



The NET

Sharing fruits of faith in Derry Diocese

ISSUE 109, JULY/AUGUST 2025

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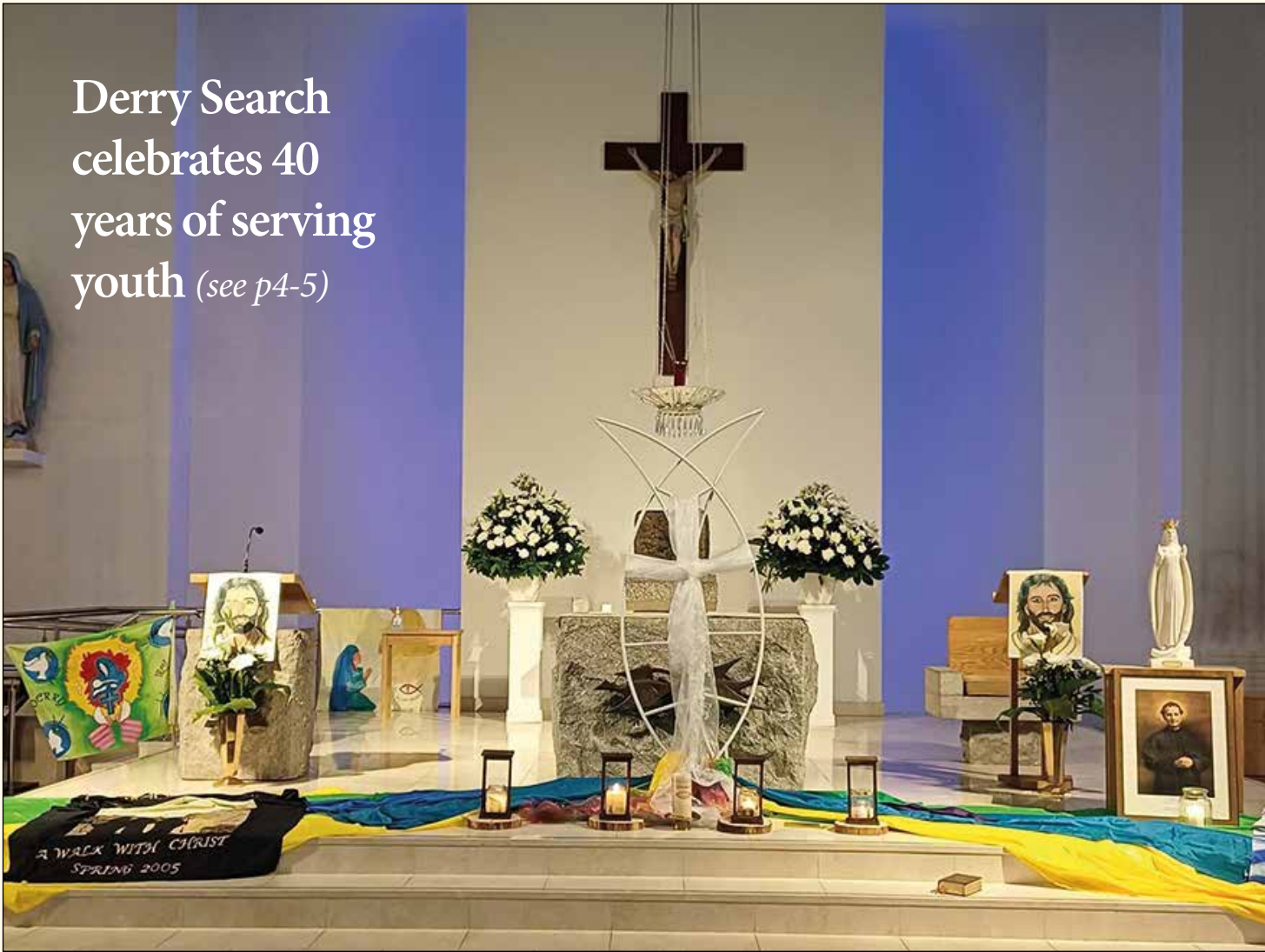
LIFE Camp - Templemore



Croagh Patrick Hope Pilgrimage
- Newtownstewart



HOPE 2025 Boat - Moville



Icon workshop - Long Tower



Diamond Jubilee celebration - Maghera



LIFE Camp - Three Patrons



Tri-Diocesan Youth Jubilee
Mass - Drumragh

People in focus

Ellen Harkin - Creggan

Fr Kieran O'Doherty
- Buncrana & Maghera

Keyla Duffy - Waterside

The late Charlotte Anne Devine
- Victoria Bridge

The late Fr Oliver Crilly
- Lavey & Castlefinn

Also featuring: Young Writers' section; Children's Catechism Club; Diamond Jubilee celebration for Fr Kieran O'Doherty, Maghera; Remembering the late Fr Oliver Crilly; Fr David O'Kane celebrates 40 years of priesthood; Accord Maghera mark Fr Paddy Doherty's Golden Jubilee; Derry Diocesan Lough Derg pilgrimage; Pope Leo XIV book launch in Omagh; Irish Section; Vocations News; Parish Post-its; Diocesan Diary; other Diary Dates; Quiz... and much more...

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The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Contacting us:

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Bishop Donal reflects on the Pope’s July & August prayer intentions:

**For formation in discernment...Let us pray that we might again learn how to discern, to know how to choose paths of life and reject everything that leads us away from Christ and the Gospel. (July)*

**For mutual coexistence...Let us pray that societies where coexistence seems more difficult might not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious or ideological reasons. (August)*

Call to be hope-filled in midst of man-made mess that we face

THE Jubilee Year of 2000 had as its theme: ‘Jesus Christ, Yesterday Today and Forever’. St John Paul II launched 2001 with a document on dreams for the Church in the new millennium. The 21st century began with optimism about what the future might hold.

But the last quarter century has been marked by the 9/11 attacks (September 2001) and the subsequent turmoil in the Middle East, the final crash caused by banks in 2008, strange political leadership in many countries, and the more recent wars in Ukraine and Gaza. The theme for this Jubilee Year – Pilgrims of Hope - may seem very appropriate, but just wishful thinking in the midst of the many crises that the world is facing.

But Pope Leo’s prayer themes

for this summer call us to be hope-filled in the midst of the man-made mess that we face.

We are invited to pray for the grace to do two things. Firstly, we will be bearers of Christ only if we are led by the Holy Spirit. The Early Church discovered that the paths of divine wisdom often seemed not very sensible. The early Christians were sent out to proclaim Jesus to the Jews – even when they felt ill-prepared and full of excuses for staying behind closed doors. They were sent to proclaim the Gospel to non-Jews even when they had not worked out the implications of this course of action.

Pope Francis and now Pope Leo want a church where we will be led, not by our fears and the security of our

hobbyhorses but by the God who wants us to go out from ourselves. That requires a spirit of prayerful discernment at the heart of what we do as parishes, a diocese and the universal church. Petty church politics or pig-headedness are not of God.

Only a prayerful, grace-powered decision-making process will create a Church which knows how to ‘choose paths of life and reject everything that leads us away from Christ and the Gospel’.

And, secondly, what decisions do we face? Clearly it means building communities which point to hope because we have the joy of the Gospel.

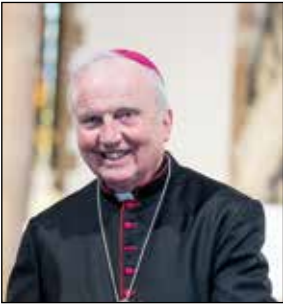
As Jesus’ followers, we speak, not just about ‘churchy’ things – but about the politics of our societies. Much

public discourse is focused on exploiting divisions and victimhood. Many people feel forced into being either conservative or progressive – as if those terms had some content and meaning. The whole message of the Early Church was that Christ has broken down all of the many barriers that human beings erect.

St Paul wrote: “For, in one Spirit, we were all baptised into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free, and we were all given one Spirit to drink” (1 Cor 12:13)

So much of the good work of peace-making in Northern Ireland was promoted by people from a faith background.

But we cannot preach that to civic society unless we are



living it ourselves. Unity-building is one of the key missions of the church and our one-ness in Christ is what we profess in The Creed – ‘I believe in one, holy catholic and apostolic Church.’

There is a temptation for some in church to follow unredeemed hearts and promote exclusive groups or divisive agendas. Sometimes, the practice of faith can be influenced by the politics of

Eucharistic Adoration in the Diocese

Aghyaran: Thursdays, 10.30am–12 noon.
Ardstraw West & Castlederg: Fridays, 10.30am –12 noon, St Patrick’s Church.
Badoney Lower: Tuesdays, after 12.30 pm Mass until 5 pm, St Patrick’s Gortin.
Badoney Upper: Wednesdays, after 7.30 pm evening Mass until 9 pm, St Patrick’s Cranagh.
Ballinascreen: First Mondays, from 12 noon-7.30 pm, in Holy Rosary Church, Draperstown.
Banagher: Thursdays, 10.30-11.30 am, St Mary’s Church, Altinure, and Fridays, 10 –11am, St Joseph’s Church, Fincairn.
Bellaghy: Every Friday, from 10 am until recitation of Rosary at 7.30 pm, in St Mary’s Church.
Buncrana: Mondays, Tuesdays & Wednesdays, 6am-10pm, Fridays, 6 am-10 pm and Sundays, 2-10 pm, St Mary’s Oratory.


Cappagh: Wednesdays, 8 -9pm, concluding with Night Prayer, and Sundays, 3.30-6.30 pm, in Christ the King, Strathroy.
Claudy: Tuesdays, after 10am Mass until 8 pm, St Patrick’s Church, Claudy, and Wednesdays, after 10 Mass until 8 pm, St Joseph’s Church, Craighane.
Clonmany: Tuesdays, 7.30 -8.30 pm, the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin; Wednesdays, 3-4 pm, St Columbcille Village, Cleagh; Fridays, 3-6 pm (Rosary at 5.40 pm), St Michael’s Church, Urris.
Coleraine: Wednesdays, in St John’s Church, 2-4 pm, with Rosary at 3:45 pm.
Creggan: Sundays 1.30 pm-6 pm; Mondays 10.30 am - 7 pm; Tue - Sat 10.30 am - 12 pm, Divine Mercy Chapel.
Donagheady: First Fridays after Mass until 12 noon, St Mary’s Church, Aughabrack.
Donaghmore: Tuesdays,

10.30 am-7.30 pm, St Mary’s Church, Sessiaghoneill; Thursdays, after 9.15 am Mass, St Patrick’s Church, Crossroads.
Drumquin: Wednesdays, 6 pm until Mass at 7.30 pm.
Drumragh: Wednesdays, following morning Mass, Sacred Heart Church until 5.30 pm.
Dungiven: Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays, 9am-6 pm, and Tuesdays & Thursdays, 9 am-8 pm, in Adoration Chapel.
Errigal: Mondays, after the 10 am Mass until 2.30 pm, St Mary’s Church, Ballerin.
Fahan: Fridays after 10am Mass, St Mura’s Parish Church.
Greencastle (Tyrone): Thursdays, 6-10 pm, St Patrick’s Church.
Greenlough: Thursdays, 9am–5 pm, St Oliver Plunkett’s Church.
Iskaheen: Tuesdays, from after 10 am Mass until 2 pm, St Patrick’s Church.
Kilrea: Mondays, 12 noon - 7pm, St Mary’s Drumagarnier.

Concludes with Benediction.
Lavey: Fridays, after 9.30 am Mass until 5 pm.
Leckpatrick: Wednesdays from 8.15 am–5 pm.
Lifford (Murlog): 9.30 am - 12.30 pm
Limavady: Sundays from 3-5 pm in Christ the King (with Confessions).
Magilligan: Wednesdays, 3-7 pm; First Sundays, 3-6 pm, St Aidan’s Church.
Melmount: Mondays, after 10 am Mass until 6 pm.
Moville: Mondays, 2-9 pm, and Wednesdays, 6-9 pm, St Pius X Church.
Newtownstewart: Thursdays, 6.30-7.30 pm, Oratory of Mary, Mother of God.
Sion Mills: Adoration takes place in the side chapel (Oratory) and will be available every day during the Church’s opening hours, moving to the main body of the chapel on Fridays, from 11am-6.50 pm, ending with Benediction before 7 pm Mass.
Steelstown: Mondays, from after 10 am Mass until 6.50pm.

Strabane (Camus): Every day from 10.30 am-1 pm in the Adoration Chapel (Oasis of Peace), at the back of the Church.
St Columba’s Long Tower: Wednesdays, after 10 am Mass until 7.30 pm Mass.
St Eugene’s Cathedral: Sundays, 3-6 pm, and Tuesdays, 10.30 am-7.20 pm.
Three Patrons: Tuesdays from 11 am-7 pm in Our Lady’s Chapel, St Joseph’s Church, Galliagh; Wednesdays from 10.30 am-7 pm, in St Patrick’s Church, Pennyburn, and seven days a week in the Adoration Room in St Brigid’s Church, Carnhill, from 8 am until 8 pm.
Urney & Castlefin: Tuesdays, 12 noon-8 pm, St Anthony’s Chapel.
Waterside: Mondays, 11.30 am-12.30 pm, St Oliver Plunkett, Strathfoyle; Thursdays, 1-6 pm, Immaculate Conception Church; Fridays, 1-6 pm, St Columb’s Church.

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



The NET

Sharing the fruits of the faith in the Derry Diocese

Supporting us:

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

‘The NET’ is a Lay Apostolate that has the blessing of our Bishop, Most Rev Donal McKeown.

With no fixed charge to read this publication, donations would be most welcome to help cover costs. Annual accounts will be available to view on request.

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The ministry of

The NET

was dedicated to Our Lady, through the intercession of

St Maximilian Kolbe, in a ceremony celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown on August 14, 2019.

Great turnout for tri-diocesan Jubilee Youth Mass in Tattyreagh



Fr Kevin Cassidy with his parents and brother.

WHILE around one million young people from over 140 countries gathered at Tor Vergata, the Roman site of the World Youth Day in 2000, for the final Youth Jubilee Mass celebrated by Pope Leo XIV, on Sunday, August 3, the youth of the neighbouring dioceses of Derry, Armagh and Clogher had their own special encounter at home, when they gathered for Mass at the rural location where the three dioceses meet.

The young people were joined by a large number of others interested in being part of what they regarded as an historic occasion in the Jubilee Year of Hope.

As the clock moved towards the three o'clock hour, pilgrims of hope arrived in growing numbers at the Tullyvalley homestead of the main celebrant of the Mass, Fr Kevin Cassidy, who was home on holiday from the South of France, where he is a member of the Congregation of the Missionaries of the Most Holy Eucharist, in Toulouse.

Bringing sunchairs and blankets with them, they gathered around the makeshift altar at the edge of the farmyard on the Clogher boundary, where Fr Kevin was joined by another member of his Order, Fr Michael Donnelly, from Armagh, Fr Eugene Hasson, PP Drumragh, Fr Sean McCartan, PP Beragh, and Fr Michael O'Dwyer, PP Ballygawley.

As chief organiser, Fr Eugene, who was also celebrating his 70th birthday, welcomed everyone to, what he described as, "this very unique and important occasion".

He added: "Pope Leo is greeting something like a million young people in Rome for the Youth Jubilee, and I thought that there would be no better way of celebrating this at home than bringing people here to this point where three dioceses meet."

Pointing over his shoulder to the large white Hope flag, with an orange flame, waving grandly in the wind at the bottom of the

field behind the altar, Fr Eugene explained: "That is the actual spot where three different dioceses meet, and you are welcome to visit it afterwards."

Thanking Fr Kevin's parents, Anne and Stephen, for their encouragement to go ahead with the celebration on their land, Fr Eugene recalled that the idea stemmed from hearing Tattyreagh school master, Tom Flanagan speak often about this point where the dioceses of Derry, Clogher and Armagh meet: "I never actually checked it out until the thought came of marking this Jubilee Year by celebrating Mass at the location. And, I am so glad that you are all here, even if it maybe seems a bit crazy!"

Fr Kevin also had a warm welcome for all gathered, particularly the young people, some of whom played an active part in the celebration of the Mass through the liturgy and choir.

In his homily, Fr Kevin referred to Pope Leo's call to move forward as pilgrims of hope and the concluding Mass the pontiff was celebrating at that moment with the world's youth in Rome, as he addressed the local young people gathered: "In this time and place, we feel we are not only looking back, standing back to reflect on the gift of history and tradition that unites us, but also looking forward, with all the promise the faith – faith in God, faith in Christ – brings."

Remarking that meeting places matter, including the "Tullyvalley wilderness" that the Lord had brought them to, he continued: "Much of what makes up our life and what we treasure comes out of those places we meet, for man is a social being."

"You can no doubt think of those places you like to meet up, boys and girls – the football pitch for sport and matches with friends and the competition, the halls and classes of school, which whether we like the subjects or not, at

least we're 'in it together' – and a lot of good memories are forged through that.

"For the less young among us, it's perhaps at a restaurant or a bar to enjoy what the French call the 'troisième mi-temps', the all-important post-match analysis and get-together, tasting nearly as good the second time over as we relive the highs and lows with those who were there.

Meeting place

"Finally, there's the family home – home is where the heart is. But then there's a meeting place that has a very special meaning, right at the heart of our community – it's the Church. The Church, like for the Israelites of old when they wandered in the desert, or settled in the promised land, there was God in their midst. Calling them together, making them one, showing them the way forward, to where all meetings find their fullness – that's what He's doing for us today."

"Whilst all the other places we meet that I spoke of are good, they matter," said Fr Kevin, he added: "the Church is unique, and sometimes we have to step outside our normal pattern to see it afresh, reconnect with the reality that is right under our nose. For the meeting place of the Church isn't just the buildings – it's us, God's people, the community that He is forming."

"The Church, our community, is that meeting place where we are called together by God, where He draws us up through His Word, in His Spirit, and makes us one by the gift of His Body, the Eucharist; He is acting in us and on us."

"It's exciting, and it is a blessing to be a part of this work of coming together that God is all about, for in his eyes we are all one family, and He is Our Father."

Going on to speak about God's Hope for the World, Fr Kevin said: "We talk this year about being 'pilgrims of hope', and there's a lot packed into that little word, because it is about desire. What desire is most deeply nestled in your heart? What hope of love, of life, of adventure, of truth is rooted

deep within you? An important question to ask God, dear youth, and open to Him in prayer

"But if we are truly to be a 'pilgrim of hope', we have to first ask ourselves – 'What is God's hope for the world? What is God's hope for me?' 'That they may be one Father, as you and I are one.' This is what Jesus said at the Last Supper, before He would go to the Cross; this was His hope, for which He was willing to make the ultimate sacrifice.

"God's hope for the world is a plan of love, of overcoming all division and separation that sin has caused. To reunite us with Himself, to reunite us with each other, to reunite us even within our own self – at peace, peace the world cannot give.

"So, as we come together to meet at Church, as the Church, we see, we remember, we know that it is not just some random habit that we picked up from bygone generations and are no longer sure why it matters. We feel that it is God's call and God's hope at work in us – pushing through to a new day, despite our setbacks, when we are one and all the earth is free."

At the end of Mass, Fr Sean McCartan thanked Fr Eugene and the Drumragh Pastoral Team for co-ordinating the event, and expressed the hope that it would bring many blessings upon Stephen and Anne for allowing it to go ahead on their farm.

Refreshments were available afterwards, and many took the opportunity to have their photographs taken at the flag marking the meeting point.

Delighted that all went so well, Siobhan McGrath, of Drumragh Pastoral Council, told "The Net" afterwards: "In feedback received, it was described as 'a very unique and special event, which people will talk about for many years to come.'"

"We are so grateful for all the involvement and support of the parishes that allowed us to celebrate the Mass on such a beautiful day."

(See back page for more photographs)



Reflection continued from p2

strong personalities – and it ends up being corrupted by values that are not based on the Gospel

We pray, this summer, for the grace to be peace builders in our own communities. And that people of faith will not allow themselves to be seduced by the 'temptation of confrontation

for ethnic, political, religious or ideological reasons.' Narrow nationalism and sectarianism are not of God.

How we live and speak can either be a sign of hope to a divided world – or be a countersign that we have not understood the bridge to healing that the Cross has built.



Four decades of Derry Search

Derry Search celebrating 40 years of serving Catholic youth

by Martin McLaughlin



DERRY Search Youth Group, established on July 4, 1985, has been offering a spiritual programme mixed with fun and games for over 40 years in the Derry Diocese and further afield.

Initially operating out of Creggan Estate, the St Don Bosco model of faith-based youth work has succeeded in serving Catholic youth throughout various towns in Ireland for over four decades. Starting with a team of young leaders and a few adults from Derry, this group weren't long in spreading their wings of Catholic and Christian evangelisation to Letterkenny, Carndonagh, Dungiven, Maghera, Belfast, Culmore, Sligo, Dublin, as well as Clydebank, in Scotland.

The Search programme had been presented to the Derry Group in July 1985, from a wonderful group of young adults from Chicago, and it wasted no time getting to grips with the Mission of 'Passing on The Faith'.

It is estimated that over 8,000 young people in the Diocese have completed a Search weekend over the years, and the group can proudly boast that they are still operating very successfully, after all this time, in offering a Christ-centred option to young people to withstand the pressures of what society is presenting to

them in areas of alcohol, drugs, promiscuity, and other deflecting addictions.

It is a voluntary group with one full-time facilitator and, for the past 13 years, has been operating out of their own rented premises at Iona Park, where they continue on a weekly basis to facilitate the needs of children and young people, with a range of ages from 11 to 16, at different sessions. The group has also committed to presenting Catholic-based back-up programmes to secondary schools in the City, throughout the school year. In addition, since the year 2000, it provides a faith-based summer scheme for primary school children aged 5 to 11, throughout July each summer.

Derry, as a Diocese, has been extremely fortunate to have Derry Search Youth Group operating in the City, through very troubled times in the 80s and 90s, and also through Covid years, where it has been steadily on the move to serve the multiplicity of young people's needs.

Different parishes in the Diocese have availed of their spiritual programmes, where they have presented a variety of themes at Christmas, Easter, Lent, by enacting different Liturgical scenes from scripture through Drama and Mime.

One of these dramas, entitled 'Everything', was displayed very professionally during their 40th anniversary celebration at St Mary's, depicting the different vile temptations facing our young people in society today, and how, at the point of surrender, the defenceless child is saved and protected through the power of

Christ overcoming all evil.

Uplifting

This was only a small part of what was a very uplifting celebration of music, drama, prayer and personal witness in a very detailed, well co-ordinated programme of events which captivated the minds and hearts of the congregation of over 200 people on the night.

It was an amazing evening, where, in the words of the song, 'Our Lady of Knock', 'There were people of all ages', including 13 of the people who participated in the very first Search weekend in 1985 at Buncrana, when the team of young adults from Chicago presented the Gift of Search to Derry and when one of them, called Richard, had written what is now our own anthem, 'The Search Song'. The final verse sums up emphatically the perfect solution to many problems, if only we could put it into practice...

"It's time to go but not to end this little start that we've been through.

Our paths have crossed, and when we are lost, we have each other to find the Way."

Jesus is The Way. 'Search' simply means Searching for The Way, for Jesus. For those who have never understood it, the young people of Creggan and their leaders back in October 1983, who were the first youth group ever in Derry to honour 'Our Lady of Knock' on a pilgrimage and, the following week, formed 'Our Lady of Knock Youth Group', where the numbers attending multiplied; quadrupled because the youth discovered

that someone really cared. Adults were prepared to show them that they cared by giving them time. Hence fulfilling the humble words of The Great St Don Bosco: "It's not enough to love them, you must show them you Love them."

Our Lady of Knock had sewn the seed in 1983, and when the time arrived for Search to show itself in 1985, as voiced by a certain beautiful Sr Evangelist, they were well prepared to begin their deeper search for Jesus.

Our Lady was now pointing and telling them, as She did at The Wedding at Cana, "Do whatever He tells you".

The Search continues today, our leaders and young facilitators thrive in what Christ has called them to be: "True, faithful and committed servants of an unconditional loving Father", who won't let one of His children perish.

Thanks to everyone who has supported us for over four decades, with a special thanks to Fr Daniel McFaul for accommodating us with the use of St Mary's Chapel for our anniversary celebration, and to Fr Ignacy Saniuta for being with us on the night to give us his blessing.

As we are a voluntary organisation, looking to keep Searching, we would welcome and appreciate any support, physically or financially, which is badly needed to fulfil our plans and His plans for hopefully many years to come.

All details for helping out can be found on Derry Search Youth Group, Facebook.



Four decades of Derry Search

Memory Lane



Summer Camp 2025



LIFE Camp summer fun...

Templemore LIFE Camp a fantastic start to summer

by Lauren Doherty, Schools Liaison Co-ordinator



Matt's Diners' Dancers' Troop - Teamwork Award Talent Show.

THE first two weeks of July saw another fantastic year for over 300 children and 40 volunteers at LIFE Camp, for the parishes of St Eugene's Cathedral and St Columba's Long Tower. With registration opened from the mid-term break in February of this year, spaces filled up pretty quickly, giving us an idea early on that we would have a busy start to the summer holidays!

LIFE Camp 2025 began with our Opening Mass on Sunday, June 29, celebrated by Fr Paul Farren in St Eugene's Cathedral. All families and campers signed up to Week 1 of our camp, came along to the Mass, took part in the Offertory Procession and readings and, afterwards, collected their t-shirt and information pack. All set and ready to go for Week 1!

Held at the wonderful location of St Mary's College, we were very fortunate with the weather this year, enabling us to have lots of fun and laughter throughout the two weeks.

Faith Formation started off each

day; we wanted to invite our young people to strengthen not only their own personal faith, but to share and learn from one another.

With different elements of faith formation, the children took part in a variety of different activities, including a prayer walk, music lessons, Confession script, movies, books and faith, guided meditation and many more. An added activity this year was Rosary bracelet making with the wonderful Teresa, which was enjoyed by everyone, including our volunteers and coaches. We were very thankful to our parish priests, who blessed each Rosary bracelet made by our campers at the Closing Mass.

Our busy timetable was packed with a range of activities for the children to enjoy throughout the week! Each day was full of fun! These included arts and crafts, dance bop, problem solving activities, team building exercises, gymnastics, football, obstacle course, and ultimate survival, to name but a few. The young people were encouraged to mix with new

people in different groups and create new friendships with like-minded people.

We are very grateful to the priests from our neighbouring parishes who came along on the Thursday of each week to hear Confessions. During the Thursday mornings' Faith Formation lesson, the children prepared for Confession with their coaches by answering a range of questions, and studying the Act of Contrition before making their Confessions.

One of the favourite days of the week at LIFE Camp, for not only our campers but our volunteers and coaches as well, was the Talent show! Children from Primary 3 to Primary 7 showcased their many talents in front of our panel of judges and their fellow campers! This year, we had acts of singing, dancing, instrumentalists, magic tricks, dance troops and much more. A hard task was left for our judges to pick winners to be presented with awards at our Closing Mass on the Friday of each week.

On our final day of both weeks at LIFE Camp, Fr Shaun Doherty and Fr Paul Farren celebrated the Closing Mass in thanksgiving for

a wonderful week! Camper family members and friends were invited along to the Masses, and it was lovely to see such a great crowd of smiling faces to end our LIFE Camp 2025.

The award ceremony took place after our Closing Masses, where we had presentations for Boy and Girl 'Camper of the Week', 'Group of the Week' and, of course, our highly anticipated Talent Show winners!

LIFE Camp wouldn't be possible without the work of our extremely dedicated JP2 Award volunteers, our coaches and facilitators. We are extremely grateful for your time, effort and energy in making sure each camper had a fantastic week! A special thank you to the staff of our parish school, St Mary's College, for such fantastic facilities that enabled us to run the camp with such ease. A massive thank you also to St Eugene's Scout Group's Celine Taylor and Teresa Peoples, who shared their talents and facilitated such great workshops for our children throughout their time at camp.

It was a fantastic two weeks for our Parish and a great start to the summer holidays for all!



Week 2 - Group of the Week.



Katie Wilson - Girl Camper of the Week.



Conor McCool - Boy Camper of the Week.



LIFE Camp summer fun...

LIFE Camp a big hit in Three Patrons' Parish

THE Three Patrons' Parish took on to run the LIFE summer camp for young people this summer for the first time, and it went down a real treat for all involved.

LIFE stands for Living In Faith Everywhere, and the young participants got to sample this during a week of fun and friendship, with faith mixed in, from July 14-18.

As well as activities like fencing, Zumba, Gaelic football, rugby, and bouncy castle fun, they got to learn about saints their teams were

named after, such as St Aidan, St Brigid, St Columba and St Patrick.

They also got to spend time with Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration, prayed the Rosary, went to Confession and took part in the celebration of Mass at the close of the Camp.

The Camp was held at St Columba's College and thanks are expressed to all who helped and supported in any way.

It is hoped to run the LIFE camp again next summer.



Great interest in Moville Hope Boat



A big attraction in Moville this summer is the newly installed Hope 2025 boat in the grounds of the Parochial House.

Forming part of the parish celebrations of this special Jubilee Year of Hope, the parish priest, Fr Colm O'Doherty hopes that it will also serve as a reminder to pray for all those who are working at sea every day, "that the Lord will protect them and bring them safely home to port."

He told 'The Net': "We decided that we would put something in the grounds to draw people's attention to the fact that we are in a Jubilee Year of Hope."

"As we are a fishing community, with Greencastle just down the road, we thought the use of a boat would be fitting. I spoke to

Michael Cavanagh of Greencastle, and some others from The Men's Shed, about the idea and Michael went on to make the boat from scratch.

"I thank Michael for the many hours he spent creating this wonderful boat model and the other members of the Men's Shed who helped to prepare the ground for its installation."

Founder of Cavankee Fishing Company Ltd, Michael Cavanagh, a man of strong faith, embraced the challenge and began work on building the boat back in May.

"I worked on it, on and off, and finally got it finished on July 28," said Michael, adding: "Fr Colm blessed it on the grounds of the Parochial House after a morning Mass, and it has been getting

plenty of viewing."

Working without any drawing or plan, the 75-year-old retired skipper of the Father McKee fishing boat remarked: "I have many years of experience with boats at sea, and so working on this boat was a labour of love. I like a challenge and I was also happy to do it for Fr Colm. I have known him a long time and as he has been a beacon of light for us here in a very dark time, and I told him that on Easter Sunday."

Sharing the story behind the naming of his fishing boat after Father James McKee, a native of Desertmartin, in Co Derry, who had been a curate in Moville for seven years in the 1970s, Michael said: "I first met Fr McKee when he came to our parish. He may

never be canonized a saint but, in my eyes and the eyes of many, he is a saint. He died on January 31, 1999, at the age of 83, and he is still talked about today. He was small in stature but big in faith and Christ-like. He was, and is, very special."

"His sister gave me two of his breviaries; one is in the day room of the Father McKee and the other is in my home and goes out to people who are sick. It is a relic that is much in demand, as are a pair of his shoes that his housekeeper felt that I should have."

He added: "When I had the first Father McKee built and was landing fish in Rathmullan, a couple from Newtownstewart happened to be there and asked if they could have their photograph taken with the boat as they had known him, and said that he was the closest they had been to a living saint. He was a real man of the people, a peace maker. To know the man was to love him."

A fisherman for over 50 years, Michael asked Fr McKee to bless the first boat he owned, the Castle Queen, which had been built in Baltimore, West Cork, in 1974. When he got his second boat, he said that he felt privileged Fr McKee gave his permission to put his name on it: "He was



Moville HOPE 2025 boat builder, Michael Cavanagh, of Greencastle, with his son, Philip, now the skipper of the Father McKee fishing boat.



such a humble man and so I didn't think that he would want his name on a boat, but he just shook his shoulders and said, 'If that is what you want.' He had a profound effect on my life just by his witness. He spent the last 23 years of his life in Glenullin, where he is buried, and I visited him there often."

What a blessing for Moville,

in this Year of Hope, to have the Jubilee commemorated in the parish with the building of a boat by the hands of a fisherman blessed in his life through his friendship with a saintly man of God that he named not just one, but three boats after.

Other parish celebrations during the Jubilee Year will include a parish mission in October.

Liturgical music conference an amazing experience for Cathedral Choral Scholars



ST Eugene's Choir Choral Scholars, Ellen Harkin and Keyla Duffy are buzzing since returning from their expenses paid trip to Warsaw for an international choral conference on liturgical music.

Not thinking it was possible to be any more passionate about music than they already were, the teenagers have returned on a musical high with the most amazing experience they had during the week of workshops and prayer.

The girls won their way to the Conference as recipients of this year's Ciaran McAlister Memorial Awards, joining Cathedral Choir director, Maghnus Monaghan and other adult choir members for the Extraordinary Music Workshop in Poland's capital city.

Sharing their experience with 'The Net', Ellen and Keyla expressed the hope of attending the conference again and their desire to continue singing with St Eugene's Choir.

Ellen

From Creggan, 19-year-old Ellen is a former Lumen Christi pupil and currently studying Bio-Medicine at the University of Ulster, Coleraine.

As well as singing with the Cathedral Choir for the past two years, on the Choral Scholar programme, she plays the cello and piano outside of choir.

Recalling how she became involved, Ellen said: "I had been in the Children's Choir in Creggan but got too old, so it had been a while since I had been in a choir when my mother said to me about the Cathedral Choral Scholar Award. I then joined the Choir after the first year of the Award, when they were looking for more young people to join the programme.

"I wanted to get back into doing

liturgical music as a way to worship and deepen my relationship with God. God gave me this gift to sing and play music, so it is a way to return the favour.

"Music is one of my main passions and I hope to remain a member of the Cathedral Choir. I love singing and being part of Church music."

Ellen went on to comment on how important her Catholic faith is to her: "My parents taught us from a young age to pray; bringing us to Mass every Sunday, not just for Christmas and Holy Week. My faith brings me comfort, especially in a world that is becoming more and more secular."

Keyla

Residing in the Waterside, 17-year-old Keyla attends St Mary's College, where she hopes to study English Literature, Politics and Maths in Lower Sixth, before pursuing the path to a career in Law.

Also passionate about music, which she studied for GCSE, Keyla recently achieved her Grade 6 for the trumpet.

Whilst attending Oakgrove Integrated PS, she started learning to play the trumpet and was a member of the choir there. Now, she is a member of three choirs – St Mary's College Choir and Orchestra, Codetta Youth Choir, as well as the Cathedral Choir.

"I am just drawn to music," laughed Keyla, saying: "My mum exposed me to a lot of music when I was younger. My RE teacher recommended me and a couple of other girls for the Cathedral Choral Scholar choir. It didn't work for my two friends to join, but I just went for it and was accepted in November. This is my first year in it and I am loving it!"

As well as the Warsaw prize,

Keyla received the Cathedral Choral Scholar Commitment Award, which Ellen won last year. Commenting on this achievement, she said: "I tried not to miss any rehearsals and I don't like being late, so most of the time I am first in!"

Something special

Feeling blessed to have experienced the international choral conference, both girls agreed: "It was very worth going to and we would love to go back next year if it is on. There was great variety and every workshop had that something special and it was also a great opportunity to meet like-minded people our age.

"It was incredible to see how much sound you can create in a small room, with no accompaniment, it was completely acapella. We have done some acapella before but it was the first time to experience complete acapella."

If the girls had any complaint about the workshops, it was that they were too short for the amount of ground that was being covered.

A big favourite for the girls

was the Gregorian Chant and Byzantine Chant workshops, which they found extremely beautiful.

A typical day during the conference began at 8.30 am with Lauds (sung Morning Prayer), followed by a warm-up of the vocal cords before being split into two groups – Intermediate, which they were in, and Advance – for the workshops. Each day ended with the celebration of Mass and Vespers, with the option of attending talks or Adoration from 8.30 pm.

During free time, the girls loved taking in the beauty of the area they were staying in, and were greatly impressed by their experience of Mass in the Cathedral, which lasted for about two hours, including Vespers.

The participants from the Derry Diocese were part of the 50-strong international contingent amongst 400-500 Polish participants, and were delighted to be sent home with a collection of the music they had worked on throughout the week.



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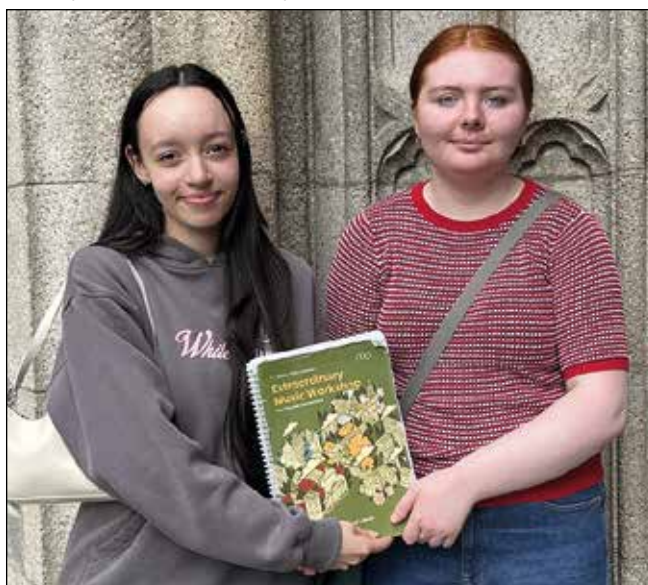
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The Jubilee of Digital Missionaries and Catholic Influencers

by Grace Carlin

IN this article I preview the Jubilee of Digital Missionaries and Catholic Influencers in Rome this July. As I prepare for the conference, I cannot help but reflect on the pilgrimages taken by my Carlin ancestors to Knock, Lourdes, and Rome.

So, picture this! The era before smartphones, before TikTok and viral reels. Back then, Catholic evangelization looked very different. No digital missionaries. No Catholic influencers. No livestreamed Rosaries or Instagram stories from the Vatican. Yet somehow, we are now living in a time where the Gospel has gone...global - not just through missionaries in the traditional sense, but through teenagers like me recording faith-filled Podcasts in their homes, through digital artists drawing Saints on iPads, and through

“We are witnessing what I call the democratization of Catholic evangelization. The Great Commission is no longer reserved for ordained clergy or religious orders.”

YouTubers turning clips into moments of grace.

We are witnessing what I call the democratization of Catholic evangelization. The Great Commission is no longer reserved for ordained clergy or religious orders. The Church has given a resounding YES to the laity, encouraging us not just to live the Gospel quietly, but to share it boldly, online and everywhere.

But this begs the question: How do we reconcile this new frontier with the more traditional, physical world of the Church? On the one hand, we see half-filled pews on Sunday mornings. On the other, we see millions tuning into Catholic YouTube channels, Apple Podcasts, livestreamed Holy Masses, and digital Novenas.

There are now two parallel worlds: One, the familiar Gothic style Churches echoing with centuries of tradition. The other, a borderless, digital Church connecting to a mass audience. And here is the beauty of it all: God is at work in both. This is the upside-down world of God.

Upside-Down Kingdom
The very nature of the Gospel has always been upside-down:
• *The first shall be last* (Matthew 19:30).
• *The meek inherit the earth*

(Matthew 5:5).
• *What you do for the least of these you do for Me* (Matthew 25:36).

These aren't just popular Bible verses. These texts capture the very nature of God's Kingdom - radical, with unexpected heroes. And now, we are seeing that upside-down logic plays out in the digital age. The least likely people - teenagers, moms, priests, nuns. Most unknown to Bishops. These are among the most powerful digital missionaries and Catholic influencers today. Not through seminary training but through Canva graphics, YouTube devotionals, and Podcast episodes. Could it be that God is once again turning expectations on their head?

Evangelization in the Digital Era
The Jubilee of Digital Missionaries and Catholic Influencers in Rome this July confirms Vatican approval for this digital movement as a gift from God. Historically, many have traced its origins to the World Youth Day 2023 in Lisbon, where Cardinal José Tolentino de Mendonça declared the need for "digital missionaries" to bring hope into the vast, often cynical, world of social media.

Biblical Foundations of Communication

The Bible recognizes the deep, spiritual power of communication. Go back to Genesis 1:3 - before humanity, before mountains, before oceans. There was speech.

"And God said, 'Let there be light.' And there was light." The first act of creation is a spoken word. Yet John 1:1-3 reminds us in his Gospel: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and without Him not one thing came into being."

When Jesus sent out the 72 in Luke 10:1-12, He didn't just tell them to preach in Synagogues. He sent them to the streets, to homes, to those who may never walk into a Temple. The disciples were to carry peace and healing, and above all, they were to proclaim the Word. Similarly, in Matthew 28:19, we get the Great Commission: "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." This isn't a suggestion. It's a command - and one rooted in going out, in crossing boundaries, in reaching all nations by whatever means available. Today, those means include Instagram reels, Apple

Podcasts, and YouTube Rosaries.

The Church Without Borders
Let's be honest. Many of us feel the weight of the empty pews. We see it during Holy Mass. But what if we have been missing something? What if the Church isn't shrinking - but shifting? The digital world has allowed for the rise of what some call a Church without borders. A global parish. A community that prays across time zones and continents. One that may never meet in person but is united in faith and mission. There is power in this. It doesn't replace physical presence or Sacramental life - but it does complement it. The Church, as Pope Francis reminded us, is called to go into the margins. And in today's world, that includes crossing the digital frontier.

“Let's be honest. Many of us feel the weight of the empty pews. We see it during Holy Mass. But what if we have been missing something? What if the Church isn't shrinking - but shifting?”

The Great Mission
As we saw earlier from the Bible, being a missionary is all about being a witness. It is not about being seen. It is about making Jesus seen. St Francis of Assisi once said: "Preach the Gospel at all times. When necessary, use words." But now, in the digital age, words are necessary. Digital Missionaries and Catholic Influencers can spark an interest. Let's remember that God spoke through an unexpected medium - a burning bush - in Exodus 3:2-5.

Evangelization is job of every Catholic

Back in the pre-digital world, it was easier to believe evangelization was the job of priests and nuns. But not anymore. In today's world, evangelization is the job of every Catholic. Pope Francis said again and again: We need a Church that goes out, a Church that listens, a Church that isn't afraid to speak the language of today's generation.

The Jubilee of Digital Missionaries: A Sign of the Times

The Jubilee of Digital Missionaries and Catholic Influencers is a sign of the times. Organised as part of the Church's



broader Jubilee Year celebrations, this event is more than a conference - it is a recognition. A recognition that the Holy Spirit does not ignore the internet. That Catholic digital creators are vital limbs of the Church. Memes can carry theology. Reels can revive souls. Comment sections can provide a confessional moment. The Jubilee will bring together Catholic influencers, speakers, tech evangelists, and digital disciples from around the world.

Three goals stand out:
• Community - because too many digital missionaries feel alone in their mission. This is a chance to connect.

• Spiritual Enrichment - walking through the Holy Door in Rome isn't just symbolic - it is transformational. It says, "I recommit to the mission, not just online, but with my whole life."

• Formation - the Church wants to equip us, not just applaud us.

Pope Francis reminded the faithful time and again that the Church is missionary by nature. And that mission must extend to new horizons - including the digital world. The first Pentecost in Acts 2:1-4 happened in an upper room - small, uncertain, hidden. And yet, in that room came the Holy Spirit. Came language. Came boldness. Came the birth of the Catholic Church. The Upside-Down World of God is a world where:

• You are the voice of hope cutting through the noise.
• Mission doesn't mean platform - it means presence.
• Influence doesn't mean ego - it means service.

Remember, in the upside-down World of God, the mustard seed in Matthew 13:31-32 became a tree. Loaves and fishes become feasts in all four Gospels. And one humble article can change someone's destiny.



Young Writers share thoughts...

DURING the summer, some of the young writers have been marking the Jubilee Year as pilgrims of hope. Taking up this theme, James writes about what it means to be a pilgrim of hope, while Bronagh shares the wonderful memories of her pilgrimage to Fatima on the Diocesan Youth Pilgrimage, during which special memories of being nurtured in the faith in her childhood came back to her.

Having created an outdoor prayer space by building a grotto in the garden, Evan encourages people to get outside and embrace nature in this lovely weather for a therapeutic experience, while Niamh shares a cherished holiday memory of unexpectedly coming upon the beautiful Festival of Virgen del Carmen in the coastal community of Cabo de Palos, in Spain.

Harry writes about the mental and physical challenges of his first Lough Derg pilgrimage and how its beauty, silence and beautiful liturgy won his heart, and Seán reflects on how devotion to mentality, physicality and spirituality mirrors three forms in which God is present in our lives, and so are of great importance in being a complete Christian.

Following the short conclave to elect Pope Leo XIV, Luke researches the 1268 papal election as the longest in Church history, when it took 33 months to elect Pope Gregory X, and John reflects on the rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence, looking at what the Church is saying about this ever-developing technology.

With the spotlight on St John Henry Newman, who is to be made a Doctor of the Church, Cara-Leigh does some research into his impressive story, and Erin looks at the example of St Dominic in writing about the challenge of striving for sainthood.




Cara-Leigh Doherty - Derry City Deanery




Bronagh Doherty, Co Derry Deanery




Peter Grant, Inishowen Deanery.



John Augustine Joseph, Derry City Deanery.



James Tourish, Derry City Deanery.



Erin Whoriskey, Derry City Deanery



Bláthnaid McMenamin - Co Tyrone Deanery



Carragh O'Donnell, Derry City Deanery



Evan Curran, Derry City Deanery



Seán McLaughlin, Co Tyrone Deanery



Niamh Sharkey, Derry City Deanery.



Harry Mason, Derry City Deanery



Luke Doherty, Inishowen Deanery



Jubilee Year Youth Pilgrimage to Fatima a special time by Bronagh

ON July 13, I embarked on the trip to Fatima, in Portugal, alongside the Derry Diocese and Derry Youth. This was an extra special trip to Fatima, one to mark the Jubilee Year, a year to be ‘Pilgrims of Hope’.

We met as a group and travelled to Dublin Airport. On the journey there, we had conversations with each other, laughed and shared life stories, unaware that these people would become friends for life. From Donegal to Dungannon, Derry to Maghera (including Ballinascreen!)...we made friends for life.

On July 14, we landed in Lisbon ready to start our week of prayer, song, fun, laughter and the occasional ice-cream! We celebrated Mass in the Parish Church of Santarem, en route to Fatima from Lisbon. Bishop Donal celebrated the Mass alongside Fr Peter O’Kane, from Strabane, which marked the official beginning of our pilgrimage.

We sang songs and prayed together, then travelled onwards to Fatima, where we then reached our hotel, had a group meal, and a song or two before heading to bed after a long day of travel, to ready for Day 2.

Throughout the week, we celebrated Mass as a group in various chapels, including the Chapel of the Most Blessed Sacrament, The Church of the Resurrection, and the Chapel of Our Lady of Sorrows, which were all situated in and around the sanctuary of Our Lady. These Masses brought great blessings, prayer, song and joy, and was an experience that united the group every morning.

The most special Mass was when Derry Diocese got to lead the Mass from the Capelinha (Chapel of Apparations), live from the sanctuary to people all over the world. An experience I

am proud to have been a part of.

Another Mass that stood out to me, particularly, was when we visited the Church of St Anthony in Lisbon, built above the crypt of his birthplace, as when I was a child I was often told to pray to St Anthony. My granny always told us when we were children to pray to St Anthony when we lost something, and we had to put a “pound in the box” the next time we were in the chapel. Visiting this Chapel brought back memories of my faith from a very young age. It reminded me too that besides material things, even people who are lost from faith are always welcomed back.

We also got to experience a cultural tradition of Portugal, of people outside the ‘Igreja de Santo António de Lisboa’ giving others small pieces of stale bread wrapped up, traditionally gifted to people moving house or having babies. One of the many traditions of Portugal!

Sight-seeing

We explored the many sightseeing areas of Portugal as well, including Alcobaca, Valinhos and Aljustrel, Nazare, including the Shrine of Our Lady of Nazareth, as we travelled along the Atlantic Coast of Portugal, and the Sanctuary of Christ the King in Lisbon.

Valinhos and Aljustrel are the locations of the house of the visionaries – Francisco, Jacinta and Lucia. We visited their birthplace, a scene always seen in books and in religion in school. It was special to get to visit it and touch the wall where they once stood. I found this a wonderful experience.

We then visited the UNESCO site of Alcobaca Monastery, an architecturally outstanding building. We were in awe of the high ceilings and the wonderful statues, and we also visited the



burial site of Portuguese Royalty and the most famous love story in Portugal’s history. Our travel rep filled us in on all the history, so we were up to speed and got the most out of our experience. We were pretty much Portuguese locals, thanks to Damien!

We then visited Nazare, a seaside town. We had glorious weather and enjoyed some lunch by the beach, and fun in the water with the whole group. Along the way, we also stopped to see the Christ the King Statue, a direct replica of the one in Rio, and the ‘25th April bridge’, a direct replica of the Golden Gate Bridge in San Francisco, USA. Both were built after Lisbon was destroyed in an earthquake. We did some sightseeing and took pictures.

We also lit candles for all our intentions and those who had asked us to pray for them, praying for everyone in our own parish, mine being Ballinascreen. We took part in the candlelight Rosary in the evenings, which is such a peaceful and reflective event and one that the whole group enjoyed. Seeing the candles flicker, each representing

a person, a family and a prayer, was and always is a wonderful reminder of our faith and the community we have. It reminded me of my first pilgrimage to World Youth Day in Lisbon in 2023, and to Medjugorje in 2024. I reflected on the friends I have made and how I have grown as a person and in faith.

We truly had the message of Fatima in our hearts: the young children who had seen the Lady of the Rosary, with Mary asking them to pray the Rosary for peace, penance, and devotion to faith, and we continue to try to live our best lives, spreading the word of God.

After five days, it was time to come home. With hearts full, faces sore from laughter, a lifetime of memories, and a group of new friends, we continued “Back home to Derry”. Thanks to everyone who organised the pilgrimage, Lizzie in the Derry Youth team, Bishop Donal, Fr Peter O’Kane and Damien from Anam Cara Travel - and everyone who made this trip so enjoyable and worthwhile.



Young Writers share thoughts...

Who is St John Henry Newman?

WHO is St John Henry Newman? This is a question a lot of people have been asking since Pope Leo announced that he will be declared the 38th Doctor of the Church, after only being canonised in 2019 by Pope Francis!

He will be the only one of three English men who have the title and his story is an amazing one.

Born in 1801, St John Henry Newman was originally part of the Church of England before his conversion to the Catholic Church. He led the Oxford Movement when he was a member of the Church of England; a movement which stressed the Catholic elements in their religion.

In 1843, he gave his last sermon as part of the Anglican Church and, by 1845, he was received by the Roman Catholic Church, after he realised that the Early Church had developed into the modern day Roman Catholic Church. He then made his way to Rome, where he was ordained to the Priesthood in May 1847.

He actually spent some time in Ireland, where he became the first rector of the new Catholic University in Dublin at the time. After facing some backlash from a clergy man of the Anglican Church, and being reported on a suspicion of heresy, he then



regained his stature within the church. In 1879, he was made Cardinal Deacon of St George. He died in 1890 in Birmingham and 15,000 people lined the streets for his funeral.

Throughout his life, he wrote many books that have shaped both religious and philosophical thought. He was a prominent theologian and philosopher. He was also a poet, and his most famous work was his contributions to *Lyra Apostolica* in his Anglican days.

He is the Patron Saint of Catholic universities, colleges, schools and of poets. His Feast Day is celebrated on October 9. Today,

Striving for Sainthood

THIS month, I was intrigued to learn more about the life of St Dominic on approach to his Feast Day.

St Dominic was a Catholic priest who founded the Dominican Order, and his Feast Day falls on August 8. While researching more about him, I was particularly inspired by how strong his desire was to be a saint – believing: “If I do not become a Saint, I am doing nothing.” It is clear through his life and work that St Dominic stuck to this belief and used it as a guide.

St Dominic was born in Caleruega, Spain, in the year 1170. Although this was a time of difficulty in the Church, due to widespread heresies and lack of accessible teaching, he remained dedicated to preaching the truth. He aimed to combat the heresy and ignorance, while encouraging other educated preachers to do the same. This specific desire was what led to him eventually forming the Order of Preachers - now known as the Dominicans.

St Dominic’s commitment to his mission shaped the way he lived and formed others, allowing him to reach hearts both truthfully



and lovingly.

Although to Catholic young people nowadays, the idea that if you do not become a saint, you are doing nothing, may sound quite extreme, it is in fact the perfect motivation for us in our world today. Striving to be a saint helps us to avoid becoming comfortable with just getting by in our faith. We should, instead, remember that we are called to make a real difference. No matter which path we may take in life, living our lives in holiness will bring

true meaning to all. The focus on becoming a saint overrides all earthly desires, achievements, and successes – as true success is living a life rooted in God. St Dominic did this through even the smallest acts in his life, giving all to the glory of God.

This quote: “If I do not become a Saint, I am doing nothing”, challenges young people not to be lukewarm or passive in our faith and values. We should seek to grow in faith, live with intention, and strive for excellence in love.

God in the garden

FORTUNATELY, we have experienced lovely weather this summer that has allowed us to enjoy outdoor activities and embrace nature’s beauty. Inspired by this pleasant weather, I embarked on a personal project in my garden. I dedicated my efforts to creating a grotto dedicated to Our Lady.

Rather than constructing it with traditional bricks and mortar, I opted for a simpler approach with the natural surroundings, making it both charming and modest. This serene space now provides me with a peaceful sanctuary, where I can sit, reflect, and engage in prayer, enhancing my spiritual connection while enjoying the tranquillity of my garden.

I firmly believe that one can encounter the divine within the serenity of a garden. Nature, with its exquisite flowers and the lovely songs of birds perched in trees, offers a sanctuary filled with gifts that inspire gratitude and reflection. Don’t overlook the often-annoying bees and graceful

butterflies flitting about; these seemingly small wonders hold immense significance.

Remember that our Lord chose the Garden of Gethsemane for solace during His time of suffering. In moments of crisis, doubt, or grief, immersing yourself in the garden can be healing. Therefore, I believe when we are in trouble or bad spirits, we should engage in fulfilling projects like mowing the lawn, planting vibrant flowers, painting a fence, or even crafting a serene grotto, allowing nature to elevate your spirit towards the heavens. Keep your mind open to the possibilities, there’s always something to do!

Fly fishing serves as a therapeutic escape for me also, soothing life’s ups and downs. Immersing myself in Ireland’s beautiful nature, I discover its vast beauty and the serenity it provides, with tranquil places like Buncrana’s walkway or Grianán of Aileach with friends. We have such beauty on our doorsteps, especially in Co Donegal.



So, I encourage everyone not to confine themselves indoors; instead, embrace the outdoors. Whether it is taking a short simple walk, or hugging a tree, or engaging with friendly people along your path, each moment spent outside can be uplifting. Nature has a way of fostering connections and experiences that can enlighten our spirits. It is remarkable how, throughout these adventures, we often encounter divine opportunities or beneficial meetings that enrich life’s journey.

Lough Derg - mentally and physically challenging but sure puts gratitude in your heart

ON August 1, I headed off to Lough Derg recalling Scripture, “He withdrew from there in a boat to a lonely place” (Mt 14:13), and you probably are asking, “Are you mad?”

I was unsure of the days ahead of me, but boy I soon realised. On Lough Derg, you could say the Stations are the heart of the pilgrimage, and on the first day you are required to do three Stations before 9 pm. I checked with a priest if I had done mine and it turned out that I had done the first three bullet points of one Station, so I had a long day ahead of me...ha ha!

Up next was the 24-hour Vigil, during which, guess what...you do more Stations, praying from 10 pm to 10 pm the next day. Yikes!

Come 2 am, someone shouted over to me, “Didn’t know that Casper the ghost had come back. Thought the Ghostbusters had got rid of him a long time ago!”

During the pilgrimage, you also had to do the Stations in your bare-feet and you were allowed one Lough Derg meal (bread, black tea and oatcakes) a day, which was mentally and physically challenging, but it sure puts gratitude into your heart.

Aside from all the tough stuff, the view from the island is breathtaking and the silence



is profound; it isn’t an absence of sound, but the presence of something deeper. It is the hush of eternity brushing against the shores of time. The sacred liturgy left deep impressions on my soul, with the incense floating up into Heaven and the chants imitating the Nine Choirs of Angels. It was out of this world!

I will share that during Benediction, when we sang

‘Tantum Ergo’, I let out tears. They were tears of joy and love. Inside, to myself, I shouted, “Get me the maniple, I can’t do this bare-armed!”

All jokes aside, I would 100% return to Lough Derg despite all the difficulties. The people you meet there are of a different breed, as us ‘Derry Ones’ would say!

St Davog, Ora pro Nobis!

Young Writers share thoughts...

With wisdom both ancient and new *by John*

ARTIFICIAL Intelligence: Everyone knows what it is; more or less everyone has used it in some manner or another; and everyone has some opinion on it. I may be exaggerating slightly, but it is without a doubt a popular topic within the public discourse. I've been thinking about this for a while, and it wasn't easy for me to decide how I should approach the topic. As the church and many scholars have already written on this subject, I've taken their wisdom to approach AI.

Artificial Intelligence can be simply explained as computers being able to simulate the way human beings think, learn, solve problems, make decisions, be creative and are autonomous [1,2]. I think we all have a sense of what AI is trying to be, but as many of us have learned, AI has not become completely humanlike (that might change in the future).

In the early stages, computer scientists and engineers developed systems that allowed computers to process information faster than humans. Later on, these computers started being able to "mimic human brain function" [1], and now we are getting to a stage in which computer systems are able to produce creative output on their own: this is called Generative AI or GenAI.

Computer scientists are able to get AI to do these things by developing models. Models are created by training algorithms to make decisions and predictions based on data. An algorithm is a piece of computer code that works using logic. Therefore, by making more complex algorithms and training them with lots of data,

current AI systems have become powerful enough to create new pieces of art, music and even some literature. It begs the question: Are these creations of art, music and literature truly that or something fake that looks like the real thing?

Some may ask, how can things created by AI be creative if they're really just spitting out the data they received in a different way? There are many questions that remain to be answered, and some may not be answered for a while. I remember all the way back in December 2022, hearing about this new AI called 'ChatGPT' and that it would revolutionise the way we do things. I thought the technology would not be that impressive, but I was wrong. I remember experimenting on ChatGPT, getting it to make (not write) poems, to solve complex mathematical problems, to give its opinions on world affairs and many other things. I remember being surprised at how many things it got right, but also by how many things it got wrong. When I pointed out its mistake, ChatGPT would correct itself and then continue. It seemed to have a certain confidence of its own and, over time, as people got it to do more crazier things, the creators of ChatGPT started to censor its output as well. This self-censorship is another problem - who controls what is censored - what if the people who control these AI systems choose to censor actual facts?

These are a few of many questions that this new technology has raised, but the question remains: How are we to

respond to these questions? Do we have a framework from which we can work on? How do we make sure that this technology is not used for evil purposes?

What has the Church said on AI?

The Vatican recently published a document called 'Antiqua et Nova' (Ancient and New) which addresses AI. It addresses many of the questions raised before by noting that Artificial Intelligence cannot simply be equated with Human Intelligence, as if the "human mind can be broken down into digitized steps that machines can replicate". Humans are rational, however, being rational is not just being able to process data but being able to know and understand, to will, to love, to choose, to desire and all bodily functions related to these abilities [2]. Human intelligence desires for the truth and seeks "truths of a higher order". Moreover, Human intelligence isn't "an isolated faculty but is exercised in relationships, finding its fullest expression in dialogue, collaboration, and solidarity" [2]. The human spirit is not distinct or of a separate nature from the body but "rather their union forms a single nature" [2]. All of this is to say that Human intelligence isn't just something that can be simply mimicked by computers, as it "possesses an essential contemplative dimension, an unselfish openness to the True, the Good, and the Beautiful, beyond any utilitarian purpose" [2].

Whilst it may have become clear that Artificial Intelligence isn't necessarily the same, and

cannot be the same as Human intelligence, the development and wider use of AI raises questions as to how it is used and for what purposes it can be used for without endangering the common good.

As Pope Francis said: "If mankind's so-called technological progress were to become an enemy of the common good, this would lead to an unfortunate regression to a form of barbarism dictated by the law of the strongest" [3]. Artificial Intelligence then is like any other tool made by human beings - it can be used for good purposes, or it can be used to cause evil. But in what circumstances is it good and bad? As the Vatican document notes when AI is "used in ways that respect human dignity and promote the well-being of individuals and communities, it can contribute positively to the human vocation" [2].

Currently, many people use AI in a positive way as a means to do things that otherwise would have taken a lot of time. However, AI is also being used to create deepfake images and videos of people in order to spread false information. There are concerns that AI could make many jobs redundant and lead to an employment crisis as employers shift towards 'greater efficiency'. I could list more concerns, but the list would be endless.

The church is very clear the AI should not be misrepresented as



a person, nor should it be used as a replacement for human relationships - a phenomenon that has already begun to exist. The Church is also very clear that as "technological progress increasingly replaces human work...AI should assist, not replace, human judgment" [2]. This is something that is being neglected, as many companies are often using AI to "replace human workers rather than complement them" [2].

For us humans, work is something essential to our way of life, and it would not be good for society as AI is used as a means to limit the ability of humans to work. Pope Francis constantly referred to the promotion of the "technocratic paradigm," which perceives all the world's problems as solvable through technological means alone [4]. This idea of putting aside solidarity and human dignity in the name of efficiency is not congruent with the Christian way.

At the end of the day, the good use and the good development of AI, and any technology for that matter, is dependent on the

persons creating and using them. If they are not morally grounded, if they don't care about the fact that this technological creation could perhaps be used as an instrument of tyranny, moreover if that is the actual intention, then the battle to make sure that AI is used for good is truly lost. It may sound 'cringe', but the only antidote to this is Christ. If our morality isn't pinned on the truth that we, humans, are made for God, and that no matter what comfort, pleasure or achievements, if we do not have Christ, we will never be fulfilled - we will never be our true selves. AI may be good, but in a world where people strive for comfort, pleasure and efficiency, and seek it in their own creations, they are bound to fall short.

[1] <https://www.ibm.com/think/topics/artificial-intelligence>

[2] Antiqua et Nova

[3] <https://cruxnow.com/vatican/2019/09/pope-warns-of-new-barbarism-in-age-of-artificial-intelligence>

[4] Laudato Si'

We are Pilgrims of Hope...but what does that mean? *by James*

PILGRIMS of Hope is the title Pope Francis gave to the Church for the Jubilee Year 2025, and it captures something essential about our Catholic identity. To be a pilgrim is to be a traveller, someone on a journey toward a sacred destination.

As Catholics, our life is not static, we are on a spiritual pilgrimage towards the Kingdom of God. We are called "pilgrims of hope" because, while we walk through trials and uncertainties, we move forward with the hope that Christ has won for us through His death and Resurrection.

Hope, in the Gospel sense, is not mere optimism. It is the confident trust that God is faithful to His promises. We see this in the story of Abraham, who set out for a land he did not know, trusting in God's word (Genesis 12). We see it fulfilled in the disciples on the

road to Emmaus (Luke 24), who, discouraged after the crucifixion, encounter the Risen Jesus. Their hearts burn with hope as He opens the Scriptures and reveals Himself in the breaking of the bread. Like them, we walk often in confusion, yet Christ walks with us, turning despair into joy.

Jesus was a pilgrim. He journeyed through Galilee and Judea proclaiming the Kingdom, healing the sick, and calling people to follow Him. He taught us that our ultimate homeland is not of this world, but with the Father. In the Sermon on the Mount, He promised, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8).

With hope, comes the virtue of faith, as when we allow ourselves to be completely entrusted to God, not relying on our own sinful selves, we focus on the



hope of salvation and reward that Christ promised us. We recognise that we have a hope that greater things are to come, through our belief in the eternal teachings of God.

As Catholics, we embrace our identity as pilgrims of hope by keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus, walking together in faith, and supporting one another on the road to eternal life. Our journey is not solitary but shared, strengthened by the sacraments and guided by God's Word.

Festival of Virgen del Carmen in Cabo de Palos a quiet yet powerful celebration *by Niamh*

WHEN my parents booked a summer holiday to La Manga, I thought it would just be a quiet week by the beach, away from the crowds. Located on the southeastern coast of Spain, La Manga isn't exactly famous for wild festivals or big cities. It is a narrow strip of land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Mar Menor lagoon.

I was expecting calm waters, paddle boarding, and seafood dinners. What I didn't expect was to accidentally walk right into a celebration called the Festival of the Virgen del Carmen.

Virgen del Carmen is the Patron Saint of Fishermen and Sailors, and this area, although small, is full of fishing tradition. Every year on July 16, coastal communities across Spain honour her with processions, prayers and sea-themed celebrations. While big cities like Málaga and Barcelona have grand

parades and fireworks, Cabo de Palos celebrates in a more modest, heartfelt way and, in some ways, that made it even more special.

A group of local men, many of them fishermen, carefully lifted a statue of the Virgen del Carmen, dressed in flowing robes and surrounded by white and blue flowers and carried her slowly through the streets. Families walked alongside, some holding candles, others tossing flower petals gently onto the path.

Eventually, the procession made its way to the harbour. There, the statue was transferred onto a small fishing boat decorated with ribbons, flowers, and lights. A cheer rose from the crowd as the boat pulled away from the dock, sailing slowly into the Mar Menor, followed by a handful of other boats. Everyone clapped and stood as the Virgen del Carmen drifted peacefully across the calm water.

There were no fireworks or massive parties, just music from a speaker, the sound of waves, and the low hum of boat engines. And yet, it was so powerful. I felt like I was part of something deeply personal and real, even though I was just a visitor.

After the procession, families gathered along the waterfront to share food, chat, and watch the boats return. We tried some local specialties like grilled sardines. It was amazing to see how a small town could keep such a big tradition alive in its own quiet way. It wasn't about the size of the crowd or the loudness of the music; it was about memory and community.

So, if you ever find yourself in La Manga, or anywhere near Cabo de Palos in July, take a walk to the harbour on the 16th. You might not expect much but, like me, you might just find something unforgettable.

Young Writers share thoughts...

Mentality, physicality and spirituality of utmost importance in drawing closer to Holy Trinity *by Seán*

AS Catholics, we believe in the Trinitarian formulation of God. It outlines God's omnipresence in every aspect of our existence, as God the Father in Heaven, Christ here in human form on earth, and the Holy Spirit which is ever present in every element of our life.

I find satisfaction and fulfilment in this belief by mirroring Trinitarian values in three elements of life; three devotions through which we can draw closer to God's Trinity, a path through which one can attain a greater comprehension of our faith and how to live fully immersed within it.

Being God's image and likeness, our faith not only draws us nearer to salvation but also inspires us to live up to the splendour and glory of our Divine Creator, the One who crafted our very being and gave us life – a life we should not waste. While we will never truly live up to our truest potential in life, that is no reason not to try.

The Trinity outlines three forms in which God is present in our life, and through three devotions

one should mirror this: mentality, physicality and spirituality. These three are of the utmost importance in being a complete Christian. All three drive oneself to be fully equipped for death, trained in human qualities which mirror the greatness of our Lord.

Mentality is one of the most vital components to human flourishing. It is a driving force towards righteousness and success. Poor mentality drives the human spirit into disarray, tangled and gored beyond recognition. The human mind demands aim and purpose. Our individuality as a work of God requires that we construct an indomitable mentality with which we can flourish. While our mentality will never truly reach God's ultimate likeness, we must follow the example of Christ in order to come as absolutely close as possible.

St Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:16, "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."

I have learned to build my

mentality, my outlook on life, based on the foundations laid by Christ. The purpose of our own faith is to live up to Christ, and mentality is vital to that. The mind needs to be fuelled through intellectual pursuits. Christ is God's human embodiment, and to build the mentality of Christ we must allow ourselves to be human, attaining and mastering the greatest elements of our species. Find peace in human creations like literature, poetry, art. The path to great mentality requires acceptance of the God-given qualities which have driven us throughout our history. Embrace creativity, imagination, emotion, and all things which make us what we are.

Our physicality cannot be willingly neglected. Those gifted with health must not take it for granted. Our body is so much of who we are; a Temple of God which we must respect and drive towards completeness through hard work. The mind cannot labour alone; the body must labour as well.

St Paul said in 1 Corinthians

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

Completeness

Developing fierce physicality does not necessarily mean vanity; which is the product of isolated physicality – when mind and spirit are neglected. All three components of this Trinitarian system rely on one another for glorious completeness. While our physicality will never remain as powerful as it could be, as always, we should strive to be the best we can, even if it is never truly attainable.

St Paul said in 1 Corinthians 12:12-13, "The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptised by one Spirit into one body."

As God became Man and suffered for us, we must

understand the physical if the mental and spirit is to become clear.

The third component is our spirituality, which along with mentality and physicality completes our humanity. The previous two components upkeep our outlook on life and our bodily labour, while our spirituality ensures that we remain fully connected to God while maintaining the previous two.

In 1 Corinthians 3:16, St Paul wrote, "Don't you know that you yourselves are God's temple and that God's Spirit lives in you?"

Our spiritual journeys drive us towards truth and meaning, our mind and body maintaining our ability to fully appreciate this earth, God's great gift. Our connection to God is built upon our ability to sense the very essence of God around us. As many of the greatest minds of our species have discovered, our attempts at spiritual wisdom are eternally futile. St Thomas Aquinas said on his deathbed that his vast writings about God were "all straw," a gangly mimic of the

truth we cannot yet see.

In 1 Corinthians 4:18, St Paul said, "Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a 'fool' so that he may become wise. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight."

We will never truly understand our spirituality in this life, but it is no reason not to try.

As we further ourselves towards completeness through human pursuits, our understanding of God will become clearer and clearer until, when our time to rest comes, we are as prepared as possible for what we will find beyond.

In 1 Corinthians 13:11-12, St Paul wrote, "When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me. Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known."

The longest papal election *by Luke*

ABOUT three months ago, the 2025 conclave after the death of Pope Francis began, on May 7. It was a relatively short conclave, taking only two days for Pope Leo XIV to be elected by the cardinals. Even so, I know that I and many others waited with anticipation, wondering who would be the next pope and how long it would take for a conclusion to be reached.

This conclave didn't require much patience. However, if it were to have taken as long as the 1268 papal election, we would not even be 10% through it.

The 1268 papal election was the longest in the history of the Church, lasting from December 1268 to September 1271. It took 33 months for the next pope, Pope Gregory X, to be elected. For almost three years after the death of Pope Clement IV, the Catholic Church had no pope. Three cardinals died of old age during this lengthy election, while one resigned because of health issues.

The reasons for the delay were complex, but in its simplest form, the lack of consensus was a result of pressure from numerous monarchs in Europe at the time, and the fact that most cardinals were from Italy and France, two countries which were experiencing some significant tension at the time, did not help matters in the least.



The election took place in the Italian city of Viterbo, and the pressure escalated to the point that the cardinals were locked in, and their rations reduced to just bread and water. Even under this pressure, they couldn't reach the necessary two-thirds majority. At one point, the roof of the building they were locked in was removed by the locals, some said it was to let the Holy Spirit in but the real motivation was to further incentivise the cardinals to make a decision.

It became clear that they would never reach a decision if things continued like this,

so the cardinals chose to form a committee of six of their members who would decide. They concluded that due to the division amongst the cardinals, nobody amongst them would be able to satisfy the necessary two-thirds majority. Finally, they settled on a candidate who was neither a cardinal nor even a priest. Teobaldo Visconti, the Archdeacon of Liege turned down the position at first, but was eventually persuaded to become Pope Gregory X, after being ordained as a priest and made a bishop within the span of weeks.

One of the first things that Pope

Gregory did was formalise the rules around papal elections to encourage the cardinals to choose quickly and prevent incidents such as this happening again. He took inspiration from the tactics employed by the residents of Viterbo, including limiting communication with outsiders and reducing their rations if it takes too long to come to a consensus. The papal election after his death is sometimes referred to as the first conclave. The word conclave even originates from the fact the cardinals were locked out from the world, as it roughly means "with a key".

Conclaves were suspended for a few papal elections following Pope Adrian V, but after the 27-month papal election in which the cardinals eventually elected Pope Celestine V, he reintroduced the conclave. The rules have been altered by many of the popes to have succeeded him, but conclaves as a concept have persisted.

<https://www.thenewspeak.com/the-conclave-historical-origins-and-curiosities/>

<https://popehistory.com/popes/pope-gregory-x/>

<https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-05/the-conclave-from-the-middle-ages-to-our-days.html>

<https://abcnews.go.com/WNT/Pope/story?id=681429>

Call to day of prayer and reflection for Gaza

FOLLOWING the month of prayer during June "for peace and solidarity with the suffering people of Gaza", Archbishop Eamon Martin has called for parishes to set aside Sunday, August 24, "as a day of prayer and reflection for Gaza and for a renewed commitment by the international community for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East."

Remarking that, since June, the situation in Gaza has become "steadily worse", he wrote in a Pastoral Letter that he joined the heartfelt plea of Pope Leo XIV for "a ceasefire, the release of hostages, and full respect for international humanitarian law."

He added: "As the Holy Father said, 'Every human being has an intrinsic dignity bestowed by God Himself.'"

The Archbishop also echoed the recent words of Card Pizzaballa, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem, and Patriarch Theophilus III, who said on July 22: "Humanitarian aid is not only necessary, it is a matter of life and death. Refusing it is not a delay, but a sentence. Every hour without food, water, medicine and shelter causes deep harm."

He added that the Irish Bishops were aware that people in parishes

across the country were "deeply troubled by stark and horrific images from Gaza of starving children and helpless, hungry families."

Encouraging people to continue to show solidarity, Archbishop Eamon continued: "Pray also for our Christian brothers and sisters among the Palestinian populations in Gaza and on the West Bank, who are witnessing daily to peace and non-violence, even in the midst of provocation and attacks."

"As Card Pizzaballa said, 'Christ is not absent from Gaza. He is there, crucified in the wounded, buried under rubble and yet present in every act of mercy, every candle in the darkness, every hand extended to the suffering.'"

Asking people to join in 24 hours of prayer and reflection in their parishes and homes on Sunday, August 24, he suggested: "Light a candle in your family home or local parish church; attend Mass; spend time before the Blessed Sacrament; pray the Rosary; make some small personal penance or sacrifice, and on that day let the light of hope radiate out from the island of Ireland for peace, for Gaza and for the future of its people."

Unforgettable week for Irish iconographers at Greek-led masterclass in Long Tower by *Darinagh Boyle*

BOSTON, Derry, Thessaloniki might sound like an unlikely triangle, but East met West in the holy precinct of St Columba's Church Long Tower last month, in a spirit of Christian unity.

Brothers Panagiotis and Dimitris Christodoulou delivered a week-long masterclass to a group of 23 iconographers from across Ireland.

The masters had been invited to the city by Dungiven tutor, Clare McReynolds and Boston-based iconographer, Anne Karakatsanis, a Derry native and Long Tower parishioner, last year.

Clare, a senior tutor in her own right, founded the Honora School of Iconography in Long Tower. And Anne Karakatsanis, a business woman and US fundraiser for Children in Crossfire, joined the class on her frequent visits home.

After months of planning and preparation, the week opened with Solemn Vespers celebrated on Sunday, July 27, by Bishop Donal McKeown, Fr Gerard Mongan and Fr Stephen Ward in Long Tower.

Greek Orthodox cleric, Fr Gregory Alexios Florides, representing His Eminence Archbishop Nikitas of Thyateira and Great Britain, was also in attendance.

Representatives of all of the main Christian denominations in the city of Derry were also invited to the ceremony, which was followed by a buffet in the beautiful confines of Long Tower Primary School.

It was here, the following morning, that the iconographers

gathered with a mix of excitement and apprehension, as they embarked on their own spiritual journey to write the icon known as the Panagia Kardiotissa.

Their fears were allayed when Panagiotis spoke to them of the mystery they were entering into as they began to write this challenging, profoundly moving icon in a little less than five days.

For Clare McReynolds, who had worked tirelessly to source and provide pigments, boards, brushes etc, the full significance started to sink in and she surrendered herself to the process of sharing sacred art.

"If iconography is about relationship, we sincerely hope this will be the beginning of a deepening relationship between Honora School of Iconography, Long Tower and the Christodoulou Iconographic House in Thessaloniki.

"The brothers and their wives, Stamatia and Eva, challenged us in ways they probably didn't even realise. Panagiotis told us not to be afraid. The atmosphere was both industrious and spiritual, everyone totally immersed in writing their own icon encouraged by the words of reassurance and numerous demonstrations.

"Panagiotis would always bring everything back to God. He and Dimitris were so generous in telling us about their experiences painting icons and visits to sacred places like Mount Athos. We feel very privileged to have had this experience. It's up to us together now to build on this foundation.

"The staff of Long Tower PS were

so accommodating and many of the local schools helped us with furnishing and easels, especially Michael McCarron and Patrick McHugh from North West Regional College art department, St Cecilia's College and Lumen Christi College."

Anne Karakatsanis added: "We felt a connection with the Greeks even in the planning meetings over Zoom. When they arrived and began tutoring, all the upheaval of travelling, hospitality and preparing for the week, evaporated and we soaked up the privilege of having them here in Derry.

"They said to us that they could 'feel the weight of sacred history' in this very old parish. And they absolutely loved the Long Tower Church, urging us to remember the generations who contributed to it in faith for so many years and telling us not to take the wonderful craftsmanship of the past for granted. They took such an interest in its history, it gave me a renewed appreciation of my own home parish.

"Finally, I want to thank each and everyone of the iconographers who took part. They took a leap of faith signing up to this first-of-its-kind residential. Without their

support, we could never have hosted this unforgettable week."

Sr Ethna McDermott, another local iconographer and chairperson of the Iconographers of Ireland Association, had a very important input into the Vespers service and general planning. Sr Ethna also provided a much-appreciated line drawing to help some participants get started on their work, and she quietly offered guidance and support throughout the entire week.

An incredibly talented Patricia Mullan voluntarily provided the participants with delicious lunches, mid-morning and afternoon traybakes and assorted home-cooked treats, kindly assisted by Paula, Laura, Maureen and Denise, who helped with preparation and serving throughout the week.

Erin McReynolds, Leah Mullen and a trio of local singers made a very special contribution to a week that will live long in our memories, raising their voices in praise and adoration.

Back in the soaring summer heat of Thessaloniki, the Christodoulou brothers said that they looked forward to returning to Long Tower and the City of Derry.



Blessed three days on Lough Derg for Derry Diocese pilgrims



Croagh Patrick Jubilee stamp for Newtownstewart Pilgrims of Hope by *Fr Roland Colhoun*



CLIMBING Croagh Patrick is a challenge from start to finish. Bringing a bus load of pilgrims adds to the excitement. This was our adventure on Sunday, July 20, when 28 enthusiastic mortals from our cluster of parishes undertook the journey. And it's a substantial journey, 276 miles round-trip from Newtownstewart. Still, if St Patrick got there in the fifth century, in a chariot, going in a comfortable coach today is not an onerous assignment.

Holy Mountain

I believe that our attraction to climbing mountains reflects our desire to go to Heaven. The

higher the elevation, the more it symbolises our earthly struggle to keep our eyes fixed on God. Bessie Bell Mountain in Newtownstewart rises to 420 metres. Mullaghcarra in Gortin Glen reaches 542m. These are not for the faint-hearted, but Croagh Patrick is higher at 765m above sea level. This makes the ascent plus descent a 7km walk and climb. And it feels like it, especially scaling the conical part at the top!

All the same, when you behold pilgrims climbing in their bare feet, you know Irish penitential faith is alive and well. I saw three barefoot children, siblings all under the age of 10, picking their

steps carefully through the stones, helping one another to do what believers have done for centuries, ascend the holy mountain. We do the climb in atonement for our sins and the sins of the whole world, as the Chaplet of Mercy so beautifully expresses it. None of our group could boast the barefoot level of penance, I'm afraid. We were all well shod, but even the best walking boots won't diminish the gradient of the mountain, nor lighten the backpacks of the priests carrying the sacred books and vessels for Mass at the summit. For my part, it was an immense privilege to offer the Eucharist on the spot where St Patrick did so.

St Patrick

According to Bishop Tírechán, the seventh century historian from Killala Bay in north Connaught, our national saint spent 40 days and 40 nights on the mountain, to imitate Moses (Mount Sinai), Elijah (Mount Carmel) and Christ (Mount Tabor).² Scholars say it was 441AD.³ He had to endure the Lenten weather, day and night, and for some reason, the birds

were troublesome to Patrick on the mountain. He spent the time interceding for Ireland, doing reparation for our sins, pleading with God to eradicate paganism and banish demons and evil spirits from this beloved missionary territory.

Contemplating the trojan efforts of St Patrick on our behalf puts into perspective any humble contribution we make today. St Patrick's Chapel, the little whitewashed stone edifice at the summit, was built in 1905. It has no seats but holds about 50 pilgrims standing. Here we celebrated our Sunday Mass, joined by another group, eager pilgrims and good musicians from Headford Parish in Co Galway.

Setting

The Lord blessed us with idyllic weather. Although heavy rain precipitated flooding in many parts of the country on that Sunday, holy Co Mayo was calm, dry and warm. The thermometer registered 21 degrees centigrade at the summit of Croagh Patrick, with the gentlest of breezes to

refresh us. The spectacular view to the west was Clew Bay, with still waters around tiny islands, and not a wave to be seen on the Atlantic Ocean.

Prayer

We endeavoured to unite with the intercession of beloved St Patrick, praying at his statue and singing 'Christ Be Beside Me' from his Breastplate. God invites us to go on pilgrimage, and we can find our prayers answered. As the Psalm puts it, "On the day I called you answered me, O Lord" (Psalm 138:3). Our group can't claim, however, to have imitated Patrick's fasting, because it was the Lord's Day and we were all well fed along the way.

Hope

A pilgrimage is designed to mirror the whole journey of life, with its challenges and blessings. We were pleased to experience joy without sorrow, because ours was a day of seamless faith, hope and love. Since our group was drawn from several parishes, old acquaintances were reunited, and

new friendships forged.

Prayerful pilgrims make wonderful travel companions and take delight in the Rosary, the hymns, the songs and, of course, the jokes! The outing was inspired by the Jubilee Year and the call of the Pope for us to embrace the motto of 2025 and be Pilgrims of Hope in the Church and the world. We all availed of the pilgrim 'passports' provided by the Irish Bishops this year, and received our official stamp to verify that we had climbed Croagh Patrick. The other two Jubilee Shrines are Knock and Lough Derg. Those invitations can be taken up on another day soon, with God's holy help.

1. Tírechán, *Collectanea*, no. 5, translation by L. Bieler, www.confessio.ie/more/tirechan_english, accessed 26th July 2025

2. Tírechán, *Collectanea*, no. 38, translation by L. Bieler, www.confessio.ie/more/tirechan_english, accessed 26th July 2025

3. "The History of Croagh Patrick", chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://obrien.ie/asset/4121/1/CroaghPatrickSample.pdf, accessed 26th July 2025

In Christ we are One – Pope Leo XIV book launched in Omagh

OMAGH native, Michael Kelly, a former journalist and now Director of Public Affairs with Aid to the Church in Need, Ireland, launched his book on Pope Leo XIV at the start of the summer in Cappagh Parish Centre, Killyclogher. All proceeds from the book is going to support the ACN emergency relief fund for Gaza.

Delighted to have the honour of speaking at the launch of 'In Christ we are One – Pope Leo XIV at the service of humanity', Fr Declan McGeehan commended it as "a brilliant, well-researched, easily accessible introduction into the life of Robert Prevost, our new Pope."

Saying that the book "gives an invaluable insight into his background", Fr Declan remarked: "Michael has broken his life and ministry down into manageable chunks to help us get a glimpse of who the man is: from his early days in Chicago, and in the Augustinian Order, to his days as Bishop in Chiclayo, Peru, and then, on to Rome."

He added: "There are handy timelines and lots of photos to give you a quick insight into the man who now sits upon the Throne of Peter. But what I think is best about this book is that it looks back to St Augustine and to the papacy of Leo XIII to help us understand what the papacy of Leo XIV might look like."

"Leo XIV's motto, taken from the writings of St Augustine, is: 'In illo uno unum' – 'In the One – we are one'. Together in Christ – as members of His body, the Church – we are one. One with Christ, our Lord and God, our Head and Founder; and one with one another."

Recalling the moment on Thursday, May 8, when "the white smoke started billowing out, and the world seemed to pause as billions tuned in to find out who the next Pope would be", Fr Declan said that he hadn't known much about Robert Prevost other than that he had been the Prefect of the Dicastery for Bishops. Being an American, he hadn't given any

thought to the possibility of him being elected.

Reminded by a friend that he had actually met the newly elected Pope on a number of occasions, he went on to recall him frequently visiting the Pontifical Irish College when he had lived there, saying: "He sent some of his own students from the Peruvian Diocese of Chiclayo there and would visit them regularly, including Fr Edgard Rimaycuna, who now serves as his personal secretary. However, visiting bishops at the Irish College were a penny a dozen, and I forgot all about him."

"I also had forgotten that I met him in February last year, when I attended a conference in Rome. So little did I know about him that I greeted him in Italian, not realising he was a native English speaker. In a way, I'm glad I didn't know much about Cardinal Robert Prevost because it was nice to just accept him as our new Pope without any pre-conceived ideas about him – without any prejudices."

Unity

Immediately impressed by his regnal name, Leo, Fr Declan said: "I was delighted with the choice. My first thought was, 'well, that's a good sign!', because Leo is neither claimed by left nor right – by conservatives or liberals, traditionalists or conservatives. There are too many divisions in the Church at present, division which, I felt, were exacerbated in recent years. We need unity. The name Leo struck me as a unifying name."

"Leo XIII, the last pontiff to choose that name, was both 'conservative' and 'progressive', if you like to use those labels. He spearheaded the revival of Thomism in Catholic thought and education, he was a great promoter of Marian doctrine and devotion, he ardently defended the rights and freedom of the Church, and yet, he also defended the rights of workers, he was instrumental in developing the social doctrine of the Church, warning against the

inherent dangers of both socialism and capitalism.

"His papacy is seen as a stabilising one. Following the loss of the Papal States, and rapid political change across Europe, Leo helped to bring stability to a changing Church and world. Pope Francis once said: 'We are not living in an era of change but in a change of era'. Leo XIII helped guide the Church through the changes of the late 19th century, and, at the same time, he helped to prepare Her for the challenges She would face in the 20th century. He was, in many ways, a bridge between one era and the next."

"Leo XIV has already indicated that he too will be a bridge builder – bridging divisions within the Church and without, but also helping the Church and all of humanity to bridge the gap opening up as a result of the technological revolution, especially in light of the challenges posed by advancements in AI."

He continued: "When Leo XIV stepped out onto the balcony, the fears I had seemed to dissipate in an instant. Some were delighted by the fact that he had returned to the traditional pontifical garb, others were perhaps disappointed that he didn't follow his predecessor's style, but what calmed all my fears were his first words, 'Peace be with you all! Dear brothers and sisters, these are the first words spoken by the risen Christ, the Good Shepherd who laid down his life for God's flock'."

"Earlier that week, Bishop Robert Barron, when asked what he wanted in the new pope, said 'What comes first when it comes to Pope is the declaration of Jesus risen from the dead...I want someone who declares the resurrection of Jesus in a compelling way because that was Peter's job.' Well, here was Peter's successor doing just that. Via the radio, television, and social media, billions of people, from every country in the world, heard that message loud and clear with Leo XIV's first words. The proclamation of the resurrection

translated into every language for all to hear, it reminded me of Pentecost!"

Fr Declan concluded with a prayer for Pope Leo XIV...

"O God, who in your providential design willed that your Church be built upon blessed Peter, whom you set over the other Apostles, look with favour, we pray, on Leo, our Pope and grant that he, whom you have made Peter's successor, may be for your people a visible source and foundation of unity in faith and of communion. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen. Mary, Mother of the Church, pray for him. St Peter, pray for him. All you Holy Roman Pontiffs, pray for him. Ss Augustine and Monica, pray for him."

Challenges

Explaining that he had set out to look at some of the challenges facing Pope Leo XIV, the author said: "In the developed west, chief amongst these challenges is re-presenting the timeless truths of the Gospel in a way that rises above all the noise."

"It is a challenge the Pope is familiar with. In an address in Rome a few weeks after his election, he told bishops, 'Ours is a time marked by a growing search for spirituality, particularly evident in young people, who are longing for authentic relationships and guides in life'."

"Hence, it is important that the Christian community be farsighted in discerning the challenges of today's world and in nurturing the desire for faith present in the heart of every man and woman."

"Since his election on May 8, Leo has shown himself to be audacious in his proclamation of the faith."

"There are those in the Church, pessimists," added Michael, "who want to give up, simply condemn the world around them as 'godless', and retreat into a 'holy huddle' where those of us who are believers



can feel comfortable and reassure one another about the rightness of our position."

"But Leo wants a Church that is confident in its message and is, therefore, able to dialogue with the world around it and bring that voice of faith to the fears and worries of our time."

Saying that numbers matter, and that "fewer people expressing their faith as a community on a Sunday morning is a matter of great concern to leaders in all Christian traditions," he continued: "However, it would be a mistake to see this simply in terms of market share or growth for the sake of growth. Christians want those around us to be part of our parishes and communities because we believe the message of the Gospel transforms our lives, and that this transformation can also benefit our family, friends and neighbours who do not practise their faith."

"Leo sees this as simply a friendship with God, by which we know ourselves to be loved. Writing on this theme, he said, 'What great need there is to promote an encounter with God, whose tender love values and loves the story of every person!'"

"Warning against proselytising or a glib 'feel good' faith, he insists, 'it is not a matter of giving hasty answers to difficult questions, but of drawing close to people, listening to them, and trying to understand together with them how to face their difficulties."

And this requires a readiness to be open, when necessary, to new ways of seeing things and different ways of acting, for each generation is different and has its own challenges, dreams and questions."

While researching for the book, Michael found Pope Leo XIV emerge "as a man of profound faith with a deep love for humanity."

"At a time when he could have ministered in his comfort zone in his native Chicago," Michael said, "he chose instead to go to Peru to work with poor and marginalised communities. When the friars of his Augustinian Order elected him their worldwide leader, he accepted without hesitation and spent 12 years touring the world visiting their various communities and missions and trying to renew and inspire the brothers."

Noting that the early days of the papacy of Leo XIV have indicated that he will be a bridge-builder, he remarked: "Each man brings something new to the papacy, but there is also continuity. In Pope Leo, I see the missionary outlook of Paul VI (1963-78), the vigour of Pope John Paul II (1978-2005), the intellectual depth of Benedict XVI (2005-2013) and the radical simplicity of Francis (2013-2025). Above all, though, I see a man comfortable to walk in the shoes of the fisherman, the first Pope St Peter and preach the Gospel in season and out of season."

Michael's book is available online at www.acnchurchresources.ie and at all good book stores.

Bishop Daly exhibition – 'A man for all seasons'

THE exhibition on Bishop Edward Daly – 'A Man for All Seasons' – is currently open for viewing in St Eugene's Cathedral, Derry.

It will run until August 28, and is open Monday-Saturday from

10.30 am until 4 pm.

Further information can be obtained by contacting Anne Marie Hickey at amhickey@derrydiocese.org or on +4428 71 262894.



Accord Maghera mark Fr Paddy Doherty's Golden Jubilee



Karyn McErlean, Patrick Doherty, Mona O'Kane, Bernie McCoy, Maria Sutton, Eilis Adamson, Fr Doherty Fiona O'Boyle and Sean McGillian.

MEMBERS of Accord Maghera gathered on Friday, July 4, for a joyful celebration at the elegant Ardtara House, Upperlands, honouring Fr Paddy Doherty on the Golden Anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

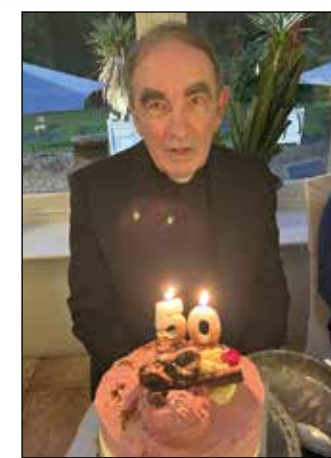
The occasion marked 50 years of dedicated service, spiritual leadership and pastoral care. His ministry in Accord has touched many lives, reached out to couples preparing for marriage, those who ask for The Sacrament of

Marriage and those who seek advice and counselling.

The evening was made special by the presence of Accord facilitators, counsellors and administration staff, both past and present, each adding to the sense of unity and celebration.

The charm, grace and friendly staff of Ardtara House provided a fitting backdrop for the night. Fr Doherty was presented with an especially commissioned painting of 'O'Doherty's Keep', a symbolic and meaningful tribute honouring both his heritage and steadfast commitment to his calling.

Accord Maghera continues its mission to support couples and



Fr Doherty.

families. They provide Marriage Preparation Courses, both in person and online on a regular basis, and counselling is available on request.

Further information can be found at accordni.com or tel: 028902 33002.

Eangach

An tAthair Oilibhéar – Duine Mór Imithe Uainn



An tAth. Oilibhéar ag Carraig Aifrinn Greanacháin

Urnaí Dúchasach chuig Muire na nGrás

A Mhuire na nGrás
A Mháthair Mhic Dé,
go gcuire tú
ar mo leas mé

Go sábhála tú mé
ar gach uile olc,
go sábhála tú mé
idir anam is chorp.

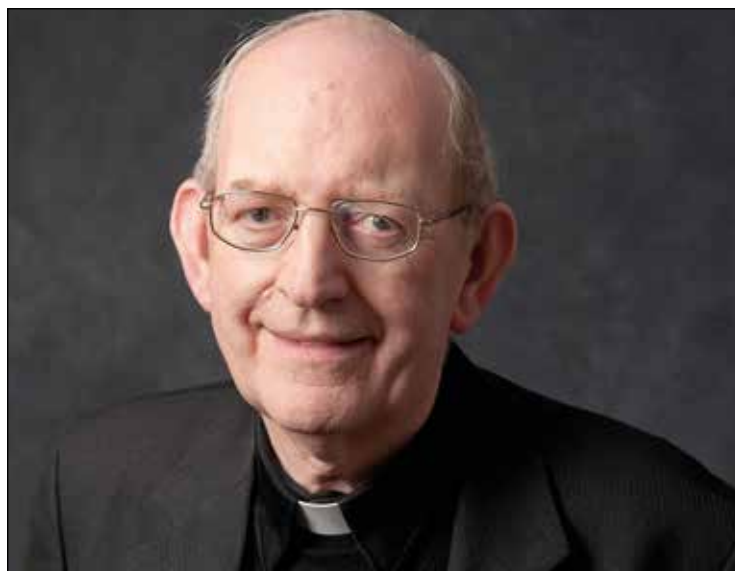
Go sábhála tú mé
ar muir is ar tír,
go sábhála tú mé
ar lic na bpian.

Garda na nAingeal
os mo chionn,
Dia romham
agus Dia liom.

Sliocht ó Mhatha 25:

A mháistir, ar seisean, 'd'fhág tú dhá thallann ar iontaobh agamsa: seo duit dhá cheann eile a ghnóthaigh mé.

Labhair a mháistir leis: 'Go han-mhaith: dea-sheirbhíseach iontaofa thú; bhí tú iontaofa i mbun beagán nithe; ceapfaidh mé i do cheann thú ar mhórán: gabh isteach in aoibhneas do thiarna.



I Mí an Mheithimh na bliana seo, chaill muid duine mór, an tAth Oilibhéar Ó Croiligh, fear a d'fhag lorg ar an réimse, i saol na hEaglaise, i saol na tíre agus i réimsí eile nach iad. Le déanaí, tá cuimhne againn féin ar a thionchar mar shagart go háitiúil i nDoire Theas. Ba léir ón scaifte mór a bhí bailithe i dTeach Pobail Oilibhéir Pluincéid, an Ghrianloch, agus ón tseanmóir, an iliomad buanna a bhí aige, chomh maith le fairsinge a thionchair agus a shaothair. Taobh thiar de seo uilig, bhí creideamh agus spioradáltacht láidir aige a chuir bun faoi – faoina obair shagartach.

Rugadh Oilibhéar in 1940 sa bhaile fearainn Baile na Creige, i Leamhaigh, Doire Theas. Bhí an creideamh láidir sa chúla inar fhás sé aníos. Anuas air sin, is é a scríobh sé in alt dá chuid: *“Ba é Íosa an Tiarna inár dtithe uilig ag an am sin. An creideamh an rud ba thábhachtaí, ach ní raibh aon rud teibí nó cianda ag baint lenár gcreideamh in Íosa. Bhí sé inár láthair go croíúil i measc ár muintire: ba é ár dTiarna é”*. Nuair a chuaigh sé ar scoil, dar leis go raibh sé ina shíniú air sin. Agus é ag ina fhreastalaí aifreann, léiríu poiblí den chreideamh a bhí ann, ach mhothaigh sé go raibh sé *‘go fóill pearsanta – i ndlíthpobal’*. Chuaigh eiseamláir an tsagairt paróiste – an tAth. McGlynn – i bhfeidhm air, go háirithe a chineáltas agus a chráifeacht.

Sílím go bhfuil macalla de sin le sonrú sa spioradáltacht a bhí aige, agus a thug sé leis fríd a shaol.

Chuaigh sé chuig an chliarscoil i Má Nuad ag pointe a bhí suntasach i stair agus saol na hEaglaise. I ndiaidh dó toiseacht i Má Nuad, toghadh an Pápa Eoin XXIII. Bhí an Dara Chomhairle Vatacánach ar siúl – rud a rachadh i bhfeidhm go mór ar an Eaglais ó shin. Bhí foireann mhaith diagairí óga i Má Nuad ag an am. Léadh an tAth.

Oilibhéar doiciméid na Comhairle de réir mar a foilsíodh iad, agus scríobh sé go raibh sin cosúil le ‘hathaimsiú’ inteacht. Dar leis an Ath. Oilibhéar gur *‘chuir an Chomhairle Vatacánach an creideamh in iúl don tréimhse ina bhfuil muid, dár nglúin-ne. D’éirigh an Íosa a raibh aithne agam air níos casta – ach chan níos scartha uaim. Lonnraigh gnúis chomhbháich Íosa fríd inníocha an tsaol nua-aimseartha’*. Ina mhinistreacht mar shagart, bhíodh sé i gcónaí ag iarraidh an creideamh a chur i bhfeidhm de réir na nithe seo a fuair sé ina chuid staidéir agus bunaithe ar a chúla.

I ndiaidh a oirnithe, bhí an tAth. Oilibhéar bainte go mór le cúrsaí cumarsáide. I ndiaidh a bheith ag teagasc i Machaire Rátha le tamall beag, ceapadh é ar Choimisiún na nEaspag Caitliceacha do na meáin chumarsáide. Bhí sé ag obair mar stiúrthóir ar Veritas, agus fríd sin, d’oibrigh sé le Cumann Leabharfoilsitheoirí Éireann. Bhí sé bainte leis an obair leis na mílte leabhrán a fhoilsiú do chuairt an Phápa Eoin Pól II go hÉirinn in 1979. Faoina mhaoirseacht, rinneadh iarracht láidir le barr feabhais a bhaint amach. D’oibrigh siad le foilsitheoirí tuata fosta agus, ar an ábhar sin, cuireadh feabhas ar an fhoilsitheoireacht in Éirinn i gcoitinne, mar gheall air.

Ceann de na rudaí is mó stuntais a chuir an Ath. Oilibhéar leis an tsochaí s’againn, ná an obair a rinne sé ar son na síochána in Éirinn. In alt a scríobh sé, luaigh sé an teagmháil a bhí aige leis an ghluaiseacht Focolare níos luaithe ina shaol mar shagart, chomh maith leis an tuiscint a bhí ag an bhunaitheoir – Chiara Lubich – ar an fhulaingt. Is é sin nach gcuireann sí bac le rudaí, ach nach mór Íosa thréigthe ar an chros a aithint ar mhaithe leis an aontacht a bhaint

amach. Rinne sé nasc idir seo agus na castachtaí a bhain leis an choimhlint a tharla go háirithe ó thuaidh, a dtugann muid ‘Na Trioblóidí’ orthu. D’éirigh sé páirteach leis an eagraíocht *Irish Commission for Justice and Peace*. Sa ról seo, bhí sé páirteach in iarrachtaí le teacht ar réiteach ar na Stailceanna Ocras. Chuir sé cuairt ar an phríosún sa Cheis Fhada agus chonaic sé na coinníollacha a bhí ansin. Bhí sé mar chuid d’obair a rinneadh leis an tuairisc *Report to the Churches on Northern Ireland Prisons* a scríobh in 1990. Sa phróiseas, d’fhoghlaim sé *‘ceacht nach raibh súil leis’* ina chuid focal féin. Bhí sé i ngrúpa a tháinig as eaglaisí éagsúla, a chuir agallamh ar phríosúnaigh ina gcealla féin. D’aithin sé go raibh na príosúnaigh níos compordáil labhairt go hoscailte nuair a chonaic siad é ansin le daoine ó eaglaisí eile. Ní amháin na Dúlseoirí, ach na Poblachtaigh fosta. Dar leis, nach raibh an chuma ar an scéal go raibh siad ann ar a son féin. Scríobh sé go raibh orthu *‘bunúis cumhachta ar n-eaglaisí áirithe a fhágáil’* agus nár measadh go raibh aon chlaontacht ag baint leo. Chonaic sé an rud céanna agus é ag obair ar an *Athbhreithniú Neamhspleách ar Pharaidí agus Mórshuílta*. B’iontach an dóigh a labhradh daoine amach le macántacht oscailte nuair a bhí siad compordach sin a dhéanamh. Ar chlár teilifíse ina raibh cúrsaí na síochána (chomh maith leis na dúshláin a bhí ann), cuireadh an cheist air, an raibh sé dóchasach go mbeadh réiteach le fáil. Is é a dúirt sé: *“Tá mé, i ndáiríre. Tá*

mé dóchasach fán tslua seo i bhfírinne. Dáinneoin na ndifríochtaí atá ag teacht chun cinn. Mar chuala mé – le linn na pléite agus ag an am tae roimhe – an maitheas atá i gcroíthe na ndaoine anseo, an pian atá ina gcroíthe. Níl aon dabht agam, dá dtiocfadh linn suí síos agus rud inteacht a oibriú amach, go dtiocfadh linn oibriú le chéile go han-sásúil, agus muid ag teacht as cúlaí éagsúla ar fad. Agus is é sin a chreidim i dtaca leis an phobal iomlán fosta.”

Ní thig gan é a lua, dar ndóigh – fócas mór eile i saol agus i mistreacht an Ath. Oilibhéar ab ea í an Ghaeilge agus an traidisiún Gaelach. Rinne sé céim sa Léann Ceilteach i Má Nuad, ag am ina raibh borradh mór ar léann na Gaeilge ann. Bhí grá mór aige don teanga, rud a bheadh aige i rith a shaol. De réir a chéile, bheadh ról aige agus a chomhaoisigh agus comhghleacaithe i gcúrsaí critice na litríochta Gaeilge. Le tionchar ón Dr. Breandán Ó Doibhlin, thuig siad go raibh na modhanna critice a bhí in úsáid i litríocht na Fraince oiriúnach do litríocht na Gaeilge. Rud a rinne siad, ag scríobh d’Isirleabhar Mhá Nuad. Chuir na modhanna critice nua seo le forbairt na litríochta Gaeilge. Bhí spéis ar leith aige i litríocht Sheosaimh Mhic Grianna, duine de na scríbhneoirí is mó Gaeilge, agus duine de mhuintir atá an-suntasach ar fad i litríocht na Gaeilge, as Rann na Feirste i nDún na nGall. Scríobh sé fá Sheosamh in Irishleabhar Mhá Nuad. Chomh maith, bhí baint aige le Cumann na Sagart, agus bhí sé ina uachtarán uirthi ó 1999 – 2004.



Cuimhní ar 10 mbliana i gCaisleán na Finne

Tháinig an tAth. Ó Croiligh go Caisleán na Finne mar shagart cónaithe i Meán Fómhair 2015 i ndiaidh dhul ar scor mar shagart Paróiste i nGrianloch. Tháinig an tAth. Michael Porter chugainnfosta, mar shagart paróiste nua i ndiaidh don Ath. Brian McGoldrick dhul ar scor ag an am chéanna.

Bhí Comhairle Paróiste againn cheana féin a bhí curtha ar bun ag an Ath. Brian McGoldrick, le cuidiú ón Ath. Angelo Lafferty S.M.A.. atá de bhunadh Chaisleáin na Finne, agus ba mhór an tacaíocht don togra seo ón bheirt shagart nua.

Ba mhór againn ar fad an tAth. Ó Croiligh a bheith i láthair ag achan chruinniú dár gcuid, agus an ionchur s'aige agus é ann.

Beidh cuimhne agam go deo ar na seanmóirí iontacha a thug sé, i ndiaidh dó an-chuid taighde

agus cuardach ar Google a rinne sé ar na hoícheanta roimhe!! Ní bheadh coinne leighis ag aon duine roimh 11a.m. i ndiaidh Aifreann na maidine (ag 10a.m.) ach – i gcónaí – bhain an slua ar fad cruinnithe isteach in Airgeal Antaine sult as an Aifreann a léigh sé, agus is iomaí cuimhne breá atá acu ó na cúrsaí onóracha a dhéanadh sé linn. Bhí sárintleacht ag an Ath. Ó Croiligh agus roinn sé linn an eolas fairsing a bhí aige ar Stair na hEaglaise agus ar an Bhíobla, agus rinne sé sin le humhlaíocht. Nuair a léigh sé an Doiciméad Deireanach den tSionad 'D'Eaglais Shionadach: Comaoineach, Rannpháirtíocht, Misean' – scríobh sé achomre ar na príomhphointí, agus ag na hAifrinne a léigh sé Dé Luain agus Dé hAoine, le linn Carghais 2025, bhí sé ábalta na pointí seo a phlé linn ina sheanmóirí. Ba thógálach

a scleodar de bharr an doiciméid agus b'ónóir dúinn a bheith ag éisteacht le sagart chomh léannta, ar bhealach a bhí intuigthe do chách.

Is maith na cuimhní atá againn uilig ar Scéal na Páise ón tSeachtain Mhór, na machnaimh urnaitheacha ar Sathairn na Seachtaine Móire a bhí ar siúl in áiteanna áirithe ar fud an pharóiste, an sé mórshiúl mar chuid de Bhigil na Cásca, an ról a bhí aige i gCeiliúradh 40 bliana ar Theach Phobail Mhuire (mar chuid de sin, fuair sé cathaoir nua don altóir, puilpid nua agus creideán nua ó John Bosco ag Sperrin Joinery, Machaire Rátha). Na cuimhní ó na Seibhísí Cuimhneacháin i Mí na Samhna, agus ní dhéanfaidh muid dearmad go deo de Chros Mhachaire Rátha, a luaigh sé go rialta ag Aifrinne na maidine!!!

Léigh sé Aifrinne go laethúil ó 2015 suas go 2020, nuair a tháinig Covid. Chuir duine ón pharóiste, Matt McGranaghan, cainéal YouTube ar bun ionas go dtiocfadh leis an Ath. Ó Croiligh an t-Aifreann a léamh óna sheomra bia féin. Bhí lúcháir air nuair a tháinig na hAifrinne ar ais go Teach Phobail Mhuire níos moille sa bhliain sin, agus bhí sé ábalta a mhinistreacht phoiblí a thioseacht arís.

Tháinig an tAth. Ciarán Ó hÉigeartaigh in áit an Ath. Porter in 2019, agus déirigh sé ina Riarthóir ar ár bparóiste in 2020. Anois, bhí beirt sagart againn as Doire Theas a raibh Gaeilge acu!! Agus ba i nGaeilge a labhair siad le chéile i gcónaí.

I Mí Aibreán 2022, bhí roinnt fadhbanna sláinte ag an Ath. Ó Croiligh, agus mar thoradh air sin, bhí air seal gairid a chaitheamh san oispidéal ach le spreagadh ón Ath. Ó hÉigeartaigh, bhí sé ábalta pilleadh agus an tAifrean laethúil a rá Dé Luain agus Dé hAoine in Airgeal Antaine ag pointe inteacht níos moille sa



Cros Mhachaire Rátha

bhliain. Bhí dúspéis ag an Ath. Ó Croiligh fá pháirt a bheith ag an ghnáthduine i seirbhísí san Eaglais, agus ar an ábhar sin, bhí tomist aige (duine a thógann an leabhar léachtaí.) chomh maith le léitheoir agus Ministir na hEocairiste ag achan Aifreann a léigh sé go dtí go bhfuair sé bás. Do na trí bliana deireanacha, ba mhór an phribhiléid dúinn uilig sa Pharóiste cúram a thabhairt dó nuair a bhí a shláinte ag meath. Ní dhearna sé dearmad riamh dá fhréamhacha agus bhí a fhios againn i gcónaí gur tacadóir Dhoire a bhí ann. Bhí lúcháir air rath CLG an Ghleanna a fhaire agus iad ar a dturas chuig a mbua Uile-Éireann. Thug sé tacaíocht do Dhún na nGall fosta mar bhí grá aige don teanga dhúchais agus is iomaí eispéireas álainn a bhí againn i Rann na Feirste agus Gleann Bhairr. Fear mór na rothaíochta a bhí ann agus nuair a thug muid cuairt air, ba i gcónaí a thug sé uasdátú dúinn ar an Tour de France mar go raibh sé á leanstan ar an teilifís agus ar an Aip Tour App ar a fhón póca. Bhí sé ábalta an paraimhíochaineoir san oispidéal a chur ar an eolas fán aip, nuair a chuaigh sé isteach ansin i Mí an Mheithimh.

Mar thoradh ar a chuid saoire go Loch Garman le dul i mbun sníodóireacht chloiche, chruthaigh sé píosa álainn in 2018 don Airgeal.

Bhí cuid mhór cairde aige as gach sórt cúlra

Le linn a mhinistreacha agus bhí sé iontach cóngarach lena bheirt dheartháireacha, Tony agus an tAth. Pádraig, a neacht Caroline, a nia Paul agus a chol ceathracha ionúin as muintir Uí Bhrolacháin agus muintir Uí Croiligh.

Tá gach duine againn i bParóiste Urnaí agus Chaisleán na Finne uaigneach i ndiaidh dúinn a leithéid de shagart a chailiúint, duine a bhí lách le cách. Bhí sé ag siúl go mór lena Aifrinne 60ú bliana a cheiliúradh, mar chuimhniúchán ar lá a oinrithe,

dúinn glacadh lena chorp isteach i dTeach Pobail Mhuire, Caisleán na Finne ar an Domhnach 29ú Meitheamh agus bigil a dhéanamh ansin thar oíche go dtí gur léadh a Aifreann Ceiliúrtha 60 bliana, mar ba mhian leis. Ansin, aitríodh a chorp go Teach Pobail Oilibhéar Pluincéad, Grianloch, d'Aifrinne an Tórraimh ar 1ú Iúil, ar fhéile Oilibhéir Pluincéid!

Roineann muid ár gcomhbhrón ar fad le Tony, an tAth. Pádraig, a thíosach, Margaret, agus an chuid eile dá mhuintir.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a ainm uasal



An tAthair Oilibhéar agus an altóir nua ó Sperrin Joinery

ar leanúint ó leathanach 16

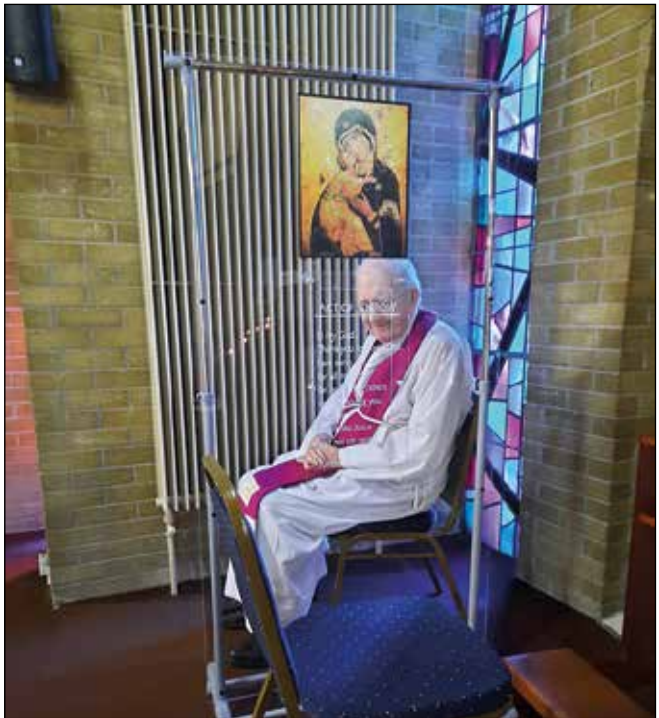
Cuireann an Cumann téacsanna liotuirgeacha agus acmhainní atá i nGaeilge ar fáil fá choinne úsáidte san Eaglais. Óna chuid staidéir i Má Nuad, deir sé go bhfuair sé tuiscint ar ghné scríoptúrtha a bhí ann sa bhunthraidisiún Gaelach críostúil. Bhí speis ar leith aige sna hardchrosa, na *hardchrosa scríoptúrtha*, mar a scríobh sé. Tá seo le feiceáil go soiléir ó na híomhánna a chlúdaíonn na seanchrosa go hiomlán. Bealach a bhí ann le scéalta an tSoiscéil agus na scríoptúir i gcoitinne a léiriú agus a theagasc don ghnáthduine. Phléigh an tAth. Oilibhéar faoi seo go domhain sa leabhar a scríobh sé – *Rún Ardchrosa Éireann*. Ba thábhachtach an rud é an Ghaeilge ina mhinistreacht go brách agus, níos moille ina shaol agus é ag dul in aois, tá cuimhne agam air ag trial go dílis ar Dhoire Theas le hAifreann a léamh i nGaeilge ag Carraig Aifrinne Ghreanacháin. Níl sé furasta turas siúl a dhéanamh a fhad leis an Charraig Aifrinne fríd chosáin agus clabar, ach bhí an tAthair Oilibhéar diombháilte, b'fhéidir duine ag tabhairt cuidithe dó a bhealach a dhéanamh ann. Ba chuma leis an Ath. Oilibhéar mar ócáid speisialta agus tábhachtach a bhí inti. Smaoinigh muid ar na daoine a thiocthadh ansin leis an

Tiarna a adhradh san Eocairist nuair a bhí géarleanúint orthu.

Ba é Oilibhéar a thosaigh an leathanach nuachtáin seo 'Eangach' fosta, óir ba mhian leis áit a thabhairt do Ghaeil an deoise!

Is iomaí paróiste ina raibh an tAth. Oilibhéar ag obair mar shagart. Bhí sé ar an tSráth Bán, in Ard Mór, taobh amuigh de Dhoire Cholmcille. Níos moille, bhí sé ina shagart paróiste ar an *Ghrianloch* .i. Paróiste Tháimhleacht Uí Chroiligh – an ceantar as a dtáinig a mhuintir. Bhí áthas air a bheith cóngarach don áit inar fhás sé aníos, agus anois i bparóiste a muintire (clann eaglasta an cheantair ab ea iad!). Ba anseo a casadh orm féin é ar dtús, bhí sé ina sheiplíneach ar an mheánscoil agus mé ag freastal ann. Is cuimhin liom a dhóigh fáiltiúil fláithiúil. Nuair a d'éirigh sé as ansin, bhog sé go Caisleán na Finne, áit ina raibh sé go fóill anghníomhach, agus ina raibh grá ag daoine dó. Is mór an chailiúint í don Deoise, do na paróistí ar fad ina raibh sé, don Eaglais in Éirinn, agus dar ndóigh dá mhuintir. Maireann a dheartháireacha, Tony, agus an tAth. Pádraig. Go mbeannaí Dia iad san am seo. Gabhaimis buíochas le Dia as saol an Athair Oilibhéar.

Go raibh leaba aige i measc na naomh.



D'iarr an tAthair Oilibhéar ar Michael O'Neill as Cladaigh scáileán a chruthú don Fhaoistin



Ceiliúradh 25 bliana an Ath. Uí Éigeartaigh (leis an Ath. Gormley fosta)



Crann curtha i gcuimhne ar an Ath. Oilibhéar, i gCaisleán na Finne

'Rejoice and be glad for your reward will be great in Heaven' (Matt 5:12)

Fond farewell to good and faithful servant, Fr Oliver Crilly



A full life, a life lived for God and for others, a Christian life and a Christian death are the legacy that Fr Oliver Crilly has left to his family.

These were the closing words of the homily delivered by Fr Michael Doherty, PP Melmount & Sion Mills, at the Requiem Mass on the Feast of St Oliver Plunkett, July 1, for his long-time friend in St Oliver Plunkett Church, Greenlough, the last parish he had ministered in as parish priest before retiring in 2015.

And they echoed the sentiments of all who had held the 85-year-old Lavey native dear, as did Fr Michael's opening words: "Despite the pain of loss, I don't think that any of us gathered here today would begrudge Fr Oliver the rest that he has now found and very much deserves."

"He was a man of activity, and

these last few years cannot have been easy for him, especially these past weeks when he looked forward to sharing the Diamond Jubilee celebrations with many of us, and especially with his family; his brothers, Tony and Fr Pat, his nephew, Paul, and niece, Caroline, and the wider family."

Noting that the passage on the Crucifixion scene read from John's Gospel, featuring Jesus, His Mother and the disciple John, had been chosen by Fr Oliver, Fr Michael remarked: "I noticed that, apart from this church of St Oliver Plunkett, all the other churches involved in his priestly ministry in the diocese have Marian titles – Immaculate Conception, Strabane, St Mary's Melmount, St Mary's Ardmore, St Mary's Castlefinn and St Mary's Lavey."

Going on to comment on Fr Oliver's achievements, talents, interests and charisms, he said: "We would need more than a few days to look at all of his achievements. It's hard to know where to start. Oliver the man, the brother, the priest, the scholar, the publisher, the author, the linguist, the broadcaster, the historian, the educationalist, cartoonist, and stone cutter in recent years. And probably many more."

"My years with him in Melmount were the 10 years from 1989; the

Troubles were still there. In the early 80s, Fr Oliver had worked hard to help find a solution to the Hunger strikes, which took their toll on him as relative and as priest. His was a world that took in troubled times, especially in his adopted town of Strabane where he worked for so long.

"Oliver laboured with the Irish Commission for Justice and Peace to try to achieve those ideals; he worked with his good friend and former Presbyterian Moderator on Peter North's Parades Commission to find a solution to contentious parades. Internationally, he travelled to Rwanda with Trócaire to see what help it could offer that country after their atrocious civil war. What he saw there had a great impact on him."

"He was never a strong man physically," he noted, "but he still managed a fundraising cycle to Knock. And he managed to administer one of the largest parishes in the diocese for 10 years. One of his proudest achievements was the reorganization of secondary education in Strabane, resulting in the building of Holy Cross College Strabane."

In his 37th year as a priest in Melmount, Fr Michael addressed the question he is often asked by people about how he got staying so long in one place: "My 'smart alec'

answer is that nobody else wants me. The true answer is Oliver Crilly who, knowing that he would be away from the parish a lot, asked the bishop to let me stay longer for the sake of stability. We got on well, with very few fall outs, and I succeeded him as parish priest there in 1999."

Energy

Considering where Fr Oliver had got his great energy from for all that he was involved in, he believed that he got it from "his faith, the word of God and from the Eucharist, helped by the spiritual groups he belonged to: Jesus Caritas; Focolare Movement; and Cumann na Sagart."

"His deep faith was nurtured in his own home," added Fr Michael, "He often talked about his granny sending him, Tony and Pat into town for messages and into the chapel to light candles. It was her way of getting them into the church to pray for others."

The main celebrant of the Requiem Mass was Fr Eamon Graham, PP Lavey, who welcomed everyone, particularly Archbishop Eamon Martin, finding it appropriate that the Armagh-based Primate of All Ireland was present with it being the Feast of St Oliver Plunkett. He also noted that Bishop Donal and those on the Diocesan pilgrimage with him to Lourdes

were remembering Fr Oliver at the French Shrine where Our Lady had appeared to St Bernadette.

Amongst the concelebrating priests were Fr Oliver's brother, Fr Pat; his Maynooth classmate and fellow Diamond Jubilarian, Fr Kieran O'Doherty; Fr Ciaran Hegarty, Adm Urney & Castlefinn; Fr Paddy Baker, former Lavey PP; and Fr Pat O'Hagan, Adm Greenlough and PP Bellaghy. His good friend Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR was also present in the congregation.

Fr Eamon extended a warm welcome as well to people from other Churches, including Presbyterian ministers, Rev John Dunlop CBE and Rev Robert Herron OBE.

He recalled: "Shortly after I was ordained, the first time I met Fr Oliver I was struck by his deep appreciation of the Sacrament of Baptism. He was very aware that we are all one. It will be a particular joy to him that we welcome so many from other churches here today."

Many people from the various parishes he had ministered in were amongst the large congregation too.

After his ordination on June 20, 1965, Fr Oliver taught in St Patrick's College, Maghera, until 1969. This was followed by a period with the Catholic Communications Institute, Dublin, of which he was director from 1977-1982. He was

then appointed as curate to Strabane and, in 1989, was appointed as parish priest of Mourne. Ten years later, he became parish priest of Ardmore, and then Greenlough in 2007. Retiring as parish priest in 2015, Fr Oliver became priest-in-residence in the Parish of Urney & Castlefinn, and remained there when he fully retired in 2024.

Paying tribute to Fr Oliver on his return from Lourdes, Bishop Donal remarked that he was "a scholar for whom his greatest blessing was his priesthood," adding: "He was so looking forward to celebrating his 60th Ordination anniversary. Many people would have wanted to share his joy and gratitude to God."

"We give thanks for him and for others who have developed the centuries-long link between spirituality and the Irish language. He was learned about the local Irish saints and had developed a skill in stone-carving

"We commend him to God that he might join the choirs of angels and saints in giving glory to God. Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam."

Predeceased by his parents, Robert and Rosina, and sister-in-law Renee, Fr Oliver is survived by his brothers, Tony and Fr Pat. His final resting place is in the cemetery of his home parish church, St Mary's, Lavey.

Castlefinn Mass of Thanksgiving for beloved Fr Oliver

ST Mary's Church, Castlefinn, in Co Donegal, was filled with people on Monday, June 30, for a special Mass to mark the Diamond Jubilee of the much-loved Fr Oliver Crilly – an occasion which he and many had been looking forward to celebrating together.

The booklet for the 'Aifreann buiochais' (Thanksgiving Mass), that he had put so much energy into preparing in thanksgiving for 60 years of priesthood, was distributed to the large congregation.

While he did get a chance to celebrate the landmark anniversary quietly during his hospital stay, before his health deteriorated further, it was felt that the Mass of Thanksgiving he had so lovingly prepared should be celebrated in his beloved Castlefinn, before his remains were taken to St Oliver Plunkett's Church, Greenlough, in Co Derry.

The chief celebrant of the Mass, Fr Ciaran Hegarty, Adm Urney & Castlefinn, noted the place that Fr Oliver had given to Blessed Mother Mary in his Jubilee Mass, and how the Rosary beads he loved, that a family member had brought back to him from a visit to a Marian Shrine, were wrapped around his fingers as he lay in his coffin.

He went on to comment on the symbol of the Eucharist on the vestments Fr Oliver was dressed in, remarking: "The Eucharist is at the heart of every priest."

He continued: "The stole placed

over his shoulder would have been placed on him on June 20, 1965, and he would have worn it countless times since then to exercise his priestly ministry in celebrating the sacraments. But you don't suddenly become a priest by putting on this stole. Fr Oliver knew whatever power comes from a priest is not from him but through him. That help comes to us through the intercession of our Blessed Mother. He wears that stole now because he was baptised and the seed of faith was planted in him. Carefully nurtured, it grew into a priestly vocation."

Saying that he had been with Fr Oliver in the parish for almost six years, Fr Ciaran remarked: "In our conversations, it was very evident that faith was at the heart of his family life. He was called Oliver because his mother had a great devotion to Blessed Oliver Plunkett, as he was known then. I was impressed that she was so taken by this martyr from Armagh that she named her second-born son after him. He will now be taken to St Oliver Plunkett's Church and will be laid to rest with his parents on the Feast of St Oliver Plunkett."

Going on to say that parishioners had often described Fr Oliver as a very intelligent man, Fr Ciaran recalled: "In many of the conversations that I had with him, he got excited about learning something new and he loved sharing this with others; that

sharing is central to the ministry of a priest."

He continued: "We both shared an interest in Irish, which he loved speaking and it flowed naturally from him. I learnt much from him."

Referring to Fr Oliver's time with the Catholic Communications Institute in Dublin, from which Veritas had emerged, Fr Ciaran relayed the dismay that both of them had felt when the religious books and gifts outlet closed last year. "He did not let it pass away unnoticed," he recalled, "he took up his pen and wrote an excellent piece about how Veritas had come about."

Parish ministry

Paying tribute to Fr Oliver's efforts, along with his brother Tony, Fr Johnny Doherty and Paddy Coyle, to enhance parish ministry, he said that he was making his way through a large box of material on this which Fr Oliver had given him to study.

Fr Ciaran also spoke of the conversations he had with Fr Oliver involving politics, noting that he had had a fundamental desire for peace. "He understood the hunger-strikers and the parades," he said, "and patiently got involved and offered whatever solutions he could. I think of Fr Oliver as among those who quietly did a lot of the spadework that made peace possible."

Fr Ciaran also found Fr Oliver's love of art worth acknowledging,

particularly in relation to faith, with the work he had done on the High Crosses of Ireland and his fascination with the Crucifixion plaque in Maghera.

Turning to consider all that Fr Oliver would have wanted to give thanks for during the Diamond Jubilee Mass he had prepared, with the great attention to fine detail that was so characteristic of him, Fr Ciaran said: "First and foremost, he would have wanted to give thanks for his call to priesthood. He would also have wanted to give thanks for his family, for the bishop and priests of the Diocese, for the pupils he had taught in Maghera, for the Catholic Communications Institute, Veritas and the people he had ministered to in parishes, especially in Castlefinn where he retired to and remained so very active."

"Thank God for all that Fr Oliver has given and been to us. We were blessed to have him among us. We will miss him and we will remember why he wore that stole."

At the conclusion of his Mass of Thanksgiving booklet, Fr Oliver penned the message:

"My years as a seminarian and a priest of the Diocese of Derry are 'bookended' by two extraordinary events: the Second Vatican Council and the Synod on Synodality. My generation in Maynooth was trained during Vatican II. I and Fr Kieran O'Doherty were ordained in 1965, the year the Vatican Council



ended. The Final Document of the Synod and the Pilgrims of Hope Jubilee Year of 2025 represent the fulfillment of the vision of Vatican II. It is an honour and a privilege just to be around to see that dream come full circle.

It has been an equal honour to know and work with all the wonderful people who have nurtured and supported my faith and my priesthood over the years. Vocation to the priesthood is like the Offertory gifts at Mass: it comes from the faith community, is consecrated, and is returned to the faith community over years of ministry. Vocation remains, of course, a personal calling, but it was in my ancestral home of Tamlaght O'Crilly (Greenlough) that I realised that that personal calling

was also an expression of a heritage of faith handed on via family and community over many centuries.

In a wonderful paradox, it is in retirement in the parish of Urney and Castlefinn that I have not only found time to read and write, but to appreciate the mysterious contribution a priest can make through accepting and being formed by the unconditional positive regard and tireless service of those who are, of course, parishioners and carers, but friends first. That human chain extends back over all the parishes, and includes the friends who once were on my sick round and have now gone before us in faith to be our friends in Heaven.

Coisreacadh De oraibh (God bless you).

Fr Oliver Crilly...a humble man - by Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR

"SOME great people make other people feel small. Truly great people make other people feel great."

These words of Charles Dickens came to my mind when I was asked to write something in remembrance of Fr Oliver Crilly. He was a truly great man who made everyone who came in contact with him feel great.

Before beginning to write about Oliver, I sat down and made a list of his many achievements, his talents and gifts and his various roles through the years. I very quickly wrote down 25 headings! And I know there were more. As I read through the list again, I could hear Oliver say to me: "There's the making of a good book there, Johnny!"

Someone else will have to do that. For now, I want to say thanks to God for the privilege of knowing Oliver for almost 50 years. And thank Oliver for the magnificent way he lived his life for almost 85 years and his life as a priest for 60 years.

A very good and comprehensive obituary of Fr Oliver appeared in the Irish Times Weekend on Saturday, August 2, 2025. This traces his life and the important highlights of many of his accomplishments and his significant place in the Irish Church and beyond. I highly recommend it to everyone.

I want to focus here on my own experience of Oliver as a priest and as a friend. It has been inspirational for me to work closely with him as a priest and to be part of his

passionate love for the Church. And it has been a great source of joy to have had him as a friend for all these years.

The first time I worked closely with Oliver was when we began to develop Parish Renewal throughout Ireland in the late 1970s. We had met a few times before at various functions of Marriage Encounter. Parish Renewal was a follow-on to the Marriage Encounter experience. At that time, Oliver was Director of the Catholic Communications Institute of Ireland. In a truly entrepreneurial style, he had led the CTSI from small beginnings into a flourishing Veritas Publication force, with its own shops and outlets. He had led the development of the Communications Centre as well as the Radhairc films group. I was working fairly full-time with Marriage Encounter, especially in the North of Ireland. They were heady days for the vision of the Church and the renewal of the Second Vatican Council, which had taken place in the 1960s.

Parishioner empowerment

Just as the renewal of the Sacrament of Marriage is crucial for the health of the family as the Domestic Church, so the renewal of the Sacrament of Holy Orders is critical for the health of the Local Church of the Diocese and Parish. Oliver believed strongly in this as coming from the teaching of the Second Vatican Council.

As we, along with Fr Chuck

Gallagher, SJ, an American Jesuit, and a number of other priests, religious and laity, developed the Parish Renewal Programme – and the Programme for Parishioner Empowerment – Oliver suggested that he would set up a new service in the Catholic Communications Institute for Pastoral Development. This was to make this a part of the official Catholic Church services in Ireland, so that it would not be seen as a separate movement of renewal. He appointed me as Director of this unit and employed Fr Michael Hickey, a priest of the Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle in England, to work with me. Fr Cathal O'Fearraí, from the Diocese of Raphoe, took over from Michael after a few years.

Working closely with Oliver was a great experience for me during these years. He was in very good standing with the Bishops of Ireland. And he was known to, and respected by, very many of the priests throughout the country. And his knowledge of the teachings of the Second Vatican Council was second to none, so that we were assured that what we were doing was in full line with the vision of the Council, and so of the future of the Church.

We had great times together and we had difficult times as well during those years. One of the many things that I learned from Oliver in the ups and downs was that our task was not to force anything on people, but simply to sow the seeds of renewal. God would bring about the growth

in its proper time. It is very difficult to wait for that!

Pastoral Councils

In the early 1990s, Oliver had left Dublin and had returned to the Derry Diocese. He was appointed as Curate in the Parish of Strabane. I was sent to the ailing Retreat House of the Redemptorists in Esker, Athenry, Co Galway. We kept in touch with each other.

Gradually, new ways of working together developed.

As he moved from Strabane to Melmount as Parish Priest, then on to Ardmore and onto Greenlough, until eventual retirement in Castlefinn, Parish Pastoral Councils became a major focus for us. Along with Paddy Curran and a few others, I was working on these in the Esker Retreat House. Oliver came there to be with us. He was setting them up in the parishes in which he was Parish Priest, and he had us there with him for these. We gradually worked together on a programme of training and follow-up. Eventually, we were invited to set up a Diocesan programme for the Derry Diocese for Parish Pastoral Councils in parishes throughout the Diocese.

We wrote two books together on Parish Pastoral Councils. The first of these we called 'Think Big, Act Small', to describe the full process we used in setting up the Parish Pastoral Council in Ardmore. We saw it as a model process that could be used in any parish. And we



Fr Oliver with Paddy Coyle, his brother, Tony, and good friend, Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR at the book launch of 'The Energy Within', at Veritas, Derry.

hoped that many would use it. The team for this process was: Oliver, Frank and Aileen Dolaghan from Newry, Paddy Curran and myself. The team we also thought of as a model for the future of parish life – the priest working in close collaboration with the laity for the good of the community.

The second book, 'The Energy Within', was written after a few sessions of the Derry Diocesan programme. The team for this programme was: Oliver, Paddy Coyle – Paddy Curran had married David Coyle in the meantime – Oliver's brother Tony, and myself. This book came from the conviction that every Parish Community has within it all that is needed for a vibrant faith community. They will always need others with particular expertise. But the parish has to believe in itself. The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to free up the gifts and powers that are there in the community.

I mention these books mainly because of the experience I had

of Oliver throughout all of this. He was a man with a powerful pastoral spirit. He believed in the goodness and giftedness of each person and each vocation. He was also a man who had a great knowledge of the Second Vatican Council; of theology; of Scripture; of Celtic spirituality; of Canon Law; of human nature etc. It was a wonderful privilege to be with him at close quarters. And it was a great grace to have him as a friend.

After all I have written I think that Oliver may have been right – there is the making of a good book, or two, in all of this. I hope someone will take it up sometime. I just want to say again how privileged I feel to have known this man, Oliver Crilly, and to have been close to him for so many years.

May you now rest in peace, Oliver, and in the joy of the God you have loved so dearly and in the company of all those who were your familiars throughout your 85 years of life and 60 years of priesthood.

Memories of Fr Oliver's 10 years in Castlefinn by Colette Carlin



FR Crilly arrived in Castlefinn as a priest-in-residence in September 2015, following his retirement as parish priest of Greenlough. Fr Michael Porter also came as our new parish priest, following the retirement of Fr Brian McGoldrick at the same time.

We already had a Parish Pastoral Council, which had been set up by Fr McGoldrick with the help of Fr Angelo Lafferty SMA, from Castlefinn, and this initiative was greatly supported by both our new priests.

Fr Crilly's presence at all our meetings and his contributions and guidance were greatly appreciated.

We will always remember his wonderful homilies after all the research and 'Googling' he had done on the previous evenings! No-one scheduled a medical appointment before 11am following 10am morning Mass, but everyone in St Anthony's Oratory always enjoyed his Mass and have many memories of the wonderful honours courses we were lead on.

Fr Crilly had a superior intellect and imparted his wide knowledge of Church History, and the Bible, so humbly with us.

After reading the Final Document of The Synod 'For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission', he wrote a summary of the main points and, during Lent of 2025, at his Monday and Friday Masses, he was able to speak to us in his homilies on these points. His excitement was infectious about the document, and we were honoured to be listening to such a learned priest in a way everyone could understand.

We all have fond memories of the Holy Week Passion Narratives; the Holy Saturday prayerful reflections at various areas in our Parish; the six processions at the Easter Vigil; his contribution to the 40th anniversary of St. Mary's, including getting a new altar chair, Ambo and Credence table from John Bosco at Sperrin Joinery, in Maghera, for St Anthony's Oratory; the beautiful Services of Remembrance in

November; and we cannot forget Fr Crilly's interest in the Maghera Crucifixion, which got a mention regularly at morning masses!

He celebrated daily Mass from 2015 up until 2020, when Covid arrived. A parishioner, Matt McGranaghan set up a YouTube channel so that he could celebrate Mass from his dining room in the Parochial House. He was delighted when our Masses returned to St Mary's again, later that year, to continue his public ministry.

Fr Ciaran Hegarty, from Kilrea, replaced Fr Porter in 2019 and became Administrator of our parish in 2020. Then we had two Irish speaking priests from South Derry in our Parish! And they always conversed in Irish.

Laity

In April 2022, Fr Crilly suffered some medical problems which resulted in him being hospitalised for a short period and, with Fr Hegarty's encouragement, he was able to return to celebrate daily Mass on Mondays and Fridays in St Anthony's sometime later in the year. Fr Crilly was passionate about involving the laity in Church services, so he had a tomist (someone to lift the lectionary!), a reader and a Eucharistic Minister at every Mass he celebrated up to his death.

For the last three years, it was privilege for us all to care for him

in our Parish in his declining years. He never forgot his Derry roots and we always knew he was a Derry supporter, and was delighted to follow the fortunes of Glen GFC on their journey in becoming All Ireland Club Champions. He also supported Donegal, as he loved the native language and had many experiences in Rann na Feirste and Glenvar. He was an avid fan of cycling and, when we visited him, we were always told how the Tour de France was going, as he followed the TV coverage as well as having the Tour App on his phone. We always got the updates and he even was able to introduce the Tour App to the paramedic in the hospital when he was admitted in June.

His stone carving holidays to Wexford resulted in us having a lovely piece he created in St Anthony's in 2018.

He had many friends in all walks of life throughout his ministry, and he was also extremely close to his two brothers, Tony and Fr Pat, his niece Caroline, nephew Paul, and his beloved cousins in the Bradley and Crilly family circle.

We are very sad in our Parish of Urney and Castlefinn to lose such a wonderful priest and a friend of everyone. He was so looking forward to celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of his ordination on June 20, had the invitations posted, the Jubilee Mass booklet printed and ready, and also the Order of Service

prepared.

We were honoured to receive his remains into St Mary's Castlefinn on Sunday, June 29, and keep vigil overnight with him until we celebrated his Jubilee Mass, as he would have wanted, before the removal to his former Parish Church of St Oliver Plunkett,

Greenlough, for the Requiem Mass on July 1, the Feast Day of St Oliver Plunkett.

We extend our sincere sympathy to Tony, Fr Pat, his housekeeper, Margaret, and all of his family circle.

Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam uasal.

'The Net' honoured by Fr Oliver's contributions

FROM its first edition over 10 years ago, the mission of 'The Net' was enthusiastically embraced and encouraged by the late Fr Oliver Crilly. And when he was asked to be the editor of a new Irish section in the publication, he readily accepted the opportunity to promote the faith and its Irish history, that he cherished, in the language he so loved. Finding it difficult

to continue in the role when his health deteriorated, Fr Oliver was delighted when fellow Lavey native and fluent Irish speaker, Declan Lavery took over, sharing with him his resources and knowledge. Fr Oliver's contributions to The Net were greatly appreciated. It was an honour, a privilege and a joy to have known and been inspired by him... may he rest in peace.



Celebrating Fr Kieran O'Doherty...

Buncrana-born Diamond Jubilarian still a priest for the people



DIAMOND Jubilarian, Fr Kieran O'Doherty celebrated a Mass of Thanksgiving in St Patrick's Church, Glen, Maghera, on June 24, to celebrate the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood.

Welcoming the many gathered, including Bishop Donal, presiding, his fellow priests, family members, friends and former parishioners, the 85-year-old prayed in thanksgiving for the many blessings that God had given them all.

During his homily, Fr Kieran spoke of how interesting it was that people referred to the priest appointed to their parish as "our

priest".

"It is an indication of the bond that is there, and so he can tell God's message in an effective way, and feed and sustain them," he remarked, adding: "As far as people are concerned, in their parish the priest is on their side and one of them, though recognizing his Priesthood and the blessing attached to it."

He continued: "The priest knows that it is not really his work, but that of God through the Holy Spirit. He sees God working in his parish in so many different ways and recognizes that he is so privileged to be involved in the work of God."

"It is good to remember that all the baptized also share in the work of Christ. Many people are great witnesses and do great work, leading exemplary lives, but they find it difficult to identify that with God's saving work. It would bring them great graces if they could."

"Indeed, priests recognize the great help of the people and are grateful for it. People in parishes have edified and comforted priests by saying how much God means to them. It would be good if people recognized that they are following in the footsteps of the priest and sharing in the work of Christ as priests are; it would be a great consolation to them."

Maghera parish priest, Fr Paddy Doherty, who had just celebrated the Golden Jubilee of his own ordination, concelebrated with Fr Kieran and recalled first meeting him in Dregish, Ardstraw West, while he was there as a seminarian gaining some experience of ministry.

Delighted to have had Fr Kieran as priest-in-residence for the last eight years in Maghera, Fr Paddy said to him: "We thank you for your faithful and dedicated work, and thank you for your continued ministry."

Commending Fr Kieran on 60

years of faithful ministry, Bishop Donal remarked: "Even for old people like me, 1965 does sound like a long time ago. Vatican II ended in December 1965, so the documents were not even published when the young Fr Kieran O'Doherty was ordained in June, in the midst of undreamed-of conflict."

He added: "Thank you for being a priest in many places and roles, before and after 75. You have never ceased to be a priest; not just helping out in neighbouring parishes, but being a priest for the people."

"There is still a huge need for those who will proclaim that Jesus is Lord, not only of the church but of their personal lives."

Fr Kieran then concluded by thanking Fr Paddy for all his kindness to him, and to all involved in the ceremony, and particularly the Pastoral Council members in carrying out the preparations for the evening.

He remarked: "It has been a very moving occasion, and the choir was exceptionally good."

All were invited to the nearby Fallaghlool Hall afterwards for refreshments and presentations to Fr Kieran.



Celebrating Fr Kieran O'Doherty...

Fr Kieran reflects on his priesthood...

Most meaningful and challenging work of a priest is to help people find God



PRIEST-in residence in the Parish of Maghera, Co Derry, 85-year-old Fr Kieran O'Doherty continues to serve God as a priest, just as he has done for the last six decades.

Reflecting on his vocation, the Diamond Jubilarian recalled the dedicated practice of the Catholic faith in his family and parish community growing up in Buncrana.

"My family had strong faith and the priests of the parish were great witnesses to the faith too, so that would have all played a part in my decision to become a priest," he said.

School also played a part in his faith formation. Starting out in the Girls' School, as everybody did then, he moved on to Buncrana Boys' National School after finishing senior infants.

Next followed life as a boarder at St Columba's College, and it was during this time that he particularly felt drawn to priesthood.

"The priests in the College were good witnesses to the faith," he recalled, adding: "Bishops from different parts of the world came to the College to ask us to be priests in their dioceses, indicating the great need there was for priests. In my thinking about this great need, I felt that I had a call to be a priest."

"I was persuaded to consider the Derry Diocese and eventually I opted to become a priest in this Diocese, and went to Maynooth in 1958. The late Fr Oliver Crilly and the late Fr Colm Diamond went to Maynooth the same year."

"My time in Maynooth was very interesting," continued Fr Kieran, "It wasn't all that hard a life being a student there. We

were well catered for and were in comfortable surroundings.

"It had expansive grounds for activities, and I enjoyed playing both soccer and Gaelic football. I was interested in the company of other students, who were encouraging, and their great dedication rubbed off a bit on me."

"Having been a boarder at St Columba's made the adjustment to student life in Maynooth much easier."

"The main concentration in Maynooth," he noted, "was the preparation for priesthood. We had Meditation every morning, followed by Mass, as well as Rosary during the day and Evening Prayer."

"We studied Dogmatic Theology, Moral Theology, Scripture and Church History. For the first few years we did Philosophy. We also studied for a BA."

As to whether he had any doubts about priesthood while in the seminary, he said: "At times, I did doubt if I had a vocation to the priesthood, but there were spiritual directors there who helped me through any difficult times."

"I was then ordained on June 20, 1965, in Maynooth, by Archbishop John Charles McQuaid on a Sunday morning at 8 am. My family were present for the ceremony. My mother was alive but my father had gone to his rest."

"I celebrated my first Mass in Maynooth the next day and my first Mass in Buncrana was on the Tuesday. I felt very privileged and honoured to be able to celebrate Mass."

Life as a priest started out for Fr Kieran with a temporary appointment to Carndonagh until January 1966. Then he was

appointed to Ardstraw West in Co Tyrone and, in 1971, he was appointed to St Eugene's Cathedral.

Reflecting on these early years of priesthood, he said: "As a curate I was saying Mass for the people, inviting them to the sacraments, and visiting the school. In the first years, it was a learning experience as much as anything. It was a blessing to work with other priests and to benefit from their help and example."

Greatest resource

"I was six years a priest when I came to St Eugene's in the midst of the Troubles. I was there a very short time. I came in October 1971 and Bloody Sunday was the following January. I witnessed so much suffering and so many families deprived of a loved one. It certainly motivated me to do as much for the people as I could. Our faith was our greatest resource at that time; we would have been completely at a loss without it."

He added: "In 1981, I was appointed as Administrator of Holy Family Parish, Ballymagroarty; that was the beginning of a new parish. Until 1983, we did not have a Church or house in Ballymagroarty, so I was still living at the Cathedral for those two years. In September 1983, the Church was opened and that was a great milestone. The house was opened just before that, in June."

"The beginning of new parish was a very interesting time. The first activity that we gave emphasis to, apart from Mass and the Sacraments, was visiting people. There was a lot of housing development in that part of Derry, so we had to visit the people living in these houses to enrol them in the parish, and they were very welcoming."

In 1990, Fr Kieran was appointed as parish priest of Coleraine. He recalled: "It was a very interesting experience in the sense that it was a parish where ecumenism was very evident in various ways and it also had a very strong Catholic community. There was the challenge of reaching out to

other faiths: Presbyterian; Church of Ireland; and Methodist. We did our best to build up relationships; meeting to discuss challenges and opportunities."

Eight years later, Fr Kieran was appointed to Granaghan Parish, where Granaghan Outreach developed at that time.

Recalling how this great initiative got underway, he said: "A girl from the parish was working for a Council in Edinburgh. One time when she was home, she called to see me and told me about staff being sent to work on projects in different parts of Africa. She had been sent out to help after the major tsunami that had severely impacted Africa in 2004."

"From that, I realized that there were plenty of people in Granaghan Parish with many skills, glad to share them in any way that they could. I discussed it with the Pastoral Council and some of the members did a lot of preparation work to enable the project to go ahead."

"Granaghan Outreach started out with us then, and now includes people from various other parishes, who have contributed greatly with regards to personnel and volunteers to help. One of the blessings of Granaghan Outreach is that it is a mixed group. Girls and young women go out as well to whatever project is being undertaken and do tremendous work."

Enjoying his retirement now, since retiring as parish priest of Granaghan in 2017, Fr Kieran is happy to help out with the celebration of Mass in Maghera and in neighbouring parishes.

Reflecting on any advice that he could give to those discerning priesthood or starting out in their vocation, he said: "The most meaningful and challenging work that a priest has is to try to help people find God and to serve God."

Having no regrets that he answered the call, one of the most encouraging aspects of priesthood for Fr Kieran is "how responsive many people are to the message of the Gospel!"



Vocations News...

Prayer Evenings for Vocations

EVENINGS of Prayer for an increase in Vocations to Priesthood, in the Diocese of Derry, will take place each month in St Columb's Church, Chapel Road, Waterside. The evenings will begin with

CALLLED TO BE A PRIEST?

DERRYVOCATIONS.ORG

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

Salamanca propaedeutic programme



Diocesan Vocations' Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan with Gerry Friel and Gary Duddy, who were propaedeutic students in Salamanca this year, from January until June. Please keep in prayer the men who have applied to begin their studies for the priesthood. Over the summer, they will be involved in psychological assessments and interviews, with the possibility of going to Salamanca for the six-month programme, beginning in January.

Clerical changes for the Diocese

THE following clerical changes announced by Bishop Donal for the Diocese are effective from August 30...

- Rev John McDevitt, PP Steelstown and Adm Culmore, to be PP Clonmany and PP Culdaff.
- Rev Sean O'Donnell, CC Three Patrons, to be PP Melmound and PP Sion Mills.
- Rev Declan McGeehan, CC Cappagh, to be PP Steelstown and Adm Culmore.
- Rev Malachy Gallagher, CC Melmound and CC Sion Mills, to be CC Cappagh.
- Rev Stephen Ward, CC Long

Tower, to be CC Three Patrons.

- Rev Peter O'Kane, ceasing his diocesan role as Training in Evangelisation and Adult Faith Formator and becoming lecturer, St Patrick's College, Maynooth.
- Rev Michael Doherty, PP Melmound and PP Sion Mills, to retire.
- Rev Charles Logue, CC Clonca, to retire.
- Rev Kevin Doherty, on loan from the Archdiocese of Dublin, Adm Clonmany and Adm Culdaff, to return to ministry in the Archdiocese of Dublin.

VOCATIONS DAY

Come and See

For those considering diocesan priesthood

Sunday, 24 August 2025

12:30PM

Waterside Parish Hall, St Columb's Church, 32 Chapel Road, Derry

derryvocations.org

Conversation & discernment for those considering priesthood

ANYONE considering a vocation to the diocesan priesthood is invited to an afternoon of prayer and discussion, organised by the Diocesan Vocations Team, on Sunday, August 24. Mass will be celebrated in St Columb's Church, Waterside, at 12.30 pm, and this will be followed by refreshments in the Parish Hall. Bishop Donal hopes to attend, along with some priests, seminarians and a number of men who have been actively discerning their vocation over the last few years. There will be some short presentations and opportunities for questions and discussion. The afternoon will end at 6 pm. Those interested in attending, or for further information, can contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan, at pgo2111@gmail.com or on (028) 7938 6259.

Claudy & Craigbane applause for Fr David O'Kane's 40 years of priesthood

HOPING for a quiet celebration of the 40th anniversary of his priesthood, Fr David O'Kane wasn't too surprised, however, when word got out and the parishioners in the Claudy and Craigbane areas that he faithfully ministers in wanted to mark the occasion. Celebrating the Sunday morning Masses on Sunday, June 15, the day before his actual anniversary, in St Joseph's Church, Craigbane, and St Patrick's Church, Claudy, in thanksgiving for his priesthood, Fr David also prayed for all in the parish. Reflecting on the various parishes he ministered in over the years, including a five-year period on the Missions in Belize, he remarked: "People are the same everywhere and have accepted me. "My family, friends and parishioners over the years have been the bedrock that has kept

me going." Thankful for the last 16 "good years" in the Claudy Parish, Fr David said: "I was almost 34 years old when I was ordained and, next year, I will be 75 years old, which is retirement age. I don't know what next summer will bring; maybe I'll be going home over the mountain to annoy the people of Moneyneena." Fr David received loud applause of appreciation from the congregations in both churches, who also happily contributed to a monetary gift of appreciation. Speaking before the presentation of the gift at end of Sunday Mass in St Joseph's Church, Craigbane, Jane Dunton commended Fr David for the 40 years of service that he willingly gave. "When it comes to service," noted Jane, "Fr is a shining example; always there in our moments of need, whether sad or happy, as well as all the public



Fr David O'Kane with members of his family after celebrating Mass in St Patrick's Church, Claudy, to celebrate the 40th anniversary of his ordination. ministry with Masses, Baptisms, First Holy Communions, Confessions, Weddings. He is always there and always willing to serve. "We very much appreciate your quiet presence amongst us, Fr. We're not looking forward to your retirement, even though we know that it will be very deserved when it comes. We wish you continued good health and happiness, and want to make a presentation to you in appreciation of your good work in Claudy and Craigbane."

Pope's monthly intention

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during July for:

Formation in Discernment Let us pray that we might again learn how to discern, to know how to choose paths of life and reject everything that leads us away from Christ and the Gospel.

The Holy Father has asked for prayer during August for:

Mutual Coexistence Let us pray that societies, where coexistence seems more difficult, might not succumb to the temptation of confrontation for ethnic, political, religious or ideological reasons.

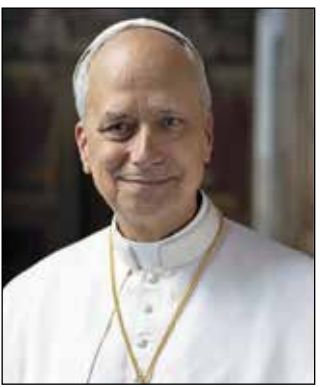
Prayer for Priests Heavenly Father, I ask you to bless our bishops and priests and to confirm them in their vocation of service. As they stand before us as ministers of Your Sacraments,

may they be channels of the love and compassion of the Good Shepherd, who came not be served but to serve. Give them the grace they need to respond generously to you, and the courage to proclaim your Word of justice, love and truth. Bless, in a special way, Your servant Father, Send your Spirit upon him So that he may always walk in the path of faith, hope and love, in the footsteps of Christ, the eternal priest, who offered Himself on the cross for the life of the world. Amen.

Remember in prayer:

- Fr John Gilmore (July 1st)
- Fr Joseph Gormley (2nd)
- Fr Eamon Graham (3rd)
- Fr Dermott Harkin (4th)
- Fr Karl Haan (5th)
- Fr Eugene Hasson (6th)
- All Priests (7th)
- Fr John Irwin (8th)
- Fr Charles Keaney (9th)
- All Priests (10th)
- Fr Gerald Hasson (11th)
- Fr Michael Keaveny (12th)
- Fr Seamus Kelly (13th)

- Fr Edward Kilpatrick (14th)
- All Priests (15th)
- Fr Charles Logue (16th)
- Fr Paul McCafferty (17th)
- Msgr Bryan McCanny (18th)
- Fr Michael McCaughey (19th)
- Fr Andrew McCloskey (20th)
- Fr Patrick Lagan (21st)
- All Priests (22nd)
- Fr Noel McDermott (23rd)
- Fr Eamon McDevitt (24th)
- Fr John McDevitt (25th)
- Fr Christopher McDermott (26th)
- Fr Kevin McElhannon (27th)
- Fr Declan McGeehan (28th)
- Fr Dermot McGirr (29th)
- All priests (30th)
- Fr Brian McGoldrick (31st)
- Fr Neil McGoldrick (Aug 1st)
- All Priests (2nd)
- Fr James McGonagle (3rd)
- Dr James McGrory (4th)
- Fr Daniel McFaul (5th)
- Fr Edward McGuinness (6th)
- Fr Micheal McGavigan (7th)
- Bishop Donal McKeown (8th)
- Fr Con McLaughlin (9th)
- All Priests (10th)
- All priests (11th)
- Fr Peter McLaughlin (12th)
- All priests (13th)
- All priests (14th)



- Fr Peter Madden (15th)
- Fr Anthony Mailey (16th)
- Archbishop Eamon Martin (17th)
- Fr Gerard Mongan (18th)
- All Priests (19th)
- Fr Sean O'Donnell (20th)
- All priests (21st)
- All priests (22nd)
- All Priests (23rd)
- All Priests (24th)
- All Priests (25th)
- All Priests (26th)
- All Priests (27th)
- Fr Colm O'Doherty (28th)
- Fr Kieran O'Doherty (29th)
- All Priests (30th)
- Fr Francis P O'Hagan (31st)

Ruach...Breath of the Spirit

A meditation that just happened on an ordinary Thursday morning by Fr Eamonn Kelly



A friendly companion allowed me to hear the following: Let me start by trying to explain what I am trying to do. Nothing. I am trying to do nothing. I am trying not to influence any other. I am trying to learn to be above social rejection or acceptance. I am trying to live my life and sing my song. I have come to realise that "God accepts me as I am right now". This sounds simple and 'sure everybody knows that'. But the reality is different.

Many may know the words. Many may understand the words. But the reality is that not many live in the knowledge that "God accepts me as I am right now". Almost all my life I have been trying to improve, be better, be more solid and more strong, more committed, more loving, more understanding, have more knowledge, have good friends and so on and so on.

However, right now, this seems to me as a waste of energy. For the more I try to change the less good comes out. The more I assent to the fact that God accepts me as I am now, the more change for betterment comes about in my life. Every spiritual director that I ever had has told me to read more scripture, contemplate more, let there be more silence, use your gifts and talents, pray more, overcome

your weaknesses... work at it...you will get there. But the reality is that "God accepts me as I am right now". I need not waste so much energy. God will not reject me. Goes does not reject me.

The second reality is that I love it when I can accompany people in their spiritual lives. But I cannot change another. I cannot fix or improve or upgrade another. All I can do is share thoughts, ideas, ideals, insights and stories to help the other to realise that somehow "God accepts me as I am right now".

We all have our gifts and our talents. Sometimes they are easy to carry. Sometimes talents include difficulties because we can be influenced by what other people might expect of us. This results in quite a bit of conflict within. To stop the internal conflict, we are invited to accept ourselves, flaws, beautiful points, history, fears, successes and so on. After all, "God accepts me as I am right now", so I too am encouraged to accept myself as I am right now.

The other morning, as I prayed the Benedictus, some words lit up, not physically but lit up none-the-less. This is the great prayer of Zechariah in Luke 1:67-79...

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel!

He has visited His people and redeemed them. (one)

He has raised up for us a mighty saviour (two) in the house of David His servant, as He promised by the lips of holy men, those who were His prophets from of old.

A saviour who would free us from our foes, (three) from the hands of all who hate us.

So, His love for our fathers is

fulfilled and His holy covenant remembered.

He swore to Abraham our father to grant us, that free from fear, and saved from the hands of our foes, we might serve Him in holiness and justice all the days of our life in His presence.

As for you, little child, (Four) you shall be called a prophet of God, the Most High.

You shall go ahead of the Lord to prepare His ways before Him, To make known to His people their salvation through forgiveness of all their sins, the loving-kindness of the heart of our God who visits us like the dawn from on high.

He will give light to those in darkness, (five) those who dwell in the shadow of death, and guide us into the way of peace.

One: He has visited his people and redeemed them.

It is past tense. It has been achieved. It has been accomplished by our Lord and Saviour Jesus. We are a redeemed people. We are acceptable to God as we are right now, for the truth is that at any moment I could be taken into eternal life. If I depend on what I have achieved in changing or improving or cultivating, then I am indeed in a miserable state. But 'bowing His head He gave us His Spirit', so that I can hold my head up, as I am, in this moment, in the here and now.

Two: He has raised up for us a mighty saviour

It is all Jesus. His victory, His sharing, His glorious resurrection, His distribution of His graces, His allotting for us a place, His assignment of goodness given to

each. The Stations of the Cross tells the story of what He achieved – we have achieved nothing – but thankfully He shares the fullness of the victory with us. We have done nothing, achieved nothing – we are nothing except by what He freely gives – sons and daughters of God, redeemed people to live for ever with the Almighty, beautiful servants of the Word – but all this by His free gift.

Three: A saviour who would free us from our foes

Freed! Freed! Freed! Not enslaved but freed. Not under control but free to live life. And who are our foes – everyone can name a few like Paddy or Monica or Richard. But many these are superficial foes. They are only humans whom we have had a run in with, or for one reason or another do not like. The real foes are within: the anger that eats with its ugly teeth into our hearts; the fear that soils even the best of intentions; the resentment that plays continually in the mind that I did not get the land, the house... but deeper...that I did not get the love, the respect, the cuddle, the acknowledgement, the handshake; the fury that demands that I need to be respected, that I need to be loved or approved or honoured or known or admired.

If we are free, and we are, then we have the privilege of accepting the liberty from these cracks in our upbringing, these absences from our memory, these affections that we never got, and the stuff that society tells us we must miss because maybe in a different upbringing we would have got them. Society – with its false politeness – often lies. We are free. If we do not

experience this freedom, the bars that imprison us are not in reality but locked up in our perception of what it is to be a human being. If we do not experience this freedom, then surely it is time to understand that "God accepts me as I am right now". God has given us free will to live in our handy-made prisons of 'I should have got, instead of breaking into freedom because I have a Saviour and that is all I need. Today, name your foes! Call them out and break the fetters that they have encased around your embodied spirit, so that we can live free from all foes and 'serve Him in holiness and justice, all the days of our life in His presence'.

Four: As for you, little child

You are eternal now that you know Jesus. You will never know death because you know Jesus. You are a little child of God with a story to tell – not our story – but His story and all that He has done for you by redeeming you and setting you free. Your liberty was got at great price – the innocent blood of the Lamb was shed in the awful mess that was Golgotha. But it was shed out of love and that is what makes all the difference. Because your redemption was won out of love, you are called to be a person who knows love – the everlasting love that God has for you. You are called to tell the story of the unblocking of your mind, the opening of the prison bars and the destruction of the internal foes. You have much to do, for you are a prophet that is called to proclaim to others the beautiful gift of salvation. Your friends and family are to be told that they too are free in Christ, and their sins are forgiven through the willing

sacrifice of the Lamb – not for a repayment but for an acceptance by the sinner of an eternal love.

Five: He will give light to those in darkness

The result of knowing that "God accepts me as I am right now" means that all darkness is being removed. This is probably the hardest part of the meditation. While free will is a brilliant gift it also holds within it a challenge. In my freedom, no one has authority over me except if I give that person the authority. As a follower of Christ, Jesus has authority over me, as does the Father and the Holy Spirit. But no one else, unless I give it to them. This is my free will in action.

You did not allow me to sing at the concert so I will not be friendly with you anymore. You picked others for the team, so I am not going to be part of the squad anymore. You spend more time with them, therefore, I am no good. This is all false. I am a child of God and if I am accepted by any other or by millions, I am still a child of God. If I have no friend but Christ, I am still a child of God and so I am at peace. The darkness is lifting; the peace is descending. It is a continuous action of God and is more visible the more we accept and cooperate. We will ultimately live with the victory over death within us and, therefore, there will be no more darkness.

So, there you have it. That is what the friendly companion allowed me to hear. Make of it what you will. Now I will go and have a coffee and look out at the sheep and see more clearly that "God accepts me as I am right now".

Tribute to Charlotte Anne Devine by Fr Roland Colhoun



The late Charlotte Anne Devine, Victoria Bridge.

was nothing remarkable about Charlotte Anne's life, but in the eyes of Heaven she was a treasure. Native of the parish of Urney in the Finn Valley, east Donegal, she spent her married life in Victoria Bridge, West Tyrone.

Charlotte had many skills, especially with a sewing machine, a sewing needle, and a set of crochet needles. These skills are often taken for granted, but not by anyone who commissions a custom-made item. One should not underestimate the effort it takes in design, calculation and sheer creativity. Charlotte did her training in Porter's Shirt Factory, Castlefinn, and Herdman's in Sion Mills, but she had a remarkable talent for bespoke seamstressing. She was not daunted by any assignment, no matter how delicate or intricate

I had heard that she was very experienced in designing curtains and producing wedding dresses, but it was ecclesiastical fabric-work that interested me. Over the years, I presented her with

numerous out-of-the-ordinary projects and she rose to the challenge every time. Items such as altar cloths, crucifix covers and statue veils for Passiontide became her masterpieces. In the quiet of the day, Charlotte could be found in the church, tape measure in hand, assessing the peculiarities of each statue, leaving no dimensions to chance. Always going the extra mile, she refused to accept any payment for these works, even though on occasion she also supplied the materials. Her generosity was unbounded. Charlotte loved God and simply wanted to serve the House of God. She had very capable hands, which is a sign of great intelligence, because hands won't function without instruction from the brain.

A good mind and a good heart is an unbeatable combination in a person. Charlotte Anne had this double endowment, giftedness and goodness. She belonged to the select group called housewives and homemakers! Often taken for

granted, but essential for society, is the cleaner, the cook, the baker and the jam-maker. Charlotte was each of these par excellence. Her family and visitors were the daily beneficiaries of this superb domesticity and warm hospitality.

One of the mysteries of life is that good people suffer. St Bernadette of Lourdes had multiple illnesses and died of bone cancer, aged 35, in 1879. St Thérèse of Lisieux's primary illness was tuberculosis, which ultimately led to her death at the age of 24 in 1897. It is appropriate to mention saints in a discourse about Charlotte Devine, for she had the qualities of Heaven. This holy woman has very little to answer for and everything to be lauded for. In sickness and in health, not once did I see Charlotte flustered or disconcerted, such was her forbearance and her trust in God. She knew that the good Lord would guide and assist her in everything. Nor did she ever raise her voice or display signs of discontent in any situation. Coming from a household of 14

children and two outstanding parents, Charlotte learned all the interpersonal skills at a busy kitchen table and discerned all the virtues on her knees for daily family prayer.

On occasion, she and her friend, Bernadette Harkin, arrived at my door to request prayers for a sick person. As often as not, the patient was there in Charlotte's car, and she was driving the afflicted person to hospital. This was repeated, day and night, as the need arose. The children of the neighbourhood always found a warm welcome and a tasty treat at her kitchen table, and she was exceptionally generous to the Shoebox Appeal for needy children every Christmas. Charlotte was a person who put Christianity into practice, thinking always of others and consistently putting herself last. She gave willingly and spontaneously and never counted the cost. She sought no praise or even payment in this world. The good Lord will not be found wanting when it comes to remunerating Charlotte. She asked

for little, but she will receive an abundance. Her contribution to society was discreet but impressive.

Aged 66, Charlotte Anne was taken from us, after just one month's illness. Cancer is a merciless visitor and arrives even with the most virtuous of people and the most beautiful of families. Charlotte has left behind a devoted husband (Kevin), five children (Declan, Linda, Christina, Terence and Caroline), nine grandchildren and a grieving extended family. The congregation was overflowing at her funeral in Sion Mills on Friday, June 27, such was the esteem in which Charlotte was held. The world feels empty without this beautiful soul, but God's ways are not our ways. She has gone to meet her virtuous forebears, the Coyles and Gallaghers of Foyfin, Castlefinn, who taught her to be a saint. They can certainly be proud of the fruits of their noble labours. Although the tears for her are many, we pray that beloved Charlotte Anne Devine will rejoice with the Blessed.

From more to less...or less to more? by Fr John McLaughlin ssc



Recent efforts

I think it was former UN Sec General Dag Hammarskjöld who left me with a personal motto, way back in those early idealistic years: "For what has happened, thanks. For what will happen, Amen." Now in those autumn years, I cannot be so simplistic nor fatalistic. In one of those seminars on Myers Briggs, or the Enneagram, there was time on The Stages of Life: from adolescence to maturity and achievement to stepping back from aggressive attitudes, on to a more peaceful time contemplating, and onwards to retirement and old age. And somehow, the expectation was that would be a journey from more to less. Or maybe not...

Nowadays, I am asking questions like - "Was it all pure chance - 'al lote' in Spanish - or Providence?" and maybe the Holy Spirit might be mentioned without embarrassment in this modern, secularized Ireland? It cannot all be due to personal zeal, or prudence, or resilience or self-confidence!

Juan Manuel Serrat, the Spanish poet, composer and singer, takes on the words of Antonio Machado: 'Caminante se hace camino, se hace camino al andar.' You make your way on the hoof and looking behind you see the steps you will not make again. The Chilean Jesuit, St Alberto Hurtado, in his final weeks in life, gave a piece of advice and challenge to his cousin, Carlos Gonzalez, then a young priest: "You are young and the juice is still flowing in your priesthood, but there will come days when feelings will hit a lower point, and that is the day you must step up to the challenge, afferarse al Señor."

Reading recently, with great admiration, the biography of Michelle Obama, I returned again and again to the fetching one-word title: 'Becoming'. Another link to my thinking over the years can be attributed to the film 'Amadeus'. "I hate mediocrity," said the guilty plagiarist. Later, there were phrases like: "To be more than that

which you were...you would be so much more the Man", from Lady Macbeth as she challenged her husband to The Deed...and more prosaic reminder, Solo le Pido a Dios...that war, culture may not be pain, deception...a mi indiferente et seq, or there was what Brazilian, Leonardo Boff would call an Epiphany Moment. I stood in a certain well-remembered place and implored the Lord not to take away my humanity as a price for continuing on as a priest in what could then be a very clerical world; as it seemed to me, from the situations being presented to me at the time. Happily, that passed and the Lord was not bent on taking on that part of my life; more than generous in my life-event. But it was a watershed moment, a personal Epiphany situation in a darker time.

Journey

The Bible is full of the importance of journey, starting maybe with Abraham, and The Camino is now almost a rite of passage for very many people of all faiths and none. Fr Brendan McManus SJ, some years back, moved me a lot with his very personal and atoning account of the journey of family atonement he had made right out to Finisterra. Recently, he had on Facebook his comments on his recent longer stay and days of service there. So, I told him that I would be plagiarising on his Ten Points!

1. Most people walk to remind themselves who they really are, pilgrims or searchers on a journey to God or the divine (or Mystery or higher power). We have been created by God and recognise God's voice: we are not independent, egoistic consumers as contemporary culture would have us believe.

2. We need to be reminded that God is always with us, this is particularly true on the Camino but also our life journey. We are more open to God on the road

as we get away from distractions, technology and busyness. Therefore, we need to cultivate this same space in our ordinary lives: bring this home with us, create solitude, live who we truly are, be a light for the world and help others, embrace nature, declutter and simplify our lives.

3. On the Camino we learn to listen as everything speaks to us: nature, symbols, fellow travellers, the world. God is always trying to communicate with us and uses everything to do that - we need to be more reflective in our lives, to start to notice things, live more fully, reflect and get in touch with a deeper part of ourselves.

4. God works with us individually, has a very specific message that speaks to our heart. God speaks to us directly and immediately in a way that we can learn to recognise and interpret. It is an inner experience that is personally customised and unique, a message for us individually.

5. This life journey is going somewhere; there is a plan. God is guiding us on the road; we have to adjust and make decisions. Mistakes and false turns are revealed, as well as a sense of direction and purpose. I need to figure out what's not working and what I need to do more of. This is the work of discernment or 'separating', clearly identifying good and bad, and making a choice.

6. We need to face going back home from the Camino with a new sense of energy and reform of life. God is highlighting things in our lives that are not working and those that are; we have to prioritise and decide on what to change in our lives. This has to mean concrete decision and actions. We have a choice about how we live and what we prioritise.

We need a lot of help and have to put certain structures in place to help us. These would be some prayer/meditation, space for solitude and walking, a group of like-minded people, regular reflection such as the Ignatian Examen and journaling.

Finally, this is all good news that God continually seeks us out, holds us in a loving gaze and always offers a road back. There is hope and purpose and meaning. Don't believe the hype, just get on the road!"

Thanks Fr Brendan...and is not, as you remarked, an occasion of sin for anyone!

So! More to less or vice-versa?

Being now adept on Youtube, I recently watched the conversation between Fr James Martin SJ and Stephan Colbert, of Saturday Night Live fame and a convinced Catholic, and I was surprised and graced for more than the hour it took! There is hope when there are open, happy, funny, joyful Catholics willing to share it in public!

Then there is the grace of WhatsApp and ready access

to friends, brothers and sisters from all over my own lifetime; a grace for so-called Old Age! Or the considerable number of free Webinars that have enchanted me, in three different languages! Living very much in the 'now' moment, surely, the 'Sacrament of Being Present', you might say. And, with an immense gratitude! Or Universalis and the succinct phrases and tone of Martin Kociwski, and the Spanish Rezando voy, daily commentaries. One is never alone in this new world!

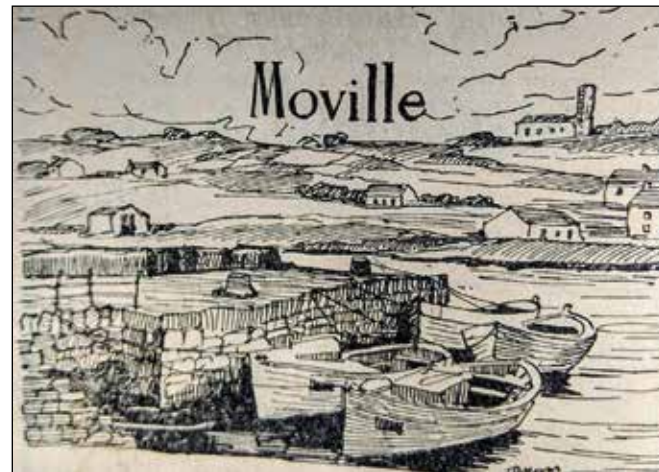
Fr Tomas Malik, in his great book on post-secular Christianity, talks of this new world that can challenge and invigorate us all, and writes also of my stage of life and the horizons it opens up: "But the afternoon of life - mature age and old age - has a different and more important task than the morning of life - a spiritual journey, a descent into the depths. The afternoon of life is kairos, a time appropriate for the development of spiritual life, an opportunity to complete the lifelong process of maturing. This stage of life can bear valuable fruit: insight, wisdom, peace and tolerance, the ability to manage emotions and overcome self-centeredness. The latter is a major obstacle on the path from the ego, the centre of our conscious life, to a deeper centre, the inner self (das Selbst). By this shift from the 'little self' to the most fundamental and essential self (we can call it God or 'Christ in us'), the human being fulfils the meaning of life, attaining maturity and fullness."

Being always a prolific and curious reader - my Godparents sent me books till well in to my 40s on the occasions of birthdays and Christmas - there has always been interest in novels and classics with spiritual material on my loaded shelves and, I recently added to that, books from the book club of my sister-in-law. There has been time in recent years to feed that hunger.

Some recent and excellent books I would recommend to adult readers are: The Silence of the Choir by Mohamet Saar; The Covenant of Water and Cutting for Stone, by Abraham Verghese; The Song Birds by Christy Lefteri; American Dirt by Jeanine (a classic to me); Where to from here? by Brian Grogan SJ; The Dutch House by Anne Patchett; Becoming by Michell Obama; This Boy's Heart by John Creedon, for Cork at its best; and Apeirogon by Colum McCann, with wonderful insights on Israel.

Missionary

Becoming a missionary priest from the diocesan ranks and style of life took a lot of discernment, and even some pain for family and other reasons. There was an element of first saving my own soul maybe, or being a friend to other people and thus enriching my own life. At a priests' workshop in 1972, in Glenart, Arklow, we were tasked with imagining our own epitaph,



Moville NS days (back row).



In more active days.



Moville scene.

and I recoiled in some horror at what repetition that seemed to involve over a succession of future Irish and Dublin parishes! People remarked that they were not surprised, from the themes of my sermons! Australian Columban, John Hegarty saw that first he had to be "converted into the language and culture of his country of mission", and then think that there might be hope for some activity for him in Peru! Pope Leo, on that same country, tells the story

in his similar clarity. And I was personally aware of the same graces of being received, tolerated and eventually respected, as I served a real apprenticeship! 'El placer de servir', as poet, Gabriela Mistral, Nobel winner, had it so well in her poem, and mentioned here in an earlier piece.

A spell in hospital at the turn of last year, and over Christmas, my first time in over 70 years, brought me in to contact with a couple of Nurse Ratchets and even a Jack

The Streets of Derry *by Dr Seán Beattie*



Our Lady of the Rosary, Sacred Heart Church, Omagh. The Dominicans promoted the Rosary as a form of prayer from the Middle Ages through their confraternities.

IT has been said that the history of Derry could be learned from its streets. One man who had an expert knowledge of this subject was the late John Bryson, a familiar figure as he trod the pavements dutifully researching the stories behind the network of street names. I was reminded of his work recently, ‘Derry’s Streets’ (Colmcille Press, Garván Downey, ed., 2021), when I walked down Frederick St, and passed along

Abbey St, and arrived in William St. There was no signage to remind visitors that this was once the location of an important religious Order. (In passing, I was reminded of our more recent history when I noticed a stone plaque in Abbey St, dedicated to Vol Charles English who lost his life at that place in 1985.)

Abbey references in places and buildings

The main commercial building in Abbey St is well known to members of Derry Credit Union. The Abbey medical practice is also here. Five references are cited in the book, in which the name ‘Abbey’ appears in the City. Bryson also listed Abbey House (Little Diamond), Abbey Park (off Frederick St), Abbeydale (off Rosstowney Road), and Abbot’s Walk (off Cable St). The original Abbey St, dating from c1815, no longer exists and has been replaced by modern buildings. This was part of the site of the original Dominican Priory.

So, thanks to the street signage and the presence of an important public building, the memory of the ancient Abbey is preserved,

although all trace of the original monastery has disappeared. With so much emphasis on the Walls of Derry as a world-renowned visitor attraction, and the prominence of Colmcille, the story of the Abbey, its location and heritage remain hidden from the passing visitor, but the street names remain a treasure trove, a reminder of an Order that can trace its roots back over 800 years and which played a pioneering role in the religious life of the Diocese.

So, what do we know about the ancient Abbey itself in the City?

The Order was founded by St Dominic in Toulouse, France c.1216. The objective of the friars was to combat heresy through the medium of preaching. In popular terms, they were known as an Order of Preachers. Traditionally, this role was reserved for bishops or their delegates. Some students were sent to the University of Paris. The Dominicans were also heavily involved in education, a role in which the Order is still active today.

Dominican Priory

Bryson reminds his readers that the name Abbey St derives from

the fact that part of the site of the Dominican Priory, founded in 1274, was based here. Other Orders associated with the City include Franciscans, Augustinians and Cistercians. House building that took place here c.1815 led to the discovery of human remains that were re-buried at the Long Tower. According to the Derry historian, Ken McCormack, Watt’s Whiskey Distillery stood on part of the site of the old Abbey, but it closed in 1921 and was demolished some years later. Bryson notes that the word ‘Abbey’ comes from Old French ‘Abbaie’, from the Latin ‘Abbatia’. The soaring spire nearby of the Cathedral adds a spiritual dimension to the history of area.

The physical presence of the Dominicans in the City is encompassed within a triangle formed by William St, Abbey St, and Rossville St. Dr Henry Jefferies and Fr Ciarán Devlin suggest that Bishop Ó’Cearbhalláin was the first Abbot, but he may not have been a Dominican himself. The lay founder of the new monastery was probably an O’Donnell. A stretch of bogland separated the monastery from the rest of the City. Details of the Abbots who ministered here are very slim, but the name of Lynn or Ó Lynn features regularly in church

documents.

The Dominicans in Elizabethan Derry

The O’Donnells, the dominant rulers in Co Donegal, were church loyalists, and held sway over parts of Derry. Perhaps for this reason, Henry VIII did not include Derry in his first round of suppression of the monasteries, but they did not escape his attention altogether. It is on record that in the following century, the monastery experienced the wrath of the invader. Thirty-two members of the community lost their lives under Queen Elizabeth. The Bishop of Derry at one stage attempted to acquire the property. Following the Siege of Derry, several members of the community went into exile.

Death in Jail

A Dominican priest, Fr Clement O’Colgan returned to Derry from Rome in 1702. He was arrested in 1704 and died two years later in jail. His death marked the effective end of the Dominican association with Derry. He is just one name among a large number of Dominicans who lost their lives in pursuit of their vocation. A small number of Dominicans ministered in parts of the Diocese throughout the 18th

century. This was the era of the wandering friars, who said Mass at Mass Rocks while under constant harassment from the authorities.

The artist Sassoferato

The church has not forgotten their heroism. In the Long Tower Church, there is a copy of Sassoferato’s ‘Lady of the Rosary’, based on an original painting dating from 1643. The figures in the painting are St Dominic and St Catherine. Dominic is credited with spreading the Rosary as an important prayer. A stained-glass window in St Eugene’s Cathedral records the contribution of the Dominicans to the City and the wider Diocese.

Legacy

Although all traces of Dominican life in Derry have gone, the Order is alive and well in Ireland. The Secretary to the Prior, Dominican Provincialate, Fr Joseph Bulman, OP, resides in St Mary’s Priory, Tallagh, Dublin. He has advised me that there are 10 Dominican communities in Ireland, with a total of 83 priests. In a small measure of consolation, the memory of the Order in the Diocese is still preserved in the streets of the Derry on the site of the ancient Priory.

Let yourself be loved *by Aoife O’Neill*

“LET yourself be loved” was the plea of St Elizabeth of the Trinity, a Carmelite Saint who was canonised by Pope Francis in 2016. She was a French Discalced Carmelite, a mystic, and a spiritual writer.

Elizabeth Catez was born on July 18, 1880, at a military camp near Bourges, the first child of Joseph

Catez, an army captain and his wife Marie (née Rolland). Elizabeth felt called to enter Carmel from seven years of age and finally realised this dream on August 2, 1901. Only four years after entering Carmel, Elizabeth’s health began to decline with Addison’s disease, which at the time was incurable. As a last testament, she left a letter for

her Prioress, Mother Germaine, with the recurring message: “Let yourself be loved.” She died on November 9, 1906.

Recently, I listened to a priest preaching on just how difficult it is for us to “Let Him”. Two little words which sound simple but, in reality, is one of the most difficult things to do. To give up all our own attempts at control, at trying to work things out by ourselves, at trying to find love and affirmation in the ways we believe is best and to ‘Let’ God love us the way He wishes to. Too often, we hold God at arm’s length as we come up with a long list of reasons why He couldn’t possibly love us. When we think of God loving us, we often think immediately of our many flaws, our sins and the ways we believe we have let God down. Or, perhaps, we don’t see God as a lover at all, maybe we think of a judge waiting to pass harsh judgement on us and to cast us away from Him forever. We can look at God with suspicion, asking ourselves can we really trust Him? Will His love really bring me joy and satisfaction?

When we look at Elizabeth of the Trinity, and the many other Catholic mystics, we do not find people who look at God as a cosmic judge or a distant taskmaster. They are not holding their own sins and shortcomings as a shield between themselves and God. Rather, they see Him as a lover. They live in a confidence and trust that God is good, that He loves them. This trust means that they are able to live lives surrendered to God and can allow Him to fill them with His love. The mystics understand that

the spiritual life is not some trial or test to pass, it is an amazing love story. God is the bridegroom who is in constant pursuit of His Bride - the soul - romancing, wooing, and calling her to union.

The arc of salvation history is a love story, and you are at the centre of this story. Your soul is the Bride. We see it in the Bible, from the earliest books of the Old Testament, the covenant between God and His people, Israel, is referred to in nuptial language. The imagery used highlights themes of love, covenant, and fidelity. The Book of Hosea depicts God as a faithful husband to an unfaithful Israel. The idolatry of Israel does not lead to God revoking the covenant, rather He responds by trying to woo her back: “I will allure her, and speak tenderly to her...I will betroth you to me forever.” (Hos 2:14,19)

Bride

Also, we have the Song of Solomon, which is interpreted as an allegory of God’s love for His people. In the Psalms, we find God referred to as a King who desires His Bride. Isaiah 62:4-5 speaks of Israel being called “My Delight is in Her” and “Married”, signifying God’s joy and commitment. This thread of bridal imagery runs right through the Bible.

The New Testament then transforms this love story totally, from imagery and metaphor, to flesh. In an act of total love, Jesus doesn’t simply use bridal language, rather He embodies it. His first miracle takes place at the Wedding Feast of Cana. He uses wedding imagery in His parables - the Ten

Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13) and the Wedding Feast (Matthew 22:1-14) to convey themes of watchfulness, readiness, and the Kingdom of Heaven as a joyous celebration. Ephesians 5:22-33 draws a direct parallel between the love of a husband for his wife and Christ’s love for the Church. It highlights the mutual respect, love, and sacrificial service that should characterize both marital relationships and the relationship between Christ and believers.

Through Jesus, we see that God’s love for us is not indulgent, but incarnate. It is not sentimental, but sacrificial. Upon the Cross, He poured out everything He had in the ultimate statement of love. Then finally, in Revelations, when all things are made new, we are brought not into a courtroom or throne room, but a wedding feast. “The marriage of the Lamb has come, and His Bride has made herself ready.” (Rev 19:7)

This love that God has for each person was something St Elizabeth understood in a profound way, and she lived her life attempting to communicate to those around her. That final letter to her Mother Superior was a message for every single person. In her words: “Listen to what He tells you: ‘Let yourself be loved more than these! That is, without fearing that any obstacle will be a hindrance to it, for I am free to pour My love on whom I wish! ‘Let yourself be loved more than these’ is your vocation.”

Accepting the love of God isn’t just for mystics and cloistered nuns - it is for us all. St Elizabeth tells us that it is a vocation we are all called to. To be Christian is to be a bride;



St Elizabeth of the Trinity

in Baptism we are betrothed. Every time You kneel before the Blessed Sacrament, you echo the posture of a bride. Every time you confess your sins, you prepare yourself for union. Every time you say ‘yes’ to grace, you lift the veil. In receiving the Eucharist, you receive the kiss of Christ. Just like John the beloved disciple, you can lay your head on the breast of Christ your beloved. The Catechism itself points out: “The entire Christian life bears the mark of the spousal love of Christ and the Church.” (CCC1617)

St Elizabeth of the Trinity and all the mystics lived this out in a way that made the veil thinner, the vows louder, the kiss more real. If we can “let Him”, the truth of how God loves us will change everything - not only how we pray, but how we think, how we act, how we suffer, how we love, and how we let ourselves be loved.

Continued from p24

Nicholson from ‘One flew over the cuckoo’s nest’. And I loved the native and joyful Catholicism of the Indian Kerala nurses. It left me with a loss of confidence, and this piece is also an act of defiance in my gradual coming to terms with being largely housebound while alive - and going towards More at this stage of my life, just to prove my thesis!

So, onwards towards the More. John Paul as Pope quoted the Psalm, “Teach us to calculate our years and acquire a wise heart”, in his Letter to the Elderly, at that stage himself. I avail of the Shalom Web Mass from Portlaoise, which is very missionary and inspiring, beamed each day into Europe, and sometimes an earlier one on YouTube.

Sport gives me energy, as does GAA and Donegal at the moment, like many other fans, and my golfing days away back there when Rory is winning. My music also lifts me in The Shed, and the adrenaline can still flow at local concerts too, as with the tapes of Serrat, Clannad, and more recent groups. Politics is hard going these days and always gets me reading and praying as democracy appears

threatened as seldom before; there can be no ostrich putting the head in the sand attitude. New friends have shown up around me at different moments, as I am largely housebound. Pope Leo invigorates me, as did Popes Francis and Paul and Benedict. ‘Radharc’ is still a word in my lexicon, as are ‘wonder’ and ‘humour’, and the talla or wisecrack arising spontaneously.

The recent RTE programme on ‘The Last of the Irish Missionaries?’ brought on again that passion Ad Gentes; though I am perplexed that there are so few around who bothered to watch; never bring the Mission into conversation, life or, indeed, liturgy, and, without which, religion may just fade away at parish level.

So, as I begin another year, I trust, pray and hope with something of the inspiration of the Fathers of the Church, who take on a new identity and conviction in these years for me.

The words of the Irish poet, Aine Ni Gearuilt (Cursai Spioradalta) stay with me: Ni rabh stair ann, na todchai: ni rabh ann ach an laitreach, agus san laitreach sin bhi gach uile rud, agus bhi gach rud cinealta. Such will be Eternity...le saol go saol.

Amen.

Parish Post-its

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.

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

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

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

Badoney Lower (Gortin-Rouskey)

Adoration: Adoration takes places in St Patrick's Gortin, after the 12.30 pm Mass until 5 pm on Tuesdays, and in St Mary's, Rouskey, after 7.30 pm Mass on Wednesdays.

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

Badoney Upper (Plumbridge-Cranagh)

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

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

Ballinascreen

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

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

Blessing of Graves: Graves will be at St Peter & St Paul's, Foreglen on Sunday, August 17, after 12 noon Mass; and

at St Mary's Church, Altinure, on Sunday, September 7, after 10.30 am Mass.

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: Fridays from 10 am-8 pm (Rosary at 7.30 pm).

Weekend Mass Times: 7 pm Vigil in Bellaghy, 9.45 am in Ballyscullion, and 11 am in Bellaghy (alternates with 11 am Sunday Mass in St Oliver Plunkett's, Clady).

Buncrana

Garden Fete: The annual Garden Fete will take place on Sunday, August 24, in the grounds of Scoil Mhuire from 3-6 pm. This year there will be many new attractions for all the family to enjoy. A meeting for volunteers will take place in St Mary's Hall on Wednesday, July 30. Note to crafters – limited tables available to display and sell crafts, for 20 Euro fee. To book, contact Parish Office on 0749361253.

Holy Year of Hope events: At parish level, the Holy Year of Hope will be marked with times of prayer, participation and pilgrimage. The first of these initiatives is entitled 'Come away from your nets for a moment', and involves gathering special interest groups of people from the parish for a special Mass and ceremony of blessing, each third Wednesday of the month (except in July & August).

Adoration: Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament now takes place in St Mary's Oratory every Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday, 6 am-10 pm, 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 pm Vigil, 10.15 am, St Aengus' Burt; 9 am, Our Lady of Lourdes, Inch; 7.15 pm Vigil, 11.30 am, St Mura's, Fahan.

Cappagh (Killyclogher)

Padre Pio Prayer Group: Cappagh Padre Pio Prayer Group Pilgrimage 2025 will take place from September 10-17, visting the shrines of Assisi, Giovanni Rotondo and St Michael's cave. Cost: £1,135 pps. For information contact: Marie on 07799112224 or Clare on 07778025587.

Eucharistic Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesday from 8-9 pm in Christ the King, Strathroy, concluding with 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 as 7.30 pm. Veneration and blessing with relic will be available after Mass.

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

Confessions: Confessions are heard on Saturdays 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 Sunday's of each month at 10 am.

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

Carndonagh

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

Castlederg & Ardstraw West

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

Exposition: Exposition of The Blessed Sacrament in St Michael's Church, Urris, on Fridays, 3-6 pm (Rosary at 5.40 pm); in the Oratory of the Assumption, Ballyliffin, on Tuesdays, 7.30-8.30 pm; and in St Columbcille Village, Cleagh, on Wednesdays, 3-4 pm.

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

Coleraine

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

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

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

Creggan

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

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

Bereavement Support: Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support. The Parish Pastoral Bereavement Support Group meets on the second Sunday of each month at 3 pm in the Parochial House community room. All are welcome to share a cup of tea, have a chat, remember and talk about their loved

one and find support with others experiencing similar feelings. In addition to the group, there is an ongoing opportunity to speak on a one-to-one basis with an experienced grief counsellor. The contact number for more information on the group or to arrange one to one support is 07907085178.

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

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

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

Culdaff

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

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

Desertmartin

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

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

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

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.



Flame of Love - North of Ireland

Launching Monday 12th May (7pm)

Weekly Cenacles - Monday @ 7pm

Venue
Termonbacca
Carmelite Retreat Centre,
Derry City, BT48 9AH

Available also on
 **YouTube**

Search: Termonbacca Derry

Facebook Page: Flame of Love - North of Ireland
WhatsApp: +44 (0) 77 4607 5335 - Geraldine
Website: www.flameoflove.ie RCN: 2020554

Parish *Post-its*

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.

Dungiven

Concert: Dungiven Community Choir Concert will take place in Dungiven Parish Conference Room on Sunday, November 30, at 3 pm. (doors open at 2.30 pm.). A second concert will take place at 7 pm. (doors open at 6.30 pm.). Ticket only event. Tickets £15, available by contacting Tel: 077 1432 9319.

Legion of Mary: Dungiven Legion of Mary meets every Tuesday at 6 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.

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 Tuesday, in St Patrick's Church at 7 pm. Society of St Joseph: The Society of St Joseph's for the support of religious vocations meets on the second Tuesdays of the month in the Committee Room, after 10 am Mass in St Patrick's Church.

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

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, Glenullin, every Wednesday evening at 6.30 pm.

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

Faughanvale

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

Vocations Society of St Joseph: The Faughanvale Branch meets in St Mary's Church on the second Monday of the month (not Jan July, August) following

morning Mass. They pray for and sponsor vocations to the priesthood. New members are needed. The meeting only takes less than an hour.

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

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

Granaghan (Swatragh)

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

Greencastle

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

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

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

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

Greenlough

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

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

Weekend Mass Times: 5.30 pm Vigil, and 11 am (alternates with 11 am Sunday Mass in St Mary's Bellaghy).

Iskaheen, Drung & Muff

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

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

St Peregrine: The St Peregrine Novena Prayer and veneration of relic takes place on the first Friday of each month, alternating between the three churches.

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

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

Drung; 9 am, St Patrick's, Iskaheen.

Kilrea

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

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

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

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

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

Lavey

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

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

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

Leckpatrick

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

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

Lifford (Murlog)

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

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

Adoration: 9.30 am-12.30 pm.

Confessions: Saturday, 6-6.15 pm

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 11 am.

Limavady

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

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

welcome. Contact: Kathy on 07538749627.

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

Maghera

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

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

Melmount

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

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

Moville

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

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

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

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 11 am-6.50 pm, ending with Benediction before 7 pm Mass.

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

Weekend Mass Times: 6 pm Vigil; 9 am & 11 am.

Steelstown & Culmore

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

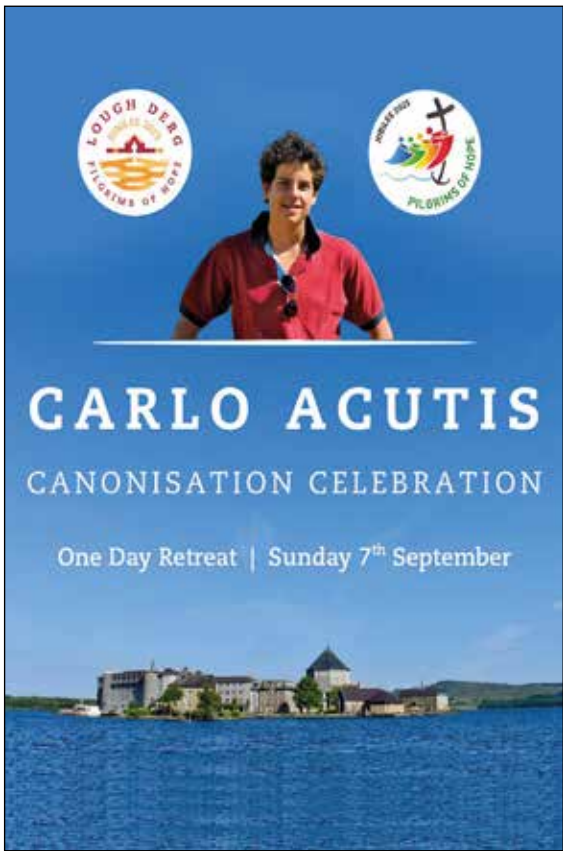
Adoration: Mondays after 10 am Mass until 6.50 pm.

Stations of the Cross: Come along to reflect on the Way of the Cross on Fridays at 7.30 pm.

Weekend Mass Times: 6.30 pm Vigil; 9 am, 11 am, and 12:15 pm.

Strabane (Camus)

Adoration: Eucharistic Adoration takes place on Wednesdays from 8.30 am



Parish Post-its

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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

Mental Health Mass: A monthly Mass for Mental Health, and a mini-Vigil to midnight, takes place on the first Thursdays at 7.30 pm. This Mass is to give thanks to God for positive mental health,

and to pray for those struggling with mental health issues and those who care for them. After Mass, Adoration will follow until midnight.

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

Long Tower & Brandywell Memories: A collection of old cine film transferred to DVD, taken from 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.

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

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

Three Patrons

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

God Club: God Club is an

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

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

Pennyburn. New members welcome.

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

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

Confessions: Confessions takes place in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh, on Tuesdays from 6.15-6.45 pm 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 will take place in St Columba's Church, Doneyloop, from 12 noon until 1 pm on the First Saturday of each month.

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

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

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

Waterside & Strathfoyle

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

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

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

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



Carmelite Book Club

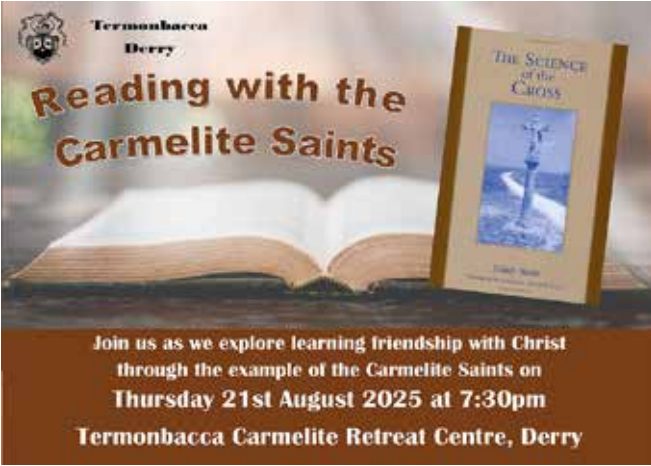
THE Carmelite Book Club will meet again in Termonbacca Retreat Centre on Thursday, August 21, at 7.30 pm.

The purpose of the book club is to explore learning friendship with Christ through the example of the Carmelite Saints.

The Carmelite vocation is committed to a life of 'allegiance to Jesus Christ', as a Friend and Companion along the way. Through the reading and

discussion of various books about or by the Carmelite Saints, we gather to get encouragement and growth in our own spiritual journey today.

The current book is 'The Science of the Cross', by Edith Stein. Everyone is welcome to come along and join us. If you have any queries please contact Aoife on 02871262512 or termonbaccaderry@ocd.ie



Diocesan Diary

Masters in Catholic School Leadership: The Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre, with St Mary's University, Twickenham, offers the Masters in Catholic School Leadership. This post graduate degree is dedicated to the professional development and spiritual formation of Catholic school leaders. It is a great opportunity for those

currently in leadership roles and those who aspire to, or have an interest in, leadership roles within the Catholic School system. If interested in registering for the Masters in September 2025 or for more details, please contact Diocesan Catechetical Centre on 028 71264087 or Email: tferry@derrydiocese.org.

...other Diary Dates

Termonbacca Summer Scheme: The summer scheme for young people, aged 8-14 years, will take place from August 18-22. Each day will run from 12-4 pm and the total week will cost £20 per child. Applications can be completed at the link below:
https://forms.gle/q5EX9RPCBSpBKivS7.

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, (F93PNOX), 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 following Wednesdays from 12.30-1.30 pm – May 28 & June 25.

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

Stations of Cross: On the First Friday of each month, after 10 am Mass in St Eugene’s, there is a silent procession from the Cathedral to

St Columba’s Church, Long Tower, meditating on the Stations of the Cross.

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

Men’s Rosary: **The Men’s Rosary** takes place on the first Saturday of every month 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.

Matt Talbot Society: The Matt Talbot Society Mass, praying for those suffering from addiction, is offered for those enrolled on the first Monday of every month in St Eugene’s Cathedral, at 7.30 pm.




Termonbacca Carmelite Monastery

st Thérèse Triduum

29th September– 1st October

Sunday 29th – Healing Mass
Monday 30th – Blessing of Children
Tuesday 1st – Blessing of the Roses
Mass, Triduum prayers and Blessing with the relic begins 7:30pm




DDS Daily Masses 2024-2025

St Eugene's 17 Jan, 9 Mar, 29 Apr, 19 Jun, 9 Aug, 29 Sep, 19 Nov	10 Dec 2024, 30 Jan, 22 Mar, 12 May, 2 Jul, 22 Aug, 12 Oct
St Columba's 18 Jan, 10 Mar, 30 Apr , 20 Jun, 10 Aug, 30 Sep, 20 Nov	Mourne 11 Dec 2024, 31 Jan, 23 Mar, 13 May, 3 Jul, 23 Aug, 13 Oct
The Three Patrons 19 Jan, 11 Mar, 1 May, 21 Jun, 11 Aug, 1 Oct, 21 Nov	Donaghmore 12 Dec 2024, 1 Feb, 24 Mar, 14 May,4 Jul, 24 Aug, 14 Oct
St Mary's, Creggan 20 Jan, 12 Mar, 2 May, 22 Jun, 12 Aug, 2 Oct, 22 Nov	Termonamongan 13 Dec 2024, 2 Feb, 25 Mar, 15 May, 5 Jul, 25 Aug, 15 Oct,
Our Lady of Lourdes 1 Dec 2024, 21 Jan, 13 Mar, 3 May, 23 Jun, 13 Aug, 3 Oct, 23 Nov	Langfield 14 Dec 2024, 3 Feb, 26 Mar, 16 May, 6 Jul, 26 Aug, 16 Oct,
Holy Family 2 Dec, 2024, 22 Jan, 14 Mar, 4 May, 24 Jun, 14 Aug, 4 Oct, 24 Nov	Sion Mills 15 Dec 2024, 4 Feb, 27 Mar, 17 May, 7 Jul, 27 Aug, 17 Oct,
Culmore 3 Dec 2024, 23 Jan, 15 Mar, 5 May, 25 Jun, 15 Aug, 5 Oct, 25 Nov	Ardstraw East 16 Dec 2024, 5 Feb, 28 Mar, 18 May, 8 Jul, 28 Aug, 18 Oct,
Glendermott 4 Dec 2024, 24 Jan, 16 Mar, 6 May, 26 Jun, 16 Aug, 6 Oct, 26 Nov	Ardstraw W & C'derg 17 Dec 2024, 6 Feb, 29 Mar, 19 May,9 Jul, 29 Aug, 19 Oct
Donagheady 5 Dec 2024, 25 Jan, 17 Mar, 7 May, 27 Jun, 17 Aug, 7 Oct, 27 Nov	Clonleigh 18 Dec 2024, 7 Feb, 30 Mar, 20 May, 10 Jul, 30 Aug, 20 Oct
Leckpatrick 6 Dec 2024, 26 Jan, 18 Mar, 8 May, 28 Jun, 18 Aug, 8 Oct, 28 Nov	Drumragh 19 Dec 2024, 8 Feb, 31 Mar, 21 May, 11 Jul, 31 Aug, 21 Oct
Ardmore 7 Dec 2024, 27 Jan, 19 Mar, 9 May, 29 Jun, 19 Aug, 9 Oct, 29 Nov	Cappagh 20 Dec 2024, 9 Feb, 1 Apr, 22 May, 12 Jul, 1 Sep, 22 Oct
Strathfoyle 8 Dec 2024, 28 Jan, 20 Mar, 10 May, 30 Jun, 20 Aug, 10 Oct	Greencastle 21 Dec 2024, 10 Feb, 2 Apr, 23 May, 13 Jul, 2 Sep, 23 Oct
Camus 9 Dec 2024, 29 Jan, 21 Mar, 11 May, 1 Jul, 21 Aug, 11 Oct	Badoney Lower 22 Dec 2024, 11 Feb, 3 Apr, 24 May, 14 Jul, 3 Sep, 24 Oct
Urney & Castlefin	Badoney Upper 23 Dec 2024, 12 Feb, 4 Apr, 25 May, 15 Jul, 4 Sep, 25 Oct
	Maghera 24 Dec 2024, 13 Feb, 5 Apr, 26 May, 16 Jul, 5 Sep, 26 Oct
	Desertmartin 25 Dec 2024, 14 Feb, 6 Apr,

27 May, 17 Jul ,6 Sep, 27 Oct	2 Aug, 22 Sep, 12 Nov
Faughanvale 26 Dec 2024, 15 Feb, 7 Apr, 28 May, 18 Jul, 7 Sep, 28 Oct	Fahan 11 Jan, 3 Mar, 23 Apr, 13 Jun, 3 Aug, 23 Sep, 13 Nov
Claudy 27 Dec 2024, 16 Feb, 8 Apr, 29 May19 Jul, 8 Sep, 29 Oct	Clonmany 12 Jan, 4 Mar, 24 Apr, 14 Jun, 4 Aug, 24 Sep, 14 Nov
Banagher 28 Dec 2024, 17 Feb, 9 Apr, 30 May 20 Jul, 9 Sep, 30 Oct	Carndonagh13 Jan, 5 Mar, 25 Apr, 15 Jun, 5 Aug, 25 Sep, 15 Nov
Ballinascreen 29 Dec 2024, 18 Feb 10 Apr, 31 May 21 Jul, 10 Sep, 31 Oct	Malin 14 Jan, 6 Mar, 26 Apr, 16 Jun, 6 Aug, 26 Sep, 16 Nov
Dungiven 30 Dec 2024, 19 Feb, 11 Apr, 1 Jun, 22 Jul, 11 Sep, 1 Nov	Iskaheen 15 Jan, 7 Mar, 27 Apr, 17 Jun, 7 Aug, 27 Sep, 17 Nov
Limavady 31 Dec 2024, 20 Feb, 12 Apr, 2 Jun, 23 Jul, 12 Sep, 2 Nov	Culdaff 16 Jan, 8 Mar, 28 Apr 18 Jun, 8 Aug, 28 Sep, 18 Nov
Magilligan 1 Jan, 21 Feb, 13 Apr, 3 Jun, 24 Jul, 13 Sep, 3 Nov	1ST FRIDAY MASS FOR LIVING MEMBERS 2024 / 2025
Coleraine 2 Jan, 22 Feb, 14 Apr, 4 Jun, 25 Jul, 14 Sep, 4 Nov	Ballinascreen 06/12/2024
Garvagh 3 Jan, 23 Feb, 15 Apr, 5 Jun, 26 Jul, 15 Sep, 5 Nov	Banagher 03/01/2025
Kilrea 4 Jan, 24 Feb, 16 Apr, 6 Jun, 27 Jul, 16 Sep, 6 Nov	Bellaghy 07/02/2025
Greenlough 5 Jan, 25 Feb, 7 Jun, 28 Jul, 17 Sep, 7 Nov	Coleraine 07/03/2025
Bellaghy 6 Jan, 26 Feb, 8 Jun, 29 Jul, 18 Sep, 8 Nov	Desertmartin 04/04/2025
Lavey 7 Jan, 27 Feb, 9 Jun, 30 Jul, 19 Sep, 9 Nov	Dungiven 02/05/2025
Moville 8 Jan, 28 Feb, 20 Apr, 10 Jun, 31 Jul, 20 Sep, 10 Nov	Errigal 06/06/2025
Granaghan 9 Jan, 1 Mar, 21 Apr, 11 Jun, 1 Aug, 21 Sep, 11 Nov	Greenlough 04/07/2025
Buncrana 10 Jan, 2 Mar, 22 Apr, 12 Jun,	Kilrea 01/08/2025
	Lavey 05/09/2025
	Limavady 03/10/2025
	Maghera 07/11/2025

6 & 7 SEPTEMBER 2025
Pastoral Centre, Claudy
"As for me, I baptize you with water: but One is coming who is mightier than I... He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire."
-- Luke 3:16



Everyone Welcome

LIFE IN THE Spirit SEMINAR

What is Life in the Spirit? It is an opportunity to deepen in your faith and to activate the gifts of the Holy Spirit you received in the Sacrament of Baptism.
The Holy Spirit wants to be part of your life and to bring you to a new awareness of His presence. Come along and hear how this can be possible.

With Fr Eamonn Kelly
Saturday 6th September 10.30am - 3pm
Sunday 7th September 10.30am - 3pm
Including Closing Mass on Sunday
Registration on arrival. Fee: Donation
Refreshments provided but can bring packed lunch.

Claudy ‘Life in the Spirit’ seminars

THE ‘Life in The Spirit’ Seminars will be held in Claudy Pastoral Centre on the weekend of September 6-7, and will be led by Donegal parish priest and sought-after speaker on the Third Person of the Trinity, Fr Eamonn Kelly. The programme gets underway both days with registration and a cuppa at 10.30 am, followed by the Rosary at 11 am. Fr Eamonn will then give an introduction to the seminars, which will include group time between each talk. Over the weekend, Fr Eamonn will lead ‘Baptism in the Spirit’ and speak on ‘Transformation in

Christ’. Other speakers include: Anne Farley on ‘God’s Love’; Tina McAteer Wallace on ‘Salvation’; Annette Creelman on ‘The New Life’; Tracey Wallace on ‘Receiving God’s Gifts’; and Margaret Friel on ‘Growth’. Fr Eamonn will celebrate a Mass of Thanksgiving on the Sunday afternoon, with the weekend coming to a close with The Divine Mercy prayers at 3 pm. All are welcome to come along and donations will be gratefully received. Refreshments will be provided but attendees can bring a packed lunch.

Forty Hours - 2025

Sun 3 Aug	St Mary’s Oratory	Buncrana
Sun 3 Aug	Star of the Sea, Malin Head	Malin
Sun 10 Aug	St Patrick’s	Clonleigh
Sun 10 Aug	St Joseph’s, Glenullin	Garvagh
Sun 17 Aug	Desertegney	Buncrana
Sun 17 Aug	St Michael’s, Urris	Clonmany
Sun 24 Aug	St Oliver Plunkett’s	Greenlough
Sun 24 Aug	Our Lady of the Wayside	Greencastle
Sun 31 Aug	St Patrick’s	Donaghmore
Sun 31 Aug	St Mary’s, Bocan	Culdaff
Sun 7 Sept	St Matthew’s, Drumsurn	Dungiven
Sun 7 Sept	St Columba’s, Straw	Ballinascreen
Sun 7 Sept	St Mura’s	Fahan
Sun 14 Sept	St John the Baptist	Granaghan
Sun 14 Sept	St Mary’s, Cockhill	Buncrana
Sun 14 Sept	Immaculate Conception	Camus
Sun 21 Sept	Christ the King	Limavady
Sun 21 Sept	St Columba’s, Drung	Iskaheen
Sun 21 Sept	St Mary’s, Castlefin	Urney & Castlefin
Sun 28 Sept	St Pius X	Moville
Sun 28 Sept	St Aidan’s	Magilligan
Sun 28 Sept	St Mary’s	Creggan, Derry

Where do you look for your fulfilment? *Fr Johnny Doherty CSsR*



Fr. Johnny Doherty CSsR

THE Solemn Novena in honour of Our Mother of Perpetual Help was celebrated in Clonard, Monastery, Belfast from June 18–26. It was a wonderful nine days. Several thousands of people attended each day and many thousands more joined us online, in our live feed, from all over the world.

The theme of the nine days was: ‘To be Pilgrims of Hope – Finding signs of Hope in a troubled world’. Each day, a particular aspect of the theme was explored and prayed about. The majority of the homilies were preached by lay people. There were preachers from other Christian Churches. And there were great signs of hope visible, with the active presence of many young people serving in most of the ministries that were evident during the Novena.

A great ending

After the final session at 8 pm on Thursday, June 26, the Novena ended with a procession around the streets immediately beside Clonard. The Icon of Our Mother of Perpetual Help was carried, followed by some of our Altar Servers and other young people, a Pipe Band playing suitable music, people from other cultures in their native costumes, the members of the Redemptorist Community,

and several hundred people who had attended the Novena. Many of the local people also joined in as the procession passed their houses. I am sure that some of those who saw and heard this procession must thought that the Twelfth of July had come early!

When we got back to Clonard Church, we had our final prayers and blessings, and we thanked God for the wonderful graces for the nine days. The dates for the Solemn Novena for next year were announced. And we said goodbye!

What Now?

The morning after the Novena, Clonard was quiet. The crowds were gone. The voices were muted. But the atmosphere was peaceful. We began hearing from people about how much they had got out of the nine days. Some people were even sorry that it did not last longer! There was a real sense of gratitude, not so much that it was over but that it had taken place with such obvious grace from God for so many of us.

For nine days, we were being fed with caviar spiritually. It was now, as they say, back to porridge! Porridge, of course, is very important. It is good. It is nourishing. It is even tasty at times. It is what keeps us going.

There's more: Sts Peter & Paul

Three days after the Novena ended, on June 29, the Church celebrated the Feast of St Peter and St Paul. Because it fell on a Sunday this year, this great feast took the place of the normal sequence of Sunday celebrations. Because of that, it became for me a clarion call again to rise in wonder at the amazing gift that our faith is for us and for the world.

These two wonderful saints bring us right back to the very origins of our faith, and to a renewal for us of the privilege we have of making

Christ known and loved in our world of 2025.

These two saints were, and continue to be, pilgrims of hope because of what God did in them through Christ. They were both most unlikely people to be of any great value to the world.

Peter, a fisherman, and not all that good at it by all accounts, was very good intentioned. But when it came to the crunch, he was weak. He denied ever knowing Christ when it seemed to him that his own life could be in danger. And yet, he is the one to whom Jesus said: “You are Peter, and on this rock, I will build my Church.”

Paul, a fully convinced Jew, saw Christians as the enemies of all he stood for. He was committed to destroying them and so purifying God's people. And yet, through the power of Christ, Paul became the most ardent disciple of Christ and the greatest of the Apostles in the spread of the early Church.

Three questions to ponder

The Feast of St Peter and St Paul leads us into these two months of July and August. They are traditionally holiday months, although not everyone can go on holidays and certainly not all of us are on holidays for the full two months! One of the things that this feast does for us is it presents us with three questions to ponder and to find inspiration from. Two of the questions are asked by Jesus in the Gospel passage of the Feast of St Peter and St Paul. One of the questions is asked by Paul as he is confronted by Christ for the first time.

“When Jesus came to the Region of Caesarea Philippi, He put this question to His disciples: ‘Who do people say the Son of Man is?’” (Matthew 16, 13)

1. Who do people say the Son of Man is?

This first question, asked by Jesus of His disciples, and asked of us today as Christ's followers, was a religious question. The disciples answered it by citing great people of the past who were seen as significant in the story of God's journey with God's people.

For us, it can also be a religious question, as many today look towards all kinds of individuals and groups as the source of their faith and for their hope for the future of the Church and the world.

But it is much more than a religious question. It is a fundamental question for everyone, as it can be seen as meaning: where do people look for their happiness, their fulfilment, their hope, their future, their salvation today? Everyone is looking for these things in their lives, often in very strange ways and places.

Three of the many ways we look for these in our lives are:

1. Position: If you can get to the top of the ladder, you will be happy. Of course, we all have the right to develop our gifts and talents to the full. But not everyone can become a celebrity! And we do not have to be.

2. Possessions: If we can get rich enough, we will be happy. Everyone has a right to enough to live a full human life. But the reality is that countless people in our world live in abject poverty. The rest of us can be immunised against even thinking about these because of our own preoccupations with what we do not have.

3. Pleasure: If we can only enjoy ourselves all the time, we will be happy. We all have a right to enjoy living. But when pleasure becomes the objective of life, we can so easily end up in unhappiness. Loneliness is one of the major causes of death in our society today.

2. Who do you say I am?

“But you,” Jesus said, “who do you say I am?” (Matthew 16, 14)

This second question is answered by Peter, the leader of the disciples: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” This is the very core of our Christian faith. Everything else comes from this and everything goes back to this.

Our Christian faith is a profession of our faith in Christ as the source of our hope, of our happiness, of our fulfilment, of our future, of our salvation. In practice this means:

1. Christ is the one who can show us who the true God is.

He clearly tells us that God, far from being someone who is distant from our lives, has come very close to us, indeed, has become one with us in Him.

God, far from being one who judges us harshly, is like a parent whose love never fails because we are always God's beloved daughter or son. God's only judgement of us is: ‘I love you. You are mine.’

God, far from being one who holds the memories of our sins, forgives us immediately and completely: ‘though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow.’

2. Christ is the one who can show us who we are and what true human living is about.

- We are made in the Image of God
- We are God's beloved daughters and sons

- We are temples of God's Holy Spirit

- We are members of Christ's Body, the Church. And Christ teaches us that the only way to true human living is the way of love.

- To love God with our whole heart, our whole soul, our whole mind, our whole strength.

- To love our neighbour as ourselves

- To forgive as we have been forgiven

- Not to judge and we will not be judged

- To be compassionate as God is compassionate.

The third question

All of this brings us very briefly to the third question that Sts Peter & Paul raise for us. It comes from the Acts of the Apostles and Paul's conversion.

Paul, then known as Saul, was on his way to Damascus to arrest and torture the Christians there. He was struck to the ground and lost his sight. He heard a voice from Heaven asking: ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?’ ‘Who are you, Lord?’ he asked. ‘I am Jesus, and you are persecuting me.’

3. “Who are you, Lord?”

Just as Peter was led to make his act of faith in Jesus as the Son of the living God, so Paul was led to recognise the Church as the Body of Christ. What he was doing to the followers of Christ in persecuting them and putting them to death, he was doing to Christ Himself.

In the Gospels, Jesus had said to His disciples – and to us – “Whatever you do to even the least of my sisters and brothers, you do to me.” Paul discovered the truth of this and made it a core part of his preaching of the Gospels forever. We are always standing on holy ground as couples, as families, as communities of faith and as the human family.

Conclusion

As we enjoy these two months of the summer and prepare ourselves for what is ahead, we do so with the assurance of our faith that in Christ we have the certain source of hope, of happiness and of the future. And we celebrate the joy of love in our homes and families and Christian communities, with the knowledge that we are entrusted with the good news for the world that we are the beloved of God. And that all will be well.

Navigating cancel culture as a Catholic *by Sinéad Strong*

LATELY, I have been thinking a lot about cancel culture and the way it seems to dominate conversations both online and off. Social media can be like a massive spotlight - sometimes it shines on important issues, but other times it feels like it is just waiting to catch someone out. All it takes is one wrong move, old or new, and suddenly someone's entire reputation is at risk.

As a Catholic, I find myself wrestling with how to respond to this; not just for my own sake, but for my children, too. How do I teach them - and honestly, remind myself - to hold on to our faith values when the world can seem so quick to judge and so slow to forgive?

Cancel culture is complicated. On the one hand, it is a way for people to hold those in power accountable for things that might otherwise be swept under the rug. But the way it plays out - so fast, so

public, and often without any room for real conversation or apology - means that people are scared to make mistakes. Sometimes, even a moment of ignorance or a youthful error can come back years later to haunt someone, while chances for growth or forgiveness are few and far between. That just doesn't sit right with the way I understand justice and mercy as a Catholic.

Our faith teaches us that justice and mercy go hand-in-hand. True justice isn't just about punishing someone for a mistake; it's about making things right and welcoming people back into the community. Mercy, of course, is at the heart of Jesus' message. I am always reminded of His words about forgiving “seventy times seven times” (Matthew 18:22). That is a tall order, but it is what we are called to do. Catholic teaching always keeps hope alive; we don't ignore wrongdoing, but we also don't define people by

their worst moments. Everyone is made in God's image and likeness and has the capacity to change. Cancel culture, on the other hand, often feels like it writes people off completely. That is not the world that I want for myself or my children.

Navigate

So, what do I do with all this? How can I help my family navigate cancel culture in a way that lines up with our faith? Here are a few things I try to keep in mind and share with my children:

- Remember the dignity of every person: I remind my children (and myself) that everyone has worth, no matter what mistakes they have made. We talk about being careful with our words, especially when discussing people who have made headlines for the wrong reasons.

- Look for context and try to understand: Jesus often challenged the crowd when they were quick to

judge. I try to teach my children to pause, ask questions, and consider the whole story before jumping in or passing something along.

- Practice forgiveness and believe in change: We talk a lot about how forgiveness doesn't mean pretending nothing happened, but it does mean giving people a chance to learn and do better. Stories from the Bible, or even the lives of the saints, show us how people can mess up but still find their way back.

- Balance accountability with mercy: When someone does wrong, there should be consequences, but the goal is always healing, not just punishment. We talk about how important it is to see apologies, real change, and a willingness to make things right.

- Stay humble and look inward, too: Look at the parable about the Pharisee and the tax collector (Luke 18:9-14). It is a good reminder that we all need

forgiveness, we need to look at our own hearts before judging others.

Forgiveness

Talking about these things is important, but living them out matters even more. When one of my children makes a mistake, I try to respond in a way that addresses what went wrong but also shows a path to forgiveness. At church and in our faith community, we must look for ways to talk openly about justice, public shaming, and grace. The story of Jesus and the woman caught in adultery (John 8:1-11) is one I come back to often - it shows how we can stand up for truth and still lead with compassion. It is also important to be really conscious of our own behaviour online. Before we share, comment, or judge, pause and ask: “Does this reflect Christ's love? Am I treating this person with dignity?”

At the end of the day, I think cancel culture reveals a deep longing for justice and truth. But, as a Catholic, I believe we are



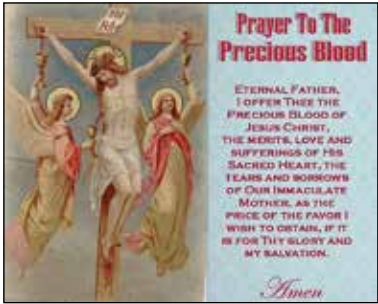
called to go further. Instead of outrage, I want to respond with hope - the hope that nobody is beyond redemption and that real change is always possible. By focusing on both truth and mercy, by teaching forgiveness and accountability, I hope my family and I can contribute to a more compassionate world. That feels like the kind of witness to the Gospel the world truly needs right now.

If you are interested in finding out more about Catholic Mothers Ireland, please visit www.catholicmothers.ie.

Children's Catechism Club - C3

by Veronica Harley

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



Precious Blood of Jesus - July

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

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



Maria Goretti (1890-1902) - Feast Day July 6

Maria was born at Corinaldo, Ancona, in Italy, into a poor but loving family; she was one of six children. She was baptised the day after she was born. Her father, Luigi was a farmer, and her mother, Assunta was a poor orphan girl who did not know how to read or write. Maria's parents loved God, the Blessed Virgin Mary and each other. Maria's father died when she was only 12, so she helped her mother on the farm and with the younger children in the home. Although they were very poor, Maria never complained and was always a comfort to her mother. She went to Mass every day, and taught her younger brothers and sister their

prayers and told them stories from the bible.

A boy named Alexander, aged 16, also worked on the same farm as Maria's family. He began to notice how pretty Maria was and wanted to be close her, but she refused because she wanted to remain pure like Our Lady. It was on a summer afternoon, July 5, 1902, that Maria was at home alone mending clothes when Alexander asked her to come to him. When she refused, he dragged her into a room and would not listen to her. She begged him to leave her alone because it would offend God and he would go to hell. Maria struggled and screamed, so Alexander angrily stabbed her several times with a dagger and then ran off.

When Maria was found she was taken straight to hospital, but she died about 24 hours later. During her last hours, Maria received Jesus in Holy Communion and told the priest that she forgave Alexander with her whole heart, and hoped that God would forgive him too. Alexander went to prison for 30 years but, for a long time, he did not feel sorry for what he had done.

Then, one night, Maria appeared to him in a dream walking in a garden and offering him a bunch of lilies. She told him that she hoped he would come to Heaven one day and from that moment he changed his life. He wrote a letter to the bishop asking for forgiveness for the awful sin he had committed. When he was released from prison, he spent the rest of his life working as a gardener in different monasteries.

Maria was declared a saint in 1950 by Pope Pius XII, who called her a "martyr of holy purity". We pray to St Maria Goretti to help all children to remain pure and holy (CCC 2518).

Saints Joachim and Anne - Parents of the Blessed Virgin Mary

July 26 is the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne. It is by tradition that Joachim and Anne are considered to be the names of the parents of Mary, the Mother of God. There is no historical evidence about their lives or names, and the only stories which exist come from legends and traditions. But it is not important to know all the historical detail about these two people. What we need to focus on is why the Church honours them.

It is true that the parents of Mary did nurture her and mould her to be the worthy Mother of God. It was their strong faith, their teaching

and guidance that assisted Mary in responding to God's request to be the Mother of His Son in faith (CCC 494).

This feast day is dedicated to grandparents because Joachim and Anne are the grandparents of Jesus. It helps grandparents to remember the important role that they have within their family and community, to ensure that they remain witnesses and guardians of the faith, which needs to be kept alive for future generations to come.

This Feast Day has a special message for younger generations too. It helps them to understand that the older people who are part of our extended families, or live in our communities, have a wealth of knowledge, experience and a true devotion to their faith in God.

Consequently, their opinions and advice should not be dismissed or considered outdated, but be viewed with respect and appreciation of the wealth and riches they continue to give us in the great gift of faith.

The Blessed Sacrament - August

The month of August is dedicated to the Blessed Sacrament. The Blessed Sacrament is the Real Presence of Jesus in The Eucharist. Special times are set aside in our Churches called 'Adoration', where we can come and worship Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, The Eucharist (CCC 1178). The Blessed Sacrament reminds us that even when Mass is not celebrated, Jesus, in the Eucharist, is still present in the Church.

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

The Transfiguration
The feast of the Transfiguration



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

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

The feast of the Transfiguration helps us to see, as the Apostles saw, that Jesus is really and truly God (CCC 554-555). This same Gospel story is heard during the second Sunday of Lent every year. It is part of the Lenten readings to remind us that the Apostles were given great hope at seeing Jesus in His glory before He was put to death and crucified. Likewise, we can reflect during Lent on the glory and joy which we will celebrate in the Easter story, which will follow.

Saints of the Month - August

St Dominic - August 8
St Clare - August 11
St Bartholomew - August 24
St Augustine - August 28



Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The beautiful Feast of the Assumption of Mary into Heaven is celebrated on August 15. The Assumption of Mary means that She was taken up into Heaven, body and soul. Mary's body was always pure. She gave birth to the Son of God,

therefore, God rewarded Her by taking Her pure immaculate body into Heaven (CCC 966).

Mary now reigns as Queen of Heaven and Earth. She is our Mother, who listens to our prayers and asks Jesus for special graces for us. On the Last Day, in the General Resurrection, we too hope to enter Heaven with our newly glorified bodies. Our resurrected bodies will not suffer any illness, nor need food or drink, but instead will be splendid and eternally beautiful.

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

Jubilee Year of Hope
St Jude Thaddeus - Patron Saint of hope and impossible causes.

St Jude Thaddeus, one of the 12 Apostles of Jesus, is known as the Patron Saint of Hope and the Impossible. In times of great trouble or difficulty, when situations seem hopeless, people turn to St Jude Thaddeus for help.

We know little about his life, but tradition tells us that he travelled far and wide - often into dangerous and unwelcoming places - proclaiming the Gospel. He was filled with the Holy Spirit and performed miracles that brought healing and hope to many people. His tireless enthusiasm and strong faith, even when faced with opposition, made him a beacon of hope. During this Jubilee Year of Hope, may we turn to St Jude Thaddeus for hope and strength in our daily lives.

His image often shows him holding an image of Jesus; this represents the miracle where Jesus impressed His face on a cloth and gave it to Jude to heal a king. He is also shown with the flame upon his head and represents His presence at Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the Apostles and gave them the courage to tell everyone the Good News about God.

St Jude Thaddeus, pray for us.

Quiz Time with Lawrence

1. What new unit of currency came into existence across the UK in June 1998?
2. Of which country is Dhaka the capital city?
3. In which William Shakespeare play does the character 'Shylock' appear?
4. Which of Henry VIII's wives is buried alongside him?
5. In which country was Elon Musk born?
6. In cricket, what is the maximum time allocated for an International Test Match?
7. With which city is the song 'Blaydon Races' normally associated?
8. What year was the Berlin Wall brought crashing down?
9. What is the name given to a word that reads the same, read backward or forward?
10. Mark Labbett and Shaun Wallace are renowned regulars on which daytime TV show?
11. Where are the world-famous Temples of Angkor Wat?
12. What American singer/songwriter released the song 'Raspberry Beret' in 1985?

13. In which Irish county is the town of Navan situated?
14. Which former World Champion boxer announced recently that he is set to make a comeback in Dubai this December, at the age of 46?
15. 'One Love' is the subtitle of a biographical film about the life of which iconic singer?
16. How many blessings are contained in the 'Beatitudes' according to the Gospel of Matthew?
17. What is the chemical symbol for silver?
18. How are musical siblings Charlie & Craig Reid better known?
19. In what movie franchise did Eddie Murphy play the role of renegade lawman, Detective Axel Foley?
20. From what species of fish does caviar come?
21. In golf, what type of bird is used to describe an occasion when a player makes a hole-in-1 on a Par 4?
22. What was the Christian name of Captain Mainwaring, played by Arthur Lowe in 'Dad's Army'?
23. What country boasts the world's longest land border?
24. What is the highest score possible in a regular game of ten pin bowling?
25. In what city did 'Oasis' begin their eagerly-awaited comeback tour?

Quiz Answers: 1, £2 coin; 2, Bangladesh; 3, The Merchant of Venice; 4, Jane Seymour; 5, South Africa; 6, Five days; 7, Newcastle; 8, 1989; 9, Palindrome; 10, The Chase; 11, Cambodia; 12, Prince; 13, Meath; 14, Ricky Hatton; 15, Bob Marley; 16, Eight; 17, Ag; 18, The Proclaimers; 19, Beverley Hills Cop; 20, Sturgeon; 21, Albatross; 22, George; 23, Canada; 24, 300; 25, Cardiff.

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

Clonmany, Coleraine, Creggan, Culladuff, Culmore, Desertmartin, Donnylough, Drumquin, Dunamannagh, Dungiven, Fahan, Faughanvale, Garvagh, Gortin, Greencastle,



Tri-diocesan Hope flag flies high for young and young-at-heart at Derry, Clogher and Armagh meeting point.

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