

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Gen 12:1-2

Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you, and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing.

OPENING PRAYER

Lord, through the work of Saint Patrick in Ireland we have come to acknowledge the mystery of the one true God and give thanks for our salvation in Christ; grant by his prayers that we who celebrate this festival may keep alive the fire of faith he kindled. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen

FIRST READING

Jer 31:31-34

A reading from the prophet Jeremiah

See, the days are coming – it is the Lord who speaks – when I will make a new covenant with the House of Israel and the House of Judah, but not a new covenant like the one I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant of mine, so I had to show them who was master. It is the Lord who speaks. No, this is the covenant I will make with the House of Israel when those days arrive – it is the Lord who speaks. Deep within them I will plant my Law, writing it on their hearts. Then I will be their God and they shall be my people. There will be no further need for neighbour to try to teach neighbour, or brother to say to brother, 'Learn to know the Lord!' No, they will all know me, the least no less than the greatest – it is the Lord who speaks – since I will forgive their iniquity and never call their sin to mind.

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 50

Response:

A pure heart create for me, O God.

1. Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness. In your compassion blot out my offence. O wash me more and more from my guilt and cleanse me from my sin. **(R)**

2. A pure heart create for me, O God, put a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, nor deprive me of your holy spirit. **(R)**

3. Give me again the joy of your help; with a spirit of fervour sustain me, that I may teach transgressors your ways and sinners may return to you. **(R)**

SECOND READING

Hebrews 5:7-9

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews

During his life on earth, Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, aloud and in silent tears, to the one who had the power to save him out of death, and he submitted so humbly that his prayer was heard. Although he was Son, he learnt to obey through suffering; but having been made perfect, he became for all who obey him the source of eternal salvation.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Glory to you, O Christ,
you are the Word of God!
If a man serves me, says the Lord,
he must follow me; wherever I am,
my servant will be there too.
Glory to you, O Christ,
you are the Word of God!**

GOSPEL

John 12:20-30

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.
A reading from the holy Gospel
according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

Among those who went up to worship at the festival were some Greeks. These approached Philip, who came from Bethsaida in Galilee, and put this request to him, 'Sir, we should like to see Jesus.' Philip went to tell Andrew, and Andrew and Philip together went to tell Jesus. Jesus replied to them: 'Now the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. I tell you, most solemnly, unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies, it remains only a single grain; but if it dies, it yields a rich harvest. Anyone who loves his life loses it; anyone who hates his life in this world will keep it for the eternal life. If a man serves me, he must follow me, wherever I am, my servant will be there too. If anyone serves me, my Father will honour him. Now my soul is troubled. What shall I say: Father, save me from this hour? But it was for this very reason that I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name!' A voice came from heaven, 'I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.' People standing by, who heard this, said it was a clap of thunder; others said, 'It was an angel speaking to him.' Jesus answered, 'It was not for my sake that this voice came, but for yours. 'Now sentence is being passed on this world; now the prince of this world is to be overthrown. And when I am lifted up from the earth, I shall draw all men to myself.' By these words he indicated the kind of death he would die.

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.**

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God, begotten, not
made, consubstantial with the Father;
through him all things were made.**

**For us men and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate
of the Virgin Mary, and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate, he suffered death
and was buried, and rose again on
the third day in accordance with
the Scriptures.**

**He ascended into heaven and is seated
at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord,
the giver of life, who proceeds from the
Father and the Son, who with the Father
and the Son is adored and
glorified, who has spoken through the
prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and
apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism
for the forgiveness of sins and I look
forward to the resurrection of the dead
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Lord, accept this pure sacrifice
which, through the labours of
Saint Patrick, your grateful people make
to the glory of your name.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

**We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Many will come from east and west
and sit down with Abraham, Isaac and
Jacob at the feast in the kingdom of
heaven, says the Lord.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Strengthen us, O Lord, by this sacrament,
so that we may profess the faith taught
by Saint Patrick and to proclaim it in our
way of living.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

Seapatrick Parish

Living and sharing Catholic faith within the Banbridge community

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PARISH OFFICE: PARISH CENTRE, EDENDERRY ROAD, BANBRIDGE BT32 3AF

Please contact the Parish Office for the arranging of Anniversary & Month's Mind Masses, applications for Baptism & Marriage, bookings of the Parish Centre & other Parish-related enquiries

OFFICE HOURS: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday: 9am - 1pm

TEL: 028 406 62136 - Voice Messages can be left at this number outside Office Hours

Email: seapatrickparish@dromorediocese.org

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Andrew McMahon 028 406 29551

PARISH DEACON: Rev. Michael Rooney 028 406 71401

MASS TIMES (Winter Schedule)

St Thérèse's Church, Scarva Road	
Saturday Vigil	5.30pm
St Patrick's Church, Dromore Street	
Sunday	9am, 10.30am & 12 noon
Tues - Fri	10am
Our Lady Queen of Peace	Sunday 7 th April, 9.30am

SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION

Confessions are heard each Saturday between 4.15pm and 5.15pm in the Church of St Thérèse

STATIONS of the CROSS

each *Thursday evening* at 7pm in *St Patrick's Church*.

Evening Masses during Lent

Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm in the *Parochial House*, Scarva Road, & *Thursdays*, *St Patrick's Church* at 7.30pm.

Exploring the Sunday Scriptures

You are invited to discuss the Sunday readings for Lent: *Wednesday 20th March* at 8pm in the *Parochial House*, Scarva Road and *Thursday 21st March* at 10.30am in the *Meeting Rooms*, Dromore Street

SOLITUDE SATURDAY, GLENVALE CONVENT

Saturday 23rd March 10am – 3.30pm

An opportunity to take some time for yourself, beginning with Mass at 10am. Donation - £20
Refreshments and a light lunch included.
Early booking essential - contact **02830832828**

PARISH DRAW WINNERS – 14th March 2024

£100 Winning No: 3401

Winner: Gerard Fitzpatrick, Hillhead Park

DISTRIBUTION of NEW ENVELOPES

New Offertory Envelopes may be collected after the 5.30pm Mass this Saturday, 16th March, in the front porch of St Thérèse's Church.

You may request a Standing Order Mandate or box of envelopes by leaving your name, address and telephone number in the Parish Office: 028 406 62136
[e] seapatrickparish@dromorediocese.org

Many thanks to all those parishioners who helped distribute envelopes over the past two weeks. Your help is very much appreciated.

Alpha - in a Catholic Context

The Alpha Course is designed to bring people together to reflect on the essentials of Christian belief and to hold meaningful conversations about life, faith and purpose. *Each 'Alpha' session includes a 25 minute video presentation, followed by discussion - with tea/coffee & biscuits. It is offered free of charge.*

A new Alpha Course is beginning in our parish on **Wednesday 10th April, 7pm - 8.30pm** in the Meeting Rooms, Dromore Street and continues every Wednesday until 5th June.

To register your interest in attending, or find out more:
Tel. Rachel - 07841418596 or Catriona - 07900306912
or Email: rachaelmccann@ymail.com
or catriona.kavanagh@gmail.com

Before the end of our Masses, this weekend, a short presentation will be given highlighting this Alpha Course

MASS of CHRISM - Thursday 28th March

Archbishop Eamon Martin, along with the clergy of the diocese, will celebrate the Chrism Mass on Holy Thursday at 10.30 a.m. in Newry Cathedral. All are welcome. *In particular, an invitation to attend is extended to families and schools in the Diocese with children who will make their Confirmation this year.* The Mass can be viewed via Newry Parish webcam at newrycathedralparish.org/parish-life/watch-live/

Dear Parishioner

As I mentioned in my letter last weekend, the Parish Pastoral Council has been considering, for some time, the best way forward in terms of Sunday and Weekday Masses in the parish once the current *Winter Pilot* schedule (October-April) ends.

That schedule was introduced for financial reasons and a concern to reduce utility bills during the colder months. When explaining this in the bulletin, last August, I pointed out that our Pastoral and Finance Councils were also of the view that the parish should be aiming to move towards three Sunday Masses, overall - as post-Covid attendances did not seem to require the provision of four weekend Masses all year round. The matter was not pursued, however - at that point - as the moving of most Masses to St Patrick's involved a sufficient upheaval, without the complication of other changes as well.

After much thought and discussion, however, the Pastoral Council and myself have come to the conclusion that a new schedule for the months ahead provides the ideal opportunity to trial such a reduction in Sunday Masses. There is always something of a decrease in church attendance during the summer season, due to holiday absences. For similar reasons, it is also the time of year when clergy are more likely to be away and visiting celebrants need to be sourced. We see the summer and early autumn time, therefore, as a period when reducing our Sunday schedule from four to three Masses would be justified - and something worth attempting this year.

For some time now, the Pastoral Council has been considering how such a reduction to three Masses might be made. Members observed attendance patterns and counted numbers in St Patrick's and St Therese's, throughout last spring and summer, and during the more recent months of the *Winter Pilot*. They have concluded that - to cater for current Mass-going parishioners - a Vigil Mass, a relatively early Sunday morning Mass and later Sunday morning Mass would be the best combination. They believe that this arrangement would offer the parish a good choice of Mass times on any weekend.

In order for this to occur, existing Sunday morning congregations will have to 'merge' to a certain extent. Given the significantly larger size of St Therese's Church and its adjoining site, this makes it a better location in which to trial a change of this kind. The high utility prices, which have made St Therese's costly to use in the winter months, are much less relevant in the warmer and brighter months ahead. The larger facility, meanwhile, offers the space and flexibility for such a combining of Masses to, hopefully, happen more smoothly.

For these reasons, we are proposing a '**Summer Pilot**' for Sunday and Weekday Masses, centred on **St Therese's Church**, and beginning at the start of May. It is, therefore, planned that, from the weekend of **Sat./Sun. 4th-5th May**, a summer schedule will begin - with *all* Sunday Masses celebrated in **St Therese's Church** as follows:

Saturday (Vigil) 5.30pm & Sunday - 9.00am & 11.00am

The **Tuesday-Friday, 10am Masses** will also return to St Therese's Church at that point, beginning Tuesday 30th April.

Remembering the Faithful Departed

ANNIVERSARIES

Sunday 17th March

Dympna Fitzpatrick, *Brooke Grove*

Lucy Kelly, *Laurel Heights*

Gertie Higgins, *Kilpike*

Charlie McDermott, *Ballykeel Road*

James Eddie & Owen Doyle, *Gilford*

James Strain, *Ravenswood*

Doris Scullion, *Granville Gardens*

Sr Carmel Loye & Mary Loye

Sean Walsh, *Mount Pleasant*

Denis Teggart, *Moorefield*

Anne Bannon, *Leitrim*

Mary Elizabeth Doyle, *Corbet*

Maeve Rea, *Primrose Gardens*

Cecil McKnight, *Seapatrick*

Patricia & Pat Burns, *Peggy's Loaning*

Jane Carr, *Primrose Gardens*

Andrew (Drew) Trainor, & Deceased Members of the Trainor Family, *Huntly Bungalows*

M.M. Jim Ward, *Newry Street*

Tuesday 19th March

Angela & Richard Sullivan

RECENTLY DECEASED

Ivor McQuaid, *Mountview Park*

Paul Neeson, *Oakdale*

As always, I hope that the changes outlined here will not be too difficult for parishioners to accept and adjust to - and I apologise, in advance, for any inconvenience which may arise for any of our faithful Mass attenders.

I realise, in particular, that - because of the new 11am Mass - St Patrick's will not have the 10.30am Mass during the Summer Pilot, and I regret this. However, I trust parishioners would be prepared to acknowledge that, during the winter months past, St Patrick's had many more Masses than it has had for some decades.

We are not changing Mass arrangements for the sake of change. We are continuing to trial and explore what schedules and combinations might prove most workable - and sustainable - for the parish, going forward. We do this, as ever, bearing in mind our reduced attendances, our increased costs and our very serious financial situation, overall, as a parish.

The Pastoral Council and myself will seek comment and feed-back from you, in due course, regarding your experience of both the Winter and Summer Pilot schedules. We look forward to hearing this and to reflecting - with you - on how we can best respond to the various challenges which continue to confront us.

Fr Andrew McMahon

There is no mention of Gethsemane in John's gospel. John has Jesus striding in glory through his life and death: his miracles are not acts of compassion as in the other gospels, but signs of his glory (2:11). Yet in this reading Jesus says, "Now my soul is troubled." Though there is no account in John's gospel of his healing the possessed, we still see his compassion: later in the same gospel he says, "Do not let your hearts be troubled" (14:1); he is human and he is with us after all. This gospel has no account of the institution of the Eucharist at the Last Supper, but in its place there is an account of Jesus washing the disciples' feet.

The Passion begins to loom early in this gospel. Jesus speaks of being "lifted up" (3:14; 8:28; 12:32, 34), and John plays on the ambiguity of this phrase. Jesus will be lifted up in shame on the cross, but this same lifting up is a lifting up in glory. Strange paradox: his shame is his glory, his death is his resurrection.

The mystics are the ones who best appreciate this paradoxical level of our Faith. Johann Tauler, a disciple of Meister Eckhart, said, "Peace is what all people are striving for; they seek after it

in every direction, in every occupation, and in all their ways of life. Oh if we could only shake ourselves free from this tendency, and learn to seek peace in tribulation. Only there is true peace born, peace which will last and really endure. To seek elsewhere is to go astray inevitably. You will always find that this is true. If only we could seek joy in sadness, peace in trouble, simplicity in multiplicity, comfort in bitterness! This is the way to become true witnesses to God."



The peace that comes from avoiding trouble is mine only as long as I can avoid trouble, and "piecemeal peace is no peace." I cannot avoid trouble forever.

If all my efforts are directed to avoiding trouble, then even the thought of it is enough to deprive me of peace. I have to be able to find peace even in trouble. Only then is it unconditional peace. Tauler again: "Before His death, our Lord always promised His disciples peace, and also after His resurrection He promised them all peace. Yet they never obtained peace externally. None the less, they found peace in tribulation and love in suffering. In death they found life; to be cross-examined, judged, and condemned was for them a joyous victory. These were true witnesses."

Briefly, a note on 'Eternal life'. It is badly translated as 'everlasting life'. Eternal life means God's kind of life, not human life stretched out in time to infinity. Nor is it a life that begins beyond the grave. "Whoever believes has eternal life," said Jesus (John 6:47) – already has, not will have. In keeping with the other paradoxes of the faith: eternal life is here and now, in this world, in this mess. It will flower beyond the grave, but not if it has no roots here and now.

Fr Donagh O'Shea, O.P.,
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