



## IN LOVE AND SERVICE

I don't have any photograph of my 1965 baptism. I suspect most people in my age group are the same. But we get on with life despite this early anonymity! I do wonder sometimes how the children of today will feel, years later as adults, looking at the vast amount of images of them posted lovingly on various social media outlets – but that's another matter!

Well, today we have a Gospel snapshot of the baptism of Jesus – not as a baby but as a grown adult, ready to start his life's work. Through my work I've met, from time to time, people who tell me with glassy eyes and empty beer/whiskey glasses that

they were 'trying to find themselves'. Jesus defines himself in the cold waters of the Jordan.

The first reading tells us what his work is about, a message of comfort to a people returning home from exile. How to begin again? Each day of our journey from the font of baptism is a fresh start, another chance. The Second reading tells us the kind of lives we should lead as we wait.

### Next Sunday's Readings



Isaiah 62:1-5

Psalms 95:1-3, 7-10

1 Corinthians 12:4-11

John 2:1-11



I think that at baptisms we often get all reflective about our own lives. What gives our life meaning? What is our life's work? What gives us deepest satisfaction? Time was when people were defined by their work, or what they possessed, or the authority they wielded, or popularity or fame. Many external things seemed to fit that bill. Now, we are not so sure. Ownership of things is a normal part of life, but how we apply that ownership carries immense social responsibilities. The Christian in me knows, however, that we are made in the image and likeness of God. Our lives are most 'successful' (a limited word) when we reach out in love and care for one another. I can't remember where I heard it, but someone asked a scientist when humanity began. She pointed to an archaeological find of an ancient

human skeleton where it was evident that someone had been treated for a fracture they had suffered. That, she stated, was the moment when humanity began - when the welfare of another person means more to us than our own convenience.

Perhaps today we need to ask, how does our daily living meet that calling to be a member of the body of Christ?

### A Baptism Prayer

*Thank you, Lord, for the love you give to me. Let the water be a sign of your grace and of my commitment to you as I submit myself to it in faith. Thank you for making me a member of your body the Church, and grant that together we may show your love in the world.* ■

- Tom Cox



### Reflection

*In which ways have you experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit through prayer?*



### Lesson

*Jesus is the anointed Son of God.*



### Prayer

*We thank you, Lord Jesus, for your baptism and for ours. Help us to really believe in our baptism, and to live our baptismal promises. Amen.*



### This Week (10-16 January)

- 10 M** St Silvanus of Amiens
- 11 T** St Benet Biscop, abbot
- 12 W** St Aelred of Rievaulx, abbot
- 13 T** St Hilary of Poitiers, bishop and doctor
- 14 F** St Gregory Nazianzen
- 15 S** St Ita, virgin
- 16 S** 2nd SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME





# St. Anthony's Parish, Belfast

PARISH PRIEST: Fr. Henry McCann (and Chaplain to the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald), 3 Willowfield Crescent, BT6 8HP.  
Tel. 028 90458158. Mobile 07740603643. (preferred) Email: [h.mccann@downandconnor.org](mailto:h.mccann@downandconnor.org), [stanthonys@downandconnor.org](mailto:stanthonys@downandconnor.org).

Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/stanthonyvbelfast>  
Website: [www.saintanthony.co.uk](http://www.saintanthony.co.uk)

**PUBLIC MASS TIMES—COVID-19 ERA (will be under assessment/review)**

Saturday Evening at 6.30pm. (English Parish Mass)

Sunday Morning (in Polish): 9am, & 6:30pm. (English Parish Mass): 11.30am

Weekdays: (Mon Private 9:30am), Tues & Thurs at 9.30am. Fri at 7.00pm.

All English Masses on Facebook. Polish Weekday Masses: Tues & Thurs 7pm, Sat 9am

Confessions: By Arrangement. Baptisms: By Appointment

Local SVP Conference contact details: 028 90351561

<https://www.svp.ie/sibernadettebelfast>



## FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD

*Jesus also had been baptized and was praying.*

*Heaven was opened and the Holy Spirit descended upon him.*

*Jesus, sinless, you stood among us,*

*awaiting the sacrament like everybody else,*

*as though you were a sinner who needs to be made clean.*

*But the Father said in a loud voice:*

*"You are my beloved Son; with you I am well pleased."*

*Oh Holy God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, you stand with us,*

*sinful as we are, forming us as beloved daughters and sons.*

*Baptism shows your light in us for all the world. Let it be.*

*Anne Osdieck*

## WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

Recently Deceased: Pat McBrearty (father of Fr Stephen), Mr Patrick Whyte, (brother of Fr Daniel), Mary Duggan, Rev Paul McCormick

Anniversaries: Peter Hughes, Mary Guinness, Robert & Mary Sheppard, Frances Donnelly, Jim McCann, Marie Matthews, Patrick Gunn (Sun 16th January at 11:30am)

COLLECTIONS: Many thanks for your support. Monthly Stipend £537.53, DONATE [Online Donate Button on Website](#)

We would appreciate that if you send in a cheque to pay for a number of different donations, that you itemise what amount should go to each collection. Also include all empty envelopes in the one envelope

As new boxes of envelopes are being prepared for April, if your details have changed or if you would like a box please contact Fr Henry ASAP.

Rotas for Ministers of the Word are available in the sacristy.

Updated Diocesan Covid-Safe Measures for all Church based liturgies/activities. As well as the previous measures, the following updates are to be followed, summarised, (issued 26th October 2021):

**Social Distancing:** a minimum of one metre social distancing between members of different households.

**Face Coverings:** The wearing of face coverings while entering, leaving and moving around a church is mandatory (except when exempted). Face coverings should be recommended throughout celebrations, even when seated. If there is congregational singing, face coverings must be worn.

**Hand Sanitizers:** Suitable hand sanitizers should continue to be provided at the entrances to Churches and other parish buildings.

**Ventilation:** Churches should be well ventilated during and after any gathering.

**Movement around the Church:** Parishes should retain any guidance/direction designed to allow social distancing.

**Cleaning Routines:** Parishes should maintain current regime of cleaning between liturgical services.

**Celebration of Mass:** Parishes should continue to observe the principle of simplicity in the Liturgy for the time being, and note that the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days remains suspended.

**Choirs and liturgical music groups** may recommence their ministry, and the number of members must be included in the safe maximum number determined in the risk assessment. Face coverings should be used and members observe 1 metre distancing. Choirs should sing at a reduced volume, and choose a repertoire that will not unnecessarily prolong the liturgy.

**Entrance and recessional processions** should be simple, confined to the celebrant, (deacon) and servers. There should be **no offertory procession** and **sign of peace remains suspended**. Those administering Holy Communion should continue to sanitize hands before and after distribution, to wear face coverings, and **communion in the hand should remain the norm**, or accommodation made for those who receive on the tongue, when hands should be sanitised immediately after each recipient.

**Covid Variant Omicron and Christmas Celebrations.** In a meeting with Faith Representatives Group with the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) and the Chief Scientific Advisor (CSA) this week, they advised that the risk of transmission of the Omicron variant of Covid-19 was at least 2.5

times higher than the Delta variant, making the risk of contagion significantly higher than before. It had been agreed that at this stage there would not be expected any formal additional restrictions imposed on Churches over the Christmas period. However, the CMO and CSA made the following appeal to Church and faith communities over the Christmas Season:

A) Assess the risk of every activity you plan to undertake, bearing in mind that the risk of spread of infection from the Omicron variant is at least 2.5 times higher than any form of the virus heretofore.

B) Maximise the use of all established mitigations notably, Ventilation, Social Distancing and Wearing of Masks.

C) Minimise all activities which bring people together and which are not essential to the integrity of your worship and faith celebration of the Christmas season. They are not saying Masses and Services should be cancelled but anything beyond this should be carefully reviewed.

Considering the advice received, Bishop Noel writes: "I would ask you to please encourage anyone who is vulnerable to consider participating online in the Christmas liturgy. Also, I suggest you encourage families to get aside time in their festivities for such online participation."

With regards the risks of contagion in relation to the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, both to the priest and other members of the congregation, and given the fact that the virus stays in the air for several hours unless the ventilation is very effective, the bishop has considered and asks "that Parishes postpone these activities until the current situation has settled, in the new year. Unless there is grave necessity for an individual to celebrate the sacrament at this time, I would ask you to encourage the faithful to consider and avail of the 'Act of Perfect Contrition' previously proposed by Pope Francis." This resource is available in the Church porch, and a full explanation is available on the Parish of St Anthony, Belfast Facebook Page, and parish website.

**St Colmille's Alpha Course.** An opportunity to explore life, faith & meaning in a friendly and informal setting. How? Via Zoom link: When? Begins on Tuesday 11th January 2022 @ 8.00pm. More information contact [n.dunn@downandconnor.org](mailto:n.dunn@downandconnor.org), 07879 498131. See flyers in the church porch, see <https://st-colmilles.net/>

**Feast of the Baptism of the Lord.** Since the first lockdown of the Pandemic, holy water fonts have been emptied and the sprinkling of holy water during services has been sparingly limited to funerals, and weddings and baptisms, and even then the risk of possible transmission of the Covid-19 virus has been minimised. Since last year saw the 4 month lockdown after Christmas 2020, this is the first public celebration of the feast of the Baptism of the Lord since the pandemic began. To this end, bottles of Holy Water have been hygienically prepared for take home, one per household. We thank you for your continued support and following of the guidance for the safe attendance at church services, and ask that God would continue to watch over you and your loved ones. May this holy water remind us of our baptism, when we died with Christ, and entered the tomb with him, so as to share in his resurrection, and live a new life through faith.

**Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible.** The Bible is at the heart of our faith and our relationship with God. Reading the Bible should bring us closer to Christ, but many people find it hard to even begin. Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible is an 8 Week online programme written by Jeff Cavins and facilitated by the Living Church office. Course participants will receive a resource pack and connect online for a time of teaching, discussion and prayerful reflection. There are three groups available.

□ Wednesday Morning at 11am beginning on Wednesday 12th January

□ Wednesday Evening at 7pm beginning on Wednesday 12th January

□ Monday Evening at 7pm beginning on Monday 17th January

To register you can complete an online form <https://forms.office.com/r/e3FWFK5x8w> or e-mail [a.steen@downandconnor.org](mailto:a.steen@downandconnor.org).

**Anam Cara Belfast,** the organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding its monthly Parent Evening for bereaved parents on Monday 10th January at 7.20pm in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast. This event is free and open to all bereaved parents regardless of the age your child died, the circumstances of their death, or whether their death was recent or not. \*Subject to change in accordance with government advice\*

**2022 Octave Of Prayer For Christian Unity.** The Annual Eight Days of Prayer for Christian Unity will take place from Tuesday 18th - Tuesday 25th January 2022. The theme for 2022 is "We saw the star in the East, and we came to worship Him" (Mt2:2).

**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 McCann PP.

The Parish of St Anthony's is part of the Diocese of Down and Connor and operates in accordance with the Diocesan Privacy Notice, copies of which are available in porch.