

# Parish Newsletter

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD – Year A | 28 May 2017  
World Communications Day | Issue 27

## A GENEROUS ABSENCE

There is a famous poem called “Footprints” and a copy of it will lie buried in a book or on a wall in many a home. People may not remember the words exactly but the picture of the sunlit beach and the lines in the sand are vivid enough to make an impression. It’s a clever poem that means an awful lot to people who ask that it be recited at times of struggle and grief in their lives. In its own way, that poem reminds us of the incredible mystery of God’s love.

People are not thinking of the real footprint of Jesus, however. On top of the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem, in the tiny Chapel of the Ascension, there is a footprint. Tradition relates it as the place Jesus ascended to heaven from. Pilgrims will flock, the more impish will see with their own foot if they can literally fill the “footprint” of Jesus. Most people stand back in a respectful manner and a little like the worshipping eleven disciples in the Gospel today, “some doubted”. We

### Today's Readings



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

### Next Sunday's Readings



Acts 2:1-11  
Psalm 103:1, 24, 29-31, 34  
1 Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13  
John 20:19-23

should never fool ourselves that visual evidence puts all doubts to rest. Faith and doubt often exist together. Faith is not a fixed commodity, it waxes and wanes, like the moon, sometimes full – at other times a sliver.

Back to footprints – this popular poem describes an experience in which a person is walking on a beach with God. They leave two sets of footprints in the sand behind them. Looking back, the tracks represent various stages of the speaker's life. At various points, the two trails dwindle to one, especially at the lowest and most hopeless moments of the person's life. When questioning God, believing that the Lord must have abandoned his love during those times, God gives the explanation: "During your times of

trial and suffering, when you see only one set of footprints, it was then that I carried you."

Life is a pilgrimage. A long or shorter set of footprints which starts in one place and ends in another place ahead of you. The steps behind you fade in the sand. Neither can you make out the "distant scene" as JH Newman put it in his prayer/hymn "Abide with me", but know that "one step enough for me." Be we parents or adults we carry our young and one another as much as we can. Sometimes we can't answer their questions and echo Jesus (First Reading).

"It is not for you to know..." really just saying, "You don't need to know that answer" – simply take the next step forward. I may not be with you as you'd want or wish, but I'm there "till the end of time." There is such a thing as a generous absence. ■

– Tom Cox

## Reflection

Feel the mystery and power in the appearance of Jesus, now transformed with divine glory.

## Lesson

Jesus says, "I am with you always, to the end of the age."

## Prayer

Jesus, may we always be glad when we think of the many ways you are with us: in the Eucharist, in your Word, in one another and in your ministers.

## This Week (29 May–4 June)

- 29 Mon** St Raymond and Companions
- 30 Tue** St Joan of Arc, virgin
- 31 Wed** The Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
- 1 Thur** St Justin, martyr
- 2 Fri** Ss Marcellinus and Peter, martyrs
- 3 Sat** St Kevin, abbot
- 4 Sun** PENTECOST SUNDAY





# 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)



## FEAST OF THE ASCENSION WORLD COMMUNICATIONS DAY

SEEING YOUR LIFE THROUGH THE LENS OF THE GOSPELS  
Matthew 28:16-20

1. Jesus meets the disciples for the last time. His final words give them direction for their future. Perhaps you can recall such parting moments in your own life – leaving home, school, college, or the death of a loved one. Was there an occasion when the words spoken to you gave you direction for the future?
2. Perhaps you can identify with Jesus in the story, when as a parent, teacher, or in some other way you sent someone on their way in life, knowing that you would not be with them as in the past. When did the way you parted help the other to make their way in life?
3. Despite this extraordinary encounter with Jesus some of the disciples doubted. Dealing with questions and doubt is part of an adult faith journey. How have your questions and doubts helped to shape the faith you have today?
4. Jesus commissioned this collection of believing and doubting disciples to carry on his work. We inherit that mission today. How do you see yourself as commissioned to continue the mission of Jesus?
5. Jesus told his disciples that although he would not be physically with them he would be with them in a new way right through life. Have there been times when you were reassured by the love and support of another even though they were not physically present with you? What are the things that help you to be aware of the presence of Jesus with you on life's journey?

John Byrne OSA. Email jpb Byrneosa@gmail.com

### WE REMEMBER OUR DECEASED LOVED-ONES

Recently Deceased: Richard Sheppard

Anniversaries: Joseph White, Daniel Doherty, Maureen Kane, Robert Dunn, Michael Matthews, Hugh Crilly, Raymond Matthews, Kathleen & Jim Burns (Sat 27th May at 6:30pm), Isobel & Thomas McGiffin (Sun 4th June at 11:30am), Elizabeth & Paul Spiers (Sat 10th June at 6:30pm).

### READERS AND EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Sun 28th May

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Anthony Clifford & Shauna Mullan  
Morning Mass: Martina McClory & Margaret Woods  
EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Frank Doherty  
Morning Mass: Séamus Monaghan

Sun 4th June

READERS:

Vigil Mass: Maria Murphy & Phyllis McGrillen  
Morning Mass: Suzanne Hopkins & Kathryn Curran  
EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS:

Vigil Mass: Sean Rafferty  
Morning Mass: Louis Corscadden

**COLLECTIONS:** Many thanks for your contribution to last week's collections: Education of Diocesan Students to the priesthood £537.17, Weekly £391.30, Monthly £23, Shrines £77.59. **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.

**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.

**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).

**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. Volunteer information leaflets are available in the church porch.

**Amoris: Let's talk Family! Let's be Family!** You are cordially invited to an exciting and interactive journey of reflection on love, marriage and family. In each diocese from September 2017, everyone is invited to a catechetical programme run locally and also available online. More information can be found on leaflets available in the church porch.

### 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.

**St. Oliver Plunkett Parish Mini-Mission.** In preparation for the Summer Ordination of Philip Mulryne, the Dominican Fathers are returning to St. Oliver Plunkett Parish. Mission Services: Friday 2nd June: Mass at 7.30pm. Saturday 3rd June: 10.00am Mass & Blessing of the Sick, 6.30pm Vigil Mass. Sunday 4th June: 10.00am and 12.00 noon Mass, 3.00pm Holy Hour. All Welcome.

**Meeting for Returned Lay Missionaries & Volunteers.** Have you ever worked overseas as a volunteer or lay missionary in Africa, Asia or South America? Would you like to meet up with like-minded people to discuss about issues of mutual concern? Join us for our next meeting which takes place on Wed May 31st at 7.00pm at the Sacred Heart Parish Centre, Glenview St, off Oldpark Rd, Belfast. For more info email jim.farrell@amri.ie or phone/text + 353 83 8422468

**Pastoral Community Forum.** As part of the development of pastoral communities within the diocese, each pastoral area is asked to find one volunteer who would work with the parish priest to represent the parish on a Pastoral Community Forum. If you would like to take part in the South and East Belfast Pastoral Community Forum, please give your name to Fr McCann as soon as possible.

**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.