

St. Anthony's Parish, Belfast

Pastoral Area of South & East Belfast

PARISH PRIEST: Fr. Henry McCann (and Chaplain to the Ulster Hospital, Dundonald), 3 Willowfield Crescent. BT6 8HP.
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Website: 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



3rd SUNDAY OF LENT

*There was once a person who had a fig tree planted in his orchard
Jesus, kind and patient gardener of souls:*

when we are barren like your fig tree,

(with unjust war, racial bias, destruction of our climate)

you don't give up on us.

Please, soak our roots. Make them heavy with your love.

And, pour your grace upon us like water on parched land

until we bear fruit.

Anne Osdieck

WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

Recently Deceased: Dolores McCafferty (sister of Fr Jack Hutton), Adele Maxwell, Luke Hassan, Brendan Doran

Anniversaries: Brigid Curran, Terence McCann, John & Florrie Guinness, Theresa McCann

COLLECTIONS: Many thanks for your support. Last week: Monthly Stipend £724.34. 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

Collection for Needy Parishes (Sunday 20th March). This collection was established to create a special fund to assist 'financially needy' parishes. There are several parishes within the Diocese that have accumulated debt and are financially stretched. However, through financially restructuring schemes it is hoped that many of these parishes, with the aid of this fund, will be able to return to a positive financial position. This collection hopes to help less fortunate parishes return to sound financial footing. 2020 - £39,560

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.

Relaxation of Covid-19 Related Regulations & Restrictions. The pandemic is not over, and we will continue to live with the risks and effects of COVID-19 for some time. As a result, it is important that, in a spirit of Christian solidarity, we all do what we can to care for each other. Therefore, the Diocese continues to strongly recommend a number of protective measures to ensure the safety and well-being of all.

1. Face Coverings: the Diocese strongly recommends that face coverings continue to be worn at all times in the church.

2. Hand Sanitizers: will continue to be provided at the entrances. Hand sanitizing when entering the church is strongly recommended.

3. Social Distancing: While we no longer have to observe social distancing in the church, we need to be distance aware, especially for the vulnerable present.

4. Those administering Holy Communion should continue to sanitize their hands before & after distribution, & wear face coverings.

5. Communion in the hand should remain the norm.

6. Here in St Anthony's we are to return to the liturgical gestures of standing, sitting and kneeling, as marked in the missalette.

7. As there is still a high prevalence of the Covid-19 virus in the community, and high infection rates, parishioners must consider themselves whether they wish to attend church or not, but the **Obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days remains suspended**. The full text of the guidelines are available on the [Parish of St Anthony, Belfast Facebook page](#) and [Website](#)

National Church Collection For Ukraine. The Irish Bishops have asked that a national church collection, to support relief for those affected by the war in Ukraine, be held on Sunday 27th March. "People are also invited to support the charitable initiatives of Aid to the Church in Need, the Jesuit Refugee Service, and Trócaire. Trócaire is currently responding to the crisis through its partners Caritas Ukraine and Caritas Poland which have a strong presence in the region and can use resources strategically to the greatest effect."

Trócaire Lenten Campaign 2022. Trócaire's Lenten Campaign was launched on Ash Wednesday. Boxes are available in the church. The Lenten Campaign will focus on Zimbabwe, through the story of Thandekile and her two children. For further information see www.trocaire.org, section Lent 2022. Trócaire can benefit

again this year from the UK Aid Match programme, which means that the UK government will match parishioners' donations up to a maximum of £2 million. This is an opportunity for our Lenten donations to double.

Lenten Pioneer Pledge. Please consider taking the short-term Lenten Pledge and make a difference to someone's life affected by addiction to drink or drugs, and say the following daily prayer:

"I promise in honour of the Sacred Heart of Jesus and with the help of the Blessed Virgin Mary to abstain from all alcoholic drink during Lent."

Scottish Jesuits. will run an online Lent course, presenting a daily episode from the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the Spanish courtier-turned priest who devised Ignatian spirituality. The retreat will show how God transformed the life of St. Ignatius and through him, the lives of countless others. People take part individually but can also join weekly groups to share the fruits of their prayer and be helped in finding new ways to pray and be inspired. More details at www.onlineprayer.net

"No Greater Love" Lenten Programme. The Living Church office will be offering the "No Greater Love" programme on-line during Lent this year. (This programme started in parishes in 2020 but the pandemic restrictions meant that the course was never finished.) There are 5 online sessions – one for each week of Lent which will lead us into Holy week. To book a place on this online program please email livingchurch@downandconnor.org The 6 sessions to choose from are: Mondays at 11am or 7pm (starting 14th March); Tuesdays at 7.30pm (starting 8th March); Wednesdays at 7.30pm (starting 9th March); Thursdays at 11am or 7pm (start 10th March).

The Synodal Pathway. At this time in the Catholic Church all over the world, Pope Francis is calling for a period of listening in preparation for a gathering, known as a synod. The synod will take place in Rome in 2023. Pope Francis' goal is to encourage us to listen to the Holy Spirit as well as listening to one another. As with all journeys, it begins with small, first steps. We are now taking our small, first steps on this synodal pathway. Recently you received a postcard in the church. Cards are still available to collect at the back of the church. On your postcard you will see four questions that ask you about your experience of the Church and ask for your thoughts and ideas for the future. Some people will want things to change and others will want things to stay the same. It's important to remember there are no right or wrong answers. This is about your experience of the Church and your ideas for the future. We would ask that you think about the questions, pray about them, discuss them perhaps at home, and submit a response. This will allow your voice to be heard. Completed postcards should be returned by Sunday 27th March to allow the information to be gathered and fed back into the diocese. You can place postcards in the collection basket. Alternatively, it is now also possible to submit your feedback directly to the Living Church Office using their on-line questionnaire. See www.downandconnor.org/synod This facility will remain open until Palm Sunday (Sunday 10th April).

Synodal Listening In The Pastoral Community Of South & East Belfast. As part of this whole process, Bishop Treanor has encouraged local parishes to come together, pray and enter into a conversation about our Church at this time. You are invited to join in the synod conversation on Thursday 31st March 7 – 9 pm in St Colmille's Parish Centre, 191a Upper Newtownards Road. The session will be facilitated by Jim Deeds from the Living Church office and Catherine McCoy, Pastoral Worker in St John's.

Loughview Integrated Primary and Nursery School

Confirmation will take place in St Anthony's on Thurs 24th March at 4pm.

First Confession will take place on Thurs 31st March at 10.30am (sorry for the mistaken date!)

First Holy Communion will take place Saturday 7th May at 10.30am

Please keep these children in your prayers.

Feast of the Annunciation (Fri 25th March) Masses: Polish at 9am; English at 7pm
Consecration of Russia to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. On Friday 25th March, during the Celebration of Penance at 1700 (4pm BST), in St Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis will consecrate Russia and Ukraine to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. We ask you to pause and pray at this time for peace. (posted on Pope Francis' twitter account @pontifex on 15/03/22) . see <https://www.vatican.va/content/vatican/en/html>

Celebrating Mary's Yes—Diocesan Prayer for Vocations, Friday 25th March 2022 at 7pm. Let us gather as a Diocese to pray for vocations. Every vocation requires commitment and generosity to say "Yes" to God's plan for our lives. On the Solemnity of the Annunciation of the Lord, we invite you to join with us online to pray the rosary for vocations to the priesthood. See www.churshscrcsps.tv/stpeterscathedral

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.



PRESENT TO THE MOMENT

Any Irish person – no matter how limited their vocabulary as *Gaelige* – will smile when the word *anseo* is mentioned. It brings one back to classroom roll-calls. Some of the *anseos* were made very sleepily. Present (*anseo*) in body, if not in mind or spirit. Moses has his *anseo* moment in the First Reading today. Except in his case the Hebrew word is *hineni*, which means ‘Here I am!’ But you should be very careful before you

dare say it. It means total readiness to give of oneself. It means total unconditional availability – nothing more, nothing less. The military life may come as close to it as possible in the modern secular world. But everybody – especially religious – will tell you that obedience is the hardest virtue to practice.

I’m not sure how present we are to Christ and the things of Christ in our lives. Awful things happen every day. We seek to explain them and somehow to make sense of things – if that is even possible. Some we can ascribe to sin – the massacres of our time –

Next Sunday's Readings



Joshua 5:9-12

Psalms 33:2-7

2 Corinthians 5:17-21

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

others to politics and greed. Maybe we have become desensitised to things and certainly to sin.

The very words we read in our Masses is thanks to St Jerome, who laboured over the original languages of Hebrew and Greek in the caves of Bethlehem. Legend has it he completed the task just days before Christmas. The ancient account has it that sometime around midnight, Jesus appeared to him, saying, 'Jerome, what will you give me for my birthday?' Jerome was speechless – for once! He responded by pointing to his translation of God's word. Jesus shook his head. The ancient account has it that Jerome

kind of lost it ... he had spent 40 years at something and Jesus didn't want it! So he began to suggest other things: what about fasting? Becoming a hermit? Giving his possessions to the poor? Jesus didn't want any of that.

Then Jerome had an *anseo* or *hineni* moment. What would Jesus most want? The simple reply was, 'give me your sins'. The fig tree of the Gospel was, in the Hebrew tradition, the tree of prayer – a place to gather oneself and bear fruit. As we come to the table of the Lord, we pray that we may bear spiritual fruit. He becomes present to us. May we, like Moses, say *Hineni/Anseo* as we pray, 'Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world, have mercy on us.'

- Tom Cox



Reflection

God wants us to grow and produce the gifts of the Spirit and the fruits of love. Do we desire the same? Are we willing to join God in working out our salvation?



Lesson

Life is a gift and an opportunity for doing good and pleasing the Father, who is the origin of life.



Prayer

Lord, your patience is like that of the owner of the vineyard. With the assistance of the Holy Spirit guide us to true repentance that we might produce abundant fruit.



This Week (21-27 March)

- 21 M** St Enda, abbot
- 22 T** St Nicholas Owen, martyr
- 23 W** St Turibius of Mongrovejo, bishop
- 24 T** St Macartan, bishop
- 25 F** THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD
- 26 S** St Braulio
- 27 S** FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

