

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)



FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Luke 1:26-38

1. We are all favoured ones and God is with us. Sometimes we are more aware of this than others. How have you experienced being a favoured person, one blessed by God? How have you experienced God's presence? Who has been Gabriel to you – a messenger of good news?

2. 'Do not be afraid.' Mary was perplexed by the words of the angel. Perhaps you too have sometimes been perplexed by life's path and wondered what it all meant. Perhaps at times you have doubted if God was really with you. In your troubled moments who has been an 'angel' helping to lower your anxiety?

3. Mary was taken by surprise by the invitation, but she did not tell the angel she was not ready, nor ask him to return later. She was prepared to go with the invitation even though it was not the 'right moment'. 'Here I am Lord.' What invitations have come to you at the 'wrong time' and how have you responded?

4. Mary's response serves as a model for us – she is one who says 'yes' to what life offers. What is it like for you to say 'yes' to life? Perhaps at this moment in your life you are being invited to say 'Here I am, Lord'?

John Byrne OSA. Email jpb Byrneosa@gmail.com

WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

Recently Deceased: Monica Cusack, Canon Hugh Starkey, Fr Peter Forde, Gerald Murray,

Anniversaries: Nancy Grogan, Peter Hughes, Patrick Joseph Greenan, Bro. Peter Gallagher, Johnny Kelly, Mark Mahoney, Marie Matthews, Rose Meenagh, John O'Connor (Tues 26th Dec at 10:30am), John Higney (Sun 31st Dec at 11:30am).

READERS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Sun 24th December

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Eamon Blancy & Carmel Blancy
Morning Mass: Martina McClory & Kathryn Curran

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Ann Wright
Morning Mass: Margaret Sheppard

Sun 31st December

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Marie Murphy & Phyllis McGrillen
Morning Mass: Suzanne Hopkins & Kay Dunn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Stephen Murphy
Morning Mass: James Henderson

New Rotas for Ministers of the Word and Eucharist are available in the Sacristy

COLLECTIONS: Many thanks for your contribution to last week's collections: Weekly Collection £670.63, Monthly Stipend £5, Shrines £89.75. 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. **PLEASE NOTE ALSO:** The Old £1 coin will no longer be accepted in collection envelopes or candelabra/shrines

Christmas Mass Times in the South & East Belfast Pastoral Community:

Holy Rosary: Vigil 7pm (children), 9pm Morning 9am, 10:30am, 12pm, 1:15pm

Drumbo & Carryduff: Vigil 7pm (children), 9pm, Morning 9am, 10:30am, 12pm

St Bernadettes: Vigil 7pm (children), 10pm, Morning 9:30am, 11am

St Anthony's: Vigil 7pm (English), 9pm (Polish), 11:30pm (English).

Morning 9:30am & 1pm (Polish) 11:30am (English)

St Stephen's 9:30am & 12pm (Polish), 10:30am (English)

St Matthew's: Vigil 7pm, Morning 11am

St Colmcille's: Vigil 7pm (Children), 10pm, Morning 9:30am, 11:30am

St Malachy's: Vigil 8pm, Morning 9:30am, 11:30am

St Brigid's: Vigil 7:30pm, 9pm, Morning: 9am, 10:30am, 12pm

"In love there is no room for fear, but perfect love drives out fear..." John 4:18. Trocaire's Christmas Appeal, 'Until Love Conquers Fear', is raising money to support people all over the developing world who face fear every day of their lives – like the fear of not being able to feed their children or the fear of having to flee their homes because of conflict. To find out more about the appeal visit www.trocaire.org

The World Meeting of Families—The Amoris Programme – 'Let's Talk Family'. 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.

World Meeting of Families Icon Prayer Card will be available, one per family, at the Christmas Masses. It is suggested that the Icon Card may be placed on the Dinner Table where the family gather for their meal, and the prayer be prayed as a grace before meals.

Towards Peace. Christmas and New Year is often a time when we are reminded of our deeper selves and deepest hopes, and deepest pain. The vision of Towards Peace is to provide a safe supportive space for people who have been affected by abuse in a Church context, and who are seeking to explore the spiritual impact of the abuse. If you have been abused and would like a space to reflect on the impact of the trauma of abuse on your own relationship with God and spirituality, Towards Peace is here for you: [www.towardspeace.ie/003531.505.3028](http://www.towardspeace.ie/). See leaflets in porch.

Bangor Parish 7 Day Trip to Brittany and Normandy. From June 25th to July 1st joining the one day St Columbanus International Meeting in St Coulomb June 30th. The cost is 895 euro pp sharing, all breakfasts and dinners included, 3 nights Lisieux, 3 nights St Malo. Day trips include; Places associated with St Therese, Mont St Michel, Dinard and more. (Courier: Kieran Troy who has led Bangor groups in the recent past). As there is great demand for hotel space in Brittany in this period prompt booking would be highly recommended. Details and booking form on parish website www.bangorparish.com.

Diocesan Directory with Lists of Clergy, Parish details & Mass times, Religious Orders, Diocesan Bodies, etc. available in the sacristy. Cost £4.

Bethany Bereavement Care. Would you like to help those people in your parish who are grieving after a bereavement? Bethany Bereavement Support offers training as a parish based group ministry which aims to help those bereaved and grieving. Support is offered on an individual basis in the home, to groups in drop-in centres, by phone calls, by helping at funeral liturgies and remembrance services. A full training course is offered over a 10 evening period. For more information or to register interest in the next Training Course which begins on 22nd February 2018 and will take place in the Good Shepherd Centre, please contact the parish office or Claire Dowds, Good Shepherd Centre, 511 Ormeau Road, Belfast BT7 3GS. Mobile 07557882183, email: bethanybereavementni@gmail.com

Bishop Noel Treanor's Christmas Message is available in the Church Porch

Children in Crossfire need more participants! Calling anyone who feels they would like to help raise vital funds, through an amazing Borneo Trek over Easter 30th March -7th April 2018. There will be mass available. £100 will secure a place contact Shauna on shauna.oneill@childrenincrossfire.org or call 02871269898 Mobile 07597747940

St Joseph's College Open Night, Thursday 18th January 2018, 7.00pm to 9.00pm. Principal's Address at 7.00pm. All Primary 6/7 pupils, prospective 6th form students and their parents are welcome.

Virtual Reality Online Safety Awareness Seminar. In the Good Shepherd Centre, in Belfast There are 2 available dates: Wednesday 17th January 2018 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm and Thursday 18th January 2018 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm. Please select your preferred date and RSVP by 12th January 2018 with your name to myself, Lorna Baker at office@soddc.org or telephone 028 90492798. See poster in the Sacristy.



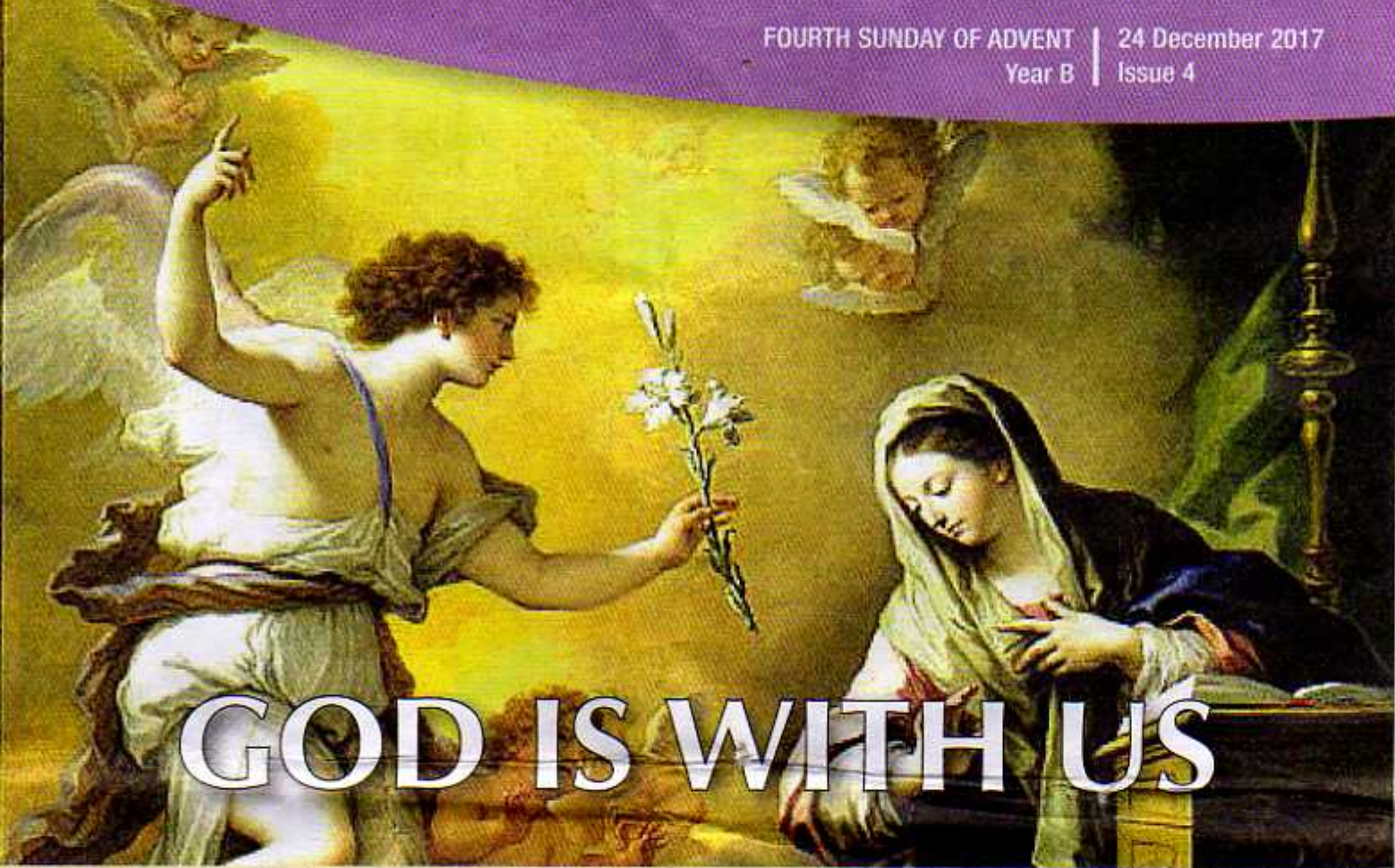
Wishing you every God's blessings for the Season of Christmas and every fortune for the New Year.

Fr Henry McCann PP

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.

Parish Newsletter

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT | 24 December 2017
Year B | Issue 4



GOD IS WITH US

The dialogue between Gabriel and Mary in today's Gospel has applications way beyond the special position of Mary. What the angel, as a messenger from God, says to Mary is what God is saying to all his children.

We are all favoured ones and God is with us. This is the core of the revelation that Jesus would bring. It is foreshadowed in this dialogue with

Mary. In love God created us and in love God accompanies us on our life's journey. Jesus came to put a human face on God as a God of love. There are times when it is easier for us to trust God's love than others. In times of doubt it is good for us to refresh our faith by recalling when we have had a livelier sense of God's presence. Perhaps there was someone who encouraged you to trust, like Gabriel did for Mary?

Today's Readings

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-12, 14, 16
Psalm 88:2-5, 27, 29
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Next Sunday's Readings

Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3
Psalm 104:1-6, 8-9
Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19
Luke 2:22-40

Yet even with a sense of God's loving presence, we may fear what lies ahead in life. It is easy to say: "Do not be afraid", but sometimes we can be perplexed by life's path and wonder where it is going. At times we may have doubted if God is really on our side.

With God's help we are capable of doing far more than we can on our own strength alone.

Mary was afraid, doubted, questioned but eventually came to trust and to be open to what God was to do through her. Later Elizabeth would say "Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled."

We also will be fruitful in life when we open ourselves to what life has to offer, saying "yes" to the opportunities that come our way trusting, not just in our own strength, but that God will be with us along the way. With God's help we are capable of doing far more than we can on our own strength alone.

King David was rebuked when he was boasting about all he was going to do by his own efforts. Then a message came to him from God through the prophet Nathan. He was told: "Who are you to think you are going to do great things? It is the Lord who will make you great." With God all things are possible. In writing to the Romans Paul gives thanks to God saying, "Glory be to God who is able to give you the strength to live according to the Good News."

The Lord is with us. We journey in hope.

— John Byrne

Reflection

Recall times when you had a sense of God being with you.

Lesson

With God all things are possible.

Prayer

Of this I am sure, O Lord, that your love lasts forever.



This Week (25–31 December)

- 25 Mon** THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD
- 26 Tue** St Stephen, The First Martyr
- 27 Wed** ST JOHN, APOSTLE AND EVANGELIST
- 28 Thur** The Holy Innocents, martyrs
- 29 Fri** St Thomas Becket, bishop and martyr
- 30 Sat** St Egwin of Evesham
- 31 Sun** THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

