



REASONS TO BE HOPEFUL

I am asked, usually in social occasions, exactly what the second reading puts before us... "Have your answer ready for people who ask you the reason for the hope that you all have." It's led to some interesting conversations. However, I have given up such debates when alcohol-fuelled queries come winging in – usually at weddings!

So what is your reason for hope for the Church? Yes, I see our own numbers as priests decline (by 50% since I began studies in 1983); yes, many have drifted from practice, quietly leaving rather than slamming the door; yes, there have been some disastrous times. But I am hopeful. Why? As I've seen a world covered with hints of God and goodness and I've seen it in and outside the Church.

An unshaken belief

I have always been naturally curious and love asking and seeking from those whose lives have been a witness to me, "How did you get to be the way you are?" I'm thinking of one senior priest who is wise, curious, engaged, joyful and constant and so want to age like him! I want to know what makes them tick. I especially want to know how they've continued to be faithful over the long haul, often without seeing any tangible results or desired outcomes. How do they keep hope alive in a world where it often seems the powers of cynicism and pessimism will dash it to bits?

The answers I receive from such people reveal an unshaken belief that God is at work in our world, that "the sin of the world" will not be allowed

(continued on back page)

to have the last word, that with God, promises made are promises kept. I have seen in them the quality of joy, something Philip (First Reading) encountered – and always been wary of those who try to steal joy away from you. I believe that these are reasons to be hopeful.

Love and obey

The contrast is stark with more earthly promises. Our hurting, broken and

disfigured world so needs the Spirit of Truth. In a world of “alternative facts” we do feel orphaned and cut off. People don’t know who or what to trust. But if we hold fast to the beginning and end of the Sunday Gospel we are reminded to do two things “love” and “obey”. To love first, longer, lastingly and again and again. To obey by listening deeply, widely, and to lovingly respond – then all will be well and the Spirit of Truth will come to be with us for the long haul.

– Tom Cox

Reflection

Reflect how the indwelling Spirit makes possible a deeper knowing of God.

Lesson

New presence of Jesus among his disciples by the Spirit of truth.

Prayer

God our Father, may we be ever mindful of the three persons of the Trinity in whose name we were baptised.

“Men lose all the material things they leave behind them in this world, but they carry with them the reward of their charity and the alms they give. For these, they will receive from the Lord the reward and recompense they deserve.”

– Francis of Assisi

This Week (22–28 May)

- 22 **Mon** St Rita of Cascia, religious
- 23 **Tue** St William of Rochester
- 24 **Wed** St Vincent de Lerins, monk
- 25 **Thur** St Bede; St Gregory VII; St Mary Magdalene
- 26 **Fri** St Philip Neri, priest
- 27 **Sat** St Augustine of Canterbury, bishop
- 28 **Sun** ASCENSION OF THE LORD

Today's Readings



Acts 8:5-8, 14-17
Psalm 65:1-7, 16, 20
1 Peter 3:15-18
John 14:15-21

Next Sunday's Readings



Acts 1:1-11
Psalm 46:2-3, 6-9
Ephesians 1:17-23
Matthew 28:16-20



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.

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)



SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS

John 14:15-21

1. 'If you love me you will keep my commandments', and specifically the commandment to love one another (cf. 13:34). How have you experienced the link between love of God and love of those around you?
2. Jesus is preparing his disciples for his imminent departure and for a future in which he would be with them in a different way. He would not 'leave them orphans' but send an 'Advocate' to 'be with (them) for ever'. How have you experienced the presence of God with you in your life?
3. Perhaps you have also experienced the challenge of preparing another (a child, a friend) for a time when you would no longer be physically together. Recall how you gave the message of your ongoing support.
4. How have you experienced the presence and support of a loved one (parent, spouse, friend) when circumstances have separated you from them?
5. The proof of the ongoing presence of Jesus with his disciples is that 'I live and you will live.' Discipleship is about much more than rules and regulations. It is about being alive. How has discipleship helped you to be more fully alive?

John Byrne OSA. Email: jpb Byrneosa@gmail.com

WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

Anniversaries: Joseph White, Daniel Doherty, Maureen Kane, Robert Dunn, Michael Matthews, Hugh Crilly (Sat 20th May at 6:30pm), Raymond Matthews (Sun 21st May at 11:30am), Kathleen & Jim Burns (Sat 27th May at 6:30pm), Isobel & Thomas McGiffin (Sun 4th June at 11:30am)

READERS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Sun 21st May

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Eamon Blaney & Carmel Blaney

Morning Mass: Tracey Mallon & Eileen Dunn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Stephen Murphy

Morning Mass: James Henderson

Sun 28th May

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Eamon Blaney & Carmel Blaney

Morning Mass: Tracey Mallon & Eileen Dunn

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Stephen Murphy

Morning Mass: James Henderson

COLLECTIONS: Many thanks for your contribution to last week's collections: Weekly £770.10, Catholics in Holy Land £5, Monthly £66, Easter Collection £20, Shrines £84.20. NEW BOXES OF ENVELOPES ARE NOW AVAILABLE. 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.

Annual Diocesan Collection for our Student Priests (this Sunday 21st May 2017). There are currently eight young men in training for priesthood for the diocese, one of whom, Manuelito is a deacon. The other students are Tony, Christopher, Stefan, David, Christopher, John, Kevin. Please remember them in your prayers. The second collection on the Sixth Sunday of Easter is the yearly collection for the education of our student priests. Thank you for your support of this collection last year. Your continued support of this annual church collection on this Sunday 21st May 2017 is again requested. Your financial contribution is another concrete way of supporting our students as they journey towards priesthood for service in our parishes.

Canticle Concert Many thanks to all who helped in setting up the church, in refreshments and/or who attended the concert. There was a good turnout from parishioners and visitors, and a lovely atmosphere. The music was sublime and the whole occasion was relaxed and enjoyable. The money raised was £500, which will be given over to Willowfield COI Parish Renovation Fund. Thanks to all who supported this endeavour. God bless.

QUB Research Project. Deborah Hyden, a PhD student at Queens University has approached me to ask for volunteer parishioners to participate in a research project entitled Experiences of Neighbourhood and Community Life in Northern Ireland. She suggests that 3 couples could be involved in this project. If you are interested you can collect consent forms in the sacristy.

Fundraising Festival of Brass. Holywood Parish Asha Support Group are having a fundraising Festival Brass concert with special guest Peter Corry on Friday 26th May 2017 at 7-45pm in Holywood Parish Church. We would be delighted if you are free to join us. Tickets cost £15 and can be purchased on line at: www.hollywoodparishchurch.co.uk/event/festival-brass-in-concert/

Lough Derg 2017:- Season opens for One Day Retreats on Monday 1st May. Retreats continue on May 6, 7, 9, 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28 & 29. Advance booking is essential. Tel. 071 9861518 (from NI 0035371 9861518) or email info@loughderg.org. The Three Day Pilgrimage season begins on Thursday 1st June, pre-booking not required. You are invited to walk in the spiritual footsteps of your ancestors and be part of the unbroken link of Lough Derg as a place of continuous prayer for over 50 generations (1,500 years).

St Anthony's Choir Recordings. New recordings of "This Joyful Eastertide" and "Bonum Est" can be found on the parish website www.saintanthony.co.uk.

The Rosminian Fathers Annual Novena in honour of Saint Jude. Calvary, Omearh, From Saturday, 3rd of June 2017 To Sunday, 11th of June 2017. Mass Each Evening at 7.30pm. HEALING MASS ON SUNDAY, 11 JUNE AT 7:30pm. This year our celebrant will be Fr. Oliver Stansfield I.C.

Simon Community Volunteers: Saturday 03 June - Collection for Simon Community at local Spar shops on Holywood Road, Upper Newtownards Road and Knock Dual Carriage Way. If anyone would be able to spare an hour or two to help with our collection anytime between the hours of 9.30am and 5.30pm it would be greatly appreciated as we are very short of volunteers. If you require any more information, please do not hesitate to contact me by email, on the office number below or on my mobile 07935 850116.

Down and Connor Living Church Three Day Pilgrimage to Lough Derg. Friday 23rd - Sunday 25th June 2017. Transport to be confirmed. Cost: £60. Please contact Geraldine Mullan : Tel: 028 90690920. Email: livingchurch@downandconnor.org. Lough Derg guides are available in the porch.

Annual Diocesan (one day) Pilgrimage to Knock, led by Bishop Noel Treanor, will take place on Sunday, 11th June. Buses will be leaving from various parishes throughout the Diocese. For further information please contact Fr Vincent Cushman, the Pilgrimage Director, at: cush25@hotmail.com

The WMOF2018 Volunteer Application Process is now Open! You can apply to volunteer here: www.worldmeeting2018.ie/volunteer. Applicants to volunteer must be residents of the island of Ireland at the time of application and be over 18 years of age, as of 1st January 2018 (or as part of a group), among other terms and conditions. Volunteers can also help in the lead up to the event in the main offices of WMOF2018 and in various preparatory events taking place around Ireland.

Relic of St. Teresa of Calcutta visits Belfast. Itinerary:

Monday 12th June - Arrive at St. Patrick's Church Donegal St, Belfast - 7:00pm - 7:15pm. - Mass at 7:30pm. - Veneration after Mass until 11pm.

Tuesday 13th June - Veneration in St. Patrick's - 12:00 noon - 13:00. - Veneration after 1pm Mass until 15:00. - Transfer Relic to Corpus Christi Church Springhill Grove, Belfast BT12 7SL. - Mass in Corpus Christi Church Belfast at 7:00pm followed by veneration until 9:00pm.

Wednesday 14th June - Veneration in St. Patrick's - 12:00 noon - 13:00. - Veneration after 1pm Mass until 15:00. - Farewell Prayer Service - 15:00 - 16:00. - 16:00 Relic leaves Belfast.

Clonard Solemn Novena to Our Mother of Perpetual Help. June 14th - 22nd. More details at www.clonard.com/novena/

An "Ecumenical Journey" with Fr. Eddie O'Donnell & Rev. Ruth Patterson in St. Brigid's Hall, June 3rd. from 2p.m. - 4p.m. All are welcome to attend!

Turas Columbanus. Simon Derache has walked across Brittany, France and Italy. He takes the pilgrim walk from Bunclody to Bangor starting on June 4th. Welcome him in your town, village and community and offer him hospitality. Walk a mile with him along the route. For further information: turscolumbanus@gmail.com. Leaflets in porch.

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.