

Parish Newsletter

THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD | 7 January 2018
Year B | Issue 6



AWAKENING BAPTISM

On every pilgrimage I've been part of to the Holy Land, we visit the River Jordan. The place visited by most pilgrims is definitely not the geographical location of the Gospel, but a pleasant place with a Kibbutz and restaurant and shop, trees to give shade and chirping birds, and a few baptism areas to gather people at.

I wade in to baptise and to be baptised. Some brave souls come into the river as well, others stay at the river edge. We renew our baptism promises

together and lower each other carefully under the water. I like it – as I always have a sense of being together and connected in our weak humanity. More importantly – that God understands and knows our lives intimately. God muddied his feet just as we do at the Jordan, he became a baby, needed changing, faced illness and disease and death. And it matters – God won't dismiss our problems and struggles. God knows, as he had a human body.

At least our Jordan experiences were not as eventful as the childhood

Today's Readings



Isaiah 55:1-11
Psalm: Isaiah 12:2-6
1 John 5:1-9
Mark 1:7-11

Next Sunday's Readings



1 Samuel 3:3-10,19
Psalm 39:2,4,7-10
1 Corinthians 6:13-15,17-20
John 1:35-42

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stories I read on St Patrick where he baptised King Aengus of Munster at Cashel. Sometime during the rite, St Patrick leaned on his sharp-pointed crozier and inadvertently stabbed the king's foot. After the baptism was over, St Patrick looked down at all the blood, realised what he had done, and begged the king's forgiveness. Why did you suffer this pain in silence, the Saint wanted to know. Aengus merely replied that he believed it to be a part of the ceremony, and did not appear to consider any suffering of consequence at such a moment. Not surprisingly there were no records of any other baptisms that day!

But sometimes things go wrong, as it did for me last June when I entered the waters of the Shannon a little less

voluntarily than I did at the Jordan or hundreds of other times, I was knocked off a boat. I went under, spluttered, lost spectacles and vision and the first thing I felt was my friend's arm from a neighbouring boat gripping mine and a reassuring voice as I surfaced with a splutter, "I got you, buddy."

Perhaps the most beautiful words I shall ever hear and his was the most beautiful face to see! Baptism, apart from a plunging or covering with water, involves two anointings with the Oil of Catechumens and Chrism. It always reminds me that my inner life may have become dry and weathered and needs smoothing. The perfumed Chrism asking... do I need to breathe in an aroma strong enough, gentle enough, to waken me to the fragrance of God's presence all around me? Today's feast rouses us – like a welcome splash of water to a tired face.

– Tom Cox

Reflection

In which ways do you identify Jesus? Make a list of answers to the question, "Who is Jesus?"

Lesson

The heavens split open is God revealing himself: a new awareness of God breaking into the human consciousness of Jesus and through him into the world.

Prayer

Lord, give confidence to all candidates for baptism and keep the wavering flame of faith alight. Amen.

This Week (8–14 January)

- 8 **Mon** St Thorfinn
- 9 **Tue** St Adrian of Canterbury
- 10 **Wed** St Peter Orseolo
- 11 **Thur** St Silvanus of Amiens
- 12 **Fri** St Benet Biscop
- 13 **Sat** St Hilary, bishop and doctor
- 14 **Sun** SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME



St. Anthony's Parish, Belfast

PARISH PRIEST: Fr. Henry McCann (and Chaplain to the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald)
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Email: h.mccann@downandconnor.org, stanthonys@downandconnor.org,
henrymccann@hotmail.com, Website: www.saintanthony.co.uk

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)



FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

Mark 1:7-11

1. John gives an example of humility as a person confident in his own role but not seeking to claim to be more than he is. He is able to acknowledge that Jesus is greater. There is a freedom in being able to acknowledge the gifts of others without losing a sense of one's own giftedness. Recall times when you were able to do this.

2. The baptism of Jesus was an extraordinary religious experience for him. Something happened that was a major step forward for Jesus in coming to know that he was the beloved Son of God. We all have events in our lives that are milestones along the road of discovering who we are. What have been these milestones for you?

3. 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased.' Bring to mind memories of experiences in which you knew you were the beloved (of God or of another person) and that the one who loved you was well pleased. Bring these experiences to mind with gratitude, knowing that the only proper response to love received is thankfulness. Perhaps you have also given that experience to another.

4. It is easy to lament the growing secularisation in the world today, but the Spirit of God who spoke loudly to the world in the Christ-event is active today. How can we be open to the new things the Spirit is saying to the Church today?

John Byrne OSA. Email jbyrneosa@gmail.com

WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

Recently Deceased: Canon Hugh Starkey, Fr Peter Forde, Gerald Murray, Jim Harte

Anniversaries: Marie Matthews, Rose Meenagh, John O'Connor, John Higney, Minnie Tanney (Sun 7th Jan at 11:30am), Claire Burke (née Kelly) (Fri 12th Jan at 7pm), Michael Gallagher (Sub 14th Jan at 11:30am), Patrick Gunn (1st Anniv Sun 21st Jan at 11:30am), Jim & Kathleen McCann

READERS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Sun 7th January

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Eamon Blaney & Carmel Blaney
Morning Mass: Margaret Sheppard & Eileen Dunn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Frank Doherty
Morning Mass: Seamus Monaghan

Sun 14th January

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Eamon Blaney & Carmel Blaney
Morning Mass: Margaret Sheppard & Eileen Dunn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Frank Doherty
Morning Mass: Seamus Monaghan

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 £589.57, Christmas Collection £40, Shrines £77.07. 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

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

Flu Advice: Medics at the Mater Hospital have apprised the Diocese of the high risk of a strain of the flu virus which has yet to peak. Hospitals in Northern Ireland are experiencing high numbers of patient admissions of those suffering from respiratory illnesses directly linked to the flu virus. As a precautionary measure parishioners are encouraged to use disinfecting hand gels and hand wash soaps to minimise risk of infection. The customary "sign of peace" handshake exchanged during Mass is suspended until the risk of infection is significantly reduced. Similarly, the sharing of the Chalice (with communicants or with Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at Mass should be temporarily suspended, for the same reason.

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.

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.

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.

Our Lady and St Patrick's College, Knock Open Morning. Saturday 13th January 2018, Year 7 Pupils and Parents welcome. 9.15am—12.30pm. Principal's Address 9.30am, and 11.00am. Prospective Year 13 students are also 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.

Parish Pastoral Council. The next meeting of the Parish Pastoral Council preparation group will be held in the John Paul II room on Wednesday 10th January 2018 at 7pm.

Legislating for Life, a lecture by Lord Alton of Liverpool in St Brigid's Parish Centre Derryvolgie Avenue Belfast BT9 6FP on Thursday 25th January at 7.30pm. David Alton is an Independent Life Peer, he is a Catholic and strongly holds a "pro-life" position.

Ault Irish Dance Classes Every Tuesday at 8.30 from 9th January 2018 in the Holy Family Parish Centre (120 Cavehill Road). Contact Anne :90324732/07714233298 e:annecidirishdance@gmail.com

Confirmation: Supporting our Young People. The Diocese has produced two leaflets on the Sacrament of Confirmation: a) Information for Parents and Carers, and b) A Guide for Sponsors. This may be of use for families where Confirmation will be conferred during the year on a child. Some of these leaflets are available in the Porch.

Epiphany Announcement: "Know, dear brothers and sisters that, as we have rejoiced at the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, so by leave of God's mercy we announce to you also the joy of his Resurrection, who is our Saviour. ON the fourteenth day of February will fall Ash Wednesday, and the beginning of the fast of the most sacred Lenten season. ON the first day of April you will celebrate with joy Easter Day, the Paschal feast of our Lord Jesus Christ. ON the thirtieth day of May will be the Ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ. ON the twentieth day of May, the feast of Pentecost. ON the third day of June, the feast of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ. ON the second day of December, the First Sunday of Advent of our Lord Jesus Christ, to who is honour and glory for ever and ever. AMEN."

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.