

Pope Francis' Intentions for December (please remember these in your personal prayer)
Universal: That the birth of the Redeemer may bring peace and hope to all people of good will.
For Evangelisation: That parents may be true evangelisers, passing on to their children the precious gift of faith.

Camowen Farmers Meeting: Monday 8th December at 8.00pm in the Milestone Centre, Carrickmore, Speaker Tom Armstrong Provita Topic: Better animal performance, also Brian Lamont DARD Topic: Equality Assessment. Also Linedance class Tuesday 9th December at 8.00pm in the Milestone Centre. *Admission is £5.00*

Craft Training Ltd: A leading organisation that gives young people training opportunities to learn new skills and gain qualifications that can help them to succeed in their chosen career path and earn £40 per week, all free of charge! Gain the skills you need to kick start your career.
 We offer a vast range of qualifications including ICT, hairdressing, joinery, painting and decorating, hospitality and catering, retail and much more.
 These are provided through two programmes. Training for Success is aimed at 16-18 year olds and Apprenticeships NI is for 18 years and up.
Tel: (028) 8225 9377 • **Address:** Kelvin Avenue, Omagh • **Email:** joincraft@hotmail.co.uk

Dalradian Gold Ltd. – Gold Panning Taster Event: Saturday 13th December from 10.00am to 12 noon in the Owenkillew Community Centre. For children as part of the Advent calendar series of events
Admission is £3.00 • All proceeds to the Omagh branch of Parkinson's UK
 Due to the continued expansion and development of the project, Dalradian Gold wish to recruit a Junior Environmental Technician and an IT Assistant. Anyone interested please request a job description from the Gortin / Omagh offices or fromaconey@dalradian.com / (028) 8224 6289.
Closing date for submission of CV and cover letter no later than 5.00pm on Friday 12th December

This Week's Calendar of Feasts and Saints:

Monday 8th 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'. [Not celebrated this year]

Friday 12th December – St. Finnian (bishop) Studied in Idrone, Co. Carlow and later in Wales, on his return he settled in Clonard, Co. Meath around 520, where he established a famous school. His pupils, among which were Canice, Columcille and Brendan, were initiators of the great monastic expansion in Ireland. Died in 549 and is remembered as the tutor of all the saints of Ireland.
Our Lady of Guadalupe Patron Saint of the Americas. This memorial recalls the apparitions in December, 1531 to Juan Diego Cuatlatlatoztin on Tepeyac Hill, near Mexico City. Mary appeared as a symbol of wisdom and peace. Her image as a *mestiza*, a woman of native American and European heritage, remained in Juan's cloak (*tilma*). She appeared as "the little brown one," affectionately called La Morenita, who gives great dignity and holiness to the native and mestizo peoples of America. The tilma that Juan Diego presented to his doubtful bishop was filled with roses and is now enshrined in Mexico City in the Basilica of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Nowhere else does she appear as a pregnant woman as she does here, wearing the blue sash traditionally worn by expectant Aztec women. She also has a flower on her womb, an Aztec symbol of new life and a new era. Blocks the sun and stands on the moon.

Saturday 13th December – St. Lucy (virgin and martyr) Suffered much for her desire to remain consecrated to Christ alone. She was martyred in 304 in Sicily in the persecution of Diocletian. Her name means *light* and her intercession has been sought for eye trouble.

Sunday 14th December – St. John of the Cross (priest and doctor of the Church) [1542-1591]
 A Carmelite who, despite opposition and imprisonment, worked for the reform of the Carmelites. He was a man of prayer, an outstanding poet and a spiritual writer. Declared doctor of the Church. [Not celebrated this year]

Parish Liturgy for December, 2014	St. Patrick's (6.00pm Vigil Mass)	St. Patrick's (9.00am Mass)	Our Lady of the Wayside (11.00am Mass)
Readers	Francis McDermott	Catriona McCullagh	Brendan / Helen McKenna
Eucharistic Ministry	Frankie Bradley	Maria Bradley	Josephine Clarke
Prayers of the Faithful	-- TBC --	-- TBC --	Conan Maguire
Collectors	Francis McLaughlin Mary Bradley	Peter Tracey Colm Keenan	Tony Donnelly Brendan Daly
Altar Society	Mary Bradley and Helen Tracey		Anne McDermott Carmel McCrory
New choir members will always be welcome – Contact Sinead			

ACCORD Marriage Preparation Courses
 St. Columba's Pastoral Centre, 48 Brook Street (028)8224 2439 accordomagh@accordni.com
 9th and 10th January • 6th and 7th February • 6th and 7th March
 10th and 11th April • 8th and 9th May • 12th and 13th June
Couples are encouraged to complete their course six months before their wedding date

Irish Catholic Catechism for Adults: A new resource from the Irish Episcopal Conference, designed to complement the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It has been adapted for an Irish audience and is written in accessible, easy to understand language. Whilst it can be used as an Individual private resource for reflection, it is also particularly useful for Parish Study Groups, Liturgy Groups, Parish Pastoral Councils and any individuals/groups working in parishes to promote catechesis / deepening of adult faith formation. A Study Guide to complement the Catechism has also been published. The Catechism is available from Veritas bookshops, at a cost of £19.99 / €24.99 and the Study Guide costs £11.00 / €12.99. Good discounts are available for multiple purchases. Tel: 02871 266888 or E-mail: derryshop@veritas.ie

Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – Mark 1:1-8: *John Byrne OSA (john@orlagh.ie)*

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?

Musings *Salvador Ryan (St. Patrick's College, Maynooth)*
 Today's First Reading contain words of comfort and tenderness for the people of Jerusalem, words which assure them that their time of hard service is at an end and their sins paid for. It reminds me of that beautiful scene from Les Misérables when the convict Jean Valjean is returned by police to the bishop of Digne, whose silver he has stolen. Seeing Valjean's state, the bishop assures police that there has been a misunderstanding – the stolen silver had been a free gift all along, and addresses Valjean, 'but you forgot the candlesticks – here take these as well!' God's mercy is always superabundant.

Public Initiative for the Prevention of Suicide and Self Harm (PIPS) (028) 3026 6195 • info@pipsnewryandmourne.org
Christmas Service of Remembrance, Hope and Healing: Sunday 14th December at 4.00pm in St. Mary's Church, Upper Hill Street, Newry. For families and friends of loved ones lost through suicide.

Warm Homes – Are you entitled to Free Insulation and Heating?
For info call 0800 988 0559 or visit warm-homes.com

Irish Language Class for Beginners: Every Thursday in Greencastle GAA Hall from 8.00pm to 9.30pm. Teenagers and adults are welcome.
Call Sinéad Warnock on 07849 394 001

The Deep End – Prepare a Way:

Jane Mellett (janemellett@yahoo.com)

John the Baptist is an interesting character. He wasn't someone who kept up with the latest fashion. We are told he wore strange clothes, ate insects and lived in the desert. And yet John was very popular as we hear that 'all of Judea' came to him. There was obviously something very attractive about John. People could see something in him; something that inspired them; something that gave them hope. John is clear that he is not the one they are looking for; rather he is someone who is pointing to the one they are looking for. John shows the way for people, he is a signpost to God.

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'. How do we prepare for welcoming God's love into our hearts? God is crying out for us to welcome him again and again. It is us who are blocked; we put so many things in the way. John is urging us to clear the path, to let go of all the things that are preventing us from experiencing God's love. John is calling people out from despair into hopefulness.