

Parish of Greencastle, Co. Tyrone (Diocese of Derry)
 St. Patrick's, Greencastle Our Lady of the Wayside, Broughderg
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time [Year B] (29th January, 2012)
 The Parochial House, 164, Greencastle Road, Sheskinshule, Omagh, BT79 7RU
 Website: greencastleparish.com Tel: (028) 8164 8474 Email: greencastlepp@yahoo.com

Catholic Schools Week: Today marks the beginning of Catholic Schools Week 2012. The purpose of the week is to highlight and celebrate the wonderful contribution that Catholic schools make to our local community and society in general. This year's theme is *Catholic Schools – Christ's Body Active in Our World*. Our parish school will invite grandparents to celebrate with them in the school on Wednesday and all of us to celebrate with the Year 7 Confirmation class at Mass on Thursday evening. The Diocesan Mass will be held in St. Eugene's Cathedral, Derry on Tuesday 7th February at 10.00am.

Liturgy Schedule for the Fourth Week in Ordinary Time [Year B] (30th January, 2012 – 5th February, 2012)

Saturday Evening (28th January)	St. Patrick's	5.30pm Confessions 6:00pm Vigil Mass: Malachy Coyle (7 th Anniversary)
Sunday 29th January Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time [Year B]	St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside	9.00am Mass (Missa Pro Populo) 10.30am Confessions 11.00am Mass
Monday 30th January Fourth Week in Ordinary Time	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass
Tuesday 31st January St. John Bosco (priest)	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass: Michael Devenney (1 st Anniversary)
Wednesday 1st February St. Brigid (abbess and Secondary Patron of Ireland) <i>If you wish to have your crosses blessed bring them to Mass with you</i>	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass: Bernadette Slane (1 st Anniversary)
Thursday 2nd February Presentation of the Lord Feast Day for Consecrate Life	St. Patrick's	8.00pm Mass Candles blessed. Service of Light and Commitment for Year 7 pupils preparing to receive Confirmation in 2012
Friday 3rd February St. Blaise (bishop and martyr) and St. Ansgar (bishop)	St. Patrick's	7.30pm Confessions 8.00pm Mass followed by the blessing of throats traditional on this feast day
Saturday 4th February Fourth Week in Ordinary Time	St. Patrick's	10.00am Mass
Saturday Evening (4th February)	St. Patrick's	5.30pm Confessions 6:00pm Vigil Mass
Sunday 5th January Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time [Year B]	St. Patrick's Our Lady of the Wayside	9.00am Mass (Missa Pro Populo) 10.30am Confessions 11.00am Mass

Weekly Offerings: Thank you for your generosity to last week's collection which amounted to **£925**.
Eucharistic Congress 2012 Support Collection: Next Sunday (5th February). See your box of envelopes.
Please support your community by using your envelope, even if you must attend Mass outside your parish.
Envelopes received from visitors coming to Mass in Greencastle are returned to those parishes.
 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.

Invitation to Mass: If you are a homemaker, not presently working or are retired you are invited to make time in your schedule to attend Mass daily.

Sick and housebound: These will be attended **Monday 6th February**. Please let them know if you live nearby. If you know of anyone who is sick or housebound and who would like a visit inform Fr. Hasson.

Remembering Our Dead: We pray for **Eileen Carson (Aughascribba)** whose requiem took place on Tuesday. On behalf of our parish faith-community we extend our sympathy and prayerful support to family and friends who mourn for her at this time. We also pray for **Michael Devenney, Bernadette Slane, Malachy Coyle, Peter Donnolly, Tom McDermott, Margaret Casey** and **Christina Enright** whose anniversaries occur at this time

Service of Light and Commitment for the 2012 Confirmation Class from Our Lady of Lourdes PS:
 This will take place at 8.00pm Mass on Thursday 2nd February (Feast of the Presentation of the Lord). Parents, families, Godparents and Sponsors are invited to participate. Parishioners are invited to commit to becoming a Prayer partner for each child preparing to receive the sacrament this year.

SERVING OUR FAITH-COMMUNITY IN GREENCASTLE PARISH

Parish Liturgy for February, 2012	St. Patrick's (6.00pm Vigil Mass)	St. Patrick's (9.00am Mass)	Our Lady of the Wayside (11.00am Mass)
Readers	Aisling McDermott	Monica Coyle	Martina McBride
Prayers of the Faithful	Emma Clarke	Kevin Clarke	<i>Volunteer needed</i>
Eucharistic Ministry	Kathleen Bradley	Louise Coyle	Peter Noel McAleer
Collectors	Gerry McDermott Noel McElhatton	Patrick Tuohey Michael Bradley	Sean Clarke Brian Gillen
Altar Society	Rosemary, Shaun and Ciara McNally		Anne McDermott Martina McBride

Thank you for all you do in our community, anyone wishing to volunteer for these ministries must make it known

6.00pm Saturday Vigil Saturday 28 th January The family of Stephan Meenan	Offertory Gifts Rota Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	9.00am Sunday Morning Sunday 29 th January The family of Orla Warnock
Saturday 4 th February The family of Enda McKenna	Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Sunday 5 th February The family of Rachael Tuohey
Saturday 11 th February The family of Shona McKenna	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	Sunday 12 th February The family of Laura Tuohey
Saturday 18 th February The family of Alisha McKenna	Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time	Sunday 19 th February The family of Louise O'Brien
Saturday 25 th February The family of Shauna McGurk	First Sunday Of Lent	Sunday 26 th February The family of Erin Mulholland
Saturday 3 rd March The family of Dylan McFarland	Second Sunday Of Lent	Sunday 4 th March The family of Leanne Morris

As the wider parish community we thank these young people and their families for this important task.

Feast of St. Brigid (abbess and Secondary Patron of Ireland) [Wednesday 1st February]: If you wish to have your traditional crosses blessed bring them to Mass with you on this morning. St. Brigid is renowned for her hospitality, almsgiving and care of the sick. She was born c.454. When she was young her father wished to make a very suitable marriage for her but she insisted in consecrating her virginity to God. She received the veil and spiritual formation probably from St. Mel and prayed for a period under his direction in Ardagh. Others followed her example and this led her to found a double monastery in Kildare with the help of Bishop Conleth. She died in 524 and her cult is widespread not only throughout Ireland but in several European lands.

St Brigid's Day: Make your own St Brigid's Cross in the IOSAS Centre, Lenamore Road, from 6.00pm to 7.00pm followed by Mass and Blessing of the Crosses in St Canice's Oratory at 7:15pm. *Note change of time*

5th Annual Award Ceremony for The Pope John Paul II Award: Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O'Connor, retired Archbishop of Westminster, will present the awards on Monday 6th February for the Derry City and Inishowen Deaneries and on Tuesday 7th February for the County Derry and Country Tyrone Deaneries. Both ceremonies will take place in the Millennium Forum, Derry and will commence at 7.30pm. There are a limited number of tickets available. If you wish to attend please contact the Catechetical Centre as soon as possible on (028) 7126 4087 or email admin@thepopejohnpauliiaward.com.

Fr. Shields Camogie Club – Annual Registration: Friday 3rd February at 7.00pm in the Greencastle Community Centre.
All new players welcome

YARD Project (Columba House, 11 Queen St, Derry) – Family Information and Support Day:
 Saturday 4th February from 10.00am to 4.30pm. Are you worried about a relative or friend's drinking, gambling or drug-taking? Would you like more information about how you can help your loved one and take better care of yourself? This is an opportunity for you to hear from people who have been in your situation and found the support they needed to move forward.
Places are limited so please contact the YARD Project on (028) 7126 9113 to reserve your place

Pope Benedict XVI's Intentions for February (please remember these in your personal prayer)

General: ACCESS TO WATER: That all peoples may have access to water and other resources needed for daily life
Missionary: HEALTH WORKERS: That the Lord may sustain the efforts of health workers assisting the sick and elderly in the world's poorest regions

Greencastle Youth Club Rota	6.30pm – 8.00pm	P6 and P7 (Sandra McElhatton and Carmel McElearney)
Monday 30 th January	8.00pm – 9.30pm	Years 8, 9 and 10 (Vincent Hollywood and Bronagh Maguire)
Tuesday 31 st January	6.30pm – 8.00pm	P4 and P5 (Fiona Teague and Barry Tracey)

Next Sunday's Readings: Job 7:1-4; Psalm 146:1-6, r/v. 3; 1 Corinthians 9:16-19, 22-23; Mark 1:29-39;
 (Lectionary I, page 747) **(Sunday: Year B) (Weekday: Year 2)**

Lotto Results: D – H – P – T – W (7 people with 3 letters, 5 drawn – £10 each) **Next Jackpot:** £6,750

Enrolling Your Child at Our Lady of Lourdes PS: Forms are presently available for anyone wishing to enrol their child in Year One for September, 2012. These forms need to be completed and returned to the school as soon as possible.

Do This In Memory – Our Parish’s First Holy Communion Preparation Programme:
Our next gathering will be at the Vigil Mass for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time (Saturday 11th February).

Medjugorje Irish Centre Grand Prize: Every month for a year we are giving away one week’s free apartment accommodation for up to 4 people. Text the word PILGRIM followed by your name and county to 60777 (53030 in Ireland) or phone us and we can enter you into the draw for free.

Contact us for details of our 2012 pilgrimages and €280 package deals

Website: med-irishcentre.com **Telephone:** (028) 8224 1888 (NI and UK) // (048) 82241888 (Ireland).

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 under 8 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.

Trócaire: Justin McCullen (Director of Trócaire) sent us a newsletter this week which detailed some of the impact the donations for the special Haiti Appeal taken up after the earthquake there two years ago which killed up to 300,000 people and left so many homeless has had. Lent will soon be upon us and this year’s Trócaire Box will tell the story of **Daniel Okweng** from Northern Uganda. Forced to flee their home due to conflict, Daniel and his family have moved back to their family home having spent many years in a camp. It was at this point that their biggest struggle began, to begin life again. With the support of Greencastle parish’s contributions Trócaire has been there, helping this family to readjust to the life back home. Working together with the community Trócaire has provided training and support groups to help people cope with the trauma they have experienced.

Trócaire will greatly appreciate your support for Lent, 2012

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 3rd 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 and read about the workings of the Bureau.

Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes: In 2012 the diocese will be going on pilgrimage to Lourdes from Sunday 1st to Friday 6th 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. Gift vouchers are available from the Thornhill Centre ((028) 7135 1233) and The Diocesan Pastoral Centre ((028) 7136 2475). Vouchers can be used as part or full payment. For further details contact Thornhill Centre at (028) 7135 1233 or email thornhillcentre@derrydiocese.org.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR THE DIARY IN 2012

International Eucharistic Congress Dublin Sunday 10th – Sunday 17th June

Sacramental Celebrations

Friday 23rd March	St. Patrick’s	6.30pm First Confession
Thursday 29th March Fifth Week of Lent	St. Patrick’s	6.00pm Sacrament of Confirmation (Bishop Hegarty)
Sunday 20th June Feast of the Ascension	St. Patrick’s	11.00am First Holy Communion

Solemn Annual Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Sunday 13th May	St. Patrick’s
Sunday 2nd September	Our Lady of the Wayside

Derry Diocesan Society Masses in our Parish

Tuesday 20 th December	Wednesday 8 th February	Friday 30 th March
Tuesday 22 nd May	Wednesday 11 th July	Thursday 30 th August
		Friday 19 th 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) (30th June and 1st July)

Saturday 30th June	St. Patrick’s	Directly after 6.00pm Vigil Mass
Sunday 1st July	Our Lady of the Wayside	Directly after 11.00am Mass
Friday 2nd 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 11th February	Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time	6.00pm Vigil Mass
Saturday 10th March	Second Sunday in Lent	6.00pm Vigil Mass
Friday 23rd March		6.30pm First Confessions (Reconciliation)
Saturday 31st March	Palm Sunday	6.00pm Vigil Mass
Saturday 5th May	Fifth Sunday of Easter	6.00pm Vigil Mass
Sunday 20th May	Feast of the Ascension of the Lord	11.00am First Holy Communion
Saturday 9th June	Feast of Corpus Christi	6.00pm Vigil Mass

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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

Are You Caring For Someone Confused and Forgetful? Then Perhaps We Can Help - Cookstown and Magherafelt Volunteer Centre, Northern Health & Social Care Trust and Alzheimer’s Society are holding three Information Days on Developing a Befriending Service for people with Dementia in the Mid Ulster area.

Tuesday 17th January (10.00am – 12.00noon)	Network Personnel Building, Magherafelt
Tuesday 17th January (10.00am – 12.00noon)	Cookstown Enterprise Agency, Cookstown
Tuesday 17th January (10.00am – 12.00noon)	St Lurach’s Hall, Maghera

For more info, please contact: Michele McKeown. Centre Co-ordinator
Cookstown and Magherafelt Volunteer Centre, 55 Rainey Street, Magherafelt. BT45 5AF
Tel/Fax: (028) 7930 1862 michele@cookstownmagherafeltvc.org cookstownmagherafeltvc.org

Rouskey Community Notes	
St. Brigid's Crosses	Sunday 29 th January at 7.30pm
First Aid Course with Bettie Dolan	Monday 30 th January from 7.30pm to 9.30pm. Need 6 people to run the class. The Heartstart programme includes skills such as: assessing an unconscious patient, performing cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), dealing with choking, serious bleeding and helping someone that may be having a heart attack. Knowing what to do when someone has a cardiac arrest is important. If you can do CPR you can buy the time needed for professional help to arrive and save the life of your loved one. Being able to do CPR more than doubles their chance of survival.
Drama Classes with Clidohna	Wednesday night from 6.30pm to 7.30pm. Price will depend on how many young people will attend the class We will going back to the Community Showcase 2012 in Strule Art Centre. <i>Age 5 to 16</i>
Tai Chi Classes with Sean O'Kane	Monday 6 th February 7.30pm. £20 for 4 weeks. Need 12 people run class
Anyone interested in any other classes should contact Bridie on (028) 8164 8706 or 07847 459 428 or leave a message on the phone	

Foyle Hospice – Leap Into Action (Wednesday 29th February): Foyle Hospice are encouraging their supporters to be creative in their fundraising efforts and come together on the 29th February to help raise vital funds for Hospice Care Services in the North-West region. Whether it is at work, at school, at home or at the gym the Hospice would like everyone to go crazy this Leap Year and try something different. For further information please contact the Fundraising Departments at Foyle Hospice, Fundraising Centre, 61 Culmore Road, Tel: (028) 7135 9888, email michellemcginn@foylehospice.com.

World Day for Consecrated Life will be celebrated in the Church on Thursday 2nd February: Please pray for all those who have made commitments in the consecrated life, and be sure to thank them on their special day. May they continue to be inspired by Jesus Christ and respond generously to God's gift of their vocation.

Prayers of the Faithful (Sunday 5th February): We pray for women and men in the Diocese of Derry who have chosen to consecrate their lives to God in religious life. May the consecrated persons of this community of faith have the grace to persevere in their commitment to the Lord and serve with open hearts and willing spirits. *We pray to the Lord...*
We are thankful for all who have responded to the prompting of the Holy Spirit to be a consecrated person. May they experience the support of the Church as they continue their growth in holiness. *We pray to the Lord...*

Those who graduate through Alcoholics Anonymous are warned of, among many things, the dangers of complacency, of describing yourself as cured. The programme of AA does not promise to turn you into someone who no longer drinks, but only to help the alcoholic to resist the first drink, one day at a time.
John Waters (Lapsed Agnostic)

The pope said that the Holocaust should teach "new generations" that "only the difficult path of listening and dialogue, love and pardon" can lead to "fraternity and peace in truth."
He expressed his prayer that the Holocaust be a warning for everyone: "May the Shoah teach especially, as much the old generations as the new ones, that only the tiring path of listening and dialogue, of love and pardon, leads peoples, cultures and religions of the world to the desired encounter of fraternity and peace in the world. May violence never again humiliate the dignity of man!"

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

ACCORD Marriage Preparation Courses (St. Columba's Pastoral Centre, 48 Brook Street (028 8224 2439)):
10th and 11th February, 9th and 10th March,
20th and 21st April, 11th and 12th May, and 1st and 2nd June
Couples are encouraged to complete their course six months before their wedding date
Couples Planning to Marry in 2012: Please confirm your details with Fr. Hasson as soon as possible.

Volunteers urgently needed for the 50th International Eucharistic Congress 2012:
The 50th International Eucharistic Congress 2012 (IEC2012) will take place in Dublin from 10th to 17th 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 and fill out an online application or request an application form from the Congress office. Induction training sessions will begin **19th November in the RDS**. For more information please contact the IEC2012 offices on (01) 2349900.

50th International Eucharistic Congress: Bookings to attend the 50th International Eucharistic Congress are live at iec2012.ie. 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!
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: marketing@iec2012.ie | W: www.iec2012.ie

The 50th International Eucharistic Congress 2012: This will take place in Dublin from 10th to 17th 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

Derry Diocesan Society for Sick and Infirm Priests: 1. Any person may become a member, sharing in all its privileges by paying £20. 2. Likewise, any person whomsoever may have a deceased relative or friend placed on the Register of Members of the Society, the deceased person thereby becoming a sharer in all the Masses and prayers offered for members. **Privileges of members: Deceased:** 1. A Mass every day in a parish in the Diocese (**this will take place in Greencastle on Wednesday 8th February**). 2. The prayers of every congregation in the Diocese on the first three Sundays of each quarter. **Living:** 1. Mass will be offered each month, as listed on the Church notice board. 2. When a living member dies the name is transferred to the list of deceased members without further payment.

If you or anyone you know has a child safeguarding concern 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.

This Week's Calendar of Saints and Feasts:

Tuesday 31st January – St. John Bosco (priest) [1815-1888] Born in Piedmont, founded the Salesians to educate boys for life. He also became involved in publishing catechetical material for youth. He is a Patron Saint of youth and of Catholic publishers.

Wednesday 1st February – St. Brigid (abbess and Secondary Patron of Ireland) [c. 454-524] Renowned for her hospitality, almsgiving and care of the sick. When she was young her father wished to make a very suitable marriage for her but she insisted in consecrating her virginity to God. She received the veil and spiritual formation probably from St. Mel and stayed for a period under his direction in Ardagh. Others followed her example and this led her to found a double monastery in Kildare, with the assistance of Bishop Conleth. Her cult is widespread not only throughout Ireland, but in several European lands.

Thursday 2nd February – Feast of the Presentation of the Lord This feast is a combined remembrance of the Son and the Mother ... on this day Christ's faithful people, with candles, in their hands, go out to meet the Lord and to acclaim him with Simeon, who recognised Christ as 'a light to reveal God to the nations'. They should therefore be taught to walk as children of the light in their entire way of life, because they have a duty to show the light of Christ to all by acting in the works that they do as lighted lamps'. *Ceremonial of Bishops, n.241*

Friday 3rd February – St. Blaise (bishop and martyr) Bishop of Sebaste, martyred in Armenia. Patron Saint for sore throats and sick cattle. Died in 315.

St. Ansgar (bishop) A Frenchman who became Archbishop of Hamburg in the 9th century and preached the gospel in Denmark and Sweden. Apostle of Scandinavia. Patron Saint of Denmark.

Sunday 5th February – St. Agatha (virgin and martyr) Died a martyr for the faith at Catania in Sicily in the 3rd century. Patron Saint of bell-founders. [Not celebrated this year]

The Deep End – Jesus the Teacher:

Have you ever had a teacher who had that something you just couldn't quite put your finger on - that air of authority that made you instantly respect them; that charisma and enthusiasm that inspired you to listen and to think? Maybe you were lucky enough to have a teacher who left a lasting impression or even propelled you towards your chosen career or way of life? Remember how you felt in their presence?

What kind of teacher was Jesus? When Jesus taught for the first time in the synagogue, he took the people by surprise. They were 'astonished'. What stands out from the description, and what marks Jesus' teaching apart from everyone else, is that he taught with authority: 'Here is a teaching that is new and with authority behind it.'

His audience had surely been to the synagogue before. Travelling teachers would often preach in the synagogue. Yet, whatever the people were used to hearing, they had encountered no one like Jesus before. Mark points out that 'unlike the scribes, he taught them with authority'. He had something their regular teachers lacked. Those who hear him can see that this is something new and exciting. Even the unclean spirits recognise his authority.

We meet Jesus here at the beginning of his ministry; earlier in the Gospel of Mark he has been proclaiming the good news: 'The kingdom of God has come near; repent and believe in the good news'. Jesus is not simply teaching the Scriptures as the scribes did. He is proclaiming the coming of God's kingdom.

Triona Doherty, Athlone, Co. Roscommon (trionad@gmail.com)

Seeing your life through the lens of the gospels – Mark 1:21-28:

1. In this first chapter Mark familiarises his readers with the type of things Jesus did to proclaim the kingdom, the Reign of God. Our passage today touches on two of these, the first being that 'he taught as one having authority'. It makes a difference when you listen to someone who is clearly speaking from experience and personal knowledge. Remember people who impressed you in this way.
2. Jesus combined teaching with healing, and he drove the evil spirit out of the man. The power of God that worked this wonder through Jesus is also at work in and through us today. When have you been freed from some bad habit?
3. The evil spirit convulsed the man before it left him. The path to liberation can be a painful struggle. If you have found it so, who was the Jesus person that helped you through the struggle to freedom?
4. It is not only individuals but groups that can be struggling with an evil spirit – jealousy, rivalry, malicious gossiping, abuse of power, etc. Sometimes a Jesus person comes into the group and drives out that evil spirit. Have you experienced this? Perhaps you yourself have been this person on some occasion?

John Byrne OSA (john@orlagh.ie)

Questions people ask:

- Q. Do you believe in the devil or is it just a notion from the times before modern psychiatry and understanding of the psyche?
- A. Don't underestimate the wisdom of olden times as shown in sophisticated mythology. I certainly do believe in the reality and power of evil spirits who would lead people astray into a quagmire of badness. The evidence of evil is all around us. Jesus said that the devil is a murderer from the beginning and the father of lies (John 8:44). Lies, especially when masquerading as half-truths confuse the mind. He called the devil the prince of this world but added that he was about to cast him out (John 12:31). The last petition of the Lord's Prayer is for deliverance from the evil one. If Jesus took the evil influence of the devil seriously, we should do likewise.

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