

PARISH OF ARDSTRAW WEST AND CASTLEDERG

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

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SUNDAY 14 MARCH 2021 – FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT

GOSPEL: ST JOHN 3:14-21 JESUS' ENCOUNTER WITH NICODEMUS – FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is *Laetare* Sunday. The Latin word *laetare* means "rejoice". (*Laetare* Sunday parallels with Gaudete Sunday in Advent). *Laetare* Sunday is the mid-point in our Lenten journey where, while we continue with our Lenten observances, we are called to look forward with hope and anticipation to the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus.

MASS SCHEDULE

Weekend Masses in St Patrick's, Castlederg:

Vigil 6.00pm (every Saturday)

Sunday 11.00am (2nd & 4th Sundays of the month - 14 March & 28 March)

Weekday Masses:

Monday: 7.30pm

Wednesday – St Patrick's Day: 7.30pm

Friday – Feast of St Joseph: 10.00am

Saturday (Lent only): 10.00am

You are invited to participate in our Masses via the parish webcam:

www.castledergparish.com

Masses in Aghyaran are also livestreamed on www.parishofaghyaran.com:

Sunday Masses: Vigil 7.30pm, Sunday morning 11.00am (1st & 3rd Sundays of the month - 21 March & 4 April).

Weekday Masses in Aghyaran:

Tuesday: 10.00am, St Patrick's Day - Wednesday: 10.00am, Thursday: 10.00am

Our churches continue to remain open for private prayer.

Please continue to pray for one another and, especially, for those who are sick.

You are welcome to light a candle for your prayer intentions.

WALKING THE VIA DOLOROSA (WAY OF THE CROSS) WITH JESUS: Friday evening, at 7.30pm, live-streamed this week from St Patrick's, Aghyaran. This Friday is the *Feast Day of St Joseph*, and the focus of our Via Dolorosa liturgy on Friday evening will be "*Walking with Joseph*". Please join me on the webcam for this time of prayer.

This year (8 Dec 2020 – 8 Dec 2021) was proclaimed by Pope Francis as *Year of St Joseph*, marking the 150th anniversary of the declaration of St Joseph as Patron of the Universal Church. In quoting St Joseph as, "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence" who, nonetheless, played "an incomparable role in the history of salvation," Pope Francis encouraged us to pray this Prayer to St Joseph, which we will pray together at Mass on Friday morning and during Friday evening's liturgy:

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.

LENTEN PENITENTIAL SERVICES: Please note that our Penitential Services in preparation for Easter will now take place during Holy Week. Details of the dates and times will be published in next week's newsletter.

THANK YOU for your generosity in last week's collection which amounted to £1,268 and €61. Your support of the parish is very much appreciated. Envelopes can continue to be left through the door of the Parochial House.

CLERICAL EDUCATION & ONGOING FORMATION collection: There is an envelope in your envelope box for this collection, which is normally taken up at our Masses on St Patrick's Day. This collection is used for the education and formation costs of seminarians of the Derry Diocese and the ongoing formation of clergy of the diocese. There are currently five students of the diocese studying for priesthood.

THE NET: The March edition of The Net is now available online. You can view it on our parish Facebook page or on <https://www.derrydiocese.org/images/the-net/the-net-march-2021.pdf> - as always, there are a host of interesting articles, photographs and interviews. Fr Peter McCawille features in the March edition.

MOTHERS' DAY: Today we celebrate Mothering Sunday. We thank God for the love and blessings that mothers bring to our families and homes. As we honour our mothers in a special way today, we pray:

Mothers' Day Prayer (from the Family Prayer Book)

Thank you, Lord, for all mothers. On this day let us think of them, whether they are with us or gone to their heavenly reward. We think of their kindness, their compassion, their care for us and, above all, their unconditional love. We pray that you will watch over them and support them in the joys and struggles of their daily lives. This we ask through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

ST PATRICK'S DAY: On Wednesday of this week we celebrate the Feast Day of our Patron Saint, St Patrick. It is a day when we celebrate in a special way our Catholic faith, conveyed to us in the fifth century by our Patron Saint. We thank God for the gift of faith in our lives and for the witness of generations of people who, through their example and encouragement, handed on the gift of faith. As the disciples of our time, we pray that we too will proclaim the Gospel, and draw others to Jesus, through our example, words and actions.

St Patrick's Day is also one when we remember in a special way all who have emigrated, especially our own family members, friends and members of our parish community and our country. We pray, through the intercession of St Patrick, that the experiences of all our emigrants will be positive and joyful. We remember especially those for whom emigration is or has been a challenging or lonely experience, for whatever reason and, especially, those who may not be in a position to return to their homeland.

We also remember our immigrants at this time - those who have travelled from other lands to make Ireland their home, especially the immigrants in our own parish community. Just as we would hope and pray that our family members would be warmly welcomed wherever they go, we pray too that those who have travelled here from other lands will always be warmly welcomed amongst us.

Prayer for Emigrants

Loving God, we pray for those whom we love but who are absent from us.

Keep them safe from all harm, evil and danger.

Bless them with peace, friends, laughter, wisdom, love and joy.

Grant that we may be reunited in the fullness of love: in Christ's name we pray, Amen

St Patrick, pray for us.

PARISH FINANCE COUNCIL MEETING: There was a further meeting of the Parish Finance Council on Thursday evening of this week (by Zoom). Matters discussed included an update on the upcoming capital works at St Patrick's Church, Castlederg: since our meeting in February, grant opportunities have been sourced, eligibility assessed and applications for funding can now proceed. Initial professional architectural guidance has also been sought. You will be kept informed as matters progress.

Gift Aid – claims, including those for the 'Small Donors' (GASDS) Scheme are now up to date and we will soon be in a position to make a claim for the year ending 5 April 2020.

MINI-LENTEN RETREAT IN PREPARATION FOR HOLY WEEK: In preparation for the Easter Triduum, 'The Hook of Faith' is happy to offer a 'Mini-Lenten Retreat', by Zoom, on Tue 23, Wed 24 and Thurs 25 March, at 8pm. The Retreat will be led by Fr Billy Swan. The three evenings will anticipate the Triduum, focusing on the Eucharist (Tue 23); the Cross and the Mystery of Suffering (Wed 24); the Resurrection, Joy and Hope (Thurs 25). To take part, email: thehookoffaith@gmail.com. All are welcome.

CENSUS 2021: Census date is Sunday 21 March. All households will have received a census pack with details on how to complete. The pack will contain an access code. The census can be completed online or you can request a paper questionnaire. To find out more, visit www.census.gov.uk/ni or call free on 0800 328 2021.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURES: Next Sunday, 21 March, is the Fifth Sunday of Lent. The Gospel we will listen to is St John 12:20-30, *Jesus, our Vision, our Way to God's glory*. You can access the Readings in the Missalette, which is available in our churches or on our parish website, www.castledergparish.com – or in your bible!