



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

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

**Fourth Sunday of Advent [Year B] (18<sup>th</sup> December, 2011)**

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

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Liturgy Schedule for the Fourth Week of Advent [Year B] (19 <sup>th</sup> December, 2011 – 25 <sup>th</sup> December, 2011)			
<b>Saturday Evening (17<sup>th</sup> December)</b>	St. Patrick's <i>Do This In Memory</i> St. Patrick's	<b>5.30pm</b> Confessions <b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass for Sunday: Katy Fox (Month's Mind) <b>9:00am</b> Mass (Missa Pro Populo)	
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December</b> Fourth Sunday of Advent [Year B]	Our Lady of the Wayside	<b>10.30am</b> Confessions <b>11.00am</b> Mass	

Penitential Services in Preparation for Christmas with the Opportunity to receive the Sacrament individually			
<b>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December</b>	St. Patrick's, Greencastle	<b>3:30pm</b>	
<i>Fr. Forbes (PP Badoney Lower), Fr. Donnelly (PP Badoney Upper) and</i>	St. Patrick's, Gortin	<b>5.30pm</b>	
<i>Fr. Hasson will be available for the individual celebration of the Sacrament</i>	Sacred Heart, Plumbridge	<b>7.00pm</b>	

<b>Monday 19<sup>th</sup> December</b> Fourth Week of Advent	St. Patrick's Sacred Heart, Omagh	<b>10.00am</b> Mass <b>8.00pm</b> Penitential Service (priests available for Sacrament)
<b>Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December</b> St. Fachan (bishop)	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass: Derry Diocesan Society (members and benefactors)
<b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December</b> St. Peter Canisus	St. Patrick's Christ the King, Strathroy	<b>10.00am</b> Mass <b>8.00pm</b> Penitential Service (priests available for Sacrament)
<b>Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> December</b> St. John of Kanty (priest)	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass
<b>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December</b> Fourth Week of Advent	St. Patrick's	<b>8.00pm</b> Mass: Gerry Daly (recently deceased) and Margaret Daly (Anniversary)
<b>Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December</b> Fourth Week of Advent	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass

Season of Christmas			
<b>Saturday Evening (24<sup>th</sup> December)</b>	St. Patrick's	<b>7.30pm</b> Carol Service <b>8:00pm</b> Vigil Mass	
<b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December</b> The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ [Year B]	Our Lady of the Wayside St. Patrick's	<b>9.00am</b> Mass (Missa Pro Populo) <b>11.00am</b> Mass	

<b>Weekly Offerings:</b> Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection which amounted to <b>£940</b> . <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.
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<b>Invitation to Mass:</b> If you are a homemaker, not presently working or are 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.
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<b>Remembering Our Dead:</b> We pray for <b>Anna Rose McCullagh</b> and <b>Margaret Daly</b> , whose anniversaries occur at this time
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<b>Baptisms:</b> As a parish community we welcome into our Christian family <b>Peter Tomas Fox</b> who was baptised recently. May our adult community offer our newly baptized and his parents and godparents prayerful support and good example in our commitment to Christian living.
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<p><b>Letter from Bishop Hegarty to Parishioners:</b></p> <p>During the past week Bishop Hegarty wrote a personal, handwritten letter to thank us for our prayers for him at this time.</p> <p><b><i>My memories of my pastoral visits to your parish have always been positive and refreshing. Please convey to the parishioners my deep gratitude and appreciation for their witness and fidelity to both the Church and to the Diocese as I have observed at Confirmation ceremonies. Although retired as Bishop of Derry please keep me in your prayers.</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b><i>With my blessing and good wishes.</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>+ Séamus Hegarty</b></p>
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<b>Next Sundays Readings:</b>
<b>Midnight Mass Readings:</b> Isaiah 9:1-7; Psalm 95:1-3, 11-13; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14; (Lectionary I, page 104)
<b>Dawn Mass Readings:</b> Isaiah 62:11-12; Psalm 96; Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:16-20; (Lectionary I, page 107)
<b>Mass During the Day:</b> Isaiah 52:7-10; Psalm 97; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18; (Lectionary I, page 109)

<b>Lotto Results:</b> O – P – Q – V – Y (2 people with 3 letters – £25 each) <b>Next Jackpot:</b> £6,450
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<b>6.00pm Saturday Vigil</b> <u>Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> December</u> The family of <b>Aoife Conway</b> To celebrate the Feast of Christmas the Vigil Mass will be at 8.00pm with carols beginning at 7.30pm. 11.00am Mass will be in St. Patrick's, Greencastle and 9.00am Mass will be in Our Lady of the Wayside, Broughderg.	<b>Offertory Gifts Rota</b> Fourth Sunday of Advent The family of <b>Kira Donnelly</b>	<b>9.00am Sunday Morning</b> <u>Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> December</u> The family of <b>Kira Donnelly</b>
<u>Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> December</u> The family of <b>Caitlin Clarke</b>	Feast of Christmas	<u>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> January</u> The family of <b>Megan Coyle</b>
<u>Saturday 31<sup>st</sup> December</u> The family of <b>Joseph Warnock</b>	Feast of Christmas	<u>Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> January</u> The family of <b>Alannah Coyle</b>
<u>Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> January</u> The family of <b>Niamh Conway</b>	Feast of Christmas	<u>Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January</u> The family of <b>Aidan Conway</b>
As the wider parish community we thank these young people and their families for this important task.		

<b>Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes (Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> – Friday 6<sup>th</sup> July):</b> Gift vouchers are available from the Thornhill Centre ((028) 7135 1233) and The Diocesan Pastoral Centre ((028) 7136 2475). <i>Vouchers can be used as part or full payment</i>
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<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>
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<p><b>Carmelite Retreat Centre (Termonbacca, Derry):</b></p> <p><b>Advent Evening Vigils:</b> Monday 19<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December. Beginning at 7.30pm with Confessions followed by Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and Mass. The Mass on Tuesday evening will be the Mass of the Sick.</p>
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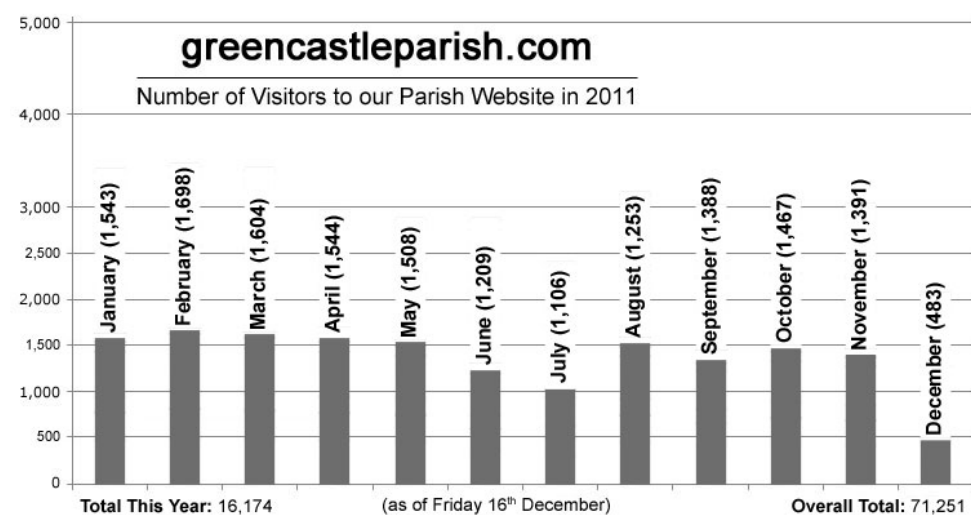
<b>If you or anyone you know has a child safeguarding concern</b> or wishes to report an allegation directly to the statutory authorities, please contact the PSNI or local Health and Social Care Trust. If you are contacting the latter, ask to speak to the Duty Social Worker. Alternatively if you have 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. Familiarise yourself with it by reading the noticeboard as you leave Church.
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<p><b>Do This In Memory of Me – Our Parish's First Holy Communion Preparation Programme:</b></p> <p>Our next gathering will be at the Vigil Mass for the Second Sunday in Ordinary Time (Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January).</p>
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<b>Owenkillew Credit Union Greencastle Office:</b> This will be closed Monday 26 <sup>th</sup> December and will reopen on Monday 2 <sup>nd</sup> January from 7.00pm-9.00pm. The Gortin office will be open Saturday 24 <sup>th</sup> and 31 <sup>st</sup> December from 6.30pm-8.00pm.
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<b>Gaelic Start Programme:</b> Sinéad Donnelly has informed us that this has now been suspended until January.
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<b>An Bruach Dearg Community Centre</b> <i>Upcoming Events</i>	<b>Every Friday Night</b> <b>Beginning February, 2012</b>	Card playing at 8.30pm Pilates/Yoga classes
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<p><b>Pope Benedict XVI's Intentions for December (please remember these in your personal prayer)</b></p> <p><b>General:</b> That all peoples may grow in harmony and peace through mutual understanding and respect.</p> <p><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.</p>
<p><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 16<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> Dec at 4.00pm, 5.30pm and 7.00pm. PRE-BOOKING IS ESSENTIAL.</p> <p><i>For tickets contact the IOSAS Centre (00353) 74938 4866 or the YARD Project (028) 7126 9113</i></p>
<p><b>Family Care Society – Adoption:</b> 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 under 8 and who need the love and attention of a caring and understanding family. Could this be you?</p> <p><i>For more information contact Family Care Society on (028) 9069 1133 (Belfast) or (028) 7136 8592 (Derry) email@familycaresociety.org familycaresociety.net</i></p>
<p><b>Vincent's, Castle Street, Omagh:</b> 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.</p> <p><i>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.</i></p>
<p><b>ACCORD – Time for a New Challenge:</b> 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. <i>Tel: 028 82242439</i></p>
<p><b>Knock Marriage Introduction Bureau:</b> 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 <a href="http://www.knockmarriagebureau.com">www.knockmarriagebureau.com</a> and read about the workings of the Bureau.</p>
<p><b>Catholic Schools Week 2012 – Diocesan Mass for Catholic Schools Week:</b> This will be held in St. Eugene's Cathedral, Derry on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> February at 10.00am.</p> <p><i>The theme is Catholic Schools – Christ's Body Active in Our World</i></p>
<p><b>Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes:</b> 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.</p> <p><i>For further details contact Thornhill Centre at (028) 7135 1233 or email <a href="mailto:thornhillcentre@derrydiocese.org">thornhillcentre@derrydiocese.org</a>. Gift vouchers are also available for purchase through Thornhill Centre.</i></p>
<p><b>Camara:</b> 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.</p> <p>Camara Belfast, Unit 23 and 24 Townsend Enterprise Park, Townsend Street, Belfast BT13 2ES  <b>Tel:</b> (028) 9033 2470 <b>Email:</b> <a href="mailto:belfast@camara.ie">belfast@camara.ie</a> <b>Online:</b> <a href="http://camara.ie">camara.ie</a></p>

Important Dates for the Diary in 2012			
Friday 22 <sup>nd</sup> March	St. Patrick's	6.30pm	First Confession
Wednesday 29 <sup>th</sup> March	Our Lady of the Wayside	5.00pm	Sacrament of Confirmation (Bishop Hegarty)
Fifth Week of Lent			
Sunday 5 <sup>th</sup> June	Our Lady of the Wayside	11.00am	First Holy Communion
Feast of the Ascension			
Solemn Annual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament			
Sunday 13 <sup>th</sup> May	St. Patrick's		
Sunday 2 <sup>nd</sup> September	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)			
Saturday 30 <sup>th</sup> June	St. Patrick's	Directly after 6.00pm	Vigil Mass
Sunday 1 <sup>st</sup> July	Our Lady of the Wayside	Directly after 11.00am	Mass
Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> November	St. Patrick's	8.00pm	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			
Saturday 14 <sup>th</sup> January	Second Sunday in Ordinary Time	6.00pm	Vigil Mass
Saturday 11 <sup>th</sup> February	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	6.00pm	Vigil Mass
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> March	Second Sunday in Lent	6.00pm	Vigil Mass
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> March		6.30pm	First Confessions (Reconciliation)
Saturday 31 <sup>st</sup> March	Palm Sunday	6.00pm	Vigil Mass
Saturday 5 <sup>th</sup> May	Fifth Sunday of Easter	6.00pm	Vigil Mass
Sunday 20 <sup>th</sup> May	Feast of the Ascension of the Lord	11.00am	First Holy Communion
Saturday 9 <sup>th</sup> June	Feast of Corpus Christi	6.00pm	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
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			
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 <a href="http://iec2012.ie">iec2012.ie</a>			



<p><b>50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress:</b> Bookings to attend the 50th International Eucharistic Congress are live at <a href="http://iec2012.ie">iec2012.ie</a>. You can book for 7 days, for 3 days or for a single day. You can decide to come as an individual, as a family or as a group. Clergy bookings are live as well. Do not leave it to the last minute! Read more about the different possibilities of booking for the Congress and book now!</p> <p>Teresa Menendez   Senior Marketing and Publications Officer   50th International Eucharistic Congress 2012  Sandymount Building   RDS   Simonscourt Road   Dublin 4.  T: +353 1 234 9904 (Direct)   T: + 353 1 234 9900 (Main)  F: + 353 1 667 5050 (Fax). E: <a href="mailto:marketing@iec2012.ie">marketing@iec2012.ie</a>   W: <a href="http://www.iec2012.ie">www.iec2012.ie</a></p>
<p><b>ACCORD Marriage Preparation Courses (St. Columba's Pastoral Centre, 48 Brook Street (028 8224 2439)):</b></p> <p>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</p> <p><b>Couples are encouraged to complete their course six months before their wedding date</b></p>
<p><b>Introduction of the new edition of the Roman Missal:</b>  <b>Posture during Mass:</b> Bishop Hegarty commends the following common posture, as set down in the <i>General Instruction</i> (43) for observation throughout the diocese:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Standing from the beginning until the end of the Collect;</li> <li>2. Standing from the <i>Orate Fratres</i> (pray brothers and sisters...) until the end of the <i>Sanctus</i>;</li> <li>3. Standing from Concluding Prayer until the end of Mass.</li> <li>4. The practice of kneeling during the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion is laudably retained.</li> </ol> <p><b>Silence:</b> Attention is drawn to articles 45 and 56 of the <i>General Instruction</i> which commend the observation of sacred silence at certain times before and during Mass.</p>
<p><b>Derry Diocesan Catechetical Centre News</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new Diocesan Youth Co-Ordinator, Dominic O'Reilly has been appointed to replace Justin McMahon.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Volunteers urgently needed for the 50<sup>th</sup> International Eucharistic Congress 2012:</b>  The 50th 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!</p> <p>If you would like to get involved please visit the IEC2012 website <a href="http://iec2012.ie/volunteer">iec2012.ie/volunteer</a> and fill out an online application or request an application form from the Congress office. Induction training sessions will begin <b>19<sup>th</sup> November in the RDS</b>. For more information please contact the IEC2012 offices on (01) 2349900.</p>
<p><b>Age NI First Connect Service:</b> 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.</p> <p>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 <a href="mailto:eimear.mckearney@ageni.org">eimear.mckearney@ageni.org</a></p>
<p><b>Questions people ask:</b></p> <p>Q. The religious meaning of Christmas seems to mean less to me every passing year. Any suggestions on how I can rediscover the religious excitement of my younger years?</p> <p>A. Do you have a crib at home? Read the Christmas story in the Gospel of Luke and like Mary ponder on these things in your heart. Take time to reflect on the Angelus, or at least the Hail Mary, this week. Attend a Carol service. Bring Christmas cheer to somebody who needs it. Be moderate in spending and do not overindulge in eating and drinking. Each day welcome Jesus into your life and your home. Bring Christ back into Christmas.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Fr. Silvester O'Flynn OFM Cap (<a href="mailto:silvesteroflynn@gmail.com">silvesteroflynn@gmail.com</a>)</i></p>

<p><b>This Week's Calendar of Saints and Feasts:</b></p> <p><b>Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December – St. Fachanan (bishop)</b> Although little is known with certainty about Fachanan, a strong tradition from early times links him with Kilfenora and records that he founded a Church or monastery there in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. He is venerated as the patron of the diocese of Kilfenora, now part of Galway.</p> <p><b>Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> December – St. Peter Canisius (priest and Doctor of the Church) [1521-1597]</b> Born in Holland. He intended to become a lawyer but joined the Jesuits. Through courtesy and learning he promoted the Catholic revival after the Council of Trent. His greatest work was a catechism of 211 questions and answers, published in 1555.</p> <p><b>Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> December – St. John of Kanty (priest) [1390-1473]</b> Taught Theology and Scripture in the university of Cracow, Poland. He is also remembered for his austerity of life and generosity.</p> <p><b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> December – The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ</b></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>THE PROCLAMATION OF CHRISTMAS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Today the twenty-fifth day of December, unknown ages from the time when God created the heavens and the earth and then formed man and woman in his own image.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Several thousand years after the flood,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>when God made the rainbow shine forth as a sign of the covenant.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Twenty-one centuries from the time of Abraham and Sarah;</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>thirteen centuries after Moses led the people of Israel out of Egypt.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Eleven hundred years from the time of Ruth and the judges;</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>one thousand years from the anointing of David as king;</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>in the sixty-fifth week according to the prophecy of Daniel;</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>In the one hundred and ninety-fourth Olympiad;</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>the seven hundred and fifty-second year from the foundation of the city of Rome.</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The forty-second year of the reign of Octavian Augustus;</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>the whole world being at peace,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Jesus Christ, eternal God and Son of the eternal Father,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>desiring to sanctify the world by his most merciful coming,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>being conceived by the Holy Spirit, and nine months having passed since his conception,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>was born in Bethlehem of Judea of the Virgin Mary,</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Today is the nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ according to the flesh.</i></p>
<p><b>Samaritans' comment on Jeremy Clarkson's Sun column</b> <span style="float: right;"><a href="http://tinyurl.com/bwogjph">tinyurl.com/bwogjph</a></span></p> <p>Reacting to Jeremy Clarkson's comments in today's Sun newspaper, Catherine Johnstone, Samaritans' Chief Executive said: "The insensitivity of Jeremy Clarkson's comments in his Sun column today about people who die by suicide on the railways truly beggars belief. While purporting to express sympathy for people who die this way, his remarks about their bodies constitute gross intrusion into the grief and shock of bereaved families and friends. "His notion that suicide is a selfish act shows how little he knows about the subject because, if he did, he would know that when a person attempts suicide they are so distressed that they genuinely believe their families will be better off without them. The concept that their actions could be construed as selfish is the furthest thing from their mind. Fortunately, most of us will never experience the mental torture that leads someone to die by suicide. "Furthermore, if Jeremy Clarkson knew anything about suicide he would also know that insensitive media coverage of the subject could trigger so-called 'copycat' deaths. The fact that he has chosen to add fuel to the flames of the comments he made earlier this week on the BBC One Show again beggars belief. It's one thing to joke about people on strike, it's in an entirely different realm of poor taste to joke about suicide. "We have already made a complaint to Ofcom about his remarks on the One Show and we will now be taking up today's comments with the Press Complaints Commission. "We want remind anyone who has been distressed by Clarkson's comments today that Samaritans' volunteers are on hand 24/7 on 08457 90 90 90 to offer support."</p> <p>In January 2010, Samaritans launched a five-year partnership with Network Rail to reduce suicides on the railways. Find out more at <a href="http://tinyurl.com/cp7qkqs">tinyurl.com/cp7qkqs</a></p> <p>Listen to train driver Paul Trigwell talking about his experience of a rail suicide and the partnership between Samaritans and Network Rail at <a href="http://tinyurl.com/cyttoa7">tinyurl.com/cyttoa7</a></p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>For advice on how to report this story sensitively see <a href="http://tinyurl.com/yzufhkv">tinyurl.com/yzufhkv</a>  Samaritans' out-of-hours press phone number is 07943 809 162</i></p>

**Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – Luke 1:26-38:**

1. We are all favoured ones and God is with us. Sometimes we are more aware of this than others. How have you experienced being a favoured person, one blessed by God? How have you experienced God's presence? Who has been Gabriel to you - a messenger of good news?
2. 'Do not be afraid.' Mary was perplexed by the words of the angel. Perhaps you too have sometimes been perplexed by life's path and wondered what it all meant. Perhaps at times you have doubted if God was really with you?
3. Mary was taken by surprise by the invitation, but she did not tell the angel she was not ready, nor ask him to return later. She was prepared to go with the invitation even though it was not the 'right moment'. 'Here I am Lord.' What invitations have come to you at the 'wrong time' and how have you responded?
4. Mary's response serves as a model for us – as one saying 'yes' to what life offers. What is it like for you to say 'yes' to life? Perhaps at this moment in your life you are being invited to say 'Here I am, Lord'?

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**The Deep End – Let It Be!**

Today's Gospel focuses on Mary's vocation. It is her YES, her LET IT BE, that brings Light into this world. We can take the opportunity today to look at our own life situations and ask to what it is that we are being called. Mary may have had other plans for her life before the Angel Gabriel dropped in unannounced. God is so full of surprises for each one of us. Mary's choice was no easy one under any human circumstance. It was very much like passing a death sentence. Can our attitude be like Mary's: to search for God, to hear ourselves being called by name, to remember that nothing is impossible with him, and to accept his will?

If I, a little, stumbling faithful soul say 'yes', and others in so many other places do the same, then once again, all Heaven will stand on tiptoe, and all creation hold its breath, as in our day the way is opened up for God to come. I wonder, will God begin again with us this Christmas?

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