

# PARISH OF ARDSTRAW WEST AND CASTLEDERG

*St Mary's, Dregish · St Patrick's, Castlederg · St Francis of Assisi, Drumnabey*

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## SUNDAY 10 JANUARY 2021 – BAPTISM OF THE LORD: GOSPEL – ST MARK 1:7-11

The Baptism of Jesus was a defining moment in His life, marking the start of His public ministry. When we receive the Sacrament of Baptism, it too is a defining moment in our lives – the beginning of a life-long journey of growing as members of the Body of Christ, and growing in responsibility as members of the family of the Church. In celebrating the Baptism of the Lord today, we reflect on how we, as adults, live out our responsibilities as baptised Catholics. We pray the blessings of the Christ-Child on the children of our parish who were baptised in the last year and for their parents and Godparents, that they will be guided by the Holy Spirit in the responsibilities they have undertaken.

### MASS SCHEDULE FOR THE REMAINDER OF JANUARY:

As you are probably already aware, our churches are closed, once again, for public worship. While they are scheduled to reopen on Saturday 6 February, there will be a review at the end of January. Churches will remain open for private prayer. You are welcome to call in and to light a candle. We continue to remember each other in prayer in these very worrying times.

**Weekend Masses in St Patrick's, Castlederg**

**Vigil 6.00pm (every Saturday);**

**Sunday 11.00am (10 and 24 January)**

**Weekday Masses in St Patrick's, Castlederg: Monday, 7.30pm, Friday, 10.00am**

**You are invited to participate in these Masses by webcam: [www.castledergparish.com](http://www.castledergparish.com)**

*Masses in Aghyaran are also livestreamed on [www.parihofaghyan.com](http://www.parihofaghyan.com):  
Sunday Masses: Vigil 7.30pm, Sunday morning 11.00am (17 and 31 January).  
Weekday Masses: Tuesday 10.00am, Thursday 10.00am.*

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**Mary McCullagh, late of 1 Main Street, Castlederg**

As a parish faith community, we offer our sympathy and our prayerful support to the daughters, Christina, Rosie, Gerry, Joanne, Monica and Brigid, grandchildren, brother, sisters and wider family circle and friends of Mary, whose Funeral Mass took place in Castlederg last Sunday. May she rest in peace.

**Carmel O'Goan, late of 176 Drumlegagh Road South, Drumquin**

We offer our sympathy and our prayerful support to Charlie, to Damien, Benedict, Priscilla and Melanie, to the grandchildren, to Gabriel and to the wider family circle and friends of Carmel, whose Funeral Mass took place in Dregish on Tuesday. May she rest in peace.

**Rosie Loughrey, formerly of Hillview Park, Castlederg**

We offer our sympathy and our prayerful support to the friends of Rosie, whose Funeral Mass took place in Castlederg on Wednesday. May she rest in peace.

**THANK YOU** for your generosity in last week's collection which amounted to £1,047. Envelopes can continue to be left through the door of the Parochial House.

**CHILDREN IN CROSSFIRE** Advent Boxes can now be returned to the parish office. The current campaign aims to provide hand washing and sanitation facilities in 700 schools in Tanzania, benefitting up to 800,000 children. There are still some packs at the doors of the church, if you feel you can support this vital work. Thank you.

**Please note, I will continue to be available at the Parochial House, as normal. Please feel free to contact me. While there will be no routine visitation of the sick, I can do house calls, by arrangement, in the case of an emergency or where there is a particular worry or concern.**

### 'YEAR OF ST JOSEPH'

In a new Apostolic Letter "Patris Corde" ("With a Father's Heart"), Pope Francis marks the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church by proclaiming a "Year of St Joseph" (8 December 2020 - 8 December 2021). The Holy Father wrote *Patris Corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of "ordinary" people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble St Joseph, "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence" who, nonetheless, played "an incomparable role in the history of salvation." At the conclusion of his Letter, the Holy Father encourages us to pray this Prayer to St Joseph:

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.*

*To you God entrusted His only Son; in you Mary placed her trust; with you Christ became man.*

*Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a father and guide us in the path of life.*

*Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage, and defend us from every evil. Amen.*

# **Statement issued by the Catholic Bishops of Northern Ireland: “As many people as possible *stay at home* for the sake of health, life and the Common Good”**

**“Faith and prayer can be a tremendous support to individuals and society during these difficult times”**

## **Statement**

Following further briefing today by the Chief Medical Officer and the Chief Scientific Officer, and in consultation with The Executive Office, we are very concerned at the current serious public health position in which Northern Ireland finds itself: with the extremely high level of transmission of the Covid-19 virus; the continuing escalation of numbers in hospital and intensive care; the number of associated deaths; and, the increasingly unsustainable pressure on our healthcare staff. The clear message from health officials is that this situation is going to worsen significantly over the coming weeks.

We recognise the efforts of so many in our parishes who have been working to ensure that our gatherings for public worship are as safe as possible and we welcome the continuing engagement between the faith communities and the NI Executive which has led to consensus between us on the importance of people being able to gather in person for worship. At this time, however, we acknowledge and support the unequivocal message from public health authorities that the movement and gathering of people should be minimised and that as many people as possible *stay at home* for the sake of health, life and the Common Good.

In light of our ongoing consultations and of the current serious and worsening situation, and in line with clear public health guidance that people should *stay at home*, we have decided that for a limited period (from midnight on Thursday 7 January until Saturday 6 February 2021, subject to review in late January), the celebration of the Eucharist and other liturgies should take place without the physical presence of the faithful - with the exception of marriage, funeral, baptismal liturgies and drive-in services (subject to regulations). Arrangements for recording and/or livestreaming, and making individual visits for private prayer are also permissible in accordance with regulations. We encourage parishes, where possible, to continue to broadcast the celebration of Mass - and other devotions and prayer services - online and on other media, knowing that faith and prayer can be a tremendous support to individuals and society during these difficult times.

We make this decision reluctantly, conscious that not being able to gather for public worship can cause pain for all the faithful, but in the hope that this limited period of sacrifice will be for the protection of life and health and for the greater good of all. We once more ask for prayers for the sick, the bereaved and all those whose livelihoods have been particularly impacted by the pandemic. We keep in our prayers all health workers, carers, chaplains and other essential workers. We welcome the announcement that a similar position is being taken by the leaders of the Church of Ireland, the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, the Methodist Church in Ireland and many other denominations and faith communities in response to the unequivocal message from public health authorities that as many people as possible stay at home at this time.

## **Most Rev Eamon Martin DD**

*Archbishop of Armagh & Primate of All-Ireland  
Apostolic Administrator of Dromore*

## **Most Rev Noel Treanor DD**

*Bishop of Down and Connor*

## **Most Rev Donal McKeown DD**

*Bishop of Derry*

## **Most Rev Larry Duffy DD**

*Bishop of Clogher*

## **Most Rev Michael Router DD**

*Auxiliary Bishop of Armagh*