

PARISH OF ARDSTRAW WEST AND CASTLEDERG

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

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SUNDAY 24 JANUARY 2021 – THIRD SUNDAY ORDINARY TIME

GOSPEL: MARK 1:14-20 - 'At once they left their nets and followed Him'

'Follow me and I will make you into fishers of men' – Jesus' invitation to the four fishermen, is open to all of us. Leaving behind old ways, taking on a new mindset and embracing new challenges is not always easy but it is something that has been forced upon all of us and on our lifestyles in the past year. Embracing 'the new' can bring with it uncertainty, doubt and fear – fear of the unknown.

Responding positively to the call of Jesus does not mean leaving behind our everyday lives and responsibilities to go on some unknown journey, but it does mean that, in 'the new' of our everyday lives, we place our trust in the vision that God has for us. We pray today for the courage to disentangle from the things in our lives that prevent us from following Jesus, and to place our confidence in the knowledge that He will lead us down a road of true discipleship that will one day lead us to the endless horizon of God's kingdom.

MASS SCHEDULE

Weekend Masses in St Patrick's, Castlederg

Vigil 6.00pm (every Saturday)

Sunday 11.00am (2nd & 4th Sundays of the month - 10 & 24 Jan, 14 & 28 Feb)

Weekday Masses: Monday, 7.30pm, Friday – Catholic Schools Week Mass – 10.00am

You are invited to participate in these Masses by webcam: www.castledergparish.com

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

Sunday Masses: Vigil 7.30pm, Sunday morning 11.00am (31 Jan, 7 Feb & 21 Feb).

Weekday Masses: Tuesday 10.00am, Thursday 10.00am.

Our churches 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, especially the sick.

†

Minnie McHugh (nee McSorley), late of 25 Hospital Road, Castlederg

As a parish faith community, we offer our sympathy and our prayerful support to Hilary, Veronica, Maoliosa and Mary, grandchildren and wider family circle and friends of Minnie, whose Funeral Mass took place in Castlederg last Sunday. May she rest in peace.

SUNDAY OF THE WORD OF GOD

Today, the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time, we celebrate Sunday of the Word of God. In 2019, Pope Francis declared the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time each year as Sunday of the Word of God. In declaring this annual celebration, Pope Francis said, *"We need to grow in our knowledge and love of the Scriptures and of the risen Lord...The Bible belongs above all to those called to hear its message and to recognise themselves in its words...The Word of God unites believers and makes them one people."* Pope Francis invites us never to take God's Word for granted but, instead, to *"let ourselves be nourished by it, in order to acknowledge and live fully our relationship with Him and with our brothers and sisters"*.

Pope Francis invites us, therefore, to get to know Christ through deepening our understanding and knowledge of the Bible. Familiarising ourselves with the Word of God before we hear it at Sunday Mass is a good way of gaining a better understanding of what God is saying to us in the Scriptures and you may therefore wish to consider devoting some sacred time and space each week to taking a look through the Readings each week this coming year, in advance of Sunday Mass. Each week in the newsletter, I give the reference for the Gospel reading for the following Sunday, so that you can check it out, either in your bible or on www.catholicbishops.ie.

Remember, in the words of Pope Francis: *"The Bible is not just a beautiful book to keep on a shelf. It is the Word of life to be sown, a gift that the Risen Jesus asks us to accept in order to have life in His name"*.

SUNDAY SCRIPTURES: Next Sunday, 31 January, is the Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time. The Gospel we will listen to is St Mark 1:21-28: 'He taught them with authority'. You can access the Readings on: www.catholicbishops.ie/readings - or in your bible!

THANK YOU for your generosity in last week's collection which amounted to £1,172. Envelopes can continue to be left through the door of the Parochial House. Thank you to those who contribute by Standing Order. Standing Order is a particularly efficient way to contribute in these Covid-times and if anyone would like to start contributing by Standing Order, a Mandate is available to download from the parish website, www.castledergparish.com, or you can pick one up at the Parochial House. If you are starting to contribute by Standing Order, it would be very helpful, for administration purposes, if you would ring me to let me know, or drop me an email. Thank you!

ST VINCENT DE PAUL wish to thank everyone for their very generous donations to their Christmas collection, which amounted to an amazing £4,883.25. All the financial support for those in need in our community is very much appreciated at this present time. Happy, healthy and peaceful New Year to everyone.
SVP Confidential Helpline number is: 028 71384 488.

THE NET: The January edition of The Net is available online, on www.derrydiocese.org, or you can access it through our parish Facebook page. As always, there is a wide range of news, interviews and photos in it. There is an article this month by Fr Peter McCawille SMA on, 'Hanging on to Hope in 2021'.

ONLINE PRE-MARRIAGE COURSE: Preparing for Marriage? Catholic Engaged Encounter is hosting a 'Zoom' online Marriage Preparation Course on 27 - 28 March 2021. This 2-day course is a positive way of preparing for Marriage aimed at enabling you to discover ways of enriching your future relationship. For further information or bookings, email marriageencounter.ie or telephone 028 276 385 12.

Please note, I 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.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK - 24-31 JANUARY: The theme this year is *Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith and Resilience*. There is no doubt whatsoever that our school communities - staff, children and parents - have had to be resilient in the incredible challenges they have had to face in the last year, with no immediate let-up in sight.

The normal activities associated with Catholic Schools Week are not feasible this year, but I will celebrate the **10.00am Mass on Friday of this week, 29 January**, for the intentions of everyone who is part of the St Patrick's PS community - the children, the teachers, ancillary staff, and the parents, grandparents and family members who have supported the children in so many ways during the Covid pandemic, and continue to do so. I ask you to join me on the parish webcam for this Mass. In particular, I ask that parents make special effort for their children to participate in this Mass.

NOVENA TO OUR LADY OF LOURDES: I invite you to join with me in praying a Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes, starting on 3 February, for the Sick. The Novena will finish on 11 February, which is Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes and is World Day of Prayer for the Sick.

A Novena Prayer will be published in our parish newsletter next week and also on our parish Facebook page. It will be prayed each time I celebrate Mass - you can participate online, and/or you can pray it in your home, perhaps with family members or, if it suits you, you can come along to the church to pray it at a time that suits you. Each day, we will have a different prayer intention, which will be published.

We all know people who are sick at this time and I ask, in particular, that you bring this Novena of Prayer for the Sick to the attention of anyone you may know who is suffering from any form of sickness, to give them the opportunity to participate in these special days of prayer in our parish. Thank you.

ACT OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

This is the version we recite during each of our Masses:

you are encouraged to pray it and to teach it to children who have made their First Holy Communion.

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY: 18 - 25 JANUARY:

THEME, 'ABIDING IN CHRIST', based on John 15:1-17: **"Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit"**.

Heavenly Father, Your Son, Jesus, calls us to abide in Him, as branches of the true vine.

He calls us to bear the fruit of Your healing and reconciling love.

He calls us to draw closer to You and to one another, in Christian unity, as we offer this love to the world.

May Your loving Spirit guide us in responding to the challenges of the call.

This we ask through Christ, our Lord. Amen.