible option during times of war. Humanities rapid progression of technology since these times, however, has left the theory incredibly out-dated.

With drone strikes becoming relatively commonplace in the modern day, not to mention the constant looming nuclear threat, recent Papal teaching argues that because modern weapons cause indiscriminate destruction, the traditional criteria (such as proportionality and the protection of civilians) simply isn't possible to be met.

In today's densely populated world, "isolated battlefields" no

longer exist. When conflict enters urban centres, the distinction between combatant and civilian becomes impossible to maintain. The risks will always outweigh any possible benefit; war has become an act of absolute criminality as opposed to the solution to injustice it may have been long ago.

'Gaudium et Spes' (No. 82) calls us to "strain every muscle in working for a time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent". This "straining every muscle" involves addressing the root causes of conflict: poverty, hunger, and environmental degradation.

If we wait for lives to be lost to talk about peace, we have already failed. Be it through prayer, active involvement in politics, or by charity, it is our duty to act as peacemakers in any way possible.

The consistent message from recent Popes is that war is never the way forward, and that the faithful are called to seek security through international bodies and the "universal natural law", rather than through the accumulation of arms.



Joy after the cross... What Easter means for us *by Cara-leigh*

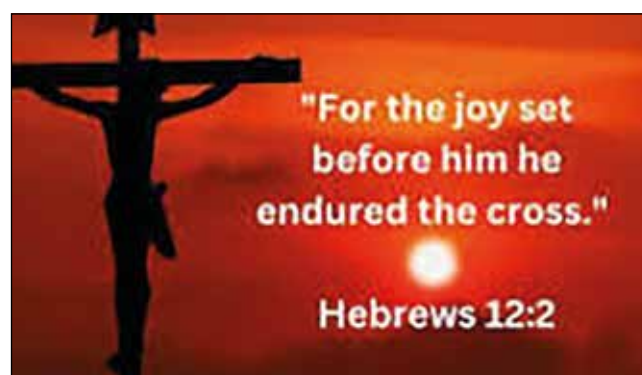
AFTER 40 long days of Lent, the Church gives us the gift of celebrating Easter for a whole 50 days, culminating in the Pentecost. It is a common experience that Easter Sunday comes and it just blows over us. We quickly return to the hustle and bustle of every-day lives; back to school, worries and stresses. But the church likes to remind us that the joy of Easter is not contained to one occasion but is meant to be maintained! As Pope John Paul II commented: "We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song."

The Easter joy can't be compared to the fleeting moment of happiness that we

experience, it is much deeper than that. It doesn't change when our circumstances change, we can experience this joy even in times of suffering. Christian joy is rooted in hope, not comfort. It is the powerful confidence of knowing that Jesus has risen from the dead! In doing so, Jesus conquered both sin and death. Reminding us all, that sin and darkness does not have the final word. It gives us immense hope – this is where our joy in the Easter season is rooted!

So, you might be thinking – that is great, but why don't I feel the joy? How can I maintain it in daily life?

We often lose sight of the



Resurrection in our daily lives, this is why maintaining Easter joy becomes difficult. Joy doesn't have to be loud; it can be in the simple moments of expressing gratitude to God at the end of our day for all that we have received.

We should make an effort to spend time with God daily in prayer, meditating on Jesus' great victory over death. If we allow time in our schedules to remain close to the sacraments, Confession and Mass, receiving our Risen Lord in the Eucharist, we will renew our Easter joy. We

can also show acts of kindness to all around us to reveal that Christ's love is still active and alive in the world!

Easter reminds all Catholics that no darkness can overpower the light of Christ. Even if life starts to get us down, we can remain rooted in the joy of the Resurrection, which provides the Christian with joy, hope and peace. As a young Catholic myself, I know it may not always feel joyful, but Easter reminds us that joy is not rooted in feeling but Faith.

Young Writers share thoughts...

The gift of peace by Erin

“LET nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you, all things are passing away: God never changes.” (St Teresa of Avila)

We live in a world that is full of noise, constantly changing and moving. There are endless tasks to complete, jobs to do, and personal problems that distract us. This quote from St Teresa of Avila stands out to me because, although it was written centuries ago, it remains just as relevant to our world today.

With all these worries that can make our minds restless, it can be hard to turn our faces to God and remember what is important. We may struggle to find time to pray

and speak to God.

St Teresa of Avila knew the struggles which could come in everyday life, she lived a life of illness and opposition. During the Protestant Reformation, she was often misunderstood for trying to restore a contemplative life for the Carmelite Order. Despite all these, St Teresa of Avila kept her eyes fixed on God and persevered through her trials, letting nothing “disturb” or “frighten” her.

Sometimes, when we are feeling deep anxiety, we think it will last forever. This is a lie we tell ourselves. Although God created us all individually and gave us

emotions, He would not create us to feel pain or worry forever. We simply need His help to carry us through.

In Matthew 6:25, Jesus says: “Do not be anxious about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, nor about your body, what you will put on. Is life not more than food, and the body more than clothing?”

He wants to challenge us to trust in God. Just like St Teresa of Avila, Jesus wants to highlight how temporary things on earth are compared to God, who is always there. When our hearts value the right things, we will become less anxious, as God will help us to

overcome. When we remember that our worries will come and go, they lose their power and don't feel so harrowing.

God's love will always remain constant for us. His presence will never fade. St Teresa of Avila recognised this, “God never changes.” We simply need to pray and work to put more trust in Him every day. By placing our worries in His hands, we can find a greater peace as He allows us to let go of what we cannot control. This is a gift He has given us – through prayer, adoration, or times of silence.

We are called to have faith, even when it is difficult, as 1 Peter 5:7 reminds us: “Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you.”

Servant Sisters' May call to honour and celebrate Our Lady

THE Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother are encouraging people to honour and celebrate Our Lady as the month of May draws near, with the reminder – “Anything we do for Her, we do for Him.”

They are promoting the distribution of a special calendar of ways to give a spiritual flower to Our Lady every day of May, along with a poster of Our Lady.

As well as hoping that people will use the calendar not only in their own homes, but also spread awareness of it in their local parishes and schools.

The Sisters found that the calendar idea was a great success last year, with many people taking the opportunity to start praying the Rosary. They just printed copies of the calendar and left them on a table, along with a basket of free Rosary beads and leaflets explaining how to pray the

Rosary, and before long all were taken.

To add interest for children at home or in school, the Sisters suggested that each time a resolution on the calendar is completed, they could make a paper flower and display it alongside a picture of Our Lady.

Anyone taking up the challenge is asked to send the Sisters a photograph, to help show how Ireland is promoting the Rosary and devotion to Our Blessed Mother. The contact email for the Sisters based at St Patrick's Crossroads, Killygordon, is derryshm@homeofthemoth.com.

The Sisters also encouraged support for Aid to the Church by buying Rosary beads and Rosary cards from its website - <https://www.acnireland.org/shop/pack-of-20-pocket-divine-mercy-cards-bzls9-md8bz>.



Marian Procession promotion attracting international interest by Barry Mallett

EXCITEMENT is growing worldwide with the launch of Guardians of the Faith YouTube Channel's the first ever world-wide Marian Procession on June 13. Giving it his blessing, Bishop Donal's promotional video is attracting international interest from across six continents, with emails flowing in from people wanting their parish onboard.

The level of interest is growing day-by-day, with over 85 parishes signed up from six continents at the time of going to press, and messages of support are coming in from such as Fr Jim Blount SOLT, Fr Chris Alar MIC, and many more household names and high-ranking clergy.

Christian media outlets around the world are picking up on the story and promoting this global event, including Life Site News, EWTN, and Shalom TV. The level of interest across some of the most recognised Christian You Tube Channels, wanting to find out more and willing to help share the event throughout Christendom, is so encouraging to see.

Derry is making massive waves across the Christendom media and, once again, leading the way in this Eucharistic revival which is having a knock-on effect.

You will know them by their fruits, and the fruits of the last World-wide Eucharistic Procession in November 2025, led by our very own Bishop Donal on the Feast of Christ the King, are becoming more and more evident. Part of the November programme included clergy in three boats blessing the River Foyle. Before the procession, there was an estimated 6,000 attempted suicides in this river and, since the procession and blessing of the River, latest statistics have revealed that there hasn't been one fatality.

Attendance at Holy Mass throughout the Diocese has increased, and we are seeing an increase in the number of young men and women, and especially Gen Z, coming back to their faith.

Local clergy have been reporting the jump in attendance not only at Holy Mass, but also in the numbers availing of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. What is so encouraging is that so many who have not been to Confession in many years, are returning. This is happening on a global level as reported by many Christian media outlets.

Since the last Eucharistic procession, a local man has set up a farm shop on the outskirts of Derry, at Nixons corner, the Coffee Barrell. We started supplying the Farm Shop with Holy Oils from the tomb of St Charbel & St Philomena and St Benedictine Medals; the same as those given out to attendees at the last procession.

The Farm shop has been inundated with requests, with

many travelling from Dublin, Newry, and other parts of the country, to the Farm Shop to avail of these free Holy Oils. The number of healings, and reported stories of people coming back to their faith and conversions, are surely signs that Heaven is doing something very special in Derry and pouring an abundance of spiritual graces on the land.

We believe that these are just some of the fruits of the recent processions, as Derry is standing up and leading from the front in bringing our Eucharistic King on to the streets and into people's hearts and minds.

The next World-wide Marian Procession is following on from this success, and will see over 10,000 free bottles of Holy Oils being handed out. We are also securing over 40,000 Miraculous Medals for all the attendees, and especially for all the school children making their First Holy Communion and Confirmation, along with other Sacramentals on the day.

The Procession will start at 10 am on June 13, the Feast of the Immaculate Heart of Mary and the Feast of St Anthony, and prior to that there will be 24-hour Adoration in Termonbacca, on Friday, June 12, the Feast of the Sacred Heart.

At 10.30 am, participants in the All-Ireland Men's and Women's Rosary will join in unity at Guildhall Square, Derry, to pray the Rosary on their knees. EWTN, Shalom TV, The Net Newspaper, Life Site News, Irish Catholic, and Ciara McDaid Photography are all covering the Rosary event, which will be followed by Holy Mass at 12 noon in St Mary's Church, Creggan, Derry. After this, the Procession will get underway, ending at Celtic Park GAA Stadium with Benediction and an afternoon of praise and worship.

Mark McLean and Alvaro from Uniquely Mary USA YouTube channels are flying in to cover the event, along with other local and international YouTube channels.

We are asking men and boys to wear white shirts and blue ties, and all ladies and girls to wear blue, as well as mantels on their heads for reverence, to make the procession as Marian as possible with Our Eucharistic King, as always, at the forefront. To Jesus Through Mary. This is Mary's Blue army rising up and answering the call to bring the light of Christ onto our streets, and spread this Eucharistic flame globally, just as St Patrick saw in 433... that a light would shine from the North and spread.

On May 12, we are asking families to start praying as a family the 33-day Consecration of St Louis de Montfort, which can be found online.

For more info go to www.worldwidemarianprocession.com

2026 **May** Complete the resolution to give Our Blessed Mother a spiritual flower every day this May!

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
31 Pray a Hail Mary for someone who is suffering					1 Give up something you like, and offer it to Our Lady	2 Thank Mary for helping you
3 Say a decade of the Rosary	4 Visit someone who is lonely	5 Pray for the souls in Purgatory	6 Pray for the Pope	7 Pray for priests	8 Invite someone to Mass with you	9 Learn about a saint and share about him/her with your family
10 Spend time thanking God for Mary	11 Think about your favourite thing about Our Lady	12 Pray three Hail Marys	13 Pray that God's will be done	14 Make a small sacrifice and offer it for your Parish Priest	15 Pray the Divine Mercy Chaplet	16 Pray for the dying
17 Pray on Our Father	18 Look at a picture of Our Lady and tell Her you love Her	19 Ask Mary to help you be good	20 Do something nice for your family	21 Pray the Memorare for priests	22 Think about Jesus' Passion	23 Pray the Rosary with your family
24 Read today's Gospel and spend a few minutes thinking about it	25 Tell Jesus you Love Him	26 Visit Jesus at Church	27 Smile - especially when you don't want to and offer it to Our Lady	28 No complaining	29 Pray the rosary	30 Pray for someone

Bellaghy Parish Pastoral Council News...

Spiritual lessons from Sr Clare during Bellaghy & Greenlough joint Lenten programme

THE Parishes of Bellaghy and Greenlough enjoyed a combined Lenten Programme in memory of Sr Clare Crockett's 10th Anniversary. Following an information night, the parishioners were blessed with prayer nights every Thursday, from February 19 to March 26, which included informal small group discussion, reflecting on spiritual lessons from Sr Clare and application to their own daily lives. The themes for the nights were: A Call to Holiness; From

Hollywood to Humble Heart; Surrender & Trust; and Alone with Christ Alone. There was also a 'Movie Night', held in Greenlough, for a viewing of the documentary on the Life & Spiritual Progression of Sr Clare. The programme came to a close with Guided Adoration by the Servant Sisters, from the Home of the Mother. Over 120 people attended, with many availing of the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation.



Behold the Power of the Cross

ON Good Friday, April 3, at 8.30 pm, the congregation of St Mary's Parish, Bellaghy, gathered together to 'walk' the Via Dolorosa with Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Accompanied by the beatific voices of Bellaghy Folk Choir, a small group of performers assumed the roles of Jesus, Mary the Mother of Jesus, Veronica, Pontius Pilate, Simon of Cyrene, the Women of Jerusalem and the Roman centurions, to create what many present described

as "a beautiful and very moving presentation of the Stations of the Cross." Each Station dramatised by the performers became a solemn prayer; the accompanying narration and reflection, encouraging meditation and an intimate encounter with Christ on the Way of Sorrows that took Him from Pilate's Praetorium to Golgotha and the tomb. *'Jesus, Remember me, when you come into Your Kingdom.'*



Buncrana faith discussions and Palm Sunday Procession great preparation for Easter

BUNCRANA parishioners enjoyed taking part in a Lenten programme using Sycamore Resources, which brought them together in the Inishowen Gateway Hotel to explore their faith via viewing films and discussions. Promoted by the Derry Diocese, Sycamore is a new programme of evangelisation and catechesis for use in parishes, chaplaincies, schools and other settings, and a number of parishes in the Diocese availed of two of the resources during Lent - Baptised and Sent in Lent with Sycamore, and the Sycamore Lent Series. The Sycamore programme consists of films that explore some of the core questions often put to Christian believers: How can I find true happiness? What is the meaning of life? Does God exist?

Who is Jesus Christ? It deals with topics such as the Holy Spirit, the Church, the Bible, the Christian Tradition, faith, prayer, love, vocation, and the purpose of life. Parishioners also had the opportunity to view and pray with the 'Way of Beauty' Stations of the Cross. Written by Fr Gilbert Choondal, SDB, the Stations were displayed in St Mary's Oratory, underneath the traditional set of Stations on the walls there. On Palm Sunday, the parishioners took part in a procession with the Stations of the Cross, which was led by Fr Francis Bradley PP and Fr Paddy Baker CC. The procession left from Neds Point and finished at Fr Hegarty's Rock, and there was a good turnout despite the cold, blustery weather.



Feast of Mercy a refuge and shelter for all souls...

Confession sought by many at Melmount Divine Mercy Devotions



CELEBRATING his first Divine Mercy Sunday ceremony since becoming parish priest of both Melmount & Sion Mills, Fr Sean O'Donnell marked the occasion with the blessing and veneration of a magnificent new painting of The Divine Mercy Image.

Painted by Jesse Lezama, a young artist living in Pomeroy, Co Tyrone, the Image is now displayed in a beautiful alcove in St Mary's Church, Melmount, which was prepared by Brendan Durning and Dominic Graham,

a voluntary sacristan in the parish and retired art teacher.

On the day, many availed of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, both before and after the three o'clock ceremony.

In an introduction to the Divine Mercy Chaplet, Sr Margaret related that Jesus had told St Faustina Kowalska to pray the Chaplet unceasingly, and that whoever would say it, would get great mercy at the moment of death, even a most hardened sinner. He also told Faustina that His unfathomable

Divine Mercy would extend to those dying with the Chaplet prayed at their bedside.

Sr Margaret read that Jesus had asked, through St Faustina, for people to immerse themselves in His Passion whenever the clock strikes the third hour: "He asked us to implore His Mercy, especially for sinners, for at that moment Mercy was open wide for every soul."

The Divine Mercy Image was then blessed by Fr Sean, who went on to speak on Divine Mercy, saying: "St Faustina saw two rays streaming from Jesus' Heart: red and white, blood and water, mercy and grace. She heard Him say, 'Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to My mercy.' He didn't say until we're perfect. He said until we turn with trust."

He continued: "When Faustina asked Jesus, 'Who will proclaim your mercy?', He answered, 'The one who receives it.' We are that one...We come to this altar where His Body is broken and Blood poured out. The same that flowed from His side on Calvary, becoming the wellspring of mercy for the world."

"The early Church devoted themselves to the breaking of bread because mercy is a fountain we return to, again and again. They needed what flows from that pierced Heart - forgiveness that renews, grace that transforms, love that never runs dry."

Fr Sean went on to note: "Jesus told Faustina, 'I desire that the Feast of Mercy be a refuge and shelter for all souls. Let no soul fear to draw near to Me.' The

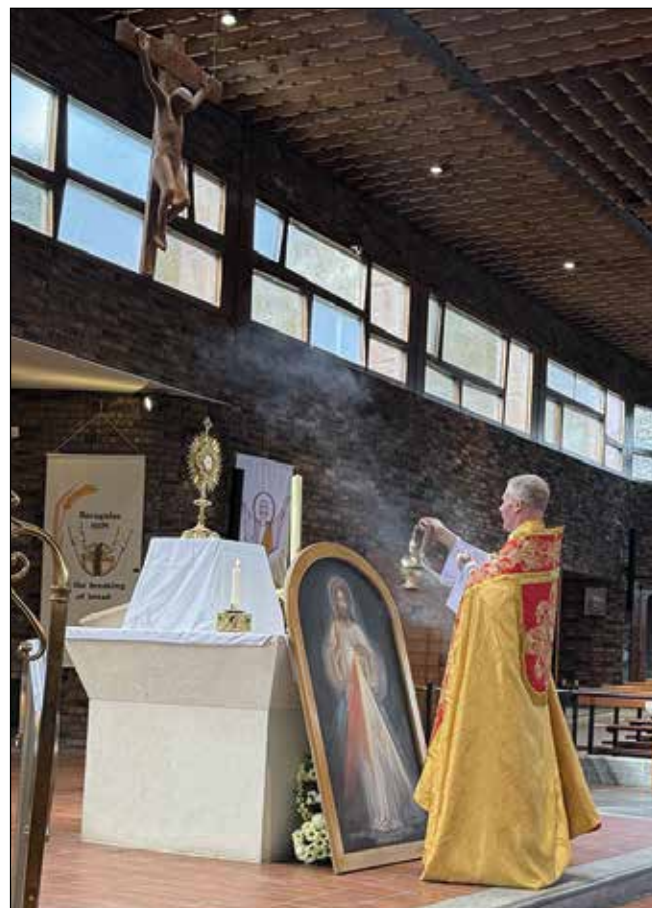
Heart pierced on Good Friday remains open as sanctuary for every soul who turns to Him. This is real hope. When we fail, mercy waits. When we doubt, mercy invites us closer. When we're afraid, mercy breathes peace.

"The wounds of Christ remain because they've become our gateway to the Father's Heart. As we receive the Eucharist, which is the sacrament of Divine Mercy itself, we pray Faustina's words, 'Jesus, I trust in You.' They acknowledge our need. They recognize His abundance. They open us to the ocean of mercy flooding our lives.

Jesus calls us blessed because we trust what we cannot see. That from His wounded Heart flows mercy enough for every sin, grace enough for every need, hope enough for every fear.

"Peace be with you. The wounds of Christ are open. Come and drink. 'O Blood and Water, which gushed forth from the Heart of Jesus as a fountain of mercy for us, I trust in You.'"

After prayers of intercession, the Act of Consecration took place, followed by Benediction. When the Divine Mercy Image was displayed in the alcove, Fr Sean invited all to come and venerate it. And he expressed his appreciation to all involved, from Jesse, the artist, Brendan, who converted one of the Confessional boxes and framed the Image, and Dominic, who painted the alcove, to all who took part in the ceremony and those who attended, or tuned in online.



Melmount Divine Mercy painting a special commission for young artist with Sacred Art mission



PAINTING the new Divine Mercy image for St Mary's Church, Melmount, was a special experience for the young artist, Jesse Lezama, who has a great devotion to praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet.

The 29-year-old told 'The Net' that while he had known about the Chaplet for a long time, he had only seriously started praying it about a year ago.

"I can be troubled at times about what is happening in the world," he explained, "and when I told a priest in Confession that a lot of things on the news bothered me, he mentioned how important Divine Mercy is in our times, and that is when I started taking it more seriously.

"I have since read how

beneficial it is to do the Divine Mercy prayers. I have found praying the Chaplet simple and the devotion has helped me in my life, especially when I feel weighed down by stuff. It really helps me to have confidence in God's Mercy; His Grace to myself and the world."

"So, it has been quite an honour," said Jesse, "for me to paint the Divine Mercy image for the chapel. I worked on it for about two or three weeks as I had a few other smaller commissions on the go – painting St Patrick and St Rose of Lima.

"I work pretty much as a full-time artist now, focusing mostly on oil painting and Sacred Art. I see it as my mission and am interested in how I can contribute to the world of Sacred Art in our times. I am learning from the artists of the past, looking at what I can take from them and apply to what people need now."

Recalling being "arty" as a child, he added: "It has always been an interest of mine and now I have become more serious about it. I studied art for A'level and had very good teachers, but I didn't go on to university to study it, I am self-taught."

The Melmount Divine Mercy image is the second one that Jesse has painted, the first being last year for Castlederg shop owner,

Sean McCrory, who showed it to fellow Cursillista, Fr Sean O'Donnell

Jesse recalled: "Having seen the Divine Mercy painting I had done for my friend, Sean McCrory, Fr Sean then asked me to do another the same, only bigger, for the chapel."

Living in Pomeroy, Co Tyrone, Jesse is originally from Trinidad. He moved with his family to Wales when he was three years old and grew up there. Having met the love of his life, Séimhin Ní Dhonghaile, a native of Tyrone, he has been living there for three years now.

He explained: "Seimhin and I met in Galway through Catholic friends, at a pro-life programme

that we were both involved in there, and we got married in 2023."

Raised a Catholic, Jesse described himself as "luke-warm" in his faith during his teens, before experiencing a pilgrimage to the French Marian Shrine of Lourdes. Since then, he has been growing in his faith, with the Rosary amongst his favourite prayers.

"I also pray for the intercession of St Joseph," he said, "and of St Catherine of Bologna, Italy, who is the Patron Saint of Artists, before I start painting."

Anyone interested in Jesse's work can contact him on 07342268528 or at jesselezama@gmail.com.



The old model of Church is dying on its feet...but the Church is not dying – Bishop Donal

IN his homily for the Mass of Chrism on Holy Thursday, Bishop Donal spoke of "a crying need for those who will consecrate themselves to the service of Jesus".

He went on, however, to also point out that "in these years, we are being forced to repent for having believed in a priest-rich service-delivery model of church, where clergy were paid to take most responsibilities."

"In a secular society with fewer worshippers and fewer clergy, the old model is dying on its feet," he noted, before stressing: "But the church is not dying."

He continued: "In an age of much despair and chronically bad international leadership, there are young people crying out for hope, for good news to be

proclaimed to the poor, for new sight to the blind.

"The Holy Spirit, with whom we are all anointed, does not want us to be a self-pitying, bickering community, who are stuck in a permanent Holy Saturday, dreaming of bygone days and afraid that the story is over, and lamenting all that has been lost.

"In the church in Derry there are many little signs of a new awakening: a widespread disenchantment with the secular agenda that promised freedom from rules, but has led to fractured families and abusive relationships, and culture that measures the value of human life by how it suits me; a deep dissatisfaction with shallow consumerism that tells me that life is a joke and that having to

grow up is burden; people coming in big numbers to the Sacrament of Reconciliation to speak out in all its fulness the memories that for years have sought to kill their hope; a noticeable number of young people going to our local Catholic bookshop asking to buy bibles; a rediscovery of public shows of faith."

"Today tells us that the Spirit of the Lord is upon us," added Bishop Donal, "Are we open to hear and meet Jesus, however uncomfortable and comforting His message – or would we rather take Him out to the hill on which Nazara was built and throw Him off? It is a choice that we have to

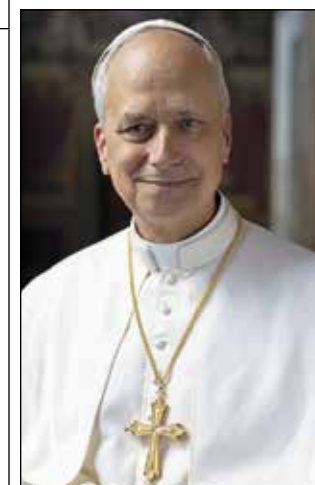
make every day."

Later that day, undertaking the 'Washing of the Feet' at the Mass of the Lord's Supper, the bishop pointed out that the washing of feet represented vulnerability and the need to serve rather than be served, while the Eucharist is a Divine invitation to a new covenant with God.

Speaking of a future Church with fewer priests and a greater role for the laity, Bishop Donal pointed to the need for greater trust in God during uncertain times, mindful of Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane: "Not my will, but yours, be done."



Pope's monthly intention



The Holy Father has asked for prayer during April for:

Priests in Crisis: Let us pray for priests going through moments of crisis in their vocation, that they may find the accompaniment they need and that communities may support them with understanding and prayer.

Prayer for Priests

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

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

Give them the grace they need to

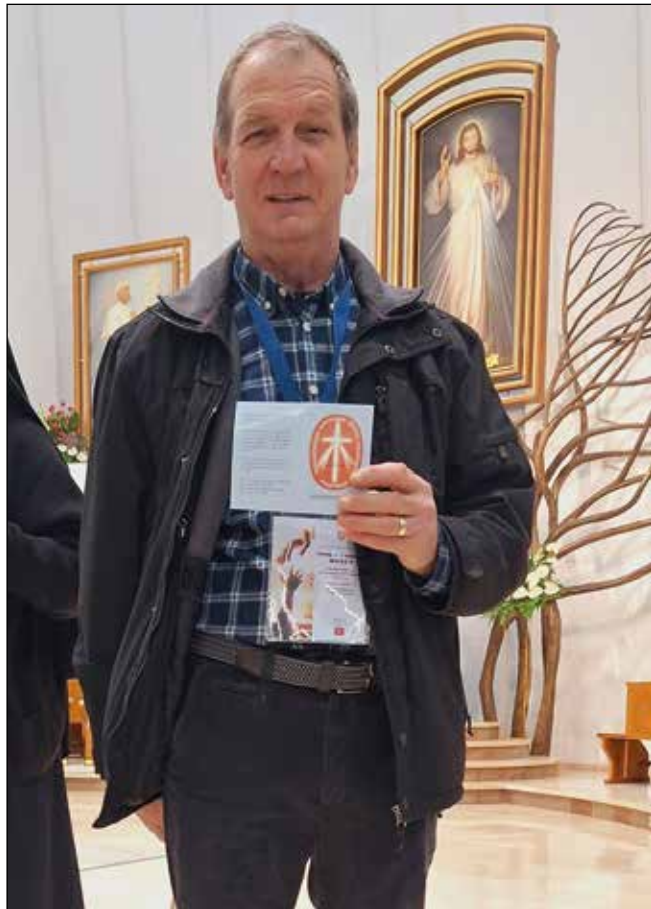
respond generously to you, and the courage to proclaim your Word of justice, love and truth. Bless, in a special way, Your servant Father, Send your Spirit upon him So that he may always walk in the path of faith, hope and love, in the footsteps of Christ, the eternal priest, who offered Himself on the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

Remember in prayer:

- Fr Michael McCaul (April 1st)
- Fr Con McLaughlin (2nd)
- All Priests (3rd)
- All Priests (4th)
- Fr Peter McLaughlin (5th)
- Fr Kevin Mulhern (6th)
- All Priests (7th)
- Fr Peter Madden (8th)
- Fr Anthony Mailey (9th)
- Archbishop Eamon Martin (10th)
- Fr Gerard Mongan (11th)
- All Priests (12th)
- All Priests (13th)
- All Priests (14th)
- All Priests (15th)
- All Priests (16th)
- All Priests (17th)
- Fr Sean O'Donnell (18th)
- All Priests (19th)
- All Priests (20th)
- Fr Colm O'Doherty (21st)
- Fr Kieran O'Doherty (22nd)
- All Priests (23rd)
- Fr Francis P O'Hagan (24th)
- Fr Patrick O'Hagan (25th)
- Fr David O'Kane (26th)
- All Priests (27th)
- Fr Peter O'Kane (28th)
- All Priests (29th)
- Fr Arthur O'Reilly (30th)

Buncrana Divine Mercy Apostle called to live simple life...

Spreading Divine Mercy through deed, word and prayer



THE annual Divine Mercy Sunday ceremony for the Buncrana Parish is attracting more and more numbers every year. It was celebrated by Fr Francis Bradley PP, in St Mary's Church, Cockhill, with parishioner, Mickey Bradley leading the praying of the Divine Mercy Chaplet and facilitating with others the veneration of the Image, along with relics of St Faustina and Blessed Fr Michael Sopoćko.

Now a member of the Faustinum Association, after completing a four-year study programme, Mickey is preparing to spread the Divine Mercy message and Devotion through word, deed and prayer, with others.

The Faustinum Programme is run by the Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, the Order that St Faustina Kowalska belonged to for 13 years, until her death in 1938. She entered in Warsaw, Poland on August 1, 1925, taking the name Sr Maria Faustina of the Blessed Sacrament. Sisters of the Congregation are based in the main Divine Mercy headquarters at the Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy, which is located in the Łagiewniki district of Krakow. It is the world-renowned pilgrimage site where St Faustina Kowalska lived, died, and is buried.

The four-year Faustinum Programme is for the formation of Apostles of Divine Mercy to live the charisma and life of St

Faustina, with spiritual training offered via community meetings, retreats, and correspondence for volunteers and members.

Having completed the study a year-and-a-half ago, Mickey commented: "It gave me a deeper insight into the spirituality of St Faustina, through studying her Divine Mercy Diary, where Jesus is always at the centre.

"The programme involved the study of four sections over four years. When I did it, it was delivered by email and study books, now it is done via Zoom meetings, which is much better as there is more discussion with others. I then decided to do the Zoom programme as a revision exercise, while developing in my own life what I have learnt already about the spirituality of St Faustina. It is good to keep refreshing the study, I find the penny dropping as I re-read."

He went on to recall: "I started out on this journey as I wanted to know more about Divine Mercy, which I first heard of through going to a Divine Mercy prayer group in Derry. It has been going for a long time now, with members meeting in each other's houses on Friday nights. There were men and women at it, but I ended up being the only man at a point. Then I started reading more about Divine Mercy, Sr Faustina and Fr Sopoćko, and I came upon the FAUSTINUM.PL website. I made an application in 2019 and asked about becoming a volunteer, and said that I had an interest in Divine Mercy.

"I got through the interview stage and then came the Covid lockdown. At first, I struggled with the literature for the study because I felt that it was away above me, but I kept going. For the last two years, the programme has been simplified and the Sisters are very helpful. You can ring and talk to them, via WhatsApp, any time during the course and they give advice."

Mickey shared a special experience he had in St Mary's Church, Cockhill, while first studying the programme: "I was learning to do meditation, sitting in silence. When I was working, I used to nip into the chapel for a couple of minutes to sit in silence. My mind was like a washing machine most times, but one day as I was sitting with eyes closed, I felt something like a nice breeze from my feet to my head, and then I heard the words, 'Peace be with you. You will do great things through Divine Mercy.' Then the feeling left and I opened my eyes. I didn't know how much time had passed."

Pondering this, Mickey is striving to be open to whatever God asks of him. As an Apostle of Divine Mercy, he explained that he is called to live a simple life, spreading Divine Mercy through deed, word and prayer.

To this end, he is working along with two others, Michael Doherty, who is also from Buncrana and just started out on the Faustinum Programme, and Liam Tiernan, from Westmeath, who is already involved in Divine Mercy in Action there. Mickey met Liam through a mutual friend in Buncrana and found him to be a great source of encouragement to stick at the study.

Elements of Divine Mercy

He added: "We are in contact with the Sisters in Krakow, who are directing us as we take these baby steps in getting set up here, for example, how to present ourselves and the format of our talks, which are ideally to be about 10-15 minutes, with about 2-3 minutes on self. We will talk about the five elements of Divine Mercy: the Feast Day; the Image; the Novena; the Chaplet; and the Hour of Mercy.

"I am happy to get up and talk about this now, before the study I would have been afraid to do that. We are hoping to lead Divine Mercy Days in parishes, when we get everything set up, and we have had a meeting with Bishop Donal to get his blessing on this Divine Mercy mission. It is only through the grace of God that I can do this; of myself, it

would never happen.

"We have already had a one-day retreat in Termonbacca that was open to everybody, and there were about 90 people there. It was led by Fr Eamon O'Driscoll, a Franciscan based in Rosnowlagh."

"Part of my mission as a Divine Mercy Apostle," said Mickey, "is to explain the Divine Mercy Image and what it means to me, and how Divine Mercy has changed my life. When I look upon it, it is like His gaze looking down from the Cross. I see His left foot stepping out towards me, and His right hand on His garment directing towards His Heart, from which red and pale rays are coming out – representing the blood that is the life of souls (the Eucharist) and the water of baptism for the cleansing of souls.

"Life is not easy. I have as many problems as everybody else. Whenever there is any bother, I do what St Faustina did – take it to the Lord and hand it over – and I like to encourage others to do the same. I'm no better than anyone else, but after having gone through all the study, instead of keeping it to myself, I would like to share the Divine Mercy Message and Devotion to others."

Hosting a Divine Mercy Prayer Meeting at his Buncrana home every Thursday night, at 7.30 pm, for about three years now, Mickey said: "We built a Divine Mercy Grotto behind our house and turned a shed into a prayer room. About 12 people come to it, including Fr Michael Sweeney, who is our spiritual director. We start off praying the Rosary, offering intentions, then have a hymn or two. Fr Michael gives a talk on the Sunday readings and answers any questions, and if he is not there, I read from St Faustina's Diary, and we finish with a prayer to St Faustina. Her mission only really started after she died, as an intercessor. The Lord told her to distribute graces "as you will, to whom you will, and when you will."

"I also lead the Divine Mercy prayers in St Mary's Church, Cockhill, here in Buncrana, on the second Friday of each month, at 6.15 pm, and still go to the Matt Talbot Prayer Group in Termonbacca, which has been going for 23 years on Tuesday nights, 52 weeks of the year. I first started going to it after I did my Cursillo weekend."

In his desire to discover more about Divine Mercy over the years, Mickey has followed in the footsteps of St Faustina: "I have visited all the places that she was



in, including her family home and where she was baptised, and a couple of years ago, along with others, I did the footsteps of Fr Sopoćko in Lithuania. He was St Faustina's confessor and spiritual director until March 21, 1936, when she left Vilnius, and he founded the Congregation of the Sisters of Merciful Jesus between 1941-1944.

"For peace of mind and reflection, I go twice a year to the Divine Mercy Centre in Krakow and talk to some of the Sisters, and I will be going on an English-speaking retreat there from August 20-24."

For further information, Mickey can be contacted via bradley Mickey@gmail.com or 0863267443.

St Faustina writes: "I feel certain that my mission will not come to an end upon my death, but will only begin. O doubting souls, I will draw aside for you the veils of Heaven to convince you of God's goodness, so that you will no longer continue to wound with your distrust the sweetest heart of Jesus. God is love and mercy." (St Faustina's Diary, 281)



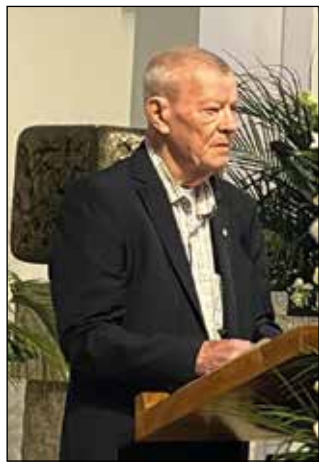
The Faustinum Programme

THE main components of the Faustinum Programme are: Formation Structure - The Basic Formation Programme lasts at least four years, with annual themes focusing on learning, living, and co-operating with mercy; Curricula - Each year consists of three courses (spirituality of St Faustina, Bible, ABC of Spiritual Life); Participation Methods - Formation is held in local parishes, or via correspondence for those unable to join a community; Sisters' Role - The Congregation of the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy facilitates the formation, often led by sisters specializing

in St Faustina's spirituality; Volunteering - Individuals can join as volunteers and later apply for full membership after completing the initial registration and a year of service.

The core themes are: Learning Mercy (Year 1) - Introduction to St Faustina's spiritual school; Live by Trust (Year 2) - Deepening reliance on God; Live by Mercy (Year 3) - Practicing mercy in daily life; Co-operate with Mercy (Year 4) - Active participation in the mission of mercy.

For more information, visit the official Faustinum website - FAUSTINUM.PL



Celebrating Feast of Divine Mercy, Bishop Donal urged people to let Jesus say to them...

Peace be with you

DIVINE Mercy Sunday ceremonies were held in several parishes throughout the Derry Diocese, including Ballymagroarty, Carnhill, Claudy, Killyclogher, Limavady, Maghera, Melmount and Newtownstewart.

As in past years, Bishop Donal has celebrated this Feast Day on the Sunday after Easter, as called for by Jesus through St Faustina, in St Mary's Church, Creggan, with numbers attending growing every year.

In his homily for Divine Mercy Sunday, the bishop spoke of how Jesus "comes with a strong hand to lift us up", saying: "That is what He wants to do for everybody – especially those who are most scarred by life and by others. That is why He finds it hard to meet with those who think that they don't need Him. He knows that condemnation will not heal a broken heart.

"Our own Sr Clare Crockett had her conversion when, around the cross on Good Friday in 2000, she suddenly realised that Jesus had died, not just for the world in general, but for

her personally. On this Divine Mercy Sunday, let Jesus say to you, 'peace be with you'."

He continued: "We can sometimes think that we might need forgiveness for a series of specific sins. Yes, we do. But that on its own keeps us childish...

In baptism, we have been born again as children of God, and given a share in the risen life of Jesus. That is why we renew our baptismal promises with Easter water. Through our baptism we have received 'a sure hope and the promise of an inheritance that can never be spoilt or soiled and never fade away, because it is being kept for you in the heavens'. For the baptised, our participation in eternal life has begun already. And we are called upon to live as if we were intentionally sharing the life of the risen Jesus.

"Our focus on Divine Mercy Sunday, and whenever we go to Confessions, is on where we have not lived as if we were sharing the life of Jesus. Individual sins will be important. But we are also asked to look at our hearts and to see where we have not

given those hearts to Jesus. It doesn't matter whether we are young or old, married, single, or in ministry in the Church. We all struggle with the temptation to do things our own way and not to let Jesus be Lord of our lives... Deep seated healing will come only when we can look deeply into our hearts and let Jesus be the One who guides and informs our decisions. Divine mercy is readily available if we recognise that we cannot follow the ways of Jesus without amazing grace."

Remarking that Jesus wants our focus as parishes and diocese to be on those who most need to know mercy, those who feel most burdened by their past, Bishop Donal added: "He doesn't want us to be a church that either locks itself away in a holy huddle for fear of what others might say - or a church that dreams of being strong with the strong. Divine Mercy wants us to be, as Jesus was, the face of the Father's mercy in His deeds and in His words.

"That is the message that the early church carried to the hearts of the harsh Roman

empire. It is the message that we have to carry into our streets. It is the message that we want to share with our young people – that beauty does not belong to those who strut the stages of the world, with nothing to offer but their egos. Jesus asks us to be His messengers of mercy and gratitude where mercilessness and anger seem to predominate. That is how the reborn baptised will be salt to the earth and light to the world."

He concluded: "Divine mercy is a relatively new devotion. But it has been at the heart of the Church's ministry since Easter Sunday. It is not merely a series of magic prayers. It is a call to our world to let itself be healed by grace and not by violence, by forgiveness and not by mercilessness. It is needed now more than it ever was."

As well as getting an opportunity to venerate the Divine Mercy Image, the faithful in St Mary's Creggan also received blessings with relics of Pope St John Paul II and St Faustina.



Knock Youth Leadership Programme

APPLICATIONS are now open for the Knock Youth Leadership Programme, for those who would like to make a real difference by supporting young people as they explore and deepen their faith.

The programme will equip participants with the skills, knowledge and confidence needed to set up or grow youth ministry initiatives in their parish.

Support will be offered by three teams: Redemptorist Youth Ministry, in delivering a seven-module programme designed to ground participants' youth ministry initiatives in faith, which is accredited by Queen's

University Belfast; Youth Link, in helping with practical skills necessary for youth ministry, such as group formation, tips and techniques for working with young people, safeguarding, etc; and Knock Youth Ministry, in accompanying and mentoring participants, including visits to their parishes to support them in their work.

Application deadline is May 22. For further information, or to apply, go to: www.knockshrine.ie, or contact Knock Youth Ministry by emailing: youthministry@knockshrine.ie, or telephone: 094 93 75321.

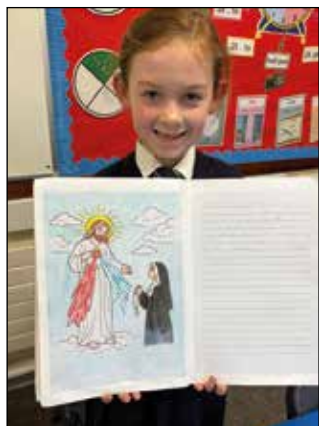
The Glebe's St Theresa PS pupils explore Divine Mercy message

IN the week following the celebration of Divine Mercy Sunday, pupils at St Theresa's PS, Glebe, in the Parish of Sion Mills, spent time exploring events in their local parish and learning about special days in the Catholic Church.

With Sion Mills Parish neighbouring the Parish of Melmount, where the parish priest of both, Fr Sean O'Donnell, had just dedicated a beautiful

new Divine Mercy Shrine at St Mary's Church, Melmount, the Feast of Divine Mercy was one of the special occasions in the Church calendar they learnt about.

This exercise, led to the P3 and P4 children reflecting on Jesus' message of kindness and forgiveness, and sharing ideas about how they can show mercy and compassion in their own lives.



KNOCK

YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

Grow in Faith. Lead with Purpose. Inspire Others.

- Are you passionate about exploring your faith and sharing it with the younger generation?
- You can make a difference in the lives of young people – walking with them on their journey of faith.

Make a Difference - One Step at a Time!

Reflecting on late Fr Eugene Hasson

Fr Peter O’Kane recalls the late Fr Eugene Hasson following memorial service in Holy Family PS Omagh...

“Out of the mouths of children and of babes, you have found praise, Lord!”

Faithfulness in ordinary ministry, shepherding God’s people, a life given in service, the legacy of influence, hope beyond earthly death, directly involved in the sacramental life of local schools, active in youth formation and parish initiatives, bridge between school and parish, walking with children and family at key moments, a priest close to the young. “Fr Eugene didn’t just stand at the altar, he stood in the lives of children, in their classrooms, in their milestones, helping them discover that faith is not something distant, but something lived.”

THIS is the response given by AI when I asked the question: “What should I preach about Fr Eugene Hasson?” How remarkable that artificial intelligence would provide such insights into the life and ministry of a priest of our Diocese. In some ways, it seemed that AI must have been listening to the words and music, prayer and scripture being shared in the assembly hall of Holy Family Primary School, Omagh, on a spring morning in the last days of March. Because in that moment of reflection, so much more was shared beyond artificial intelligence, but rather from the real human experience shared by pupils, staff and governors of this parish school about their beloved parish priest and chaplain of many years.

This event in Omagh marked three months since the death of Fr Eugene. Each of us carry our own memories and stories of this man from Dungiven – proud of his Co Tyrone heritage near to the townland of Cranagh – who walked among the people of this parish and beyond over the past 45 years as priest, pastor and chaplain, shaped in life by his parents, sister, brothers, family circle and many friends.

When I was ordained, I was assigned to the parishes of Glendermott and Strathfoyle, told I was going to be well looked after by three stalwarts of the diocese – two Omagh men, Fr Aiden Mullan and Fr Michael McCaughey, and then the quasi-Omagh man, Fr Eugene Hasson. All three were exceptional in their desire to shape, or rather knock the corners off, the new priest. Throughout the years that followed, whether when he was high priest of the Diocese in Greencastle, or I was with the Dominicans, and everything in-between, Fr Eugene never missed a significant date in my

diary – ordination anniversary, birthday, my parents’ wedding anniversary, my profession days, and, indeed, when he would hear of a death or illness, a letter, text, email would arrive.

“The pilgrim is called to discover their calling as a child of God, the God who is ever faithful and who fills with life.

It is the generations that follow where God gradually unveils the meaning of “yes”, to be fulfilled in the coming of the Word made flesh to open the eyes of God’s people as Christ walks among them.

It is in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ where this promise is unfolded.

When I was appointed to Drumragh Parish in the summer of 2021, I had just returned from the Dominicans. Fr Eugene welcomed me enthusiastically and kindly, assuring me that, like all the men who had served in this parish, I would be very happy. But what I came to learn more profoundly was that Omagh made him happy.

From his earliest days post-ordination, under the pastorship of Monsignor Rooney with his two companions Fr Michael Doherty and Fr John Cargan, through the circle of life that saw him return to Drumragh in 2016 to work alongside Monsignor Donnelly and then assume pastoral leadership in 2017, this he knew, as he shared with me, “a warm wind of prayer and care has come from Omagh.” For this

he was truly grateful, whether from Omagh or Dungiven and the many roads in-between.

These are just some examples of how Fr Eugene sought to respond like the boy Samuel in the Old Testament. At a young age, he said “Speak Lord” and he was able to discern the Lord’s voice, for one of his gifts was listening. That listening bore its fruit, it saw the possibilities of new ways and the desire for fulfilled lives. It also, at times, saw frustrations and imperfections, it brought laughter and tears, it embraced joy even if at times soberly and it bore sorrow gracefully. This listening animated Fr Eugene’s searching heart and probing spirit over his 45 years in his faithful and fervent service of God’s people, in all the places he was asked to be.

And this listening touched deeply his searching and probing over the months when he embarked on a new moment, which brought its tears of separation, its fears of future, but also its comfort of home, its experience of love and its acceptance of the pilgrim. This is the profound nature of the priestly life: that at times in our lives, we are called to allow other pilgrims to support us on the road that leads to God. This is the beauty of our life, for as a text well-known to Fr Eugene in the praying of Evening Prayer reminds us: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...that He would bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything on earth.”

In the light of Easter, we know of the goodness of God who raised His Son Jesus Christ from the dead to bring everyone and everything together under the same Lord. This is the fulfilment of God’s promises as Christ gave the new commandment: “Love one another as I have loved you.” This is eternal love, love unconditional and love freely given. This love catches us unawares, illuminating the dark corners of life and filling us with radiance.

As the psalmist proclaims: “Lord, I am a passing guest, a pilgrim, like all my ancestors.” The pilgrim is called to discover their calling as a child of God, the God who is ever faithful and who fills with life.

It is the generations that follow

where God gradually unveils the meaning of “yes”, to be fulfilled in the coming of the Word made flesh to open the eyes of God’s people as Christ walks among them. It is in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ where this promise is unfolded. As Jesus began His earthly ministry – by His silent prayer, His miracle working and His preaching, being a true friend and a challenging companion, Christ gave a way of life for the follower to seek God in the reality of time. And with the greatest depth of love and friendship, as Christ undertook the pain of the Cross, walking the path of His Passion, He shows by His glorious Resurrection, people are given a share in life, where Divine love caught people unawares, filling their lives with the eternal light shining in their darkness, where radiance transformed, healed, made new all things.

We thank God for the voyage in life that he granted to Fr Eugene, because by his life and his death he has shown many how to live – and how to embrace the journey of life as he knew deeply of the eternal love that brought not only the suffering of the Cross, but the joy of the Resurrection. For these Easter days remind us that whatever the reality of the Cross in our lives, all things are transfigured in Christ by the power of His Resurrection, so that darkness gives way to light.



Tree planted as lasting reminder of a life that touched so many...

HOLY Family PS held a memorial service for their late school chaplain and parish priest, Fr Eugene Hasson, during which KS2 pupils shared heartfelt memories, P4 pupils reverently led the ‘Our Father’ prayer, and representatives from each year group took part in a candle procession.

Principal, Mrs Maura Dolan, remarked: “The service, led by Fr Peter O’Kane, truly captured the spirit of Fr Hasson and reflected the deep impact he had on our school community.”

She added: “It was a privilege to welcome Fr Hasson’s brother Fearghal and his sister Fiona, with her husband Brian, to share this special moment with us.

“As a lasting tribute, we presented Fr Hasson’s family with



a framed fingerprint tree picture and a Holy Family Genesis bronze statue. We also planted a tree in his loving memory; a symbol of strength, faith, and the cherished memories that will continue to grow in our hearts. May it stand as a lasting reminder of a life that

touched so many.”

Thanking all involved in the service and in preparing the lunch afterwards, Mrs Dolan said: “It was a truly lovely day as we came together to celebrate Fr Hasson’s life and lasting legacy.”

Reflecting on late Fr Eugene Hasson

Fr Hasson, our school chaplain was never a stranger in our school. We often met him in the corridors and he would stop and ask us about ourselves and our families. During the school masses, he reminded us that faith isn't confined to a church building but lived daily through kindness, curiosity, and courage. During the Sacraments, we felt safe and close to God and knew that Fr Hasson was there to help us grow into the people we want to become.

Frank P6

Fr Hasson taught us how important it is to be calm and quiet sometimes. Whether in assembly or just talking to us, he always said things that made us think. He helped us stop for a moment, understand things better, and see the good in ourselves and others.

Conla P6

Many of our school community talked to Fr Hasson at a personal level during difficult times. He was very supportive, a great listener and helped us believe things would get better. He was very kind and caring at funerals, and he always remembered us when we saw him outside of school.

Darragh P6

Fr Hasson worked really hard to help both the parish and our school. He cheered us on when we did well especially at sporting events and supported us when things weren't going to well. He was always ready to join in with whatever was happening. He blessed our new school Grotto, he always said our school masses and visited our classrooms for Sacramental preparation. By watching him, we learned that faith is about helping others, being kind, and trying to make a difference.

Ronan P6

Fr Hasson baptised me and all my siblings. He never pushed me to do anything or rushed me to do anything. He was kind, caring and most important he was just a jolly man and was always happy. He listened to what you said, even if it was silly. He was a great support to all our class. He was the kind of priest you would dream of, kind, caring, awesome and the best priest.

Monica P5

Fr Hasson helped to prepare us for our First Confession and First Holy Communion. He was a very nice man. He came into our class and went over what was going to happen on the big day. He was very supportive and made us all feel so comfortable. A week after our First Holy Communion he said The Rosary with some of us at Drumragh Chapel.

Enda P5

In Year 3 Fr Hasson used to come in and tell us all about the saints and God. He prepared us for our First Holy Communion and First Confessions. He was so supportive and would always listen to us. He made these days so special for all of us and we were so lucky to share them with him.

Anna P5

Fr Hasson baptised most of us. He was a great priest. He came into our class and taught us about Jesus and the church. He helped us during our First Holy Communion and First Confessions. His presence always calmed people down. We will miss him in our school.

Sean P5

One of my clearest memories of Fr Hasson is the day I made my First Confession. I remember being so nervous that my stomach was in knots. I worried I wouldn't know what to say or that I'd get the prayers wrong. But standing there beside me was Fr. Hasson — calm, steady, and reassuring. He was always so gentle and kind.

He spoke quietly, never rushing, guiding me through each part of the sacrament so I never felt overwhelmed. His voice had this way of settling my nerves, and before I knew it, my fear had gone, and I felt ok. He made something that felt scary suddenly feel safe and simple.

Whenever he came into our school, he brought that same warmth with him — always kind, always approachable, and always good craic. There was something about his presence that made you feel at ease, like you were genuinely seen and cared for.

Looking back now, I realise how much those small acts of kindness mattered. Fr. Hasson was wise, gentle and caring and I will never forget him.

Alana P7

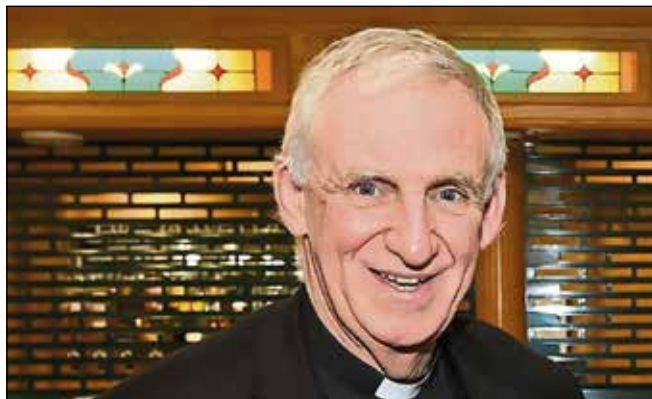
One of my memories of Fr Hasson is preparing for my First Holy Communion. He would come into our classroom with a smile that instantly put everyone at ease, and he spoke to us about the Eucharist with such warmth and excitement that we couldn't help but look forward to the big day. He told us it would be a great celebration — and he was right.

I absolutely loved my Communion. Our families were there, our class was together, and of course, Fr. Hasson was with us, guiding us gently through every part of the day. He always seemed

Holy Family Primary School Memorial Service for Fr. Eugene Hasson

Our School Chaplain & Parish Priest

Monday, 30th March 2026



genuinely delighted to see us at Mass. He loved hearing our class sing, and he especially enjoyed it when we taught him the actions for the Our Father song.

What stands out most in my memory is his kindness. He was always smiling, always encouraging, and always patient. To me, Fr. Hasson will forever be remembered as a special, caring priest.

Senan P7

Friendly smile that welcomed everyone each day
Reassuring words that helped us find our way

Holy Communion shared with love and care
Always kind, with time to spare
Singing songs that filled our hearts with cheer
Sacraments that brought God near
Out with horses, happy and free
Never too busy for a cup of tea

A priest so gentle, warm, and true,
We'll always remember Fr Hasson—we miss you

Conan P7

As our school chaplain, Fr. Hasson, would come into our classroom to talk to us about what it meant to become a priest. He always arrived with a gentle smile and a kind presence, and even

though we were only children, he spoke to us in a way that made us feel important and included.

He told us about his own journey — how he spent six years studying for the priesthood at St Patrick's Pontifical University in Maynooth before being ordained on the 14th of June 1980. We listened as he shared stories from the many parishes he served: Drumragh, where he began; the Waterside in Derry; Claudy; and Greencastle. We were especially delighted when he told us how meaningful it was to return to Drumragh later as Parish Priest, a place that clearly held a special place in his heart.

What stood out most were the people who inspired him. He spoke with great affection about a priest he worked with in Dungiven during his time as a curate — someone who encouraged him and helped shape his vocation. And he talked about his grandmother, a woman he described as endlessly kind and caring, whose example stayed with him all his life.

But the part that always made us smile was when he spoke about what he loved most about being a priest. He told us that the greatest joy of his vocation was getting to meet new people and help others. He said he felt deeply grateful to God for calling him to a life he loved so much. He really loved us interviewing him too!

His kindness, his gentleness, and the genuine love he had for people made every visit memorable. Looking back now, I will always remember Fr. Hasson as a caring and inspiring man — someone whose faith and compassion touched everyone who crossed his path.

Rhona P7

One of my favourite memories of our parish priest and school chaplain, Fr. Hasson, is the day he came to the opening of our school garden. He arrived with his big dog, Clara by his side, which immediately caused great excitement among all of us. As we showed him around, he took his time wandering through each new area, admiring the plants, trees, and all the hard work that had gone into creating the garden. You could tell how genuinely impressed he was.

Fr. Hasson loved nature, and that day he shared stories about his fondness for animals — especially horses and his own horse Sorcha. The way he spoke about them made it clear how deeply he appreciated the beauty of the outdoors and God's creation.

Matthew P7

Another special memory was last May, when he celebrated the opening of our Prayer Garden and the Grotto to Our Lady. It was a truly joyful occasion. We held a special ceremony for Mary in May, and the school grounds were filled with Holy Family pupils, past and present staff members, and many familiar faces from our wider school community.

After the ceremony, everyone gathered in the hall for a tea party. The choir sang beautifully — something Fr. Hasson always loved. You could see how much he enjoyed listening to them, his face lit with the same warm smile we all knew so well.

Looking back, these moments capture what made Fr. Hasson so special. He was kind, friendly, and always genuinely interested in the life of our school. Whether he was blessing a new garden, chatting with pupils, or simply listening to the choir sing, he brought warmth and joy with him everywhere he went.

Jessica P7

When I think about our parish priest and school chaplain, Fr. Hasson, I remember someone who was always warm, approachable, and truly interested in the lives of the children in our school.

As parish priest, Fr. Hasson looked after the people of the parish, celebrated Mass, led special celebrations, and supported families through important moments in their lives. He helped guide our community in faith, always with kindness and understanding.

As school chaplain, his role was to support us — the pupils — as well as our teachers, staff, and families. He visited the school and helped us prepare for the sacraments. He was someone we could talk to, laugh with, and learn from. His visits always made the school feel brighter.

He also supported the whole school community. He showed a genuine appreciation for the work done in school, whether it was a new garden, a special ceremony, or simply the everyday efforts of pupils and teachers.

To us, Fr. Hasson was more than a priest. He was a friendly face, a patient teacher, and someone who truly cared about our school. His kindness made a lasting impression on everyone who met him. He will always be remembered as a gentle, supportive, and muchloved part of our school family.

Patrick P7

John Paul II Men's Group Lenten Talks...

'Men Called to More' by Oliver Barrett



THIS Lenten Season, the John Paul II Men's Group based in Gortin, Co Tyrone, organised a series of 'Lenten Talks' to prepare for Easter. Founded by Colm O'Neill in 2025, and under spiritual direction of Fr Roland Colhoun, this group meets every Sunday evening throughout the year in the Parochial House in Gortin, for scripture reading, sharing, silence and singing.

The Lenten Talks were held each Sunday evening at Cormac House, beside the Chapel in Gortin, and offered the time and space for prayerful preparation for Easter. Each evening, the guest speaker shared their thoughts and insights about certain aspects of the faith and about being Catholic. There was also time each evening for the attendees to have a Q & A with the guest speaker on the subject or theme they spoke about. Each talk was followed with refreshments and time for fraternity.

Peter Harte

On Sunday, February 15, we had an introductory night. The guest speaker was Co Tyrone footballer, Peter Harte, who talked about balancing faith, family, work, and sport in a hectic world. Peter gave insights about the importance of his faith in his day-to-day life and decision making. He spoke at length about the challenges of being a practicing Catholic and a prominent member of the GAA.

Patrick Gallagher

On Sunday, February 22, the guest speaker was Co Antrim footballer, Patrick Gallagher, who talked about his faith journey and the importance of faith in his family, and in his own personal life. He shared an inspiring story about the great lengths he went to attend Mass when on holiday on Thailand. He also spoke about important milestones in his faith journey, eg, attending a conference in Croke Park, and the prayer groups he attended that shaped him as a person.

Fr James Devine is an important person in his faith journey, because it was Fr James who introduced Patrick to his wife. His talk was book-ended with two words, courage and effort. He recommended a book to read: 'The Rock from Which You Were Hewn', the title of which is taken from Isaiah 51:1.

Patrick shared family faith traditions, such as making the Jesse Tree with his family. Like Peter, he talked about the tension between being a member of the GAA and a member of the Catholic Church, that often led to training and meetings clashing with attending Mass. Patrick always chose to practice his faith on occasions when there were clashes, despite the consequences.

Fr Declan McGeehan

On Sunday, March 1, we had a talk on the Eucharist from Fr Declan McGeehan. He started his talk saying that it was impossible to completely explain what happens at the Mass due to the mysterious nature of this Sacrament. He gave an accurate definition of what a sacrament is - an outward sign of an internal grace. It is through the sacraments that we are drawn into union with God, and we can go deeper into God's mysteries.

Fr McGeehan pointed out that the Eucharist is the source and the summit of the Christian life. He said that Christ is the principal actor at the Mass; it is Christ who offers the Mass. This is how it is with all the sacraments, eg, when a person baptizes it is, in fact, Christ who baptizes. Fr McGeehan pointed out that the Priest and the People offer the Mass, that the faithful are in-fact co-offerors. We offer ourselves at the Mass as Christ offered Himself to the Father to restore original justice. Therefore, the Mass requires full, active, and conscious participation, with both mental and physical engagement. At Mass, Christ's sacrificial offering of Himself to the Father, that is, the events of Holy Week, are

made present on the Altar.

He explained what sacrifice is by saying that pain without Christ is suffering, and pain with Christ is sacrifice. He talked about how the sacrificial nature of the Mass is evident in the transience of the candles, incense, and even the flowers on display. He stated that it is important to enter the Mass beyond the externals. Fr McGeehan talked about the connection between the Mass and the Jewish Passover meal, including the symbolism of the Jewish Menorah and the seven days of creation. He also explained the concepts of 'Epiclesis' and 'Anamnesis', which are two interconnected components of Eucharistic prayer. Anamnesis is the remembering aspect, and Epiclesis is the invocation aspect, when the Holy Spirit is invoked.

Fr McGeehan spoke about the Liturgical renewal of Pope Benedict XVI and about how important it is to understand what is happening at the Liturgy. He gave the definition of Liturgy as the work of the people, or work on behalf of the people. Finally, he advised those present to be curious about faith. If we have a question, we should not be afraid to go to the catechism and look it up.

Dr Lynette McShane

On Sunday, March 8, we had a talk from Dr Lynette McShane, a Doctor of Psychology and a lady's footballer for Co Tyrone. The theme of Dr McShane's talk was on the importance of fathers keeping God central in the family home. Dr McShane stated that, as it is the father who protects and provides for his family, it is important that he be a man of his word. It is up to the father to keep God at the center of his home. He achieves this through leading the family in prayer. Prayer time at home is when the family can be collectively visible and, according to Dr McShane, it is important for the family to be visible witnesses to the faith. Dr McShane stressed how important it is for the family to reclaim the household, and we need to fight to restore peace in our homes. This peace is only possible when we surrender to God's will, for example when we pray as a family.

She advised that it is important to be careful in our communications when at home. Our communications should build each other up, particularly in marriage, and not detract from the other person. Husbands should pray for their wives and not be afraid to take the lead on things. Dr McShane clarified how spiritual sloth prevents us from practicing our

faith, and how important it is to be on our guard against spiritual sloths. We should pray to the Holy Spirit for discernment. She looked in-depth at what it means to be a good Catholic man in today's world.

Spiritual Warfare

On Sunday, March 15, we were scheduled to have a talk from Dr Gavin Kerr, who is both an MMA Fighter and Dr of Philosophy at Maynooth University. This talk was not delivered due to logistical reasons. Instead, we had a discussion about Spiritual Warfare. We looked at the three ways that Satan can attack men through lust, spiritual laziness, and distractions. This is evident through the need to spend so much time at work, playing sports, making money, and materialism, instead of prayer. The three weapons we have against these things are prayer, confession, and fasting. It is important for men to be praying at home with their wives and families.

Fr Malachy Gallagher

On Sunday, March 22, we had a talk from Fr Malachy Gallagher entitled 'A Father's Merciful Love'. The talk followed a period of prayer and adoration. Fr Malachy presented St Jean Vianney and St Padre Pio as examples of two humble confessors, who often spent more than 12 hours a day hearing people's Confession. He outlined how Confession is the beating heart of holiness and how even humble Saints, such as St Padre Pio and St John Paul II, had recourse to this sacrament every week. I am very privileged to know a Prior in the Benedictine order who confesses daily. The example of the saints, who went to confession weekly, indicates that the sacrament of confession is a means of perfection in spiritual life.

Fr Malachy referred several times to the Diary of St Faustina. According to St Faustina, when God restores a soul to a state of grace, a greater miracle occurs than when God first created the universe. That is how important the Sacrament of Reconciliation is.

Fr Malachy then walked the listeners through the distinct stages of Confession, that is, the purgative, the illuminative, and the unitive. In the purgative stage, the soul is actively battling against mortal sin, in other words, we are in active spiritual combat. When we go to Confession during this stage, we address the mortal sin. The sin is referred to as mortal because our souls are wounded. When our souls are wounded, it is



Some members of the John Paul II Men's Group

instinct to hide. However, it is particularly important to go to Confession during this time, to let the Divine Physician heal our wounds.

Fr Malachy talked about the instruction given by St Alphonsus Liguori on the various stages of giving into temptation. The first being spiritual blindness, when the subtle temptation convinces the sin we are about to commit is not really a sin, or at least not that big of a deal. Then, when we sin, we are ashamed when we see what we have done and realize we have sinned. Confession provides us with the opportunity to bring sin out into the light. The enemy's power, that, Satan, relies on secrecy. In confession, we bring the sin into the light to allow the Divine Physician to remove the shrapnel that has mortally wounded our soul.

Next is the illuminative stage of Confession. During this time, the soul has conquered mortal sin as regular Confession has educated the soul. During the illuminative stage, we are blessed with genuine self-knowledge, and a purified conscience. It is important during this time to continue to receive the Sacrament of Confession often, because avoidance of Confession is the ruination of the soul. When we go to Confession, we make an act of humility. We are saying that we cannot do this on our own. Confession has become a means to grow in the spiritual life, and it is important during this time to be specific about the nature of our sins, that is, specify in Confession that muscle we have not exercised. We need to precisely name the fault to be able to build up virtue.

The final stage of Confession is the unitive stage of confession. Fr Malachy likened this to being on a 30-day silent retreat, when there is no opportunity or inclination to commit a mortal or a venial sin. St John Paul II went to weekly Confession to remove the last microscopic

trace of sin. The Saints, such as St John Paul II and Saint Padre Pio, went to regular Confession because this made their spiritual eyesight sharper. Regular weekly Confession afforded the Saints the opportunity to confess imperfection and build humility. This reminded me of an occasion in St Peter's Basilica in Rome, when I saw a free confessional. As I approached and knelt to receive the sacrament, the steward kindly pointed out that I was not to go to Confession there because that confessional was for the Pope. It is true, the Pope does go regularly to Confession.

Finally, Fr Gallagher said that we always focus on our side of the Confession, on what we have done and what we need to do. He encouraged us to think about Jesus' side of the Confession. It is His divine right to meet with us there in the Sacrament. Fr Gallagher said that we are truly blessed when we can see our sins. He reassured us that, as a priest, he is blessed with Holy Forgetting and does not remember the sins he forgave through the action of the church. He encouraged us to imagine that we are speaking directly to Jesus when we confess, as this is an opportunity to encounter the Divine and let the Divine Physician heal our wounds. Finally, Fr Gallagher said that everything can change when we confess our sins.

The evening ended with the opportunity to receive the Sacrament of Confession.

Find out more

The John Paul II men's group would like to take this opportunity to thank Fr Colhoun and Fr Devine for their spiritual direction, and to thank the speakers and the listeners each evening. If anyone would like to find out more about the John Paul II Men's Group, then please do not hesitate to reach out to Colm O'Neill at +447825575395.

Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

Earache by Fr Eamonn Kelly

MAL was glad to be going home. He was awful tired indeed. It had been a long day. In fact, he had really put in two shifts without a break. When he had turned up for duty the previous evening, he had no idea how much could be squeezed into a few hours at work. Now he was looking forward to seeing his beloved wife and hopefully sharing a nice meal with her.

As he walked the last mile towards his home, he recalled the aftermath of the arrest of Jesus. He and his colleagues in the Temple Guard had been well prepared for the ambush and the arrest. With the informant's co-operation, all had gone quite smoothly, but it was the long night and day that followed that had made Mal so tired and exhausted. It was a day of rumour and counter-rumour. One minute they heard that the followers of Jesus were planning an attack and the next minute there was word that it would take place later. All day and all night, the Temple Guard were on alert, then stood down, then put on alert again, and then stood down. "At least now," thought Mal, "the man Jesus was over with the Roman authorities, and they would have to deal with anything that would come up."

Mal was delighted to turn the corner and see his home and, as

he opened the door, he called his wife's name, 'Kathtona'. He always loved that name – meaning joy of God – but he loved most of all, the woman who used that name. "In the kitchen," came the familiar and soothing voice, and so it was into the kitchen that Mal went. Kathtona was standing at the fire, stirring a pot that was releasing a beautiful aroma all around. He put his arms around her tummy and gently kissed her neck. "It is great to have you home. Sarah, next door, said that her husband arrived back a while ago and that you would not be long behind."

"You ladies have a great network of spies!" Mal said gently, making fun with Kathtona.

"She also said that you had a long day, having to rush here and there to make sure of keeping the peace."

"Did she now?" Mal said, "but we can now forget about the day, and you can tell me how long it will be until we eat?"

Kathtona stopped stirring and moved the pot from the heat and turned to kiss her husband, and then suddenly she screamed,

"You are covered in blood! What happened? Are you hurt? Who did this? Do you need to see a doctor? Is it bad?"

Mal, always so calm and collected, reacted with coolness, "It is

nothing. I had even forgotten there was blood on my shirt. It is nothing at all."

"Malcus!" Kathtona said, "there is blood all over your shirt. Don't tell me 'It is nothing'. Are you injured? Are you hurt?"

When Kathtona used 'Malcus' everybody knew it was serious, so Mal tried to reassure her. "No, Kathtona, I am not hurt or injured. I was but I am not now."

"That makes no sense."

"Well let me explain."

"Yes, please do."

"Let us sit for a moment. I will explain."

"Yes, that would be good. But are you hurt at all?"

"No, I am not hurt, come let us sit."

Mal led Kathtona by the hand to the kitchen table that was already ready for the evening meal.

"We were assigned to arrest a man in the early hours of the shift and..."

"Who was it that you had to arrest?"

"Kathtona, you know I am not to disclose my duties, but let me just say his name was Jesus and..."

"Jesus the healer?" interrupted Kathtona.

"We were instructed to arrest Jesus, the political agitator who was stirring up the people against the leaders."

"Is it Jesus from Galilee that you are speaking about?"

"That is right. Yes, from Galilee. How do you know about him?"

"He is a great man, a man of prayer, a man of God."

"Kathtona, you really have heard about him?"

"Of course. He has a long list of great healings and cures. He even raised a man from the dead a few weeks back. Sarah, next door, saw him a few times and once, when she was present, he gave sight to a man who was born blind."

"Do not be fooled, Kathtona. We were sent to arrest him because he is a threat to our whole way of life."

"From what I hear, he wants people to pray, to respect God and to love one another. It does not sound like a threat to anyone."

"We all must follow orders. So, we, with a lot of others, were sent to take him in for trial. As we arrested him one of his commanders sliced my ear off."

"Sliced your ear off? Your ears look ok to me."

"Off it came. The pain was terrible. Blood everywhere, and the pain was massive. Then Jesus picked up the ear and just put it back on."

"Just put your ear back on?"

"It does sound a bit ridiculous when I say it, but that is what happened. Jesus picked up the ear,



put it back on and said 'Shalom' as he was pushed to the ground to bind him."

Kathtona sat and made no reply. Mal tried to find words to explain what had happened, but it was making no sense. The more he thought about it, the less he was convinced that Jesus was anything other than a good man. Deep down, he hoped that the Roman authorities would treat Jesus fairly and that he would be let go.

He asked: "What are you thinking?" but he got the response of another question, "Can you hear ok in the ear?"

"Oh, yes, I can. And if I am honest..."

"I hope you are always honest

with me!"

"Yes, of course, but what I was going to say is that the ringing noise that is always in my ears has not been there all day since, ah, since the ear was put back on."

"That is amazing. That is just amazing."

"Yes, it really is."

After another pause, Kathtona said, "Mal, let us have our meal."

"That would be great, Kathtona."

"Then let us get you cleaned up and get some fresh clothes."

"Yes, that would be good."

"And then, let us pray that we might know about who Jesus really is."

"Yes, Kathtona, let us pray that we may know who Jesus is."

Irish Council of Churches host Care of Creation Conference by Patricia McCormack

PARISHIONERS from The Three Patrons Parish and Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, Steelstown, were amongst the 200 people who attended the Care of Creation Conference in Newry, in January, organised by Ireland's Church Leaders in response to the pollution of Lough Neagh and wider environmental concerns. The Conference had a clear objective – to equip Churches across Ireland to move from concern to commitment in caring for creation.

The programme combined talks by science and theology experts, presentations on practical responses, and question and answer sessions, with liturgical moments of reflection and prayer. The Climate Justice Candle was lit, and water from Lough Neagh poured and blessed by Archbishop Eamon Martin: "Lord of life, bless this water. May it awaken our hearts, cleanse our indifference, soothe our grief and renew our hope."

Lough Neagh, which supplies 45% of drinking water in Northern Ireland, is dying. A diverse habitat for many species of fish, birds and animals is

endangered, and an important resource for livelihoods and recreation is threatened. Pollution is largely arising from localised intensive agriculture, septic tanks and inadequate wastewater treatment.

Science can identify the causes of the problem and explore solutions. These were clearly outlined by Professor Jim McAdam, an agricultural and environmental expert. He reminded us that the problem was not restricted to Lough Neagh; 80% of our rivers are in a sub-standard state. BBC's Louise Cullen led a Q&A session with NI Minister for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs, Andrew Muir, on the implementation of identified science-based actions.

Dr Hilary Marlow, Faculty of Divinity, Cambridge University, posed the question: "What do environmental issues have to do with the Bible?" She then examined scriptural references to creation and our place within it. As Christians, we all have a responsibility to consider how these scriptures might change our daily actions. She cited Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical

letter, *Laudato Si'* on care of our common home, as essential reading for Christians of all denominations.

She echoed the need for a change of heart – an ecological conversion – quoting the following: "I used to think that the top global environmental problems were biodiversity loss, ecosystem collapse and climate change. I thought that with 30 years of good science we could address these problems, but I was wrong. The top environmental problems are selfishness, greed and apathy, and to deal with these we need a spiritual and cultural transformation. And we scientists don't know how to do that." (Gus Speth, 2006, meeting of NAE and Harvard scientists)

Themes of brokenness, honest acknowledgment of neglect and harm, forgiveness, reconciliation and healing were included in Dr Gail Heffner's talk on working with communities to address pollution in West Michigan rivers resulting in contamination of The Great Lakes. "Do unto those downstream as we would have those upstream do unto us!" she reminded us.

It was helpful to hear about

the work being done by various Faith congregations throughout Ireland, the supportive role of Eco Congregations Ireland and the Archdiocese of Dublin's Energy Masterplan. The numerous Information Stands provided an opportunity to connect with a variety of organisations and groups, eg Trocaire, Christian Aid, A Rocha, Save Our Sperrins – all working to care for our Common Home.

This Conference re-affirmed our belief in the importance of the Church's prophetic role in addressing environmental issues, biodiversity loss and climate injustice, and in giving leadership in good stewardship through practical actions. Listening to the speakers, it was encouraging to hear that The Three Patrons Care of Creation Group and Culmore/Steelstown Parish Eco Group have been working along the right lines. There is much more to do!

For more information see The Diocesan Environmental Strategy at www.derrydiocese.org

Contact laudatosiderry@gmail.com or Patricia McCormack on 07711900420.



Archbishop Eamon Martin with Lee, Mary and Patricia, members of Culmore-Steelstown Parish Eco Group, at Care of Creation Conference.



Joe Boucher and Tony Harkin, Three Patrons Care of Creation Group, with Patricia McCormack, Lee Casey and Mary Furey, Steelstown Parish Eco Group, at Care of Creation Conference.

Vocations News

Great conversation at Vocations Council conference

ON March 21, the Diocesan Vocations Council hosted a Conference in Pio House, Galliagh. Approximately 50 people attended from all over the diocese, representing parishes, schools, religious orders, and a variety of apostolates active throughout the diocese.

The Conference began with Morning Prayer, followed by words of welcome from the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan, who introduced the members of the Vocations Council and explained that the purpose of the day was to ascertain how best to encourage and promote vocations to the diocesan priesthood in particular.

The attendees were split into six groups and given a few questions to discuss, using the 'Conversation in the Spirit' method promoted by the late Pope Francis. Participants are asked to listen attentively to what is said, while each person in turn offers their thoughts and reflections on the question or topic, without interruption.

The areas for discussion in Galliagh revolved around the need for priests, the relevance or importance of promoting vocations to the priesthood, and how best to do so.

The Vocations Council met a few weeks later to discuss the feedback from the group discussions, and were delighted that the attendees had more or less agreed with the

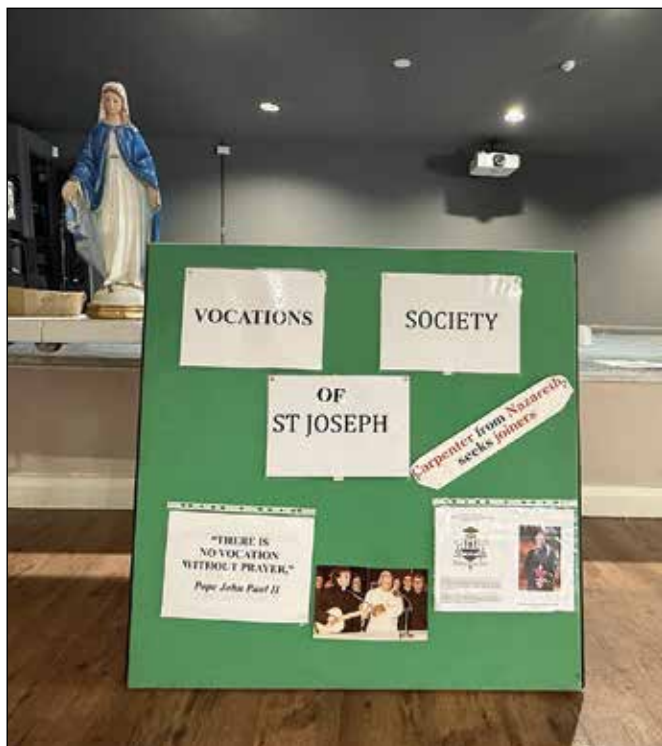
thinking of the Council prior to the Conference.

Over the summer, the Council will be working on a poster campaign for parishes, youth clubs, sporting organisations, schools, and third-level institutions. They have written to the priests of the Diocese in advance of Vocations Sunday (Good Shepherd Sunday), which falls this year on April 26, to ask them to speak about, promote, and pray for vocations, not just on that one day, but on a regular basis.

They also hope to attend a number of events involving Religious Education teachers and catechists over the next few months, and are happy to speak at school assemblies or at other school functions. In keeping with what was said at the Conference, they would like to see priestly and religious vocations included in Careers events.

The Diocesan Vocations Council is pleased to note that, currently, Derry has seven men in formation, with a number of others actively discerning the possibility of serving the Church as priests of the diocese.

Please pray for Deacon Stephen Baxter as he prepares for ordination to the priesthood on June 14, for our seminarians, for our cohort of discerners, and for an increase in vocations.



Inspired by an article on the Seven Columban Irish Martyrs in Korea by James Tourish, in the Young Writers section of 'The Net' January edition, Mrs Joan Mullan Conaghan, sister of the late Fr Kevin Mullan, submitted this story on the life of her uncle, Fr Tommie Cusack, who was one of the Irish Martyrs.

Fr Thomas Cusack...the Martyr Priest (1910-1950)

FATHER Thomas Cusack was born in Ballycotton, County Clare, Ireland, in 1910, the son of Michael Cusack and Bridget Heaphy. Baptised as an infant, he entered St Columban's Foreign Missionary Seminary, Dalgan Park, Co Galway, Ireland, in 1928, at the age of 18. Ordained a priest on 21 December, 1934, he was sent as a missionary to Korea.

After arriving in Korea in November 1935, Father Thomas Cusack studied the Korean language and began his ministry as an assistant in Mokpo Parish, in South West Korea. In July 1939, he was appointed pastor of Suncheon Parish (now known as Jeojeon-dong Parish).

However, shortly after the outbreak of the Pacific War, on 8 December, 1941, the Japanese authorities imprisoned him at the Suncheon Police Station. Father Thomas Cusack was released shortly afterwards and placed under house arrest in the Presbytery. The following year, he was transferred to the headquarters of St Columban's Foreign Missions in Mokpo, where he was again placed under house arrest. On 29 May, 1945, along with all the Columbans in Korea, he was transferred

to Hongcheon, in Kangwon Province, where they remained under arrest until the end of the War.

After the liberation of Korea on 15 August, 1945, Fr Cusack was released and served briefly as pastor of Suncheon Parish from November 1945 to March 1946. He was then appointed pastor of Gwangju Parish (now Bukdong Parish) and remained there until he went on home leave to Ireland in December 1947. He returned to Korea in February 1949 and was appointed pastor of the Mokpo Parish (now Sanjong-dong Parish). But, soon after the outbreak of the Korean War, he was captured by the North Korean army.

The Korean faithful called Fr Thomas Cusack 'The Iron Man', the 'Priest Saint'. He taught daily catechesis classes for students, catechesis classes for prospective believers, and devotional groups. He visited the faithful, especially those whose faith had weakened; he cared for the sick in his pastoral jurisdiction; and he visited and counselled in juvenile detention centres. On 24 July, 1950, less than a month after the outbreak of the Korean War, North Korean troops entered Mokpo. As soon

as Fr Thomas Cusack heard the news, he went into the Church, collected and consumed all the Sacred Hosts. He, along with the assistant pastor, Fr John O'Brien, did not flee to another place, but stayed to protect the church, fully prepared to be martyred for the sake of the parishioners.

On 25 July, the North Korean army stormed into the church and forced Fr Thomas Cusack and Fr John O'Brien to walk around the City of Mokpo. During this time, the parishioners urged Fr Thomas Cusack to hide in their homes, but he declined each offer, not wanting to be a burden to them.

On Sunday, 30 July, the North Korean soldiers returned to the church and demanded that Fr Thomas Cusack hand over the list of parishioners, but he refused. As a result, the soldiers detained Fr Thomas Cusack, along with Fr John O'Brien and Monsignor Patrick Brennan, the Vicar General of Gwangju, and took them to Mokpo Police Station. They were soon transferred to Gwangju Prison. Even as he was being taken away, Fr Thomas Cusack regretted that the parishioners would no longer be able to participate in the Sacraments.

On 26 August, US Lieutenant Alexander Makaroumis and two other soldiers were brought to the prison and placed with the missionaries. According to Makaroumis' testimony, "The missionaries tried to give hope to the other inmates and even gave away their own three blankets to the other prisoners."

Soon afterwards, the North Korean soldiers took Fr Thomas Cusack, and 32 others who were imprisoned with him, transporting them by night in the direction of Seoul. When the truck broke down near Daejeon, the group was forced to travel on foot. Upon arrival in Daejeon, the Columban missionaries were placed in a makeshift camp in a Franciscan monastery, while the American soldiers were transported to Daejeon Prison. Fr Thomas Cusack and his group met Father Kang Mansu (Joseph) and the French missionaries there.

Subsequently, when the North Koreans heard that UN troops were advancing north, they prepared to retreat, and between 23-26 September (or 25-26 September), they took all the prisoners and executed them. It is certain that Fr Thomas Cusack

was among those executed. He was 40 years old. The bodies were subsequently cremated and buried in a grave on the hill behind the monastery.

In 1996, this area was designated for re-development and it was decided to move the remains of the 'Patriotic Martyrs' Cemetery' in Daejeon. Relatives of the people massacred were contacted and came to claim some of the remains. Some of the remains were kept by Daejeon Diocese and were later placed beneath the 'Korean War Martyrs Memorial' at the Daejeon Seminary Cemetery during its consecration in 2008.

Although Fr Cusack's body was not separately identified at the time of the exhumation, the Church believes that his remains were among those cremated together.

The family has requested to receive a portion of the remains of Father Thomas Cusack. However, since Father Thomas Cusack and 80 others are being considered for beatification as 'Modern-Day Witnesses of Faith of the Korean Church', it is not permissible by Canon Law to exhume, divide, or move the remains. Instead, to help the family remember and



Fr Tommie Cusack.

commemorate Father Thomas Cusack, soil from the area closest to his burial site has been collected and placed in the urn.

"The Diocese of Daejeon testifies that the material in this urn is taken from the place closest to burial place where a part of the cremated remains of the victims of the Daejeon Korean War Massacres, including those of Fr Cusack, are interred."

June 18, 2024

Signed: The Chancellor of the Catholic Diocese of Daejeon, Fr John Sang-ho Kwak.

Saints in the Derry Diocese and Donegal by Dr Seán Beattie

IN any review of saints in Counties Derry and Donegal, two immediately stand out, St Patrick and St Colmcille. St Patrick's arrival in Donegal, his encounter with the King of Grianán Aileach, and the monastic foundations he established both in Donegal and Derry are well documented. The Cross of St Patrick in Carndonagh has the unique distinction of being the oldest free-standing High Cross in Ireland, dating from c 800 AD. Churches and places bearing the word 'domhnach' are indicative of a church founded by him. While, Colmcille is a renowned figure in the Early Christian Church, and several monastic foundations are associated with him in Ireland, apart from his fame as an evangelist outside Ireland.

Brother Michael O'Clery of Kilbarron, Ballyshannon - one of the compilers of the 'Annals of the Four Masters' - drew up from ancient sources a calendar of the Irish saints, and a genealogy of the kings and saints of Ireland. The descendants of Conal - known as the Cenél Conaill - claimed to have 40 saints in their tribe. That clan ruled most of west Ulster, from Donegal to Armagh, at one time. Some names were later added and these included 14 of

the Abbots of Iona, the last being Dubhdhach mac Dubáin, Abbot of Raphoe, who died in 938. Some caution must be exercised, however. The process of claiming saints for one's clan was open to criticism - a saint in the family was a status symbol - and there is a possibility that some of those on the list may have been added for other reasons, some political, others ornamental.

St Ultán of Falmore, Gleneely, Inishowen

One of the best known is St Ultan, who was venerated at St John's Point in south Donegal, and also in Inishowen. A holy well in his honour can be seen at Falmore, near Gleneely, Co Donegal. A High Cross stands over the well, which is approached by steps. A number of prayers have to be recited. According to folklore, the present Cross was erected by the landlord, James Steele Nicholson. He came from Co Down and Falmore was his shooting lodge. He was also a Freemason, and the insignia of the Order can still be seen over the door, although the house is a ruin, having been burned down some years ago. It is said that one of his children accidentally smashed the original cross, the

base of which appears to have Ogham writing. (This has not yet been confirmed by the National Monuments committee).

Ultán is a Patron Saint of Sick Children and the old Children's Hospital in Dublin was named after him. Local people had great belief in the curative powers of the well. Some 50 years ago, an old lady told me that she brought her son to the well to be cured. He suffered from a disability in his gait. Following a pilgrimage to the well, having said the prayers and blessed him in the water, the child made a full recovery and grew into adulthood.

The Council of Trent

Outside Catholicism, Luther, Zwingli and Calvin all denied the role of the saints as intercessors. The Council of Trent (1563) did not agree and reaffirmed the status. However, the Protestant church recognizes such saints as Colmcille and his cousin, and successor as Abbot of Iona, Baithine. They do not recognize their role as intercessors.

Over time, the declaration of sainthood was to be undertaken by a Bishop, but later that role was reserved by the Holy See. In the past, it was traditional that a cause for sainthood could not be

undertaken until a person was 50 years dead. These conditions no longer operate, as in the case of Mother Teresa and Pope John Paul XXIII.

Some of our Popular Saints

There are several saints in the Derry Diocese who are from Donegal. County Donegal includes all the Raphoe Diocese and parts of Derry and Clogher Dioceses. Mura is regarded as the founder of the Abbey at Fahan, Bunrana. His Feast Day is on March 12. St Boden is honoured on July 22 at Bocan, Culdaff. The Protestant and the local National School (under the Derry Diocese) are named after him.

At Malin Head, the most northerly part of the Diocese, there is a holy well in honour of St Muirdealach. The historian, Dr Silke states his Feast Day is on November 3. Over the years, he has been venerated on different dates, mostly August 15 but currently, the annual 'Turas' (pilgrimage) to Malin Well, as it is called, takes place on the first Sunday of May.

Maol Íosa Ó Brolcháin, who died in 1086, has a Feast Day on January 16, according to Dr Silke. In 1986, the historian Brian Bonner organised a Mass

for his anniversary in St Mary's Church, Bocan, Culdaff. He is still remembered in the parish, where his hymn, 'Deus Meus Adiuva Me', is still sung. Fr John Colgan, the Franciscan historian, described him as "a man of miracles, of holiness and of life". According to Pádraig Ó Riain, in his 'Dictionary of Irish Saints', he died as a member of the community in Armagh, following a pilgrimage to Lismore, although his early life was spent in the Diocese of Derry.

St Brigid

St Brigid's Feast Day is February 1 and is a national holiday in the Republic, thus raising her profile. The church recognises her as one of the Three Patron Saints of Ireland. Second in status only to St Patrick in the Irish world, she was born c 450 and died c 523. In the seventh century, her church in Kildare vied for status with no less than Armagh over the other churches in the country. It is believed that she travelled throughout all the four provinces, including Ulster. She was highly respected on the Continent. At home in Ireland, there are 35 townlands called Kilbride, indicating her extensive travels throughout Ireland. Her father was Dubhtach, and she founded a



Church of the Sacred Heart, Carndonagh, Co Donegal, with larger-than-life statue of one of the Three Patrons of Ireland.

monastery in Kildare.

In the Diocese of Derry, there are a number of holy wells dedicated to her. However, they are few in number when compared to other saints. The Church of the Sacred Heart, in Carndonagh, has a larger-than-life statue dedicated to her and her fellow Patrons, overlooking the surrounding countryside and out towards the Atlantic Ocean. So, it is fair to conclude that in the northernmost region of the Diocese and of the country, she is still revered.

Parish Post-its

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

Aghyaran

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30 pm Vigil, and 11 am.

Ardstraw East

(Newtownstewart)

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 11.30 am, St Eugene's Glenock.

Badoney Lower

(Gortin-Rouskey)

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

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

Badoney Upper

(Plumbridge-Cranagh)

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

Confessions: Confessions are available after 11 am Mass on Saturdays in Sacred Heart Church, Plumbridge, and after the 7.30 pm Saturday Vigil Mass in St Patrick's Church, Cranagh.

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

Ballinascreen

St Pio Mass: Mass in honour of St Pio of Pietrelcina is celebrated on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church. The Novena prayers and Rosary are recited at 7.10 pm.

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

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

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

in St Eugene's, Moneyneena.

Ballymagroarty

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

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

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

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

Banagher

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

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

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

Bellaghy

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

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

Buncrana

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

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed each weekday at 9.30 am in St Mary's Oratory, prior to 10 am Mass.

Guided Holy Hour: A Guided Holy Hour of Adoration in Honour of the Holy Face of Jesus takes place on Sundays, 6-7 pm in St

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

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

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

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

Burt, Inch & Fahan

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

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

Cappagh (Killyclogher)

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

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher, Monday-Saturday at 9.15 am, and in Corpus Christi, Mountfield every Thursday evening at 8 pm.

Legion of Mary: Legion of Mary meets every Monday after 10 am Mass in St Mary's Church, Killyclogher. New members always welcome.

Anyone wishing to welcome the Pilgrim Statute of Our Lady into your home and pray the Rosary is asked to contact Rosaleen on 07917421119 to make arrangements with the Legion of Mary, Cappagh Group.

St Pio Novena Devotions: Novena devotions through the intercession of St Padre Pio take place on the first Wednesday of the month in Christ the King Church, Strathroy. Rosary at 7 pm, followed by Mass at 7.30 pm.

Veneration and blessing with

relic will be available after Mass.

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

Confessions: Confessions are heard on Saturdays after 10 am Mass in St Mary's Killyclogher, and from 5.45-6.25 pm in Christ The King, Strathroy.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 12 noon, Christ The King, Strathroy; 9 & 11 am, St Mary's, Killyclogher.

Carndonagh

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

Castlederg & Ardstraw West

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil and 11 am, Castlederg; 9.30 am Dregish; and 12.30 pm Drumnabey.

Claudy

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Patrick's.

Clonleigh (Lifford)

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 11 am.

Clonmany

Life in Spirit Seminars: Life in the Spirit Seminars are underway in St Francis' School, Clonmany, led by the Columba Community. They will run for five Wednesdays (starting on April 22) and are a way of discovering what the Holy Spirit has to offer in your life. Each evening begins with tea/coffee at 7.15 pm, and will consist of prayer, praise, input and discussion. All welcome.

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary pray the Rosary every Sunday evening at 6 pm at the Grotto beside St Mary's Church. All are welcome.

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

Confessions: Confession is available in St Mary's Church from 7 pm on Fridays, in lead up to 7.30 pm Mass 6 pm on Saturdays, in lead up to 6.30 pm Vigil Mass.

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

Coleraine

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil, 11 am, St John's; 7.30 pm Vigil, St Mary's Dunboe; 9.45 am, Our Lady of the Assumption, Aghadowey.

Creggan

Sycamore: The Sycamore sessions continue in St Mary's Parochial House Conference Room on the second and fourth Fridays of the month, running from 6-7 pm. The

sessions are an opportunity to explore faith, ask questions and meet people, and include a short film and friendly chat over a cuppa. The next dates are February 27; and March 13 and 27.

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

Bereavement Support: Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support. The Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support Group meets on the second Sunday of each month at 3 pm in the Parochial House community room. All are welcome to share a cup of tea, have a chat, remember and talk about their loved one and find support with others experiencing similar feelings. In addition to the group, there is an ongoing opportunity to speak on a one-to-one basis with an experienced grief counsellor. The contact number for more information on the group or to arrange one to one support is 07907085178.

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

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

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

Culdaff

Good as New Shop: St Mary's Church Bocan Re-decorating Committee has the 'Good as New Shop' now open in Carndonagh. All proceeds are for the Re-decorating Fund.

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

Desertmartin

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

Weekend Mass Times: 7.30 pm Vigil in St Patrick's, Keenaught; and 10 am in St Mary's, Coolcalm.

Confessions: Saturday evenings in St Patrick's, Keenaught, from 6.30-7.10 pm.

Donaghheady (Aughabrack & Dunamanagh)

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St

Mary's, Aughabrack, on First Fridays, after 10 am Mass until 12 noon.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, St Patrick's, and 10.30 am, St Mary's.

Donaghmore (Killygordon)

Holy Hour: Prayerful reading of the Scriptures & Rosary with the Home of the Mother, Servant Sisters every Tuesday from 6.30-7.30 pm at St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill, Ballybofey, and every Thursday from 7-8 pm at St. Patrick's.

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary's Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick's Church, Crossroads.

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

Drumquin

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed each Tuesday morning at 10 am in St Patrick's Church, Drumquin.

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 6 pm - Mass at 7.30 pm. Weekend Mass Times: Vigil 6.30 pm, and 11 am.

Drumragh (Omagh)

Prayer Group: The Charismatic Prayer Group meetings take place in The Pastoral Centre on Thursday evenings, with Rosary at 7.30 pm and prayer meeting at 8 pm. All welcome to come and pray.

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary Men's meetings take place on the first, second and last Monday, and third Tuesday of each month at 7.30 pm, in St Vincent's Hall (beneath Sacred Heart Church Sacristy). Contact: Sean on 07730671370.

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in Sacred Heart Church on Wednesdays following 10 am Mass until 5.30 pm.

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

Stations of Cross: The Stations are prayed after 10 am Mass in Sacred Heart Church.

Confessions: Confession take place on Saturdays after 10 am Mass and after 6 pm Mass in Sacred Heart Church.

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

Parish Post-its

Dungiven

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary will host a Rosary on Monday, May 4, at 7 pm in the Emmaus Hall, beside St Patrick's Church. This Rosary will be offered for all those sitting exams this year. Tea, coffee and light refreshments will be served afterwards. All are welcome to attend.

The Legion of Mary meets every Tuesday at 7 pm in the Parish Committee Room. New members welcome. If anyone would like to have the Legion of Mary Statue, (Our Lady of Peace), please telephone 078 9552 9563. Many blessings have been bestowed upon those who have taken the statue to their home for a week. And we host the Rosary on the first Monday of each month, at 7 pm, in Emmaus Hall, beside St Patrick's Church. Special intentions are prayed for and light refreshments provided.

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

St Pio Healing Mass: A St Pio Healing Mass is celebrated monthly, on the first Thursday, in St Patrick's Church at 7 pm.

Society of St Joseph: The Society of St Joseph's for the support of religious vocations meets on the second Tuesdays of the month in the Committee Room, after 10 am Mass in St Patrick's Church.

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

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross will be prayed after the 10 am Mass on Fridays, in St Patrick's Church.

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed on Mondays, Tuesday, Wednesdays and Fridays, at 9.35 am, in St Patrick's Church.

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

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

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

Errigal

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

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

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

Faughanvale

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

Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Faughanvale Branch meets in St Mary's Church on the second Monday of the month (not Jan July, August) following morning Mass. They pray for and sponsor vocations to the priesthood. New members are needed. The meeting only takes less than an hour.

Rosary for Priests and for Vocations: A Rosary for priests and vocations is recited each Monday before morning Mass.

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

Granaghan (Swatragh)

Weekend Mass Times: 12 noon & 7 pm Vigils; 10.30 am.

Greencastle

Divine Mercy: The Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed on the First Tuesday of every month at 12.15 pm before Mass in St Patrick's Church, Greencastle.

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in St Patrick's Church on Thursdays, 6-10 pm.

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are prayed after 7.30 pm Mass on Fridays in St Patrick's, Greencastle.

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

Greenlough

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil, live-streamed to Bellaghy; 11 am, live-streamed from Bellaghy.

Iskaheen, Drung & Muff

History Talk: The Adult Faith Group is hosting a talk on The History of St Patrick's, Iskaheen, in St Patrick's Church, on Tuesday, May 19, at 7.30 pm.

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

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

Rosary: The Rosary is prayed before all weekday Masses.

Blessing: The St Peregrine Novena Mass and relic blessing takes place on the First Fridays at 7 pm, alternating between the three parish churches.

Confessions: Confessions are available in Iskaheen on Saturdays, 9.45-10 am, and in Muff on Saturdays, 6 pm, and after 6.30 pm Vigil Mass

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 11.30 am, Sacred Heart Church, Muff; 8 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Columba's, Drung; 9 am, St Patrick's, Iskaheen.

Kilrea

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

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

SVP: The St Vincent de Paul Thrift Shop is open on Saturdays from 10 am -1pm.

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

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

Lavey

Exams Mass: The 6 pm Vigil Mass on Saturday, May 2, in the Church of Our Lady of Mercy, will be offered up for those sitting exams. All students and families welcome.

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

Confession: Confessions are heard from 5.15-5.45 pm on

Saturdays.

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

Leckpatrick

Grotto Rosary: The Rosary will be prayed at The Grotto, Porthall, on Friday, May 15, at 7 pm, led by Fr McCaughey. All parishioners are invited to attend.

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

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

Lifford (Murlog)

Grotto Rosary: The Rosary will be prayed at The Grotto, Porthall, on Friday, May 15, at 7 pm, led by Fr McCaughey. All parishioners are invited to attend.

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

Stations of the Cross: The Stations of the Cross are recited publicly each Friday after 9.30 am Mass in St Patrick's Church, Murlog.

Adoration: 9.30am-12.30 pm. Confessions: Saturday, 6-6.15 pm

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 11 am.

Limavady

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on the first Sunday of each month in Christ the King (with Confessions) from 3-5 pm, and on Thursdays in St Mary's Church, from 1-6 pm.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 4.30 pm Vigil, 9 am, 12 noon, Christ the King Church; 6 pm Vigil, St Finlough's Church; 10.30 am, St Mary's Church.

Maghera

Holy Face of Jesus: The Holy Face of Jesus prayers take place every Tuesday after the 9.30 am Mass and Divine Mercy.

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

Confession: Daily after morning Mass (except Sunday and Holydays), and St Mary's

at 7 pm on Wednesdays (before evening Mass) and Saturdays at 11am/12noon and 5.30pm/6.15pm

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

Magilligan

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

Malin

Turas: The annual Malin Well Turas will take place on Sunday, May 3, with Fr Charlie Logue leading off from Star of the Sea Chapel at 3 pm.

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

Melmount

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place in the church on Mondays after 10.30 am - 6.30 pm (Benediction at 6.30 pm if priest available).

Confessions: Second and fourth Saturdays at 11.30 am in St Mary's; for First Fridays - after Mass Thursday & Friday mornings (if no funeral) and after First Friday evening Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, 11.30 am.

Moville

Music: Music continues on Thursday evenings at 8 pm in Moville Men's Shed. Love Music? Just Show Up! Singers, players, and socialisers alike are all welcome for a relaxing evening at one of the few Shed activities open to both men and women.

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

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

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

Confessions: Confessions will be heard in St Pius X Church on Saturdays from 5.45-6.15 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil, 10 am, St Pius X Church. 11.30 am on alternate Sundays in St Mary's Ballybrack, and St Columba's Ballinacrae.

Sion Mills

Adoration: Exposition

of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on Fridays, from 10.30 am - 6.30 pm (ending with Benediction if priest available). The Blessed Sacrament can also be adored in the Adoration Room in St Theresa's anytime while the Church is open.

Legion of Mary: The Legion of Mary meets in the Green Room, behind the church, each Monday evening at 7.30 pm. This is open not only to members of the Legion but to anyone interested in joining. Anyone can come along to the start of the meeting for the Rosary.

Confessions: First, third and fifth Saturdays at 10.30 am in St Theresa's.

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil; 9.30 am.

Steelstown & Culmore

Lectio Divina: Lectio Divina is a way of praying the Scriptures together and takes place every Wednesday after 10 am Mass, in the Parish Conference Room. All welcome.

Adoration: Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6.50 pm. Stations of the Cross: Come along to reflect on the Way of the Cross on Fridays at 7.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 9 am, 11 am, and 12.15 pm.

Strabane (Camus)

Grotto Rosary: The Rosary will be prayed at The Grotto, Porthall, on Friday, May 15, at 7 pm, led by Fr McCaughey. All parishioners are invited to attend.

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

Stations of Cross: Stations of the Cross are recited publicly each Friday after 10 am Mass in Immaculate Conception Church.

Adoration: Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every day, from 10.30 am-1 pm, in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), which is situated at the back of the Church.

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

Society of St Joseph: The St John Vianney branch of the Society of St Joseph (the three combined Strabane parishes) meets on the first Tuesday of the month, excluding January, July and August, with Rosary in the church after 10 am Mass and continues in St Patrick's Hall. More people are encouraged to join in

this prayer for new students to join the priesthood. The Society assists Irish and overseas student. Please contact Margaret Harte on 028 71 883159.

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

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

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

Templemore - St

Eugene's

Eucharistic Adoration: Every Sunday, there is Eucharistic Adoration from 3-6 pm and every Tuesday from 10.30 am until 7.20 pm. Matt Talbot Mass: The Matt Talbot, Freedom from addiction Mass takes place on the first Monday of each month at 7.30 pm in St Eugene's Cathedral.

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

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

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

Templemore - Long

Tower

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

Mental Health Mass: A monthly Mass for Mental Health, and a mini-Vigil to midnight, takes place on the first Thursdays at 7.30 pm. This Mass is to give thanks to God for positive mental health, and to pray for those struggling with mental health issues and those who care for them. After Mass, Adoration will follow until midnight.

Parish Post-its

cont. from page 27

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

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

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

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

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

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

Three Patrons

New Course: The Parish is running a course entitled, "Genesis (1-11) and Church Teaching" on Thursdays in the Kildare Room, St Brigid's, Carnhill, from 7-8 pm. All are welcome; bring along a Bible and come discover how these ancient stories speak powerfully to our faith today.

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

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

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

St Brigid's Choir: The 10.30 am St Brigid's Choir meets on

Thursdays from 5-5.30 pm in St Brigid's Church.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Holy Face Devotions: Devotions to the Holy Face of Jesus takes place every

Tuesday after 11 am Mass in Our Lady's Chapel, St Joseph's Church, Galliagh. All welcome

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

after 11 am Mass and from 4-4.30 pm.

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

Urney & Castlefinn

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

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

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

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

Waterside & Strathfoyle

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

Eucharistic Adoration: There is Eucharistic Adoration in St Oliver Plunkett Church, Strathfoyle, on Wednesdays from 6.30-8.30 pm; in Immaculate Conception Church on Thursdays, 1-6 pm; and in St Columba's Church on Fridays, 1-6 pm.

Confessions: St Columba's – Saturday after 10 am Mass, Monday-Friday at 7 pm, before evening Mass;

...other Diary Dates

HoM Boy's Get-Together:

The Servant Priests of the Home of the Mother will be leading a get-together day for boys on Saturday, May 9, at the Servant Sisters' Crossroads base, outside Killygordon, Co Donegal (F93 PNOX). It will be an afternoon of sports, fellowship, faith, and food, running from 1.30-5.30 pm, and is aimed at those aged 9-17 years old. To sign up by Thursday, May 7, or for further information, contact the Sisters at derryshm@homeofthemoth.com – or on 0858763564. Consent forms need to be signed by parent/guardian.

The Home of the Mother will also be hosting its next Encounter for Families, though all are welcome, on Sunday, May 10, at Rosnowlough Friary, Co Donegal, and the Servant Priests will also be there for that. The programme will get underway at 10.30 am with registration, followed by a formation meeting at 11 am, with children's activities occurring simultaneously. There will be Mass at 12.15 pm, followed by lunch (bring your own), and then Adoration and Confessions at 2.30 pm. The Rosary will be prayed at 3.45 pm and the day will end with tea at 4.30 pm (bring something to share). The link to sign up or for more information: <https://forms.gle/8oYiKNInxmXiFWiPA>

Ladies' Retreat: The Sisters from the Apostles of the Sacred Heart of Jesus will return to Termonbacca to lead a ladies' retreat on Pentecost weekend, May 22-24.

This is a lovely opportunity to take time out and gather in prayer and friendship. To book a place please complete a form at the link: <https://forms.gle/4gbNFutMxFaCbpf6>

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

Derry Search Youth Group: The monthly Search prayer


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

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

St Therese Prayer Hour: This year, it is 100 years

**DERRY DIOCESAN
PILGRIMAGE
TO
KNOCK
SHRINE**

Saturday 6 June



In conjunction with the All Ireland Rosary Rally, we will join those gathered to celebrate at our National Eucharistic and Marian Shrine.

Buses will leave St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, at 8am.

Cost £50, which includes dinner in Knock House Hotel following the conclusion of the Mass in the Basilica.

A day of prayer, faith and fellowship in the heart of our Catholic faith.

TO BOOK PLEASE CONTACT KAREN
048 7126 2894
or by email at cathedral@derrydiocese.org

ST EUGENE'S CATHEDRAL
DERRY

F93 PNOX

**BOYS
GET TOGETHER**

WITH THE SERVANT PRIESTS
OF THE HOME OF THE MOTHER

When? Sat. 9th May from 1:30pm to 5:30pm

For who? Any lads between 9 and 17 who are up for some good craic: sports, games and prayer and more!

SIGN UP: Please sign up by Thursday, 7 May! To sign up or for any questions please contact the Sisters at derryshm@homeofthemoth.com / 085 876 3564



**THE LITTLE WAY NOVENA
TO ST. THÉRÈSE OF LISIEUX**



9-17 MAY 2026

SAINT EUGENE'S CATHEDRAL - DERRY

Parish Post-its

...other Diary Dates cont.

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

Ladies' Bible Study: Ladies interested in coming to a deeper understanding of scripture are welcome to come along to the Ladies' Bible Study in Termonbacca, Derry, every Tuesday evening from 8:30-9:30 pm. It is led by Fr Stephen Quinn ocd, who is currently working through the Gospel of Mark, which is the Gospel for Mass for this year. This Bible Study is open to all women who are interested

in coming along. There is no need to book, you can simply show up. For further information contact Termonbacca on 028 71 262512.

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

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

Polish Mass: Mass for the Polish community is celebrated in the

Church of Christ The King, Strathroy, Omagh, on the first and third Sundays of each month at 10 am, and at 9.30 am every second and fourth Sunday in the Divine Mercy Chapel, at St Mary's Church, Creggan, in Derry City.

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

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

Men's Rosary: The Men's Rosary takes place on the first Saturday of every month at Market Street, Omagh (opposite Primark) and at the side of O'Neill's Sports Store, near Guildhall Square, at 1 pm. All Welcome!

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

Reading with the Carmelites: The Carmelite Fathers at Termonbacca hold a monthly session of 'Reading with the Carmelite Saints', to explore learning friendship with Christ through the example of the Carmelite Saints. It takes place on the third Thursday of the month at 7.30 pm.

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

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

Diocesan Diary

Diocesan Knock Pilgrimage: org.

The Derry Diocesan pilgrimage to the National Eucharistic & Marian Shrine at Knock, Co Mayo, will take place on Saturday, June 6, in conjunction with the All-Ireland Rosary Rally. Buses will leave St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry, at 8 am. Cost £50, which includes dinner in Knock House Hotel following the conclusion of Mass in the Basilica. To book please contact Karen on 048 7126 2894 or by email at cathedral@derrydiocese.

Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage:

There will be a Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage to Fatima for young people aged 16+, for five nights from August 3-8. Cost is £820 and there will be a budget plan to help with this. Names and deposit of £100 are required as soon as possible to secure a place. For more info or to book contact bethany.doherty@derrydiocese.org 00442871264087.

Forty Hours - April & May

Sun 19 April	St Patrick's	Iskaheen
Sun 19 April	St Patrick's	Drumquin
Sun 19 April	St Joseph's, Galliagh	Three Patrons, Derry
Sun 26 April	St Mary's, Craigavole	Kilrea
Sun 26 April	Star of the Sea	Faughanvale
Sun 3 May	St Mary's, Ballerin	Garvagh
Sun 3 May	St Patrick's	Greencastle
Sun 3 May	St Mary's, Dunboe	Coleraine
Sun 10 May	St Francis of Assisi, Drumnabey	Ardstraw West & Castlederg
Sun 10 May	Corpus Christi, Mountfield	Cappagh
Sun 10 May	St Mary's, Altinure	Banagher
Sun 17 May	St Mary's, Cloughcor	Leckpatrick
Sun 17 May	Immaculate Conception	Glendermott
Sun 17 May	St Mary's	Ardmore
Sun 24 May	Sacred Heart	Badoney Upper (Plumbridge)
Sun 24 May	St Mary's	Faughanvale
Sun 24 May	St Patrick's	Donagheady
Sun 31 May	St Mary's	Clonmany
Sun 31 May	St Patrick's	Claudy
Sun 31 May	St Patrick's	Badoney Lower (Gortin)
Sun 31 May	St Patrick's, Keenaught	Desertmartin

DDS Daily Masses 2025-2026

St Eugene's

17 Jan, 9 Mar, 29 Apr, 19 Jun, 9 Aug, 29 Sep, 19 Nov

St Columba's

18 Jan, 10 Mar, 30 Apr, 20 Jun, 10 Aug, 30 Sep, 20 Nov

The Three Patrons

19 Jan, 11 Mar, 1 May, 21 Jun, 11 Aug, 1 Oct, 21 Nov

St Mary's, Creggan

30 Nov 2025, 20 Jan, 12 Mar, 2 May, 22 Jun, 12 Aug, 2 Oct, 22 Nov

Our Lady of Lourdes

1 Dec 2025, 21 Jan, 13 Mar, 3 May, 23 Jun, 13 Aug, 3 Oct, 23 Nov

Holy Family

2 Dec, 2025, 22 Jan, 14 Mar, 4 May, 24 Jun, 14 Aug, 4 Oct, 24 Nov

Culmore

3 Dec 2025, 23 Jan, 15 Mar, 5 May, 25 Jun, 15 Aug, 5 Oct, 25 Nov

Glendermott

4 Dec 2025, 24 Jan, 16 Mar, 6 May, 26 Jun, 16 Aug, 6 Oct, 26 Nov

Donagheady

5 Dec 2025, 25 Jan, 17 Mar, 7 May, 27 Jun, 17 Aug, 7 Oct, 27 Nov

Leckpatrick

6 Dec 2025, 26 Jan, 18 Mar, 8 May, 28 Jun, 18 Aug, 8 Oct, 28 Nov

Ardmore

7 Dec 2025, 27 Jan, 19 Mar, 9 May, 29 Jun, 19 Aug, 9 Oct

Strathfoyle

8 Dec 2025, 28 Jan, 20 Mar, 10 May, 30 Jun, 20 Aug, 10 Oct

Camus

9 Dec 2025, 29 Jan, 21 Mar, 11 May, 1 Jul, 21 Aug, 11 Oct

Urney & Castlefin

10 Dec 2025, 30 Jan, 22 Mar, 12 May, 2 Jul, 22 Aug, 12 Oct

Mourne

11 Dec 2025, 31 Jan, 23 Mar, 13 May, 3 Jul, 23 Aug, 13 Oct

Donaghmore

12 Dec 2025, 1 Feb, 24 Mar, 14 May, 4 Jul, 24 Aug, 14 Oct

Termonamongan

13 Dec 2025, 2 Feb, 25 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jul, 25 Aug, 15 Oct

Langfield

14 Dec 2025, 3 Feb, 26 Mar, 16 May, 6 Jul, 26 Aug, 16 Oct

Sion Mills

15 Dec 2025, 4 Feb, 27 Mar, 17 May, 7 Jul, 27 Aug, 17 Oct

Ardstraw East

16 Dec 2025, 5 Feb, 28 Mar, 18 May, 8 Jul, 28 Aug, 18 Oct

Ardstraw W & C'derg

17 Dec 2025, 6 Feb, 29 Mar, 19 May, 9 Jul, 29 Aug, 19 Oct

Clonleigh

18 Dec 2025, 7 Feb, 30 Mar, 20 May, 10 Jul, 30 Aug, 20 Oct

Drumragh

19 Dec 2025, 8 Feb, 31 Mar, 21 May, 11 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Oct

Cappagh

20 Dec 2025, 9 Feb, 1 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jul, 1 Sep, 22 Oct

Greencastle

21 Dec 2025, 10 Feb, 23 May, 13 Jul, 2 Sep, 23 Oct

Badoney Lower

22 Dec 2025, 11 Feb, 24 May, 14 Jul, 3 Sep, 24 Oct

Badoney Upper

23 Dec 2025, 12 Feb, 25 May, 15 Jul, 4 Sep, 25 Oct

Maghera

24 Dec 2025, 13 Feb, 5 Apr, 26 May, 16 Jul, 5 Sep, 26 Oct

Desertmartin

25 Dec 2025, 14 Feb, 6 Apr, 27 May, 17 Jul, 6 Sep, 27 Oct

Faughanvale

26 Dec 2025, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 28 May, 18 Jul, 7 Sep, 28 Oct

Claudy

27 Dec 2025, 16 Feb, 8 Apr, 29 May, 19 Jul, 8 Sep, 29 Oct

Banagher

28 Dec 2025, 17 Feb, 9 Apr, 30 May, 20 Jul, 9 Sep, 30 Oct

Ballinascreen

29 Dec 2025, 18 Feb, 10 Apr, 31 May, 21 Jul, 10 Sep, 31 Oct

Dungiven

30 Dec 2025, 19 Feb, 11 Apr, 1 Jun, 22 Jul, 11 Sep, 1 Nov

Limavady

31 Dec 2025, 20 Feb, 12 Apr, 2 Jun, 23 Jul, 12 Sep, 2 Nov

Magilligan

1 Jan, 21 Feb, 13 Apr, 3 Jun, 24 Jul, 13 Sep, 3 Nov

Coleraine

2 Jan, 22 Feb, 14 Apr, 4 Jun, 25 Jul, 14 Sep, 4 Nov

Garvagh

3 Jan, 23 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Jun, 26 Jul, 15 Sep, 5 Nov

Kilrea

4 Jan, 24 Feb, 16 Apr, 6 Jun, 27 Jul, 16 Sep, 6 Nov

Greenlough

5 Jan, 25 Feb, 17 Apr, 7 Jun, 28 Jul, 17 Sep, 7 Nov

Bellaghy

6 Jan, 26 Feb, 18 Apr, 8 Jun, 29 Jul, 18 Sep, 8 Nov

Lavey

7 Jan, 27 Feb, 19 Apr, 9 Jun, 30 Jul, 19 Sep, 9 Nov

Moville

8 Jan, 28 Feb, 20 Apr, 10 Jun, 31 Jul, 20 Sep, 10 Nov

Granaghan

9 Jan, 1 Mar, 21 Apr, 11 Jun, 1 Aug, 21 Sep, 11 Nov

Buncrana

10 Jan, 2 Mar, 22 Apr, 12 Jun, 2 Aug, 22 Sep, 12 Nov

Fahan

11 Jan, 3 Mar, 23 Apr, 13 Jun, 3 Aug, 23 Sep, 13 Nov

Clonmany

12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Apr, 14 Jun, 4 Aug, 24 Sep, 14 Nov

Carndonagh

13 Jan, 5 Mar, 25 Apr, 15 Jun, 5 Aug, 25 Sep, 15 Nov

Malin

14 Jan, 6 Mar, 26 Apr, 16 Jun, 6 Aug, 26 Sep, 16 Nov

Iskaheen

15 Jan, 7 Mar, 27 Apr, 17 Jun, 7 Aug, 27 Sep, 17 Nov

Culdaff

16 Jan, 8 Mar, 28 Apr, 18 Jun, 8 Aug, 28 Sep, 18 Nov

1ST FRIDAY MASS FOR LIVING MEMBERS

2025 / 2026

Magilligan

12/5/25

Granaghan

1/2/26

Termonamongan

2/6/26

Ardstraw West /Castlederg

3/6/26

Cappagh

4/10/26

Donagheady

5/1/26

Donaghmore

6/5/26

Langfield

7/3/26

Badoney Lower

8/7/26

Greencastle

9/4/26

Leckpatrick

10/2/26

Clonleigh

11/6/26

Parish Post its cont

Immaculate Conception, after 11 am Mass every Saturday and at 5.30 pm before evening Mass on a Saturday; St Oliver Plunkett, Every Saturday 5.30 pm, before the Vigil Mass.

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil, St Columba's; 6 pm Vigil, 10.15 am & 12.15 pm, Immaculate Conception; 6 pm Vigil and 11.15 am, St Oliver Plunkett.

He is risen. Alleluia *Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR*

EVERY four years, we Redemptorists have appointments of Superiors for our various Communities. A person can only be appointed for two of these terms consecutively. So, we are always making fresh beginnings to our Community life and mission.

A number of years ago, when one of our Communities came together for the initial meeting of the four-year term, the new Superior gave his talk outlining what his hopes and plans were for the four years ahead. He summed up his remarks by saying that his "main hope was that everyone would be happy for the years ahead."

As he said this, a loud whisper was heard from the back of the room, from one of the characters of the Community: "I don't want to be happy!"

I was reminded of this over the past few weeks as we prepared for Easter, and as we now have entered into the Easter Season. It is a time when the Word of God is filled with words of peace and happiness and joy and hope, while all around us the world is filled with war and violence and hopelessness.

How can we celebrate Easter joy?

During this month of April, and into May, we are reminded through the Liturgy of the Mass that the Resurrection of Christ from the dead took place in the setting of complete hopelessness. Everything had collapsed around His disciples. Christ had been put to death, the shameful death of a criminal on a Cross. The disciples had almost all abandoned Him, because they were afraid of what might happen to them. All that they had built up for themselves over the past three years was gone, and now they had to return to their normal lives with

no vision for the future.

The road to Emmaus

All of this is very well captured in the well-known story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, as told to us in the Gospel of Luke 24:13-35. This is probably the best-known story of Christ's resurrection that we have. I encourage you to go to your Bible and read this full story for yourself, and meditate on it throughout this month of April.

I now invite you to walk with me as we accompany these disciples on their journey and let them accompany us on our journey today.

"Two of the disciples were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem"

When we hear that word 'disciples', we immediately think in terms of two men. And that is how they are usually pictured in paintings. But there is an old tradition that these two disciples were a married couple. Thinking about them like that makes much more sense.

They were on their way home, broken-hearted because the man they loved so deeply, and to whom they had committed their lives, was now dead. They were talking about Jesus with love and affection. But they had lost hope, as they said themselves. That can often be how we are too, especially in light of the world we live in today

"Jesus Himself came up and walked by their side; but something prevented them from recognising Him."

The Scriptures reveal to us that the deepest truth about our lives is that Jesus walks by our sides today. Last month, when we celebrated the Feast of St Patrick, we were

reminded that, at the heart of the faith, Patrick brought to us what is called the 'Breastplate of St Patrick' – Christ beside me, Christ before me; Christ within me, Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ all around me, King of my heart.

What prevents us from recognising Him is what prevented them from recognising Him – our own pre-occupations about life as we know it today.

He (Jesus) said to them: *"What matters are you discussing as you walk along?"*

That question that Jesus asked the two disciples is the question that He asks us today, as we walk along on our journey of faith. It is so important that we answer it for ourselves. When we do answer it, we will find that what we are talking about are things that generally knock the heart out of us: at a world level because of all the wars that are going on and more threatened; about the state of the Church, with so much going on that makes us despondent; about our parish and faith communities that would seem to be floundering with fewer priests, and many, especially of our young people, giving up on us; about marriage and family life, where everyone is thinking about themselves rather than about one another; at a personal level, where so many of us are caught in addictions of one kind or another, a situation that is being exacerbated by social media and the internet.

"Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered Him: 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' 'What things?' He asked. 'All about Jesus

of Nazareth,' they answered."

The disciple, Cleopas, is very much like all of us. He thought that what he saw was all there was to see. He said to Jesus that He must be the only person who did not know what had been happening in Jerusalem. The truth is that he was talking to the only person who did know!

We can reduce our faith in Jesus to spiritual things and act as if He has nothing to say about the real things of life. The great truth is that we have among us, speaking to us through the Holy Spirit, the One who is the way, the truth and the life. And, He tells us that love is the only way for living human life; that peace is the only way for a fruitful world; that unity is the only way to build the Church and society, so that our world can be the kingdom of God. Violence and war; hatred and vengeance; domination and subjugation only all lead to death and destruction. Do we believe this?

"Jesus said to them: 'You foolish people, so slow to believe the full message of the prophets.' Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, He explained to them the passages throughout the Scriptures that were about Himself."

We, the disciples of Jesus, the Church of today, also deserve this reprimand: "You foolish people, so slow to believe." And, we are given this same promise that He will teach us the full truth. We, too, can be slow to believe. We can set very low limits to what our faith in Christ is about. We can easily forget, or choose not to remember, that Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again. This month of April and into May, this Easter season, is a time when we are called

to renew our faith in what the full impact of Christ's salvation for the world is about.

Our faith is not about having all the answers to the questions of the world today. It is about knowing that Christ is needed to shine His light on all the many questions that the world has today, so that we can find the truth about the things that are important at every level of human life.

"When they drew near the village to which they were going, He made as if to go on, but they pressed Him to stay with them."

This is why at least one of the disciples had to be a woman! Only a woman would have had the sensitivity to care for this stranger, who had spent all this time talking to them. But also, only a woman would have had the spiritual insight to realise that there was someone very special here and they needed to foster that relationship with Him. She had the security of their love for one another as a couple to insist on her intuition. And it was then that they recognised Him.

"Now while He was with them at table, He took the bread and said the blessing; then He broke the bread and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised Him."

The greatest treasure that we have as Catholics is, without doubt, the constant celebration of the Eucharist in which Jesus gives Himself to us in His Body and Blood. Unfortunately, we have often made it into an obligation. The questions around the Mass are so often: "Do I have to go?"; "How long will it last?" and so on.

The Easter season is a time for us to get rid of all this small-mindedness from our lives and let the mystery of the faith open us out into the wonders of God's love and Christ's presence and power working within us.



Fr. Johnny Doherty CSsR

"They said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as He talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?'"

One of the most important changes that we have to make as Catholics is to give equal importance to the Liturgy of the Word as to the Liturgy of the Eucharist, as we celebrate Mass. We have a profound belief in the real presence of Christ in the bread and wine. We need to make a full act of faith in the real presence of Christ in the Scriptures. It was this that changed the hearts and lives of the two disciples. It is this that will change our hearts and lives also.

"They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them: 'Yes, it is true. The Lord has risen and has appeared to Simon.'"

During these weeks of April and into May let us make this core truth of our faith grow in us, so that we can bring joy into our homes and families; bring hope into our parishes and communities of faith; and bring peace to our troubled world.

Pope Leo is leading the way for us, as He constantly preaches to the world the vital message of peace rather than war. Let us get in behind Him and make it our gift also to the world around us.

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

How I deal with anger towards God *by Sinéad Strong*

FEELING angry with God is something I have wrestled with, and I know that I am not alone. Sometimes, this anger surfaces after a loss - maybe the death of a loved one, an illness, or even when life simply doesn't make sense. There are moments when prayers seem to go unanswered, and suffering just feels unfair. At first, I felt guilty and confused, wondering if faith itself had slipped away but, as a Catholic, I have discovered that our tradition offers both empathy and practical ways to move through these emotions. This journey is not easy, but it is deeply human, and I have learned that confronting my anger honestly can open the door to a richer relationship with God.

I learnt that anger - yes, even directed at God - is a normal human response. Honestly, when I look at the Bible, I see people like Job, the Psalm writers, and prophets being pretty honest with God about their pain and frustration. Job, for example, lost everything and didn't hesitate to voice his anguish. The

Psalms, too, are full of cries for help, complaints, and questions. That is comforting because it reminds me that God wants a real relationship, not just polite words or perfect emotions. The Church doesn't demand that I hide my feelings or pretend everything is fine; instead, it encourages me to bring my true self into the conversation with God.

Instead of pretending that everything is fine or feeling ashamed, I have found that bringing my anger into prayer actually helps. Sometimes, I sit down and just tell God what is on my heart; even if my words are raw, even if all I can do is sigh or cry. I often think of St Teresa of Ávila, who didn't hold back in her conversations with God, sometimes expressing exasperation and even humour. Praying through my anger, lets God into my hurt and opens me up to healing. I have come to see prayer not as a performance, but as honest dialogue, trusting that God can handle my doubts, questions, and even my rage.

Sometimes, I use the words of the Psalms or write my own prayers. Other times, I just sit in silence, letting my feelings rise in the presence of God. Over time, I have realized that all my hurt and anger, when brought to prayer, can be transformed. It doesn't always disappear, but it can become an invitation for God to meet me where I am.

Catholic teaching reminds me that tough times can lead to spiritual growth. My anger often points to a deeper longing for meaning or justice. Sometimes, beneath my frustration, there is grief, disappointment, or fear. Talking things over with a spiritual director or confessor helps me see how my faith can be strengthened, even when life feels dark. The Catechism says "faith is often lived in darkness," and sticking with it during hard times is a real testament.

I have also learned to ask myself: "What do I really want from God? What is the ache behind my

anger?" Sometimes, it is a longing for answers, sometimes it is a desire for comfort, and sometimes it is simply the hope that things will change. By naming these desires, I can invite God into the deeper places of my heart, trusting that He hears me, even when I don't understand everything.

It is also important to remember that we don't have to do everything by ourselves. There is support there in the Church community, through groups like Catholic Mothers Ireland and others, and the sacraments, especially Reconciliation and the Eucharist; these bring me comfort and remind me of God's presence. Sharing my struggles with faith friends makes me feel less isolated and helps me heal. Sometimes, hearing others talk about their own spiritual battles helps me to realize that anger at God is not a sign of failure, but a part of real faith.

Reconciliation, in particular, has been a powerful experience for me. When I bring my anger and pain

before God in the Sacrament of Confession, I feel both heard and forgiven. The Eucharist gives me a sense of belonging and hope; it is a reminder that God's love is always present, even in the middle of my confusion.

For me, the Catholic perspective is all about hope and healing. God's love doesn't waver, and He wants to help us mend our hearts. By facing my anger honestly, seeking understanding, and staying open to grace, I have found that my relationship with God can grow deeper, built on trust, humility, and renewed faith.

It is not always a quick process. Sometimes, anger returns when new struggles arise, but I try to remember that God is patient. Each time I choose honesty and prayer, I feel a little closer to peace. I am reminded that God doesn't demand perfection, He desires real connection, even when I am hurting. The Church encourages us to bring all our emotions to Him, believing that He listens,



understands, and walks alongside us on the road to peace.

If you are struggling with anger towards God, trust me, you are not alone. The journey is hard, but there is wisdom, support, and hope waiting for you. Bring your honest self and let God meet you in the mess. He is bigger than our anger, and He loves us through it all.

God, I come to You with my honest heart, full of anger, questions, and hurt.

Help me to trust that You are big enough for my emotions and patient with my struggles.

Meet me in this mess, bring healing and peace, and remind me of Your unwavering love.

Thank You for listening, forgiving, and walking beside me, even when I don't understand. Amen.

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

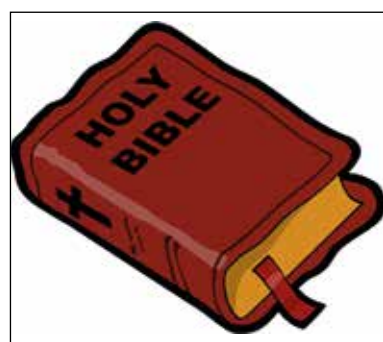
HELLO children. Welcome to the month of April. This month is dedicated to the Holy Eucharist. April begins with the wonderful celebration of Easter in the Church. "Easter is not simply one feast among others, but the 'Feast of feasts'" (CCC 1169). We also celebrate a special feast called Divine Mercy Sunday, in which the great gift of God's Mercy is given to all who come to Him with a sincere heart.



Easter

This year we celebrate Easter Sunday on April 5. The celebration of Easter is the highest and holiest of days for all creation. Easter celebrates Christ's resurrection from the dead (CCC 1166). It always falls on a Sunday, and marks the end of Lent, the end of Holy Week and of the Easter Triduum (Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday). It launches Eastertide, the seven-week season of the liturgical year.

The Gospels tell us that Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the third day following His crucifixion, which was Sunday (Matthew 28:1-10, John 20:1-18). His resurrection marks the triumph of good over evil, sin and death. Jesus' resurrection is a remarkable event, which proves that those who trust in God and accept Christ will be raised from the dead.



Easter Bible Scavenger Hunt

Look through your bible to find the answers to the following questions.

1. What number is stated in Luke 24:9?
2. What emotion is mentioned in Matthew 28:4?
3. What was the name of the woman in John 20:1?
4. The angel told them that Jesus had ____ (Mark 16:6).
5. Which day of the week is mentioned in Matthew 28:1?
6. What did Peter find in the tomb in Luke 24:12?
7. Which location is mentioned in Mark 16:7?
8. What occupation is mentioned in John 20:15?

Answers

- 1.- 11, 2., fear, 3., Mary Magdala,
4. risen, 5. first, 6. linen cloths, 7. Galilee, 8. gardener

Saints of the Month

- April 5 St Vincent Ferrer
 April 23 St George, martyr
 April 25 St Mark the Evangelist
 April 29 St Catherine of Siena



The Eucharist

The month of April is dedicated to the Eucharist because Holy Thursday, the day on which Catholics celebrate the Institution of the Eucharist, usually falls in the fourth month. However, this year we celebrated Holy Thursday on the last week in March.

On Holy Thursday night, Jesus shared an important meal with His Apostles. This meal was called the 'Last Supper', as it was the final meal Jesus shared with His disciples before He was crucified. At the end of the meal, Jesus took bread and wine, blessed them, gave them to the Apostles and taught them that the bread and wine had changed into his Body and Blood. At the meal, Jesus instructed His Apostles to do the same in memory of Him.

At Mass today, the bread and wine offered up by the priest becomes the actual Body and Blood of Christ. The bread and wine do not alter in appearance, but change in substance. They are transformed beyond our human understanding into the Body and Blood, soul and divinity of Jesus Christ. This is called 'Transubstantiation' and it happens at the celebration of every holy Mass.

The Eucharist is the most important act of worship. All Catholics are bound to attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day, and are encouraged to receive Holy Communion. Some fervent Catholics go to Mass every day to receive the Eucharist.

Divine Mercy - St Faustina

St Faustina was born in Poland



on August 25, 1905. She was the third of 10 children. When she was almost 20, she entered the convent and joined the Sisters of Our Lady of Mercy, who devoted themselves to the care of troubled young women. On February 22, 1931, Sr Faustina received from Jesus a message of mercy that she was told to spread throughout the world. She was asked to become the secretary of God's mercy, to be a model of how to be merciful to others. The message was that God loves us, all of us, no matter how great our sins are. God wants us to know that His mercy is greater than our sins, therefore, we should always call on Him with trust, receive His mercy and let it flow through us to others, so that all will come to share His joy. Jesus showed Faustina an image of Himself which He wanted painted so that all could see the abundant mercy which flows from His heart. Under the image, He told her to write, 'Jesus I trust in you'.

Faustina lived her entire life in imitation of Christ's, always making sacrifices as Jesus did for others. At the request of Jesus, she willingly offered her personal sufferings with Jesus to atone for the sins of others; in her daily life she became a doer of mercy, bringing joy and peace to others. She wrote about God's mercy, and she encouraged others to trust in God and prepare the world for His coming again.

During her life, Faustina wrote and suffered in secret, without many knowing that anything special was taking place in her life. After her death from tuberculosis in 1938, even her closest friends were amazed to discover what great sufferings

and mystical experiences she had received. She had listened carefully to Christ's Gospel command to "be merciful just as your heavenly Father is merciful". The message of mercy that Sr Faustina received has been spread throughout the world.

Jesus asked that a special Feast Day be set aside to celebrate God's wonderful gift of mercy to the world. This Feast is called Divine Mercy Sunday, and it falls eight days after Easter. On this day, God pours out His mercy on all those who come to Him. The novena, which we pray for nine days prior to Mercy Sunday, is called the Chaplet of Divine Mercy. We say these prayers as part of our daily pledge to ask God's mercy to come upon us.

St Bernadette Soubirous

St Bernadette was born in Lourdes, France on January 7, 1844. Her parents were very poor, and she was the first of nine children. We celebrate her Feast Day on April 16. She is the Patron Saint of Shepherds and of people suffering illnesses.

On the February 11, 1858, Bernadette Soubirous was out collecting firewood with her sister and a friend near a grotto. Suddenly, Bernadette saw a vision of a beautiful lady. This was the first of 18 appearances.

During these visits, the Lady (who did not immediately identify herself as the Blessed Virgin Mary) asked for a chapel to be built on the grounds, so that Bernadette could pray for the conversion of sinners. She also asked Bernadette to drink the spring water that was revealed to her at the grotto.

The news of the apparitions spread rapidly and caused quite a commotion in the town. As a result, 14-year-old Bernadette was

detained, interrogated and harassed by the civil authorities and treated as if she were a common criminal. The villagers, however, came to Bernadette's rescue and demanded that she be released. Through all these difficulties, little Bernadette was given an interior strength.

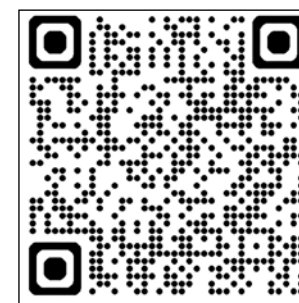
Many of the townspeople believed that it was the Blessed Virgin Mary who was appearing to Bernadette, and they came down in large numbers to the grotto to pray. The spring which the Lady asked Bernadette to drink from at the grotto quickly revealed itself to give forth blessed water, with miraculous healing properties.

On March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, the Lady appeared at the grotto again, this time identifying herself as the Immaculate Conception, and requested prayer, penance and devotion.

In 1866, Bernadette joined the Sisters of Charity in Nevers, and spent the rest of her life there working as an infirmary assistant, and later a sacristan. She died at the age of 35 on April 16, 1879, while praying the Rosary.

St Bernadette was humble and obedient to the will of God. She did everything the Blessed Virgin asked of her. We should pray the Rosary daily to our Blessed Mother Mary.

St Bernadette, pray for us
 Please scan the QR code to hear the story of St Bernadette.



Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. 'The Royal March' is the English name for what country's national anthem?
2. Entomophobia is the fear of what?
3. Who was the lead singer of British Rock band 'Dire Straits'?
4. What racehorse recently won the 2026 Aintree Grand National?
5. Who starred as Sheldon Cooper in the TV series 'The Big Bang Theory'?
6. Sacramento is the capital of which US state?
7. Which actress won an Oscar for her performance in the film 'Erin Brokovich'?
8. Who painted the iconic masterpiece 'The Last Supper'?
9. What organ in the human body produces insulin?
10. What Scottish football club does Neil Lennon currently manage?
11. What popular dessert is made from coffee and mascarpone cheese?
12. The female of what animal is known as a 'Jenny'?
13. In Roman numerals, what number does 'D' represent?
14. In what month is 'Labour Day' celebrated in the USA?
15. What sporting event was jointly hosted by the cities of Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo this year?
16. In politics, name the Deputy Prime Minister who resigned in 2025 over a property tax evasion scandal?
17. Through which Irish county does the River Corrib flow?
18. In what year did Derry's Altnagelvin Hospital open to the public?
19. In motoring terms, what do the letters 'PSV' stand for?
20. What global celebrity is engaged to NFL American football star Travis Kelce?
21. In what country did Beef Stroganoff originate?
22. How many times did Alex Higgins win the World Snooker championship?
23. What is the official name for the metallic container used to burn incense during mass or service?
24. What actress played the role of 'Michelle' in the Derry Girls TV show?
25. Whose 2025 autobiography is titled simply, 'Hope'?

Quiz Answers:

1, Spain; 2, Insects; 3, Mark Knopfler; 4, I am Maximus; 5, Jim Parsons; 6, California; 7, Julia Roberts; 8, Leonardo da Vinci; 9, Pancreas; 10, Dunfermline; 11, Tiramisu; 12, Donkey; 13, 500; 14, September; 15, The Winter Olympics; 16, Angela Rayner; 17, Galway; 18, 1960; 19, Public Service Vehicle; 20, Taylor Swift; 21, Russia; 22, Twice; 23, Thurible; 24, Jamie Lee O'Donnell; 25, Pope Francis.

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

Let Your Light Shine!

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

Clommany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnyloop, Drumquin, Dunamansha, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,



A. Iosa tá muintín Agam Asat

**New Divine Mercy painting for Melmount Chapel by Jesse Lezama, Pomeroy, Co Tyrone
(see p17 for story)**

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