



## Parish of Greencastle, Co. Tyrone (Diocese of Derry)

**St. Patrick's, Greencastle      Our Lady of the Wayside, Broughderg**

**Second Sunday of Advent [Year B] (4<sup>th</sup> December, 2011)**

The Parochial House, 164, Greencastle Road, Sheshinshule, Omagh, BT79 7RU

**Website:** greencastleparish.com    **Tel:** (028) 8164 8474    **Email:** greencastlepp@yahoo.com



Liturgy Schedule for the Second Week of Advent [Year B] (5 <sup>th</sup> November, 2011 – 11 <sup>th</sup> December, 2011)			
<b>Saturday Evening (3<sup>rd</sup> December)</b>	St. Patrick's	<b>5.30pm</b> Confessions <b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass for Sunday: Eileen Clarke (Month's Mind)	
<b>Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December</b> Second Sunday of Advent [Year B]	St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside	<b>9:00am</b> Mass (Missa Pro Populo) <b>10.30am</b> Confessions <b>11.00am</b> Mass: Kathleen and James Duffy	
<b>Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December</b> Second Week of Advent	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass <i>Sick and housebound will be visited</i>	
<b>Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December</b> St. Nicholas (bishop)	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass	
<b>Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December</b> St. Ambrose (bishop and doctor of the Church)	St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside	<b>10.00am</b> Mass <b>8.00pm</b> Mass	
<b>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December</b> Feast of the Immaculate Conception	St. Patrick's	<b>11.00am</b> Mass	
<b>Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December</b> St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin	St. Patrick's	<b>8.00pm</b> Mass	
<b>Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December</b> Second Week of Advent	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass	
<b>Saturday Evening (10<sup>th</sup> December)</b>	St. Patrick's	<b>5.30pm</b> Confessions <b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass for Sunday: <b>9:00am</b> Mass (Missa Pro Populo)	
<b>Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December</b> Third Sunday of Advent [Year B]	St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside	<b>10.30am</b> Confessions <b>11.00am</b> Mass: Gerard, Gerry & Mary McCrory	
<b>We welcome new parishioners and invite you to register by filling out a parish census form</b> <b>Please forward it to The Parochial House, at the address above</b>			
<b>Weekly Offerings:</b> Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection which amounted to <b>£1,010</b> and the contribution of <b>£60</b> to the Retired Priests' Fund. <i>Envelopes received from visitors coming to Mass in Greencastle are returned to those parishes.</i> Please remember the parish when making your will. If you are a taxpayer please consider a Gift-Aid declaration, your contribution will be worth 25% more to your parish.			
<b>Invitation to Mass:</b> If you are a homemaker or retired you are invited to make time in your schedule to attend Mass daily during Advent, this is the best way to prepare for Christmas.			
<b>Sick and housebound:</b> These will be attended <b>Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December</b> . Please let them know if you live nearby. If you know of anyone who is sick or housebound and who would like a visit please inform Fr. Hasson.			
<b>Remembering Our Dead:</b> We pray for <b>Mary Conway</b> and <b>James and Kathleen Duffy</b> whose anniversaries occur now			
<b>Pope Benedict XVI's Intentions for December (please remember these in your personal prayer)</b>			
<b>General:</b> That all peoples may grow in harmony and peace through mutual understanding and respect.			
<b>Missionary:</b> That children and young people may be messengers of the Gospel and that they may be respected and preserved from all violence and exploitation.			
<b>If you or anyone you know has a child safeguarding concern</b> or wishes to report an allegation directly to the statutory authorities, please contact the PSNI or local Health and Social Care Trust. If you are contacting the latter, ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker. Alternatively if you have a child safeguarding concern in relation to any member of Church personnel and wish to report it to Church authorities, please contact one of the diocesan designated persons, who will in turn report your concern to the relevant statutory authorities.			
<b>Child Safeguarding Policy:</b> Please familiarise yourself with it by reading the noticeboard as you leave Church today.			
<b>Next Sunday's Readings:</b> Isaiah 61:1-2, 10-11; Psalm Luke 1:46-50, 53-54; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28; (Lectionary I, page 48) <b>(Sunday: Year B) (Weekday: Year 2)</b>			
<b>Lotto Results:</b> C – D – L – H – V (11 people with 3 letters, 5 drawn – £10 each) <b>Next Jackpot:</b> £6,350			

6.00pm Saturday Vigil	Offertory Gifts Rota	9.00am Sunday Morning
Saturday 3 <sup>rd</sup> December The family of <b>Tyler Gumley</b>	Second Sunday of Advent	Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> December The family of <b>Ronan Hollywood</b>
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> December The family of <b>Oisin Coyle</b>	Third Sunday of Advent	Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> December The family of <b>Ryan Gumley</b>
Saturday 17 <sup>th</sup> December The family of <b>Aoife Conway</b>	Fourth Sunday of Advent	Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> December The family of <b>Kira Donnelly</b>
As the wider parish community we thank these young people and their families for this important task.		
<b>Trócaire:</b> You are invited to give someone special in your life a very special gift this Christmas by choosing from their offer of the nine life-changing gifts. <i>A leaflet is available at the church door</i>		
The <b>Carmelite Retreat Centre (Termonbacca, Derry):</b> <i>Calling the Carmelite Fathers Office on (028) 7126 2512 to book</i> <b>Marian Devotions:</b> Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> December from 7.30pm. <b>Advent Weekend Residential Retreat:</b> From 7.30pm on Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> December until after lunch on Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> December		
<b>"Follow the Star" to the Celtic Garden Christmas Trail at the IOSAS Centre, Muff:</b> An interactive family experience to recapture the true spirit of Christmas and learn about some of the Christian stories behind our favourite Christmas traditions. Facilitated by the YARD Project, Derry it is taking place Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> December and Friday 16 <sup>th</sup> – Sunday 18 <sup>th</sup> Dec at 4.00pm, 5.30pm and 7.00pm. PRE-BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL. <i>For tickets and information contact the IOSAS Centre (00353) 74938 4866 or the YARD Project (028) 7126 9113</i>		
<b>St Joseph's High School, Plumbridge – Book and DVD Launch:</b> Book and DVD, covering the life and times of St Joseph's High School (1969 – 2007) will be launched in Plumbridge Parochial Hall on Friday 9 <sup>th</sup> December at 8.00pm for £12. <i>Refreshments served</i>		
<b>Sacred Heart Church, Omagh – University of Ulster Choir:</b> Tuesday 13 <sup>th</sup> December at 8.00pm. Led by Choir Director, Shaun Ryan, the 70 strong Choir and Chamber Choir, renowned throughout Northern Ireland, will perform a programme including Howard Goodalls "Eternal Light", "Sleep" by Eric Whitacre, and Ralph Vaughan William's popular setting of "O be joyful in the Lord" ("The Hundredth Psalm"), together with a range of Christmas Music. <i>Everyone is warmly invited to come along</i>		
<b>Celebration of Arts and Crafts Work in Rouskey Community Centre:</b> Rouskey Management Committee invites everyone to Rouskey Community Centre on Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> December from 2.00pm to 5.00pm to see all crafts and art work that has been done in Rouskey since September. Childrens and Adults Art, Flower Arranging, Sculpture Making, Painted Crafts, Felt –making. Refreshments will be served. <i>Contact Bridie on 07847 459 428 or (028) 8164 8706</i> <b>Wizard of OZ Production:</b> We would thank all children/young people who took part in the show. Thanks to Cliodhna Fullen, producer and director of the show. Thanks who everyone donate prizes were much appreciated. Thanks to everyone for their support and help before and during the show. Thanks everyone who came along to the show. Hire of Rouskey Community Centre and equipment: <i>Contact Sheena on (028) 8164 8186</i>		
<b>Pioneer Retreat in Termonbacca:</b> Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> December. <i>Contact committee members for details</i>		
<b>Annual Bazaar:</b> Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> December from 4.30pm.		
<b>Pioneer Committee Meeting:</b> Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> December in St. Patrick's at 7.00pm.		
Greencastle Youth Club Rota		
Monday 5 <sup>th</sup> November	6.30pm – 8.00pm 8.00pm – 9.30pm	P6 and P7 (Bernard Morris) Years 8, 9 and 10 (Cheryl McCullagh)
Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> November	6.30pm – 8.00pm	P4 and P5 (Clare Mulholland)
An Bruach Dearg Community Centre Upcoming Events		Every Friday Night Beginning February, 2012
		Card playing at 8.30pm Pilates/Yoga classes
<b>The Deep End – Prepare Space:</b> We often miss Advent's power because these weeks are full of parties and intense consumerism in 'preparation' for Christmas. In today's Gospel, John the Baptist tells us to Prepare a Way and this is the commitment we are asked to make, to clear a space for God in our lives. God is with us in many different ways, trying to catch our attention in the midst of our crazy, busy days. The Gospel today calls to us to PREPARE SPACE, 5 minutes, 7 minutes, 20 mins... what can we give each day to stop, be still, to ask God for what we need, to listen? The world says to God, 'we no longer need you, we know what is best'. And then we look at the wilderness of our modern world and hear the voice of one crying, 'PREPARE A WAY'. Today ask for the grace to prepare space for the Lord in one's own heart, in the family, in the parish and in the human community.  In the body there is a little shrine. In that shrine there is a lotus. In that lotus there is a little space. The whole universe is in that little space, because the Creator, the source of all, is in the heart of each one of us. <i>Upanishad</i>		
<i>Jane Mellett (janemellett@yahoo.com)</i>		

**Family Care Society – Adoption:** Could you make a child happy again after a difficult start in life? Family Care Society is presently seeking adoptive families who would be interested in parenting children aged between 0 and 8 years and who need the love and attention of a caring and understanding family. Could this be you?  
For more information contact Family Care Society on (028) 9069 1133 (Belfast) or (028) 7136 8592 (Derry)  
email@familycaresociety.org familycaresociety.net

**Vincent's, Castle Street, Omagh:** Vincent's is the only SVP shop in this district. It depends on donations from you. Our customers really appreciate your gifts, especially good quality clothing. The shops profits are a steady source of income towards the work of SVP (St. Vincent DePaul Society). We realise there is a lot of competition from commercial and charity sources for your donations. We thank you for your ongoing support and appeal to you to continue to support SVP work in the seven SVP conferences in Omagh and district.  
Please leave your donations at the shop or place them in the blue bin near St. Patrick's Church, Greencastle.  
Our SVP van can collect larger amounts of goods or furniture. Our shop number is (028) 8224 9839.

**ACCORD – Time for a New Challenge:** ACCORD is a voluntary agency of the Catholic Church providing services to couples preparing for or seeking a deeper commitment within the sacrament of marriage. The Omagh Centre is seeking new members to train as facilitators. We are looking for people who are currently married 5 years in the Catholic Church or currently in a marriage recognised by the Catholic Church, have the ability to convey a positive attitude to marriage, have an openness and commitment to working within a Catholic organisation, relate easily to people, are able to be part of a team and are sensitive, warm, caring and accepting. An Information evening regarding this will be held in Mount St. Columba Pastoral Centre, 48 Brook Street, Omagh on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May at 8.00pm. Please feel free to come along, no commitment needed, have your questions answered and learn more about what ACCORD can offer you. Tel: 028 82242439

**Knock Marriage Introduction Bureau:** The aim of the Bureau is to introduce people considering marriage to a suitable marriage partner. Over 800 marriages have taken place as a result of these introductions. If you are searching for a suitable partner, why not consider applying? For further information contact the Bureau at Knock, Co. Mayo. Phone 00353 94937 5960 or visit our website at [www.knockmarriagebureau.com](http://www.knockmarriagebureau.com) and read about the workings of the Bureau.

**Foyle Hospice – Free Adult Counseling Service:** Offered on Tuesdays to help support those with a life limiting illness and their families / carers. Counseling is also available for the bereaved and there is a children's bereavement support group.  
For more info please contact the Hospice on (028) 7135 1010

**Thornhill Centre (121 Culmore Road, Derry) – Courses starting soon:** Liturgy – Theology/Spirituality  
(028) 7135 1233

**Catholic Schools Week 2012 – Diocesan Mass for Catholic Schools Week:** This will be held in St. Eugene's Cathedral, Derry on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 10.00am.  
The theme is *Catholic Schools – Christ's Body Active in Our World*

**Santa Stroll for all the Family and your Friends:** Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> December, starting at 11.00am. From Sainsbury's and stroll along the river, crossing The Peace Bridge. Entry Fee is £6.00 and receive a Santa suit Goddie bag and medal. All proceeds go to Foyle Hospice  
Contact the Hospice for an entry form on (028) 7135 9888, or email [victoria@foylehospice.com](mailto:victoria@foylehospice.com).

**Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes:** In 2012 the diocese will be going on pilgrimage to Lourdes from Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> to Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July. The cost is £599. There are early payment schemes available in the Pastoral Centre, Bishop Street, Derry; Pastoral Centre, Maghera; St Eugene's Cathedral; Thornhill Centre and Strabane.  
For further details contact Thornhill Centre at (028) 7135 1233 or email [thornhillcentre@derrydiocese.org](mailto:thornhillcentre@derrydiocese.org).  
Gift vouchers are also available for purchase through Thornhill Centre.

**Camara:** This is a charity which takes in used computers, refurbishes them and sends them to schools and colleges in Africa. In 2011 we will refurbish over 10,000 computers which will be supplied to schools in Uganda, Lesotho, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia, Tanzania and Rwanda. Every summer Camara sends teams of Volunteers for four very Telephone/Email on busy weeks to Africa to assist our local partners deliver essential training to teachers in the schools we supply. The assignment is for four or five weeks, departing Ireland in early July or early August depending on destination.  
Camara Belfast, Unit 23 and 24 Townsend Enterprise Park, Townsend Street, Belfast BT13 2ES  
Tel: (028) 9033 2470 Email: [belfast@camara.ie](mailto:belfast@camara.ie) Online: [camara.ie](http://camara.ie)

## Important Dates for the Diary in 2012

<b>Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> March</b>	St. Patrick's	<b>6.30pm</b> First Confession
<b>Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Our Lady of the Wayside	<b>5.00pm</b> Sacrament of Confirmation (Bishop Hegarty)
<b>Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Our Lady of the Wayside	<b>11.00am</b> First Holy Communion
Feast of the Ascension		

## Solemn Annual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

<b>Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> May</b>	St. Patrick's
<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> September</b>	Our Lady of the Wayside

## Derry Diocesan Society Masses in our Parish

Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> December	Wednesday 8 <sup>th</sup> February	Friday 30 <sup>th</sup> March
Tuesday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May	Wednesday 11 <sup>th</sup> July	Thursday 30 <sup>th</sup> August
Friday 19 <sup>th</sup> October		
The weekday Masses will be celebrated at 10.00am in St. Patrick's Church unless a Requiem is needed on the date		

## Public Prayers for our Deceased (Cemetery Sunday) (30<sup>th</sup> June and 1<sup>st</sup> July)

<b>Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June</b>	St. Patrick's	Directly after <b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass
<b>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> July</b>	Our Lady of the Wayside	Directly after <b>11.00am</b> Mass
<b>Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November</b>	St. Patrick's	<b>8.00pm</b> Commemoration of All Souls (remembering all who died during the year)

'Do This In Memory' liturgies for candidates preparing for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion

<b>Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	<b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass
<b>Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> February</b>	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	<b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass
<b>Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> March</b>	Second Sunday in Lent	<b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass
<b>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> March</b>		<b>6.30pm</b> First Confessions (Reconciliation)
<b>Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> March</b>	Palm Sunday	<b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass
<b>Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Fifth Sunday of Easter	<b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass
<b>Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> May</b>	Feast of the Ascension of the Lord	<b>11.00am</b> First Holy Communion
<b>Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> June</b>	Feast of Corpus Christi	<b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass

Parish Liturgy for December, 2011	St. Patrick's (6.00pm Vigil Mass)	St. Patrick's (9.00am Mass)	Our Lady of the Wayside (11.00am Mass)
Readers	Martin McCullagh	Mary Clarke	Brendan/Helen McKenna
Prayers of the Faithful	Aileen Tuohy	Emmett Bradley	Volunteer needed
Eucharistic Ministry	Frankie Bradley	Maria Bradley	Josephine Clarke
Collectors	John Bradley Colm Devlin	Eugene Tracey Brendan Conway	---
Altar Society	Mary Bradley and Helen Tracey		Anne McDermott Carmel McCrory

**The 50th International Eucharistic Congress 2012:** This will take place in Dublin from 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June under the theme 'The Eucharist: Communion with Christ and with one another' and expects 25,000 pilgrims to participate each day, both from Ireland and from overseas.

It is an international gathering of people, which aims to promote an awareness of the central place of the Eucharist in the life and mission of the Catholic Church; help improve our understanding and celebration of the liturgy and draw attention to the social dimension of the Eucharist.



These aims are achieved through a programme of pastoral preparation in the years leading up to the Congress and the actual week of the Congress that consists of a programme of Prayer, Eucharist, workshops, discussion groups, catechesis and testimonies, cultural events, a youth space, tours, exhibitions, a Eucharistic Procession, a massive closing ceremony in Croke Park and more.  
For more information visit [iec2012.ie](http://iec2012.ie)

**ACCORD Marriage Preparation Courses (St. Columba's Pastoral Centre, 48 Brook Street (028 8224 2439)):**

2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> December, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> January, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February,  
9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> March, 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> April, 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> May, and 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> June

**Couples are encouraged to complete their course six months before their wedding date**

### Introduction of the new edition of the Roman Missal:

**Posture during Mass:** Bishop Hegarty commends the following common posture, as set down in the *General Instruction* (43) for observation throughout the diocese:

1. Standing from the beginning until the end of the Collect;
2. Standing from the *Orate Fratres* (pray brothers and sisters...) until the end of the *Sanctus*;
3. Standing from Concluding Prayer until the end of Mass.
4. The practice of kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion is laudably retained.

**Silence:** Attention is drawn to articles 45 and 56 of the *General Instruction* which commend the observation of sacred silence at certain times before and during Mass.

### Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre News

- A new Diocesan Youth Co-Ordinator, Dominic O'Reilly has been appointed to replace Justin McMahon.
- Annual Award Ceremony for Pope John Paul II Award will take place on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> and Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February in the Millennium Forum Derry.

### Volunteers urgently needed for the 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress 2012:

The 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress 2012 (IEC2012) will take place in Dublin from 10<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> June. Volunteers will have an integral role to play in the success of the Congress. Between two and three thousand volunteers will be needed during the week of the Congress and also to assist in preparations in the months leading up to the Congress. The Congress is now recruiting volunteers for a wide range of roles such as administration, data entry, stewards, marketing, transport, meet and greet, multimedia, pastoral preparation and much more!

If you would like to get involved please visit the IEC2012 website [iec2012.ie/volunteer](http://iec2012.ie/volunteer) and fill out an online application or request an application form from the Congress office. Induction training sessions will begin **19<sup>th</sup>**

**November in the RDS.** For more information please contact the IEC2012 offices on (01) 2349900.

**Age NI First Connect Service:** First Connect offers emotional and practical support at difficult times to people later in life. The First Connect Coordinator will visit each client at home or at an alternative suitable venue, to discuss their needs and provide them with information on the services that are available. This could be as simple as involving them in the community by organising access to a day centre or community group, a benefits check to ensure they are getting what they are entitled to, providing home safety measures, etc. In agreement with the client, the First Connect Coordinator will signpost them to the services and make sure they are in place.

For more information or to make a referral to the First Connect service contact Age NI at: Freephone 0808 808 7575. Alternatively you can contact the First Connect Coordinator for the Western Area, Eimear McKearney on 07425 620 194 or email [eimear.mckearney@ageni.org](mailto:eimear.mckearney@ageni.org)

### This Week's Calendar of Saints and Feasts:

**Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December – St. Nicholas (bishop)** 4<sup>th</sup> century bishop of Myra (in modern Turkey) whose legendary kindness inspired the Santa Claus tradition. He is Patron Saint of Russia, sailors, pawnbrokers and children.

**Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December – St. Ambrose (bishop and doctor of the Church) [340-397]** Converted to Christianity and was made bishop of Milan in 274 by popular acclaim. A brilliant teacher and preacher of the faith, he influenced Augustine who he received into the Church. Patron Saint of Milan, beekeepers and domestic animals.

**Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December – Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** On this holy day of obligation we celebrate Mary, mother of Jesus. She was preserved free from sin from the first moment of her existence in the womb 'by a singular grace and privilege of Almighty God'.

**Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December – St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin [1474-1548]** Saw the vision of Our Lady of Guadalupe in December of 1531.

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> December – St. Damascus I (pope)** Born around 304 and died on this day in 384, was elected pope in 336. He insisted on the apostolic foundations of the Roman See and was active in opposing 4<sup>th</sup> century heresies. He commissioned St. Jerome to prepare the vulgate version of the bible.

*Not celebrated this year*

### Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – Mark 1:1-8:

1. John the Baptist is presented as a messenger to prepare the way for Jesus. Who have been messengers to you, preparing the way for the Lord by alerting you to ways in which you could improve your life? To whom have you been such a messenger?
2. John calls the people to repentance (a change of heart), as a way to a new life. Can you recall times when you had a change of heart, and the change led to new life for you?
3. John baptised people with water as a gesture to mark their change of heart. Sometimes we perform an action to symbolise our change of heart – write a letter, throw away our last cigarettes, etc. Can you remember a symbolic gesture with which you marked a change of heart?

*John Byrne OSA ([john@orlagh.ie](mailto:john@orlagh.ie))*

### Questions people ask:

Q. What is the connection between Santa Claus and St Nicholas?

A. Santa comes from Sanctus meaning holy or saintly. Claus is a shortened form of Nicholas. So, Santa Claus literally means Saint Nicholas. Nicholas was a bishop in Turkey in the fourth century renowned for healing and generosity to the poor. One story is that he paid a dowry in gold to enable three girls to get husbands rather than be sold by their father to prostitution. The three golden balls outside a pawn shop recall that story. His feast was an occasion for giving toys and sweets to children. This custom was later linked with Christmas to celebrate the generosity of God in giving his Son as the dowry for our marriage with heaven. St Nicholas is celebrated on Tuesday, 6 December.

*Fr. Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap ([silvesteroflynn@gmail.com](mailto:silvesteroflynn@gmail.com))*