

GOOD TO GO

I was introduced recently to the song "Empty Garden" by Sir Elton John. It was inspired by the murder of his friend John Lennon in 1980 by a deranged evangelical Christian, Mark Chapman. Elton John is in fact godfather for one of Lennon's sons – Sean. The words are very apt for Easter in what is a beautiful sad song about a murdered friend.

*"Who lived there?
He must have been a gardener that
cared a lot
Who weeded out the tears and grew
a good crop
Now we pray for rain, and with every
drop"*

Eerie isn't it? It came to mind with

Mary of Magdala going into a different garden in the early hours of that first Easter Morning. But unlike in Sir Elton's song, the Magdalene's friend was Risen. Or, as one little boy exclaimed when shown a picture of an empty tomb with the stone rolled back: "Jesus is loose." And that he most certainly is! The tomb was empty but the garden was filled with his presence. And not just the garden but, as we'll hear over the next few Sundays, His presence erupts among huddled disciples and Emmaus-bound disciples. It's a presence that seeks to nourish and irrigate the most arid life, a presence that will weed out tears and produce in us a harvest of good works.

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His presence

Unfortunately we expect Jesus to operate along straight lines. We expect He be there on Sunday in a set place and for a set duration. The deal is this, He comes good if we are good and behave according to what our culture asks. We have come a long way from the fiery prophetic figure of Jesus of Nazareth who shocked and disturbed the established conventions of his day.

Reflection

What blinds you to the full truth of the resurrection of Jesus?

Lesson

Feel the overwhelming joy and faith of Mary Magdalene when Jesus meets her in his risen glory.

Prayer

I praise and glorify your holy resurrection, for through the cross has joy come into the world.

The deeper vision of Christ

He is most definitely free and unbound (words he said of the resurrected Lazarus just two Sundays ago). He can show up in the most surprising of places and people. We, however, tend to have a more "bound up" view of things: tradition, convention and commerce can limit our view. We like things to be predictable and hopefully cost-free. For instance, in Queensland, Australia, last year, a proposal to make Easter Sunday a public holiday was opposed as bad for the economy. As one believer said, "I didn't know Easter Sunday was about the economy. I thought it was about celebrating the Resurrection. I must have been misled!"

Let's pray this Easter that we don't lose sight of the deeper vision of Christ and that we have fresh heart for the passion and enthusiasm of God's Kingdom.

— Tom Cox

This Week (17–23 April)

- 17 **Mon** Easter Monday
- 18 **Tue** Easter Tuesday
- 19 **Wed** Easter Wednesday
- 20 **Thur** Easter Thursday
- 21 **Fri** Easter Friday
- 22 **Sat** Easter Saturday
- 23 **Sun** SECOND SUNDAY OF EASTER

Today's Readings



Acts 10:34-37-43
Psalm 117:1-2,16-17,22-23
Colossians 3:1-4
or 1 Corinthians 5:6-8; Jn 20:1-9

Next Sunday's Readings



Acts 2:42-47
Psalm 117:2-4,13-15,22-24
1 Peter 1:3-9
John 20:19-31

St. Anthony's Parish, Belfast

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MASS TIMES & SERVICES

(UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED)

Saturday Evening at 6.30pm. (English Parish Mass)

Sunday Morning (in Polish): 9.30am, 1pm & 7pm. (English Parish Mass): 11.30am

Weekdays: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday at 9.30am. Friday at 7.00pm.

Wednesday: Communion Service discontinued until further notice (Day off)

Holy Days of Obligation: Vigil Mass at 7.00pm & Morning of Feast Day 09.30am

Confessions: Before each Mass and By Arrangement. Baptisms: Saturdays at 4pm (3 weeks notice required)

EASTER DAY OF THE LORD'S RESURRECTION

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 20:1-9

In some ways this gospel is a difficult one for prayer. It only presents a part of the story.

1 The disciples are in a state of shock and suffering from a traumatic loss. Jesus, the one in whom they had placed so much hope, has been murdered and buried. Then, another shock – the body of Jesus is missing. Have you had experiences in which one tragedy or crisis follows quickly after another? What was that like for you? How did you cope? What, or who, sustained you then?

2. Mary and Peter, and possibly others, came and discovered that the tomb was empty. They are left in a state of bewilderment 'for as yet they did not understand the scripture, that he must rise from the dead.' Have you been in that kind of situation, faced with events you cannot explain, events which have dashed your hopes in another person, or in God? What has that been like for you?

3. Yet in spite of the lack of explanation, the beloved disciple 'saw and believed'.

• Have there been times when others have done something that you could not understand, and which they could not explain at the time and yet you believed that all was not as it seemed? Times when you decided to trust in spite of the evidence?

• Have there been times when others have shown this kind of faith in you, and all you could say was 'trust me'?

• Have there been times in your relationship with God when you have felt that you were faced with an empty tomb and still you believed?

Where have you found life in such experiences?

John Byrne OSA. Email jbyrneosa@gmail.com

WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

Recently Deceased: John McCann, Fr Finbar Glavin

Anniversaries: Fr Pat Gallagher, Máire Smyth, Fr Kevin O'Leary, Winnie McPhillips & Evelyn Mills, John Riordan (Sun 16th at 11:30am), John Mahony (Mon 17th at 11am), May Riordan (Tues 18th at 9:30am), Olive McCormick (Thurs 20th April at 9:30am), Mairead Hughes (Sat 22nd April at 6:30pm), Joseph White (Sun 23rd at 11:30am), Daniel Doherty (Sun 30th at 11:30am)

READERS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Sun 16th April

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Maria Murphy & Anthony Clifford

Morning Mass: Martina McClory & Eileen Dunn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Ann Wright

Morning Mass: Margaret Sheppard

Sun 23rd April

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Eamon Blaney & Carmel Blaney

Morning Mass: Suzanne Hopkins & Margaret Woods

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Stephen Murphy

Morning Mass: James Henderson

COLLECTIONS: Many thanks for your contribution to last week's collection: World Meeting of Families £889.48, Shrines £101.68. **NEW BOXES OF ENVELOPES ARE NOW AVAILABLE** (arranged by surname, alphabetically). Please note to reduce waste numbers have been re-attributed. If your details have changed, or if you would like to register



PEACE TO YOU



for a box, please give your details to Fr McCann as soon as possible. Please consider signing a Gift Aid form so that the parish can claim back the Tax from the HMRC on your contributions. Your own Tax is not affected.

Trócaire Lenten Collection Boxes. Trócaire thanks the parishes of Down and Connor for the donations received towards their 2016 Lenten Campaign: a magnificent total of £620,451 and €250 was raised. With this in mind, you are asked to open your boxes, change any coins into notes and place your donation into the envelope supplied and fill in our name and address, and if possible tick the gift aid box (if you are a tax payer). In accordance with the government gift match, where the treasury will match the amount given to charities, the donations should all be collected within 90 days of the beginning of the funding project. We would highly encourage you to return your donations AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

Cantiunculae Concerts—Dates for your diary. Fr McCann's choir will be staging the following concerts:

Cantiunculae, Music through the generations: /Friday 21st March, in 1st Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, Belfast, presenting religious and secular, popular music, by Cantiunculae choir and their family members. 7pm. Proceeds in aid of Glebe House

Cantiunculae Faure's Requiem with the McDonnell Trio, Friday 19th May [NB CHANGE OF DATE!] in St Anthony's Church, Willowfield at 7pm. Proceeds in aid of Renovation of the Willowfield COI Parish Hall. More details posted later in subsequent bulletins.

Fatima Centenary Celebrations. Tom McCormack, co-producer of the film, "the Call to Fatima", will speak on the importance of Our Lady's apparitions at Fatima for our time. His work is based entirely on the writings by Sister Lucia of Fatima. The presentation will take place in St. Teresa of Avila Parish Centre, Glen Road on Monday 24th April at 7.15 p.m. Enrolment in the brown scapular will follow the presentation. All welcome.

Me and My Girl. St. Agnes' Choral Society continue their 60th Anniversary celebrations with their production of the hilarious family comedy musical, Me and My Girl in The Grand Opera House, Belfast from 9th - 13th May. Tickets can be purchased online at www.goh.co.uk or via the Box Office on 028 9024 1919

Feast of Divine Mercy. The Feast of Divine Mercy will be celebrated in Belfast on 23 April in:

St. Peter's Cathedral, Falls Road – starts at 2:30 with Holy Rosary and Sacrament of Reconciliation; Divine Mercy Chaplet; and Mass.

Sacred Heart Church, Oldpark Road – starts at 2:30 with Holy Rosary and Sacrament of Reconciliation; Divine Mercy Chaplet; and Mass.

St. Paul's Church, Falls Road – starts at 1:30 with Exposition and Sacrament of Reconciliation; Holy Rosary; Divine Mercy Chaplet; and Mass. See novena prayers and poster in the Porch.

Family Healing Retreat led by Fr. Edgardo Arellano (Fr. Bing) Spiritual Director of the Alliance of the Two Hearts. The theme of the retreat "The Appeal of Our Lady of Fatima for Prayer and Reparation: HILTON HOTEL, 4 Laynon Place, Belfast (2 min from Central Station) On Sat 29th and Sun 30th April 2017. Residential and Non Residential are welcome. For further information please contact. 07734562102 or 07754837045 or 07917056350 or (028 87767451)

Legion of Mary Hostel Collection Bishop Treanor has given permission for a collection to be taken up in support of the Legion of Mary hostels for the homeless (Morning Star and Regina Coeli) on 29/30 April 2017, subject to local variations, in every parish in the diocese. The money collected is essential for the running of the hostels, at a time when money is tight and statutory financial support is reducing. Unfortunately the hostels do not have sufficient personnel to carry out the collection in every parish.

Are you interested in working with couples preparing for Marriage or becoming a Marriage & Relationship counsellor? Come along to our Information Evening on Tuesday 2nd May, 7pm – 9pm

ACCORD NI. Are you interested in working with couples preparing for Marriage or becoming a Marriage & Relationship counsellor? Come along to our Information Evening on Tuesday 2nd May, 7pm – 9pm ACCORD Belfast Centre, Curran House, 155 Northumberland Street, Belfast BT13 2JF. Contact - 02890 339944 Email- belfast@accordni.com

Every God's blessings for the Easter Celebrations of the Lord's Resurrection

Parish Safeguarding. Can you please ensure that all Children and Vulnerable Adults are accompanied at all times when entering the Sacristy / Toilet facilities. If you have any queries regarding the Safeguarding Policy please contact a member of the Parish Safeguarding Committee. Many Thanks. Fr Henry PP.