

Parish Newsletter

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT | 3 December 2017
Year B | Issue 1

SEIZE THE MOMENT

Advent comes with an annual wake-up call. It's not that we have all been sleeping for the last while. It is a recognition that our priorities can get lost in the midst of all demands of family life, work commitments, and the general worries of life. So this annual wake-up call is a helpful reminder to us to check our sense of direction and put first things first.

Perhaps at times we can be like the Israelites described by Isaiah in the first

reading, repeatedly wandering from their good intentions. Isaiah asks for God's help in this situation, reminding God: "Lord, you are our Father, we the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hand."

It's as though Isaiah is saying to God, "Lord, if we do wander from our good intentions, it is you who made us. Come now and help us."

Both Isaiah and Paul in the second reading have no doubt about God's

Today's Readings



Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1.3-8
Psalm 79:2-3,15-16,18-19
1 Corinthians 1:3-9
Mark 13:33-37

Next Sunday's Readings



Isaiah 40:1-5.9-11
Psalm 84:9-14
2 Peter 3:8-14
Mark 1:1-8

(continued on back page)

willingness to help, because they believe in a loving God, and so do we. When in the midst of our confusion we

No matter what our current problem, God loves us, God is calling us, and God is faithful.

send out a plea to God, "Lord, help me to sort out myself out!" this is a cry for help to the loving God who made us. No matter what our current problem, God loves us, God is calling us, and God is faithful.

It is this fidelity of God that makes us people of gratitude and hope. We have been given the gift of life and left in charge of that gift. It is a great honour when we are entrusted with the care

of something valuable. What is it like for you to see yourself entrusted by God with the gift of life? Each morning when we awake we can offer a prayer of thanks for the gift of another day. We can also look forward in hope so that we can make the most of that day. We ask the Lord to keep us awake so that we will not miss opportunities that will come our way, both for our own fulfilment and for the benefit of others. "Stay awake, for you never know when the time will come." These words are often seen as referring exclusively to the moment of death. That's a very limited and a somewhat scary way of hearing them. Any moment of grace, any positive opportunity, can be seen as the Lord coming into our lives. We are the losers when we miss out on such opportunities. So, this Advent, stay awake to welcome the Lord in whatever way he comes to you. ■

– John Byrne

Reflection

Can you recall the experience of an unexpected grace – a good thing happening for you that was not anticipated?

Lesson

"Lord, you are our Father; we are the clay, you the potter, we are all the work of your hands" (Is 64:8).

Prayer

Let us see, O Lord, your mercy, and give us your saving help.

This Week (4–10 December)

- 4 **Mon** St John of Damascus, priest and doctor
- 5 **Tue** St Crispina, martyr
- 6 **Wed** St Nicholas, bishop
- 7 **Thur** St Ambrose, bishop and doctor
- 8 **Fri** THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION OF THE BVM
- 9 **Sat** St Juan Diego; St Peter Fourier
- 10 **Sun** SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT



St. Anthony's Parish, Belfast

PARISH PRIEST: Fr. Henry McCann (and Chaplain to the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald)
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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)



FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 13:33-37

1. The coming of the Lord is not just the moment of death, but any moment of grace. Recall unexpected graces – good things that happened when they were not anticipated.

2. Perhaps some of these were moments when you were particularly alert and aware of what was going on in you and around you, and this enabled you to be open to the moment of grace. Recall the contrast with moments when that alertness and awareness were not present.

3. The servants were given charge of the household 'each with their own job'. Identify with the servants as people given a responsibility within the household of God's people. What has it been like for you when you have been shown trust in this way by another person? What is it like for you to see yourself trusted in this way by God?

4. Jesus says that what he is saying to his disciples he is saying to all. Have there been times when you have been a messenger of hope to others, encouraging them to wait for a moment of grace. Who have been the ones to encourage you?

John Byrne OSA. Email jpbryneosa@gmail.com

WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

Recently Deceased: Katie Shinn (niece of Kay Dunn), Monica Cusack
Anniversaries: Terence & Sarah McCartan, Sally Watson, Nancy Grogan,
Peter Hughes, Patrick Joseph Greenan (Sat 2nd Dec at 6:30pm), Bro. Peter
Gallagher (Sun 3rd Dec at 11:30am), Marie Matthews (Sun 10th Dec at
11:30am), Rose Meenagh (Sun 17th Dec at 11:30am), John Higney (Sun
31st Dec at 11:30am)

READERS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Sun 3rd December

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Anthony Clifford & Shauna Mullen

Morning Mass: Sarah Corcadden & Kay Dunn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Stephen Murphy

Morning Mass: James Henderson

Sun 10th December

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Ann Flanagan & Shauna Mullen

Morning Mass: Loretta Watson & Eileen Dunn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Frank Doherty

Morning Mass: Séamus Monaghan

COLLECTIONS: Many thanks for your contribution to last week's collections: Weekly Collection £645.55, Bishop's Commissions £10, Shrines £89.58. If your details have changed, or if you would like to register 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.

PLEASE NOTE: If you have missed sending in your collection envelope donations, One Envelope Per Collection (eg Weekly or Monthly) will suffice. For example there is no need to put weekly envelopes inside each other with your donation. Discard the missed envelope(s) and place your total donation into ONE envelope. Thank you.

Advent Stations of Confessions available in St Anthony's after 6.30pm mass from next week (Sat 2nd December) from 7.30pm–8pm. Why not prepare early before the Penitential Services, in preparation for Christmas.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception (8th December). Times of Masses:

Friday: 9:30am English.

7pm Polish

St Brigid's Parish Pastoral Council have organised a "Day for Life" 8th December. It is a day of prayer that our society will respect, protect, love and serve life from the moment of conception until its natural end. The 8th December has been deliberately chosen for this day of prayer as it is the Feast of The Immaculate Conception. Everyone is invited to make a special effort to play a part in this day.

Leaflets are available in the porch.

Advent at Clonard Monastery. You are invited to join us in Clonard Monastery to celebrate the beautiful season of Advent. Let's gather together on four consecutive Tuesdays (28 Nov, 5 Dec, 12 Dec and 19 Dec) in the conference room of Clonard Monastery from 7.30-8.30pm. Kindly, sign up at Clonard reception, or email reception@clonard.com, or phone 028 9044 5950.

SVP Christmas Cards. Saint Vincent de Paul (St. Bernadette's conference) will be selling packs of ten Christmas cards after Sunday masses, starting 19th November. If you buy them and send them, it will help to spread the name of the charity as well as helping towards supporting local people in difficulty in this busy season.

Saintfield & Carrickmannon Parish: Liam Lawton Concert - O Holy Night. Monday 18th December 2017 in Aid of Marie Cure and the N. I Hospice. Tickets contact: 07788435797 or 07919332490.

Mary's Meals at Christmas. Raffle: Prizes galore in our raffle Hampers, Toiletries, Candles Tickets £1 –sold in porch. Give a Mary's Meal Gift card Prices from £5 to £30. Join us for Tea and mince pies on Sunday 17th December after mass to celebrate the good work achieved by all of you on behalf of Mary's Meals this year. See poster in porch.

Mary's Meals Newsletter now available in Church Porch.

An Evening of Festive Favourites at Drumalis, Friday, 22 December at 7.00 pm. The evening will include seasonal favourites, old and new, performed by Voices Chamber Choir under the direction of Loreto McAuley. On arrival, there will be a festive reception with entertainment commencing at 7.30 pm. A two-course supper will be served during the interval. The cost for the evening is £25 per person and admission is by pre-paid ticket only. For further information, please contact Drumalis during office hours (Monday – Friday, 9 am – 5 pm) – telephone 028 2827 2196/028 2827 6455.

St Colmille's Ballyhackamore are presenting an Advent DVD programme for the over sixties, 'Beloved Disciple', in the Iona Room, Parochial Hall on four Friday mornings, beginning this Friday 24th November at 10.00am, starting with refreshments. All are welcome.

Iona Institute: Invitation to a talk: 'Marriage and family in Northern Ireland'. Speaker: David Quinn, on Tuesday, December 12, 2017, in the Wellington Park Hotel, 21 Malone Road, Belfast at 8pm. Admission: Free. If you would like to attend please email tharkin@ionainstitute.ie.

Saint Ignatius of Loyola, Spiritual Exercises (Silent Retreat) for Women. 28 Dec–1 Jan, at the Alexian Brothers Monastery, Knock, Co. Mayo. For details +353-85-8235525. Poster in Porch.

Christmas at Tobar Mhuire. Gift Shop. - Christmas Shopping in our Gift Shop for your religious Christmas items, from Christmas cards to Nativity sets, Advent candles and gifts. For further information on pricing or bookings call 02844 830242 or email secretary@tobarmhuirecrossgar.com

The World Meeting of Families—The Amoris Programme – 'Let's Talk Family', produced by the National Team for WMOF 2018, aims to give parishioners an opportunity to come together to discuss issues affecting family life today in the light of the gospel and Church teaching as presented in the Papal Exhortation, 'The Joy of Love'. The programme (6 X 1.5 hours sessions), will be delivered across the diocese during the season of Lent, either in individual parishes or within a Pastoral Community setting.

Volunteers from each parish who would be willing to lead six group discussions during Lent are desirable. Ideally the volunteers should have some previous experience of leading group discussions with adults. Training of the group leaders, consisting of two evening sessions, will take place at three venues across the diocese. Trainee leaders can attend training sessions at whichever venue suits them.

Training of Group Leaders 2018:

1. All Saints Parish Centre, Ballymena, 4 Broughshane Road, BT43 7DX. Two training sessions – Wednesday 10th and 17th January, 7-9.30pm.
2. St. Malachy's Parish Centre, 24 Alfred Street, Belfast, BT2 8EN. Two training sessions – Thursday 11th and 18th January, 7-9.30pm.
3. St Michael's Parish Centre, 99 Irish Street, Downpatrick, BT30 6BS. Two training sessions – Wednesday 24th January and 7th February, 7-9.30pm.

If you are interested please give your names to Fr McCann as soon as possible.

The Holy Family Developing World Group is hosting the launch of the **Trócaire Art and Poetry Exhibition** to be held on Tuesday, 5 December 2017 at 7pm in the Gathering Space of Holy Family Church. All most welcome. For more information contact Trócaire on 028 9080 8030

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.