

**Parish of Greencastle, Co. Tyrone (Diocese of Derry)**  
 St. Patrick's, Greencastle      Our Lady of the Wayside, Broughderg  
**The Fourth Sunday of Easter (25<sup>th</sup> April, 2010) – Day of Prayer for Vocations**  
 The Parochial House, 164, Greencastle Road, Sheskinshule, Omagh, BT79 7RU  
 Website: greencastleparish.com    Tel: (028) 8164 8474    Email: greencastlepp@yahoo.com

**Confirmation:** Congratulations to Connor Patrick Bradley, Caoileann Mary Conway, Megan Conway, Aaron Brendan Donnelly, Lauryn Ashley Hollywood, Michaelae Susan McBride, Maeve Anna McCullagh, Noel James McKenna, Conan Barry Maguire, Shauna Mary Morris, Aileen Teresa Tracey, and Jack Francis Touhey who were all confirmed in their faith by Bishop Hegarty last Sunday (18<sup>th</sup> April). May each of you continue to grow and mature both individually and as members of our Church faith community in every way throughout your lives. Thanks to everyone who contributed to making last Sunday such a blessed experience in our parish – choir, altar-servers, sacristans, the BADA association who provided refreshments after the ceremony and the teachers in our school who have helped in the catechesis of our young people.

**Liturgy Schedule for the Third Week of Easter (26<sup>th</sup> April, 2010 – 2<sup>nd</sup> May, 2010)**

<b>Saturday Evening</b>	St. Patrick's	<b>5.30pm</b> Confessions <b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass for Sunday: Mary Morris (8 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary) <b>9:00am</b> Mass: Misso Pro Populo
<b>Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April</b> Fourth Sunday of Easter Day of Vocations for Easter	St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside	<b>10.30pm</b> Confessions <b>11:00am</b> Mass
<b>Monday 26<sup>th</sup> April</b> Fourth Week of Easter	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass
<b>Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April</b> Fourth Week of Easter	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass
<b>Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April</b> Fourth Week of Easter	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass
<b>Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April</b> St. Catherine of Siena	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass
<b>Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April</b> Fourth Week of Easter	St. Patrick's	<b>8.00pm</b> Mass
<b>Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May</b> Fourth Week of Easter	St. Patrick's	<b>10.00am</b> Mass
<b>Saturday Evening</b>	St. Patrick's	<b>5.30pm</b> Confessions <b>6.00pm</b> Vigil Mass for Sunday <b>9:00am</b> Mass: Misso Pro Populo
<b>Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May</b> Fifth Sunday of Easter	St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside	<b>10.30pm</b> Confessions <b>11:00am</b> Mass

**Weekly Offerings:** Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection which amounted to **£810**. 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.

**Trócaire Lenten Campaign:** Your donations to the Trócaire Lenten Campaign are helping to break the cycle of hunger and poverty in the world's poorest countries. Thank you for standing in solidarity with families in the developing world. Your generosity makes a big difference in their lives. During the past week **£270** was received. Any further contributions will be gratefully accepted

**Remembering Our Dead:** We pray for **Mary Morris (Aughascribba)** and **Mary Morris (Cashel)** whose anniversaries occur at this time.

**Sick and housebound** will be attended Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> May. Please let them know if you live nearby. If you know of anyone who is sick or housebound and would like a visit please inform Fr. Hasson.

**We welcome new parishioners** and invite you to register by filling out a parish census form. Please forward it to The Parochial House at the address above.

**First Holy Communion – Please Note:** This will take place on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> May at the 11.00am Mass in Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Broughderg.

**Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School Closure:** We will be closed from Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April to Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May.

**Prayer Friends for the Confirmation Class of 2010:** Thank you for your daily support towards our young people who will receive the Sacrament on Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> April (today).

**Next Sunday's Readings:** Acts of the Apostles 14:21-27; Psalm 144; Apocalypse 21:1-5; John 13:31-35  
 Lectionary I, page 517 (Sunday: Year C) (Weekday: Year 2)

**Lotto Results:** A – C – J – U – W (10 winners with 3 letters – £10 each) **Next Jackpot:** £2,200

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

<b>Parish Liturgy for May, 2010</b>	<b>St. Patrick's (6.00pm Vigil Mass)</b>	<b>St. Patrick's (9.00am Mass)</b>	<b>Our Lady of the Wayside (11.00am Mass)</b>
<b>Readers</b>	Martin McCullagh	Monica Coyle	Geraldine McNamee
<b>Prayers of Intercession</b>	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	<i>Volunteers needed</i>	<i>Volunteers needed</i>
<b>Eucharistic Ministry</b>	Brigid Keenan	Eugene McCullagh	Patricia Donnelly
<b>Collectors</b>	Raymond Bradley Oliver McCullagh	Eugene Tracey Brendan Conway	Francis Keenan Perry McCrory
<b>Altar Society</b>	Siobhan McKeena, Ciara McKenna and Caitriona McCullagh		Anne McDermott

**New choir members will always be welcome – Contact Sinead Donnelly**  
**The Altar Society needs volunteers for June and July – Please consider volunteering for service in your parish**

**Offertory Gifts:** The Year 4 and 7 classes of 2009 / 2010 and their families taking responsibility for presenting the Offertory gifts at each Sunday Mass are as follows:-

Week	6.00pm Saturday Vigil	Offertory Gifts Rota	9.00am Sunday Morning
35	Saturday 1 <sup>st</sup> May The family of <b>Megan Conway</b>	Fifth Sunday of Easter	Sunday 4 <sup>th</sup> May The family of <b>Michaela McBride</b>
36	Saturday 8 <sup>th</sup> May The family of <b>Lauryn Hollywood</b>	Sixth Sunday of Easter	Sunday 9 <sup>th</sup> May The family of <b>Aaron Donnelly</b>
37	Saturday 15 <sup>th</sup> May The family of <b>Maeve McCullagh</b>	Ascension of the Lord	Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> May* The family of <b>Sorcha-Rose Meenan</b>
38	Saturday 22 <sup>nd</sup> May The family of <b>Shauna Morris</b>	Pentecost Sunday	Sunday 23 <sup>rd</sup> May The family of <b>Noel McKenna</b>
39	Saturday 29 <sup>th</sup> May The family of <b>Jack Touhey</b>	Feast of the Holy Trinity	Sunday 30 <sup>th</sup> May The family of <b>Aileen Tracey</b>

**\*First Holy Communion**

As the wider parish community we support these young people and their families with our prayers and we thank them for what they are doing for us. If you are unable to attend ensure that you have arranged with another family for the gifts to be presented.

**During the month of May** members of the Legion of Mary will lead us praying the Rosary **30 minutes before** the beginning of Mass each day. Please join them or make the Rosary your special family prayer during this month.

The Glorious Mysteries (Sunday and Wednesday)	The Joyful Mysteries (Monday and Saturday)	The Sorrowful Mysteries (Tuesday and Friday)	The Mysteries of Light (Thursday)
The Resurrection	The Annunciation	The Agony in the Garden	Jesus is baptised in the Jordan
The Ascension	The Visitation	The Scourging at the Pillar	Jesus at the wedding feast of Cana
The Descent of the Holy Spirit on the Apostles	The Birth of the Lord	The Crowning with Thorns	Jesus proclaims the Kingdom of God and calls us to conversion
The Assumption of our Lady into Heaven	The Presentation in the Temple	The Carrying of the Cross	The Transfiguration
The Crowning of our Lady as Queen of Heaven	The Finding of the child Jesus in the Temple	The Crucifixion and Death of our Lord	The Last Supper and Institution of the Eucharist

**Profile of Priests in Derry Diocese in 2010:** Today is World day of Prayer for Vocations in our Church.

Ages	30-40	40-50	50-60	60-70	70-80	80-90	90+
<b>Number of Priests</b>	9	15	18	29	28	11	2
<b>Total</b>	112 (24 under 50 and 88 over)				In 1971 there were 150 (75 under 50 and 75 over)		

**The Pope's Intentions for May, 2010 (please remember these in your personal prayer)**

**General:** That the shameful and monstrous commerce in human beings which sadly involves millions of women and children, may be ended.

**Mission:** That ordained ministers, religious women and men, and lay people involved in apostolic work may understand how to infuse missionary enthusiasm into the communities entrusted to their care.

In "Coaching Young Couch Potatoes" Michael Clapier teaches coaches what I call Primary Greatness (character/values) as opposed to the traditional Secondary Greatness (winning is everything) as an effective way to mentor young athletes. I have always believed that winning is only one of many goals set by a wise coach to develop a balanced young man or woman. How valuable it would be if coaches nurtured, inspired vision, and instilled character development into young athletes so they could apply these lessons not only in sports but to life's experiences.  
*Stephen R. Covey (author of The 8<sup>th</sup> Habit and NY Times Best Selling books The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People)*

**Upcoming BADA Events**      **Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April**    Dance, with music by *Country Sensations*

*Details for the Annual Guest Tea will appear soon*

**Saint Vincent de Paul Society – Clothing Bank:** We do not have anyone involved with the St. Vincent de Paul locally in the parish of Greencastle, but neighbouring groups have asked for our support, a clothing bank is now available near to St. Patrick's for a period of time. *Please support them in any way you can*

**Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes (16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> 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. Special arrangements are made for the youth who will be lead by the Pilgrimage Youth Team.

**Children in Crossfire – 25<sup>th</sup> Budapest Half Marathon:** Children in Crossfire are recruiting 20 enthusiastic individuals to join them for the 25<sup>th</sup> Budapest Half Marathon on 5<sup>th</sup> September. A deposit of £150 is requested and minimum sponsorship applies. Contact Sarah on (028) 7126 9898 or e-mail [events@childrenincrossfire.org](mailto:events@childrenincrossfire.org) for more information. Children in Crossfire also hold a car boot sale every Saturday and Sunday at Elagh Business Park on the Bunrana Road, Derry. £5 entry for cars.

**Foyle Hospice, Derry:**  
**Bark in the Park Sponsored Dog Walk:** Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May in St Columb's Park, Limavady Road at 2.00pm. The registration fee is £5.00 per dog and includes a certificate and goodie bag for your pooch on the day. For further information and registration packs please contact Foyle Hospice Fundraising Centre on (028) 7135 9888 or e-mail [rachelbruce@foylehospice.com](mailto:rachelbruce@foylehospice.com).  
**The BIG Saunter Sponsored Riverside Walk:** Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> May at 1.00pm, for those aged 55 and over. The walk will commence from Sainsbury's along the path of the River Foyle and finish off at the Guildhall. All monies raised will go to Foyle Hospice. For further information please contact Stephanie English, Old Library Trust, Creggan, (028) 7137 3870.

**The Priests, with special guest Camilla Kerslake at Millennium Forum, Derry:**  
Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> June at 8.00pm. Tickets £19.50/£24.50/£29.50 Box Office: (028) 7126 4455.

**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 3 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](mailto:email@familycaresociety.org) [www.familycaresociety.net](http://www.familycaresociety.net)

**Our Parish cemeteries** are special places providing a focus for our prayerful remembrance of the dead. Please cooperate in their maintenance and care with respect, dignity and honour. Remove flowers and wreaths that have withered. Please do not dump them anywhere in the graveyard. Monumental Sculptors who have completed their work should take rubble away and not dispose of it at the side of the cemetery.

**Request from Brian Quin:** "My name is Brian Quin. I live in Opunake in New Zealand. I'm trying to trace my family ancestry. I am led to believe that possibly my GG grandfather could have come from around Broughderg. His name was Stephen and two of his sons Charles and James headed down under in the 1800(s). I would be truly grateful if any Quin(s) in your parish or maybe a nearby parish could help. I am planning a trip to your area in early May and we would love to talk to and share some of the Quin history here in NZ [quinnee@xtra.co.nz](mailto:quinnee@xtra.co.nz)

**Medjugorje Irish Centre:** Every week for a year we are giving away one weeks free apartment accommodation for up to 4 people. Text the word PILGRIM followed by your name and county to 60777 or phone us and we can enter you into the draw for free. Special introductory offer E260 package. Website [www.med-irishcentre.com](http://www.med-irishcentre.com) Tel: (028) 82241888.

**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.

**Pioneering Total Abstinence Association:** I write to you to inform you about this year's National Ball and to ask you to spread the word far and wide. The National Ball 2010 takes place on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May in the Cavan Crystal Hotel, Cavan. This is now the 14<sup>th</sup> National Ball, and we're pleased to say that a great night is in store for everyone. The evening commences with Mass in St Bridget's Church, Killygarry at 7.30pm, the meal and dancing will follow in the Cavan Crystal to the music of *Time Out* and our DJ *Peter McEnroe*. One highlight of the night will be our guest speaker *Sean Gallagher* from Dragon's Den, whom we all hope to learn something from in these recessionary times. This is the perfect night to put on your gúna deas and new suit or tux, and dance into the wee small hours while catching up with old friends and hopefully making some new ones. So don't be shy! Tickets are €30 each, €20 for students under 16 years. Do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further information. Accommodation list is available on request.

**Broughderg First Responders Scheme:** The role of a First Responder is to attend, when possible a patient who has collapsed and administer CPR and / or defibrillation whilst awaiting for an ambulance crew to attend. The Broughderg First Responders are volunteers who live and work in the local area they are fully trained and are fully insured. When an appropriate 999 call is received from the area covered by the First Responder Scheme; the volunteers are notified and try to attend to provide whatever care is reasonable. First Responders will only attend when dispatched by Ambulance Control. They have no role in the diagnosis or management of illness apart from the collapsed patient. There will always be a 999 ambulance in attendance. Volunteers are clearly identifiable as they will have ID with them. They will provide whatever care is reasonable and will endeavour to assist either doctors or members of the Ambulance Service as appropriate. If you require any further information about the scheme please do not hesitate to get in touch.  
*Janet Shields (Dalriada Urgent Care) (028) 2566 3502*

**Lough Derg 2010 Season Guide at [www.loughderg.org](http://www.loughderg.org):** For the 2010 season we are once again offering a varied programme. The usual Three Day Pilgrimages, One Day Retreats, Quiet Days and a Day for Families, along with Confirmation and School Retreats and the Life's Journey Series of Workshops will provide opportunities for many to visit. Whether it is for healing or strength, or for reconciliation or renewal, we invite you to join us for a few hours or a day (or three days!). Whatever your reason for wanting to be connected with the Holy Island, know that we are committed to bringing you the *Gift of Hope*.

**ACCORD – Annual Recruitment Campaign.** ACCORD is looking for people who are currently married in the Catholic Church or currently in a marriage recognised by the Catholic Church for 5 years, 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. In particular, we are seeking volunteers to deliver our Marriage Preparation Courses in the Omagh centre. Last year we prepared 137 couples for the sacrament of marriage in our centre. We realise that this doesn't fully meet the demands for this service and we would be grateful if you could help us in our attempts to identify suitable people to carry out this important work. We are hosting an informal information evening on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April at 8.00pm for those interested in working with ACCORD and who want to find out more about what a facilitator's role involves without any commitment being required. Mount Saint Columba Pastoral Centre, 48 Brook Street, Omagh. Tel (028) 8224 2439..

**Study Theology From Home:** The Dominicans are offering a theology programme specifically for lay people, offered by distance learning. This means that one can study for a certificate, diploma or degree in theology, and even more importantly, become more educated in the Faith, all from the comfort of home. For more information contact The Priory Institute, Tallaght Village, Dublin 24, Tel: 00353 1404 8124/7 or email [enquiries@prioryinstitute.com](mailto:enquiries@prioryinstitute.com) Visit our website [www.prioryinstitute.com](http://www.prioryinstitute.com)

**WITNESS AWAKENS VOCATIONS VATICAN CITY, 16 FEB 2010 (VIS)**  
"Witness Awakens Vocations" is the title of the Pope's message for the 47<sup>th</sup> World Day of Prayer for Vocations that will be celebrated on 25<sup>th</sup> April - Good Shepherd Sunday - the Fourth Sunday of Easter. Here follow excerpts from the document:  
"The fruitfulness of our efforts to promote vocations depends primarily on God's free action, yet, as pastoral experience confirms, it is also helped by the quality and depth of the personal and communal witness of those who have already answered the Lord's call to the ministerial priesthood and to the consecrated life, for their witness is then able to awaken in others a desire to respond generously to Christ's call." →

← "In the Old Testament the prophets knew that they were called to witness by their own lives to the message they proclaimed, and were prepared to face misunderstanding, rejection and persecution. (...) In the fullness of time, Jesus, sent by the Father, would bear witness to the love of God for all human beings, without distinction, with particular attention to the least ones, sinners, the outcast and the poor. Jesus is the supreme Witness to God and to his concern for the salvation of all."

"Similarly the calling of Peter (...) occurred through the witness of his brother Andrew (...). This was also the case for Nathanael, Bartholomew, thanks to the witness of yet another disciple, Philip (...). God's free and gracious initiative encounters and challenges the human responsibility of all those who accept his invitation to become, through their own witness, the instruments of his divine call. This occurs in the Church even today: the Lord makes use of the witness of priests who are faithful to their mission in order to awaken new priestly and religious vocations for the service of the People of God."

"A fundamental element, one which can be seen in every vocation to the priesthood and the consecrated life, is friendship with Christ. (...) If the priest is a "man of God", one who belongs to God and helps others to know and love him, he cannot fail to cultivate a deep intimacy with God, abiding in his love and making space to hear his Word."

"In following Jesus, everyone called to a life of special consecration must do his utmost to testify that he has given himself completely to God. This is the source of his ability to give himself in turn to those whom Providence entrusts to him in his pastoral ministry with complete, constant and faithful devotion (...) enabling them too to become open to meeting Christ, so that his Word may become a light to their footsteps. The story of every vocation is almost always intertwined with the testimony of a priest who joyfully lives the gift of himself to his brothers and sisters for the sake of the Kingdom of God."

"A third aspect which necessarily characterizes the priest and the consecrated person is a life of communion. (...) In a particular way the priest must be a man of communion, open to all, capable of gathering into one the pilgrim flock which the goodness of the Lord has entrusted to him, helping to overcome divisions, to heal rifts, to settle conflicts and misunderstandings, and to forgive offences."

"[I]f young people see priests who appear distant and sad, they will hardly feel encouraged to follow their example. They will remain hesitant if they are led to think that this is the life of a priest. Instead, they need to see the example of a communion of life which can reveal to them the beauty of being a priest."

"It can be said that priestly vocations are born of contact with priests, as a sort of precious legacy handed down by word, example and a whole way of life."

"The same can be said with regard to the consecrated life. The very life of men and women religious proclaims the love of Christ whenever they follow him in complete fidelity to the Gospel and joyfully make their own its criteria for judgement and conduct. They become "signs of contradiction" for the world, whose thinking is often inspired by materialism, self-centredness and individualism."

"By letting themselves be won over by God through self-renunciation, their fidelity and the power of their witness constantly awaken in the hearts of many young people the desire to follow Christ in their turn, in a way that is generous and complete. To imitate Christ, chaste, poor and obedient, and to identify with him: this is the ideal of the consecrated life, a witness to the absolute primacy of God in human life and history."

"Every priest, every consecrated person, faithful to his or her vocation, radiates the joy of serving Christ and draws all Christians to respond to the universal call to holiness. Consequently, in order to foster vocations to the ministerial priesthood and the consecrated life, and to be more effective in promoting the discernment of vocations, we cannot do without the example of those who have already said "yes" to God and to his plan for the life of each individual. Personal witness, in the form of concrete existential choices, will encourage young people for their part to make demanding decisions affecting their future."

"May this World Day once again offer many young people a precious opportunity to reflect on their own vocation and to be faithful to it in simplicity, trust and complete openness."

MESS/WORLD DAY FOR PRAYER AND VOCATIONS/...

VIS 100216 (910)

#### Questions people ask:

Q. In the light of clerical scandals do you ever regret being a priest?

A. The vast majority of priests are faithful, dedicated people. Sure, none of them is perfect, but the majority are dedicated to the worship of God and loyal in the service of people. It is a privileged calling, but, in the words of an advertising slogan, nobody said it would be easy. Regret it? Not for one second. Rather, I am deeply grateful for the call of God and for the goodness of all who trust me and support me in many ways. It's a great calling, thank God.

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

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

**Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> April – St. Mark (evangelist)** Not celebrated this year.

**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> April – St. Ascius (bishop)** Was St. Patrick's expert craftsman in metal work and accompanied him on his journeys. He was left in charge of the church in Elphin which Patrick is said to have founded.

**Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> April – St. Peter Chanel (priest and martyr)** Born in France in 1803. Joined the Marist. He worked on the island of Futuna, Oceania where he was clubbed to death for baptising the chief's son. He is honoured as the first martyr of the church in Oceania.

**St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (priest) [1673-1716]** Was a priest whose calling was to preach missions and to care for the sick and the poor. His writings concern Mary's role in the mystery of salvation. He strongly promoted the praying of the Rosary.

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> April – St. Catherine of Siena (virgin and Doctor of the Church) [1347-1380]** Humble and dauntless Dominican tertiary, who brought peace to her native Siena, to Italy, and to 14<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Spent all her energies for the Church, being able to achieve the Pope's return from Avignon to Rome. She is remembered also as a mystic and reformer of religious life. Proclaimed Doctor of the Church in 1970 and patron of Europe in 2000.

**Friday 30<sup>th</sup> April – St. Pius V (Pope) [1504-1572]** Dominican, elected Pope in 1565. He implemented the reforms of the Council of Trent, including the Breviary, Missal and Catechism. He is noted for his defence of Christendom against the Ottoman empire.

**Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> May – St. Joseph the Worker**

#### Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – John 10:27-30:

1. Jesus tells us that we can rely on his relationship with us. Think of the relationships you have in which you feel safe and secure because there is mutual understanding and the relationship has stood the test of time.
2. Jesus says that the disciple is one who listens. What is your experience of listening to the word of God in the Scriptures? To what other voices have you listened and found guidance?
3. The faithful disciple is also one who follows the path of love that Jesus preached and practiced. Although it may be difficult at times, it is in following it we find life. Where have you had the experience of listening, responding, loving and finding life?

John Byrne OSA (john@orlagh.ie)

#### The Deep End – Disarming:

Things change during recession. People buy less and bargain-hunt more. They count their change. Supposedly, they go to church more often. Hard times, it seems, remind us of a soft God. A new one for me, however, is an increase in gun sales. American gunmaker Smith & Wesson is aiming for doubled annual sales for the next few years. After a 13 per cent hike in 2009, triggering sales to a whopping \$335 million, they were expected to jump 30 per cent in the first quarter of this financial year – an impressive, or depressive depending on your viewpoint, \$102 million increase. Throughout the US demand for firearms is rising. The reason? Fear. Fear that recession-induced unemployment will lead to more crime. Fear that terrorism will again strike at the heartland. Fear that government will slap restrictions on gun ownership, and more taxes on firearms. Today's Gospel reading opens a fear-free zone. (John 10:27-30) It radiates confidence. *My sheep hear my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one will snatch them out of my hand.* (v. 27-28) This is not an arrogant boast but a sober statement of fact. The Church knows she's awash with saints and sinners. Even when lifestyles and attitudes within the Church betray the sorry fact of sin's influence on its members, the community's faith holds. The reason? Our God loves: in prosperity as well as in recession, and sinners as well as saints. Maybe sinners that little more, because they're short on love! Rather disarming, isn't it?

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