

Parish of Greencastle, Co. Tyrone, Diocese of Derry

Saint Patrick's Church, Greencastle Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Broughderg

The Second Sunday of Advent – Year C (6th December, 2009)

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

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Today the liturgy turns to John the Baptist, one of the primary figures of Advent. What an entrance John makes in today's Gospel. He appears, the Gospel attests, preaching fire and brimstone. He reminds us of the urgency of Advent and the radical transformation of our lives to which the season calls us. The Lord is coming. Let your repentance show in your lives. Our observance of Advent is meant, like our observance of every other liturgical season, to change us. It is meant to have an effect upon our lives and the way we live as followers of Christ, as members of the Church. When Christmas arrives, we should be changed – different from how we were when Advent began. This transformation is the essence of John the Baptist's preaching. *LTP Sourcebook (2008)*

Liturgy Schedule for the Second Week of Advent (7th December – 12th December, 2009)

Monday 7th December St. Ambrose (bishop and doctor of the Church)	Saint Patrick's	10.00am Mass <i>Sick and Housebound will be visited</i>
Monday 7th December (evening) Holy Day of Obligation	Our Lady of the Wayside	7.30pm Confessions 8.00pm Vigil Mass for Feast Day
Tuesday 8th December Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Saint Patrick's	11.00am Mass
Wednesday 9th December St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin	Saint Patrick's	10.00am Mass
Thursday 10th December Second Week of Advent	Saint Patrick's	10.00am Mass
Friday 11th December St. Damascus (pope)	Saint Patrick's	7.30pm Practice for choir and all involved in <i>Do This In Memory</i> programme
Saturday 12th December Our Lady of Guadalupe and St. Lucy (virgin and martyr)	Saint Patrick's	8.00pm Mass: (Rosaleen Heagney – 1 st Anniversary)
Saturday 12th December (evening)	Saint Patrick's	10.00am Mass
Sunday 13th December Third Sunday of Advent	Saint Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside	5.30pm Confessions 6.00pm Vigil Mass for Sunday: <i>Do This In Memory</i> programme 9:00am Mass: 'Misso Pro Populo' 10.30am Confessions 11:00am Mass

Weekly Offerings: Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection which amounted to **£1,090. Please support your parish by using your envelope even if you must attend Mass outside your parish, thank you.** Envelopes received from visitors coming to Mass in Greencastle are returned to those parishes. Thank you also for the further **£30** received for the **Retired Priests' Fund** bringing it to the current total of **£950.**

Remembering Our Dead: We pray for **Rosaleen Heagney, Mary Conway** and **Patrick Devlin** whose anniversaries occur at this time.

'Do This In Memory of Me': Our parish programme in preparation for the Sacraments of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion continues at the Vigil Mass for the Third Sunday of Advent on Saturday 12th December in Greencastle.

Next Sunday's Readings: Zephaniah 3:14-18; Psalm "Isaiah 12:2-6"; Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:10-18
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Lotto Numbers: 2, 12, 14, 17 (4 winners with 3 numbers – £15 each) **Next Jackpot:** £1,150

Serving Our Faith-Community in Greencastle Parish

Parish Liturgy for 12 th / 13 th December, 2009	St. Patrick's (6.00pm Vigil Mass)	St. Patrick's (9.00am Mass)	Our Lady of the Wayside (11.00am Mass)
Prayers of Intercession	<i>Do This In Memory</i>	<i>Volunteer needed</i>	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Offertory Gifts	The family of Matthew Conway	The family of Michaela McBride	

Choir Practice for Christmas: There will be a choir practice on Wednesday night in Greencastle at 7.00pm regarding rehearsal for Christmas masses. Please join and share your gifts.

Pilgrimages and Retreats

Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes (16th – 21st July, 2010): Cost £629 – payable in instalments. Application forms are now available in the sacristy (Greencastle). Forms for those in need of special care or those aged 80 or over are available only from the Pilgrimage Office, Derry. Telephone: (028) 7126 0293.

Carmelite Retreat Centre, Termonbacca, Derry – Monthly Devotions in Honour of Our Lady:
Tuesday 1st December with confessions at 7.30pm followed by Rosary and Mass. Finishing 10.00pm.
Annual Pioneer Retreat: Sunday 6th December from 10.30am. Donation: £14.

St. Anthony's Retreat Centre, Dundrean, Burnfoot. Co. Donegal: A space of quiet, prayer and solitude. Available for individual retreats and spiritual guidance. Residential accommodation and meals in the Centre's hermitages. Promotions offer €45 per night. "Come away by yourself to a desert place and rest for a while."
Contact Fr. Neal Carlin on 00353 74936 8370 or sacre@eircom.net for enquiries and bookings.

Advent is a twofold character: As a season to prepare for Christmas when Christ's first coming to us is remembered and as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and heart to await Christ's Second Coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation. There are two stages in Advent; the first runs until 16th December and the second (which is mainly directed to the Christmas feasts) runs from 17th December until 24th December.

The Advent Wreath: Placing four candles on green fronds has become a symbol of Advent in many Christian homes especially in Germanic countries and in North America – we do so in Church each year. The Advent wreath with its progressive lighting of four candles each Sunday until Christmas, is a recollection of the various stages of salvation prior to Christ's coming and a symbol of the prophetic light gradually illuminating the long night prior to the rising of the Sun of Justice (Malachi 3:20; Luke 1:18).

Dean Maguirc College will be holding First Aid classes on Thursday nights from 7.00pm to 8.30pm for 4 weeks beginning on 3rd December. Upon completion of the course those involved will hold a valid first aid certificate. If you are interested in taking part in this workshop please contact Mr. Gerard Mullan at Dean Maguirc College on (028) 8076 1272.

Foundations in Liturgy: A 12 week Liturgy course led by the Thornhill Centre team will be held in Sion Mills Parish Centre beginning Tuesday 19th January, 2010 from 7:30pm to 9:30 pm. This course is designed to foster an understanding of the richness of the Liturgy of the Church, examining core elements and symbols of our ritual and worship. Course cost: £100. For further details, please contact Thornhill Centre at (028) 7135 1233.

BADA An Bruach Dearg Community Centre – Upcoming Events:

Every Friday Night Card game from 8.30pm

greencastleparish.com: During the month of November, 2009 a total of **2,650** people have visited our website bringing the overall total to **30,475.**

Thank you to Fr. Terry Bennett for his presence among us these past two weekends

Items for inclusion should be forwarded to the Parochial House by the Wednesday evening prior to publication

Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – *Luke 3:1-6*:

1. The manner in which Luke identifies in detail the time when John the Baptist started his preaching shows that Luke regarded this as a historic moment. Perhaps you can recall in detail the time and the circumstances of particularly significant moments in your life?
2. John called people to give expression to their desire for a change of heart by a symbolic baptism in the Jordan. When have you found it helpful to symbolise your desire to change for the better by some symbolic gesture, e.g. burning a packet of cigarettes, sending a card, making a phone call, etc.
3. Behind the quotation from Isaiah lies the practice of preparing festival routes for religious celebrations. Isaiah visualises such a celebration to celebrate the return of the Israelites to Jerusalem. Can you recall a particularly memorable Advent? What happened? Think of how you can do it this year.

John Byrne OSA (john@orlagh.ie)

Questions people ask:

- Q. On a television programme it was claimed that Christmas was a development of the pagan cult of Mithra, a pagan god associated with worship of sunlight. Is there any reason to doubt the traditional belief that the Son of God was born at Bethlehem?
- A. Pagan myths lack all foundation in historical fact whereas Christianity is rooted in facts about real, historical people and geographical places. Read St Luke's list of real people and places in today's Gospel. The incarnation, that is the coming of God in human flesh and blood, is no imaginary myth but historical fact.

Fr. Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap (silvesteroflynn@gmail.com)

The Deep End – *On the Margins*:

Drunk and wobbling, he stood in the middle of O'Connell Street, Dublin. Ignoring the rictus of the *floosie in the jacuzzi* statue behind him, he berated passers-by for walking around in a dream and not knowing it. He had a point. But no impact. 'Ye'r all livin' in a dream!' was his shouted message. But for his spectral hearers the medium was the message: a noontime drunk couldn't have anything worthwhile to say.

Yet what about another down-and-out: the poet Francis Thompson. He had much to say, and all of it worthwhile. As God's word came to John the Baptist in the wilderness of sand (today's Gospel Luke 3:1-6) so too it came to an opium addict in his wilderness of streets. When it came his eyes opened and he penned these luminous lines: *The angels keep their ancient places/Turn but a stone and start a wing!/Tis ye, 'tis your estrangéd faces,/That miss the many-splendored thing.*

John the Baptist couldn't have put it better! Truly what Advent announces is a 'many-splendored thing': God's splendour shining through simplicity, God's power bursting through weakness. Conceived out of wedlock, born out of home, rejected by society, killed by the 'law', Jesus became a man on the margins.

Do we want to cheer at the birth of a marginalised man? Do we want to listen to what he says? Do we not prefer the hollow chant of 'Ho! Ho! Ho!' and the glint of tacky tinsel? Could that be why we've handed Christmas over to kids?

Fr. Tom Cahill SVD, Divine Word Missionaries, Donamon, Co Roscommon (tomcee@eircom.net)

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 2-6 years and who need the love and attention of a caring and understanding family.

Could this be you?

Please contact Family Care Society on:

(028) 9069 1133 [Belfast] or (028) 7136 8592 [Derry]

Email: email@family-care-society.org

Website: family-care-society.net

Help to contain the swine flu impact: Everyone can play their part, and simple measures such as regular hand-washing and using a tissue can go some way towards mitigating this pandemic's impact.

Irish News (18th July, 2009)

This Week's Calendar of Saints:

- Monday 7th December** – **St. Ambrose (340-397)** Became governor of the Roman Province whose seat was in Milan. In 374 the laity insisted on his becoming bishop even though he was still not baptised. He defended orthodoxy in brilliant preaching and through his writing. Patron of Milan, beekeepers and domestic animals.
- Tuesday 8th December** – **Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary** We celebrate Mary, who from the first instant of her existence in the womb of her mother Anne was 'by singular grace and privilege of Almighty God and in view of the merits of Jesus Christ, Saviour of the human race, preserved free from all stain of original sin'.
- Wednesday 9th December** – **St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatatzin (1474-1548)** Saw the vision of Our Lady of Guadalupe in December, 1531.
- Friday 11th December** – **St. Damasus I** He was born around 304 and died on this day in 384, elected pope in 366. He insisted on the apostolic foundations of the Roman See and was active in opposing fourth-century heresies. He commissioned St. Jerome to prepare the Vulgate version of the Bible.
- Saturday 12th December** – **St. Finnian**, studied in Idrone (Co. Carlow) and later in Wales, and on his return he settled in Clonard, Co. Meath, around 520, where he established a famous school. His pupils, among them Canice, Columcille, and Brendan, were the initiators of the great monastic expansion in Ireland. He died in 594 and is remembered as the tutor of the Saints of Ireland.