

PARISH OF CLONLEIGH

St Patrick's Church, Murlog, Lifford

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Parish Website and Webcam: www.clonleighparish.com Facebook: Clonleigh Parish Twitter: @clonleighparish

Derry Diocesan Website: www.derrydiocese.org Facebook: Diocese of Derry Twitter: @derrydiocese

SUNDAY 20 DECEMBER 2020 FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

MARY, THE ARK OF GOD'S COVENANT (GOSPEL – ST LUKE 1:26-38)

Mary, our blessed Mother, is the focus of the Gospel on this fourth Sunday of Advent, when we hear St Luke's account of the Annunciation. God, through the angel Gabriel, gradually revealed to Mary, a humble young woman, her extraordinary mission in life, a unique role in God's plan for salvation as the mother of Jesus, the long-awaited Messiah. We are told that the angel's opening words to Mary were, "Rejoice, so highly favoured! The Lord is with you." 'The Lord is with you' is an expression used in the Bible to greet those God has called to play a crucial role in His plan of salvation. Each time we attend Mass, the priest says to the congregation in the opening words of the Mass, "*The Lord be with you*". This highlights for us, as children of God, that each of us is called to a unique mission in building His kingdom. Mary is a model for us in faith: despite the enormity of God's plan for her, she was unwavering in her trust in and acceptance of His will for her. *Mary, Ark of the Covenant, pray for us.*

MASS SCHEDULE FOR THE PARISH THIS WEEK

SUNDAY MASSES:

Vigil: Saturday 6.30pm, Sunday Morning: 9.00am and 11.00am

WEEKDAY MASSES:

Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday: 9.30am

The Rosary will be recited at 9.10am, prior to morning Mass, Monday – Wednesday

CHRISTMAS MASSES:

Christmas Eve (24th): 6.00pm and 9.00pm

Christmas Day (25th): 7.00am, 9.00am and 11.00am

Please note, the two Christmas Eve Masses are fully booked, and the Christmas Day 9.00am Mass is fully booked. Places are still available at the 7.00am Mass and 11.00am Mass and can be booked by phoning or emailing Lorna at the parish office, 074 9142001: or email: clonleighparish@derrydiocese.org between 10am and 12noon, on Monday. **Please note that Monday is the last day you can book.** Lorna will need to know: the name of the person booking, the number of family members being booked in, the contact number/email. Children aged 7 or under do not require a ticket.

All tickets for the Christmas Eve and Christmas Day Masses must be collected today (Saturday / Sunday) after Mass or, at latest, after the 9.30am Mass tomorrow, Monday (except for those still to be booked for the 7.00am and 11.00am Masses). Please note: stewards will collect your ticket as you enter the church for the Christmas Mass you have chosen to attend. I would very much appreciate your co-operation with the stewards. Also, please use the hand sanitiser that is available and maintain social distancing both inside and outside the church and wear a face covering.

All our Masses continue to be live-streamed on webcam: www.clonleighparish.com
Our 11.00am Mass each Sunday is also broadcast live on Finn Valley Radio, FM95.8

MASS INTENTIONS FOR THIS WEEK

Saturday 19 December, 6.30pm Vigil: Ray Jarrett, Tober

Sunday 20 December, 11am: Pauline Mc Callion, Cavan Hill

THANK YOU for your generosity to the collection last week, which amounted to €2615.98. Thank you also to those who contribute by Standing order. Your on-going financial support of the parish is very much appreciated.

'CAROLS BY CANDLELIGHT': An online Carol Service will take place tonight, Sunday, at 8.00pm, from the Basilica at Knock Shrine. Livestreamed on knockshrine.ie. A wide range of classic Christmas carols will be sung, including 'O Holy Night', 'Joy to the World', 'In the Bleak mid-Winter' and many more well-known favourites.

ANNIVERSARIES

We remember in prayer the souls of those whose anniversaries occur at this time:

Sarah Kelly, Butcher Street; Susan Arthur, Townparks; Charlie Clarke, Porthall; Msgr Hugh Clarke, Porthall; Vincent Crawford, Porthall; Patrick Gallagher, Sherclown; Denis Mc Geehan, Coneyburrow; Edmund Breslin, Croaghan Heights; John Foley, Tober; Kathleen Porter, The Common; Willie Doherty, Cloughfin; Margaret Ann Patton, Carrigans; Ray Jarrett, Tober; Pauline Mc Callion, Cavan Hill; Patrick McGranaghan, Strabane.

May they rest in peace.

ACT OF PERFECT CONTRITION: MAKING PEACE WITH GOD

Many of us have become familiar with the practice of making a spiritual communion during the current pandemic - when it is not possible to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion. Similarly, while the pandemic continues, the Church reminds us all of the practice of making an Act of Perfect Contrition, (to receive pardon for our sins) - when it is not possible to attend the Sacrament of Confession.

I invite you all to join with me this evening, Sunday, at 6.00pm, via our parish webcam, for a special Penitential Liturgy I hope that as many of you as possible will take the time to join in. During the Penitential Liturgy, with heart and mind open to God's merciful love, you will be invited to make an Act of Perfect Contrition.

How to make an Act of Perfect Contrition:

I become aware of the presence of God. I take time to think of the following:

- Christ's death on the Cross and how He bore the weight of sin.
 - The call to follow God's way of love.
 - The reality of my own weakness.
- The ways I have not been loving towards others.
- My need to be in right relations with God and others
 - I make a commitment to try not sin again
 - I express my sorrow, "Lord, have mercy on me, a sinner."
 - I resolve to receive the Sacrament of Penance when it is possible to do so.

When we were exchanging greetings for Christmas and New Year this time last year, none of us could have imagined the year that lay ahead. Little did I think that, just six months after I was privileged to be appointed as your Parish Priest, I would be closing the doors of the church while I would celebrate Mass alone, hoping that parishioners would participate via webcam. Becoming an 'online parish community' was certainly not the pastoral direction I had hoped our parish would take. However, in these last nine months, despite all the disruption which you have had to endure, in so many aspects of your life, I have been humbled by your faithful support of our parish, not least in your financial support. I have been greatly encouraged by your resilience, your co-operation, your patience and ability to acclimatise quickly to the ever-changing rules and restrictions. For all your support, in so many different ways, and for your kind words of encouragement to me, I am most grateful. Most of all, thank you for your prayerful support.

Christmas, as we know, may not be celebrated with all its usual traditions and trimmings this year and, in our church, we will celebrate Christmas in smaller units than normal; this will not take away, however, from the joy and true meaning of Christmas, the great celebration of the birth of the Christ Child.

I wish you all peace and joy this Christmas. Special Christmas blessings on all the children of our parish, especially the children who were born and baptised into our parish faith community this year.

To all who are carrying the cross of sickness this Christmas, especially those whom I would normally attend at part of my Visitation of the Sick and Housebound, may the blessings of the Christ Child be a source of strength and comfort to you. Blessings too on all who care for the sick. I think especially of those in the caring profession who comforted patients in hospital, and residents of care homes, who were unable to have family and friends visiting because of the pandemic.

To the families in our parish who have suffered bereavement this year, may our prayerful support be a comfort to you at this time. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

I ask you to continue to pray, through the protection of St Patrick, for an end to the pandemic and, most importantly, in the meantime, stay safe, create a safe environment for others and abide by the restrictions in place for our benefit.

I look forward to journeying with you in faith in the coming year and to the day when the rules and restrictions in our churches, especially for our liturgies, can be safely lifted.

May the blessings of the Christ Child be upon you all this Christmas. Fr Colm.

THE TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS – PRAYER BOOKLET: I am delighted to offer you a Prayer Booklet to facilitate prayer, scripture and reflection in your home, with family, or during quiet time in the church, over the Twelve Days of Christmas. It will be available as you leave the Church after the Christmas Masses. In particular, you might bring one home to a family member or friend who is not able to get out to Mass. The booklet is also available online, on www.derrydiocese.org