



Archdiocese of Dublin
Education Secretariat

Post - Primary Diocesan Advisers R.E. News Blog – March 2024

Dear Chaplain and R. E. Teacher,

On February 14, we celebrated Ash Wednesday and the beginning of Lent. In many parts of the world that celebration took to the streets in a wild outpouring of music, dance and parades known as Carnevale or Carnival while here in Ireland children made pancakes and dreamt of Easter Eggs and chocolate at the end of the Lenten period. For many people however Lent arrived not with a sense of eager anticipation but with some dread. Often this dread is related to memories of previous Lents when they have failed in their efforts to do some great Lenten practise or penance. If, like me, you are one of these people, maybe we can try to see it in a new way this year.

Lent is a journey not a destination. It is a period of preparation that leads to Easter. During Lent, we traditionally follow the three pillars of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Many people do other penances such as giving things up which is a worthwhile pursuit if it makes us into more loving, generous people. But there is a more basic goal which I feel we should consider. The word most often used in the gospels for repentance is metanoia which means a change of mind and heart. It invites us to re-orientate our lives, to choose to become..... to become more loving, more compassionate, more patient, more faithful, more trusting, more open. Each one of us will know what shape our becoming must take!

So this Lent maybe we can pray not simply for the willingness to give up chocolate but to become a more loving person day by day in our own way. May this Lent help each one of us and the students to become ever more the person God wants us to be.

In recent years, we have been encouraged to start doing something new during Lent, instead of giving something up. It might include carrying out a random act of kindness every day, or something more planned such as volunteering, or actively helping a neighbour in need.

Pope Francis says, "Being a disciple means being constantly ready to bring the love of Jesus to others, and this can happen unexpectedly and in any place: on the street, in a city square, during work, on a journey."

Lig dúinn turas sa chreideamh an Carghas seo agus muid ag ullmhú don Cháisc.

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As we continue to journey through Lent.....



Lent stimulates us to let the word of God penetrate our life and, in this way to know the fundamental truth:

Who we are,

Where we come from,

Where we must go,

What path we must take in life.

Pope Benedict XVI

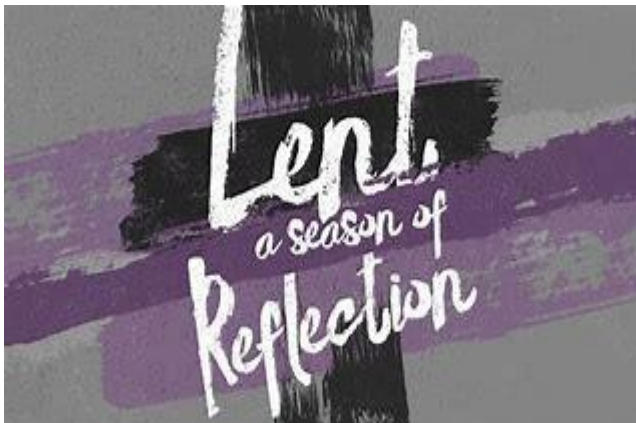
Lent, Ash Wednesday, 14 February - Holy Thursday, 28 March



The forty days of Lent is a reference to the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert fasting, praying, and preparing for his public ministry.

"There are three elements that are almost always part of Lent: prayer, giving something up, and giving something back."

Elizabeth Hyndman



*Take Time
to
Relax, Reflect
and
Pray.*

Lent is a time for reflection and prayer in preparation for Christ's Resurrection. It is a time to renew our faith and hope for what is yet to come. Lent is the time to start new patterns of prayer. Perhaps you haven't been praying at all. This is a great time to choose to begin. It is important to begin realistically. You can start by simply pausing when you get up and taking a slow, deep breath, recalling what you have to do for the day, and asking for grace to do it as a child of God. You may want to go to bed a half an hour earlier and get up a half an hour earlier and give yourself some time alone to read the readings for the day, and just talk with the Lord about those readings or about your life as it unfolds. Lent is an ideal time, with Spring and brighter days, and new life all around, to try different ways of praying. You may choose to go to Mass each day during Lent, or if going for a walk, as you pass the church, to call in and pray the Stations of the Cross. A visit to the local church with the students would be appropriate during these weeks.

"Lord, help us to see in your Crucifixion and Resurrection an example of how to endure and seemingly to die in the agony and conflict of daily life so that we may live more fully and creatively."

Mother Teresa of Calcutta

What Needs Changing in My Life?

We start to come to know that by asking for help.

Lord, help me to know what needs changing. It is often said, “Be careful about what you ask for.” This is one of those requests that God must surely want to answer. Then, we have to listen.

In her book on prayer, **Sr. Wendy Beckett**, a British art historian and contemplative nun, states that prayer is **“God’s business. You bring yourself in whatever state you are and offer that to God.”**

With a little reflection, most of us will just begin to name things that make up our ordinary habits and ways of being who we are, that we aren’t very proud of. Things we do and things we never get around to doing. We can feel the call to change our attitudes, our self-absorption, or our way of interacting with others. Perhaps a spouse, a loved one, a friend, a family member, a colleague has told me something about myself that gets in the way of communication, that makes relating to them difficult. Maybe, I don’t really take time to deal with my relationship with God. Perhaps I let my mind and fantasy get cluttered with escapist litter. I might begin to name a number of self-indulgent habits. I may realize that I rarely, if ever, hear the cry of the poor, and can’t remember when I have answered that cry. It could be that dishonesty on all kinds of levels has become a way of life. One of the roadblocks in my relationship with God and others may be deep wounds or resentments from the past, things I continue to hold against others or myself.

At any stage in our life, we can pause, take stock, review, evaluate and make changes. We know that Jesus in proclaiming the Good News said; “The time has come.” “The Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the Good News.” **Mark 1:15**

“True conversion moves us along. It’s a breakthrough. True conversion continuously moves us along with outward signs, but more importantly from within and with a changed, transformed way of perceiving the world”. ([The Art of Waiting](#) by Laurence Freeman OSB)

During this Lent, we may find a thing or two we could improve on in how we live our faith.

5 Ways to Reconnect with God When You Feel Distant

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We know there are many struggles and we will always have struggles but at the end of Lent, we hopefully will have found a renewed conversation / relationship with God and a renewed peace within ourselves.

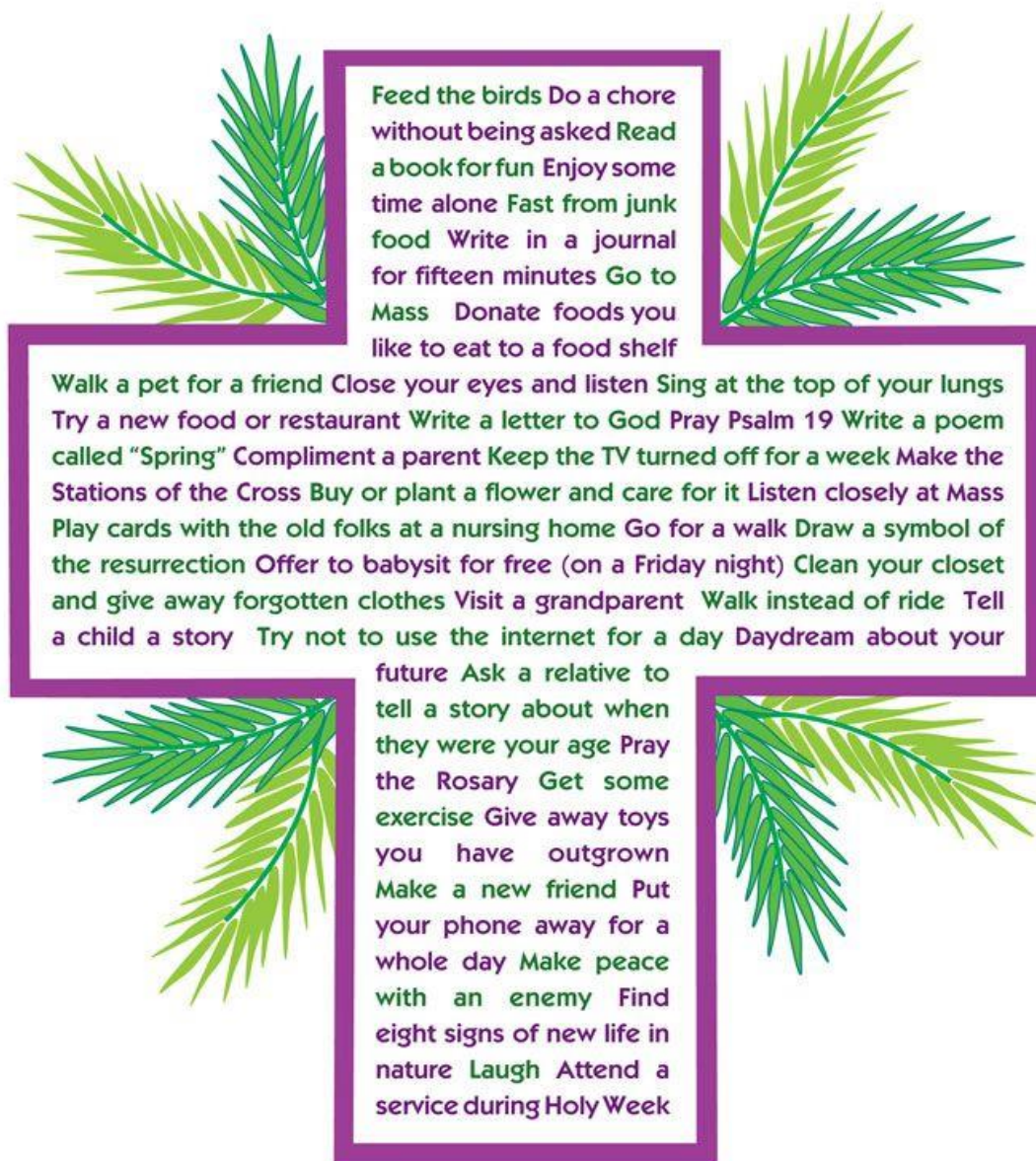
Giving something up and Giving something back...

Jesus taught his disciples to fast, so that they had time to focus on God and make time for prayer. Prayer and fasting often go hand in hand; 'So we fasted and petitioned our God about this, and he answered our prayer.' **Ezra 6:23**

Sometimes people might fast by missing a meal during the day to make time to seek God (although obviously this isn't suitable for some people). Others might refrain from TV, Social Media or alcohol, or whatever else might get in the way of being focused on God.

WAYS TO DO LENT

Try one of these practices each day during Lent.



"Great works do not always lie in our way, but every moment we may do little ones excellently, that is, with great love." St. Francis de Sales

Do we want to believe that Lent is

an opportunity for us to become better?

Some questions for us....

A Message of Repentance and Believing in God

For Reflection and Prayer:

What have we decided to repent of?

Can we repent of being selfish, greedy and talking about people behind their back?

Do we want to believe more in forgiving one another in kindness and compassion?

How we thought of being forgiving? Are we ready to forgive?

Have we thought of repenting from being unable to love and care for one another?

What about the times when we have not been peaceful at home, with family
and in school?

How can we be more loving and compassionate with those whose lives we share?

Have there been times when we have not been able to believe in God?

Can we think of believing in God?

Maybe all of these questions are too many – *Take courage*

One question at a time – *God's is with us.*

"God wants you to be the fullness of what you can be.

You cannot become this if you do not allow Him to enter into you."

Sr. Wendy Beckett

Self-knowledge and healing

To ask people to become more aware of what blocks them on the path to true self-knowledge often meets with resistance.

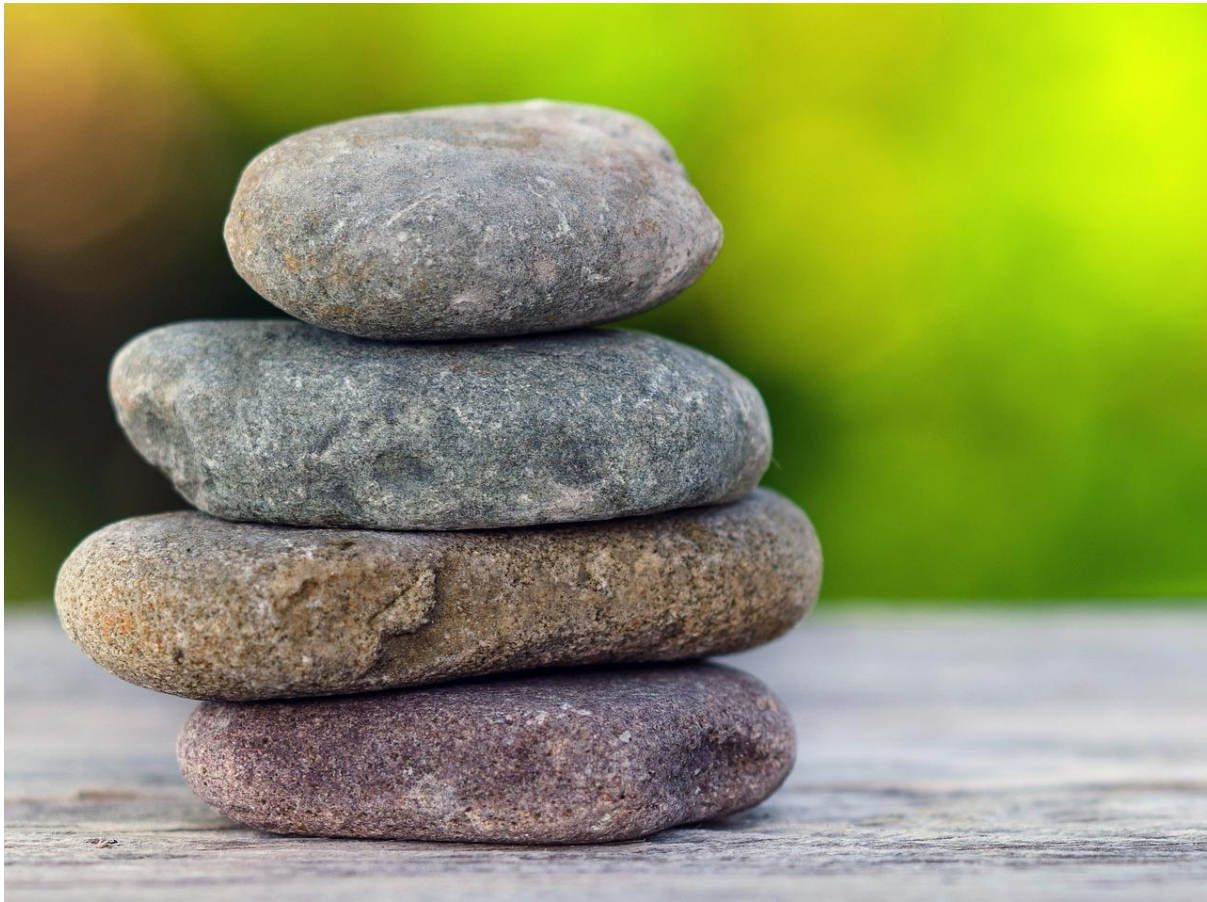


Image by No-longer-here from Pixabay

Kim Nataraja

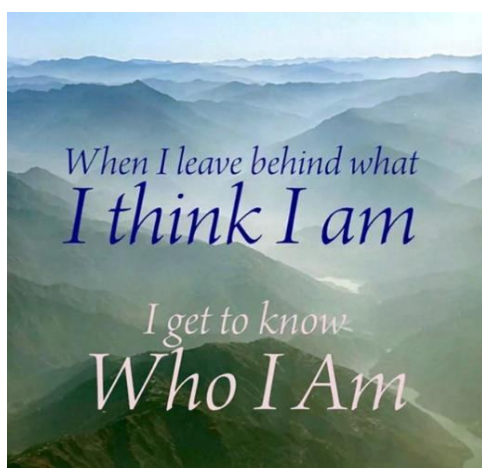
To ask people to become more aware of what blocks them on the path to true self-knowledge often meets with resistance. The response may be: 'Surely I do know who I am at this stage of my life.' or 'There are many things in my past I really don't want to face; there is no need for that, I have coped, I am alright as I am.' Of course we know who we are at one level. But what we are talking about is our surface self, caught and conditioned by past experiences. We may even accept at the intellectual level that perhaps we are more than we think we are. We may take on board that the ego is not the whole of our being; we believe the saying that the Kingdom is also within us. But we need to do more than just accepting this in trust and hope; we need to work towards experiencing this truth for our self, which is often too challenging. John Main was very aware of this. In 'Fully Alive', he explains that "Most of us spend quite a lot of our energy suppressing feelings of guilt, fears, whatever it may be. When you begin to meditate, after some time those suppressions are taken off and so the fear that you are turning from, or the guilt you are trying to bury, gradually bubbles up to the surface and so

you may find, after your meditation, that instead of feeling more deeply relaxed, you can feel vaguely anxious, vaguely worried, you are not sure why.” At this point many of us turn away and think ‘Meditation is not for me; I must be doing something wrong; it is not helping me at all’. The misunderstanding of meditation merely as a form of relaxation, a way of forgetting our problems and of suppressing parts of our nature we do not like to be confronted with, can mean that we practice for years without any increase in awareness of our potential. Rather than coming to self-knowledge and integrated wholeness we remain fragmented. And yet we hear Jesus in the ‘Gospel of Thomas’ say: “When you know yourselves, then you will be known, and you will understand that you are children of the living father. But if you do not know yourselves, then you dwell in poverty, and you are poverty.” (Gospel of Thomas 3) Of course do want not want to ‘dwell in poverty’; we do want to experience this sense of wholeness, integration and harmony. The reason why we think we cannot do this is, that we assume it is a task we have to achieve on our own. But John Main continues: “The power of meditation is this: as you persevere on the path, the thing that you are suppressing or the fear that you cannot face or the guilt that you do not want to admit to is, as it were, burned away in the fire of Divine Love. Very often, you will never consciously know what it was, but it is gone and it is gone for ever.” There is therefore nothing to strive for; it is not an ‘achievement’– ‘achievement’, ‘goal’ are words of the ‘ego’ and therefore not relevant on this path. We just need to remember the Divine spark inherent in our human nature. The hope and trust coming from the knowledge of this innate potential does make our practice of meditation meaningful and lifts it from the realm of mere relaxation.

Kim Nataraja is a retired College Lecturer and Head of Department of Modern Languages. She has been a contemplative since her youth and joined The World Community for Christian Meditation in 1993. In 1998 she became a Benedictine Oblate to the Community and since 1999 her service to the Community has been to be the Director of the School of Meditation. In that role she has led retreats and given talks in many parts of the world. In 2016 she stepped down from the role as School Director and is concentrating on Spiritual Direction and her writing.

WCCM - The World Community for Christian Meditation

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“The Spirit of God dwells in our hearts in Silence.”

John Main

Christian Meditation Ireland

<https://christianmeditation.ie>

Lenten Prayer: Gardening God's Way

Planting Your Spring Garden:

Plant three rows of peas:

Peace of mind

Peace of heart

Peace of soul

Plant four rows of squash:

Squash gossip

Squash indifference

Squash grumbling

Squash selfishness

Plant four rows of lettuce:

Lettuce be faithful

Lettuce be kind

Lettuce be patient

Lettuce really love one another

No garden is complete without turnips:

Turnip for meetings

Turnip for service

Turnip to help one another

To conclude our garden, we must have thyme:

Thyme for God

Thyme for Reflection

Thyme for Prayer

“Every moment and every event of every person’s life on earth plants something in her or his soul.

For just as the wind carries thousands of winged seeds, so each moment brings with it germs of spiritual vitality that come to rest imperceptibly in the minds and wills of men and women.

Most of these unnumbered seeds perish and are lost, for such seeds as these cannot spring up anywhere except in the good soil of freedom, spontaneity and love.” *Seeds of Contemplation by Thomas Merton*

Paidir na Maidine - Morning Prayer – Bishop Fintan Monahan

<https://www.bing.com/videos/riverview/relatedvideo?&q=youtube+bishop+fintan+monahan&&mid=F6C4D69E87266ECC0AF3F6C4D69E87266ECC0AF3&&FORM=VRD GAR>

Videos of Praying the Stations of the Cross for Teenagers You Tube

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Lenten Prayer Service for Teens and Young Adults - Ignatian

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**Strengthen Your Faith this Easter -
40 Day Devotional with Scripture,
Reflections and Prayers**

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Jubilee Year 2025



Pope Francis has announced a Jubilee Year for 2025 with the theme of "Pilgrims of Hope."

He has called for 2024 to be a Year of Prayer in preparation for Jubilee 2025.

These chosen words, Pilgrims and Hope attempt to condense the meaning of the entire Jubilee journey. They both represent key themes of Pope Francis' pontificate.

Pope Francis has said that a Year of Prayer will be "a year dedicated to rediscovering the great value and absolute need for prayer in one's own personal life, in the life of the Church and in the world."

"In this time of preparation, I would greatly desire that we devote 2024, the year preceding the Jubilee event, to a great "sympathy" of prayer. Prayer, above all else, to renew our desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and to adore him. Prayer, moreover, to thank God for the many gifts of his love for us and to praise his work in creation, which summons everyone to respect it and to take concrete and responsible steps to protect it. Prayer as the expression of a single "heart and soul" (cf. Acts 4:32), which then translates into solidarity and the sharing of our daily bread. Prayer that makes it possible for every man and woman in this world to turn to the one God and to reveal to him what lies hidden in the depths of their heart. Prayer as the royal road to holiness, which enable us to be contemplative even in the midst of activity. In a word, may it be an intense year of prayer in which hearts are open to receive the outpouring of God's grace and to make the "Our Father," the prayer Jesus taught us, the life programme of each of his disciples." Pope Francis <https://youtu.be/FBi5SCO2J88>

Italian Archbishop Rino Fisichella says it is a time, "to discover how to pray, and above all how to educate the people of today in prayer, in this age of digital culture, so that prayer can be effective and fruitful." One concrete initiative that will take place, he said, is that Pope Francis in 2024 will set up a "School of Prayer" that will consist of a series of meetings and encounters with different groups of people, with the aim being "to pray together and better understand the various forms of prayer."



[It's the Year of Prayer - toward Jubilee Year 2025](#)

“A Jubilee is both an opportunity and a challenge – an opportunity to discover more deeply the scriptural meaning of jubilee but also a challenge to commit ourselves to social justice and raising our voices on behalf of the poor.”

Fleur Dorrell, National Co-ordinator of the ‘God who Speaks.’ www.godspeaks.uk

JUBILEE YEAR OF 2025 GOES DIGITAL


<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E4iz86flH4M>

The cross of Christ is the hope that cannot ever be abandoned because we are always in need of it, especially in the most difficult moments.

The Cross, in the shape of a sail, is transformed into an anchor that imposes itself over the waves in motion. A universal symbol of Hope.

The figures represent humanity from the four corners of the World. They are embracing each other to illustrate the solidarity between the peoples, as the first holds onto the cross.

The rough sea is a reminder of the difficulties of the pilgrimage of life. Often, personal events as well as those of the world, press on us more intensely, demanding a greater hope.


 DICASTERY FOR EVANGELIZATION
 SECTION FOR FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS
 REGARDING EVANGELIZATION IN THE WORLD

What is a Jubilee?

**“Jubilee” is the name given to a particular year.
A time to re-establish a proper relationship with God, with one another, and
with all of creation.**

The jubilee principle challenges three things relevant for us today.

- a) Mass accumulation of land and wealth at the expense of the community**
- b) All forms of monopolies and nationalisation that destroy a more equitable exercise of personal or family ownership**
- c) Creation of barriers to opportunities and resources for families to provide for themselves**

With our Jubilee Year, there are six themes and principles in Scripture that we can explore:

**Care for Creation,
Food Poverty,
Modern Slavery,
Managing Debt,
Forgiveness,
Rest and Worship**

This new Jubilee year reminds us that our policies and practices can be challenged and reversed. We can conserve the planet’s resources more carefully, so that the distribution of goods can travel further and benefit more people. Our climate conditions alone have shown us a bleak future if we do not act now.

We can change iniquitous policies around land grabs, international tax and tariff structures.

A living wage isn’t just a wage we can live off, it should be a wage with which we can save.

The rise in global human trafficking is one of the worst evils of our time, and we must continue to challenge it here and abroad.

With our current cost of living, we are a very long way from reducing the gulf between the poor and the wealthy today, yet there are solutions to managing individual and international debt when the will is there, and if we put pressure on governments and not keep silent.

Forgiveness and reconciliation all start with us. When we forgive we are forgiven, says the *Our Father*.

When we make time for the Sabbath and help others to rest where we can, we do not lose sight of God in the busyness and commercialised world we live in.

Excerpted - The Jubilee Challenge, Fleur Dorrell, Bible Alive - Lent 2024

Let us make this Jubilee a time to see and act with new eyes.

Paving the Way to the Jubilee: Transforming Rome for 2025

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2025 Jubilee Year Logo Explained - Official Jubilee Year Hymn

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Pilgrims of Hope

Original text: Pierangelo Sequeri

**Like a flame my hope is burning,
may my song arise to you:
Source of life that has no ending,
on life's path I trust in you.**

Ev'ry nation, tongue, and people
find a light within your Word.
Scattered fragile sons and daughters
find a home in your dear Son.

God, so tender and so patient,
dawn of hope, you care for all.
Heav'n and earth are recreated
by the Spirit of Life set free.

Raise your eyes, the wind is blowing,
for our God is born in time.
Son made man for you and many
who will find the way in him.

The score can be downloaded, [here](#), in two versions – one for organ and voice, the other for organ and choir (four-part harmony).

The Jubilee Prayer

Father in heaven,
may the *faith* you have given us
in your son, Jesus Christ, our brother,
and the flame of *charity* enkindled
in our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
reawaken in us the blessed *hope*
for the coming of your Kingdom.

May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the Gospel.
May those seeds transform from within both humanity and the
whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.

May the grace of the Jubilee
reawaken in us, *Pilgrims of Hope*,
a yearning for the treasures of heaven.

May that same grace spread
the joy and peace of our Redeemer
throughout the earth.

To you our God, eternally blessed,
be glory and praise for ever.

Amen

Franciscus



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



<https://www.popesprayer.va/>

<https://popesprayerusa.net/>

Small Group reflection

<https://popesprayerusa.net/popes-intentions/>



The Holy Father's Prayer Intentions
entrusted to his Worldwide Prayer Network
for the year 2024



Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network



THE POPE VIDEO



CLICK TO PRAY

You can find here the Pope's prayer intentions for 2024:

<https://www.popesprayer.va/the-challenges-facing-humanity-and-assists-the-mission-of-the-church/>

From time to time, Pope Francis may add a second prayer intention related to current events or urgent needs, like disaster relief. The second prayer request will help mobilize prayer and action related to the urgent situation.

Pope's Intentions

March 2024

FOR THE NEW MARTYRS

We pray that those who risk their lives for the Gospel in various parts of the world inflame the Church with their courage and missionary enthusiasm.

Some *Information* and *Websites* to Explore.....

TAKE THE RISK FOR CHRIST

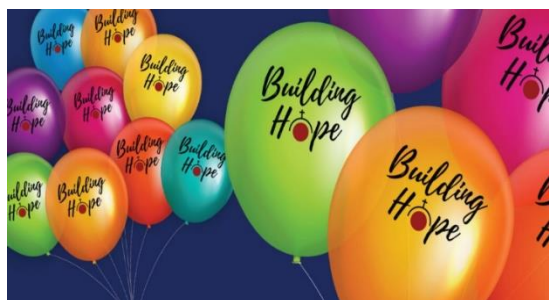
Year for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood
vocations.ie

The **National Vocations Office** in collaboration with **The Hook of Faith** are running an online (Zoom) Webinar. **Tuesday, 5th March - 8 pm to 9 pm**

Keynote Speaker – Breda O’Brien

To register for this webinar email: thehookoffaith@gmail.com
www.thehookoffaith.com

**Are you concerned about the decline in Vocations? What can I do to promote Vocations?
What else can be done?
All Are Welcome**



Partnership in Practice

<https://dublindiocese.ie/partnership-in-practice/>

**Co-responsibility - Priests and People
together - Passing on the Faith**

A Synod Retreat Meditation – Rev. Fr. Timothy Radcliffe OP

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Fr. Timothy Radcliffe Reflections at the Synod on Synodality

The reflections of Fr. Timothy Radcliffe have been one of the highlights of the Synod Assembly in the Vatican. He led the synod participants on a retreat before the synod gathering and offered reflections and spiritual guidance. Some have called him the “spiritual father” of the synod.

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Teaching Meditation to Children, Teens and Young Adults

(...) it is so important that we teach a contemplative practice to young people, to children when they are setting out on their journey of life, so that they have this, let's call it a life skill. It's a life-giving and life-transforming skill or practice. Or we could call it an art. No child today that left school without knowing how to use a computer, you would say was really well prepared or well educated or well-conditioned for life in the modern world. So in the same way, if we are not giving this art of prayer to our children we are condemning them and the next generation facing the huge problems that we have created, condemning them to a very difficult and perhaps even despairing future.

([Breakthrough](#) by Laurence Freeman OSB)

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Catechist's Journey - Catechists as Echoes (Part 1): Echoes of Hope

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Join online, in a time and a place that suits you best, to deepen your understanding of our faith or to prepare for ministry. Courses include lection Divina, Introduction to Synodality, Preparing Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and more.

Email info@aspal.ie Web www.aspal.ie

Emmanuel 2024: Join us at the Helix for the Emmanuel Concerts on 12/13/14 March at 7.30 p.m. 600 students per day sing their hearts out with a professional band accompanied by student instrumentalists. Book your tickets via 01 7007000 or online at www.thehelix.ie. For a preview, recordings are available on iTunes Store, Apple Music, Spotify, Play Music or YouTube. All soloists (about 100) will gather soon, hosted by Holy Faith Secondary School, Glasnevin, and supported by a team of coaches, to help them bring out their best performances.

Knock Pilgrimage

Archbishop Dermot Farrell will lead our annual pilgrimage to Knock on **Saturday, April 27**. This year we are celebrating 145 years since the apparition in 1879. We are encouraging Parishes/Parish Partnerships to book buses and to share the date with parish groups. We are glad to say that the Choir of Many Voices from throughout the Archdiocese will be back this year. A series of workshops with interesting and thought-provoking speakers and being planned, more details to follow. As in previous years, parishes should plan to arrive in Knock for 11.45am. If you would like to take part in the choir or have any other queries, **please email** knockpilgrimage@dublindiocese.ie.



Chaplains & R.E Teachers Retreat

DATE: TUESDAY APRIL 23RD 2024

TIME: 10AM – 3PM

COST: €15 PER-PERSON (LIGHT LUNCH INCLUDED)

VENUE: OVOCA MANOR, AVOCA CO. WICKLOW
Y14TE27 (DENSMORE LODGE)

YOU are invited to a Chaplains & R.E. Teachers retreat in Ovoca Manor. This retreat aims to provide a space for your personal spiritual development, learning through engaging workshops while also connecting with others. And best of all, this will count as a CPD day. This retreat aims to provide a much needed sense of support, refreshment and encouragement by spending time with like-minded people involved in R.E/Chaplaincy work in schools around Ireland.

We hope to see you there!

To find out more and to register visit www.scriptureunion.ie/retreat





Mother's Day is a special day that honours the selfless and unconditional love of mothers. It is a day to appreciate the sacrifices and constant hard work that mothers do to nurture and guide their children in the right direction. Mothers are forgiving, patient, and kind. They are willing to put others before themselves.

Mothers play a crucial role in our lives, from giving birth to teaching us valuable life lessons. They are our first teachers and our first role models, and their influence lasts a lifetime.

A mother's love is infinite and can never be replaced.

On Mother's day, we express our gratitude and love for our mothers. It is a day to show them how much we appreciate all they have done for us. It is also a day to remember those Mother who have died and to honour their memory.

Mother's day is a time for celebration and reflection. We reflect on the impact that our mothers have on our lives and the lessons they have taught us. We all have different experiences and stories about our mothers. Our stories inform our lives, how we relate to our own mothers and to our children.

Mother's Day is a special day to celebrate the love and sacrifices of mothers. It is a day to express our gratitude and appreciation for all they have done for us. We celebrate their unwavering love and devotion, and the countless ways they have supported us throughout our lives. Let us take this opportunity to honour and cherish our mothers and all those who fulfil the role of mothers in our lives.

On Mother's Day, we don't want to forget Mary, the mother of Jesus. The feast of the Annunciation of the Lord, Mary's 'Yes' is usually celebrated on 25 March. As it falls this year during Lent, it is celebrated on 8 April. We know from scripture the kind of mother Mary was to her son, Jesus. She was with him from beginning to the very end. She taught him about the faith and watched him grow through boyhood. When Jesus was pierced to the cross, Mary's heart was pierced with sorrow. St. Ignatius says it is likely that Mary was the first person he visited when he rose from the dead.

Mary inspires us and teaches us to hope patiently, persevere in times of difficulties and pray with love and confidence.

A Blessing for a Mother

Mother,
Your voice learning to smooth
Your new child
Was the first home-sound
We heard before we could see.

Your young eyes
Gazing on us
Was the first mirror
Where we glimpsed
What to be seen
Could mean.

Mother,
Your nearness tilled the air,
An umbilical garden for all the seeds
Of thought that stirred in our infant hearts.

You nurtured and fostered this space
To root all our quietly gathering intensity
That could grow nowhere else.

Mother,
Formed from the depths beneath your heart,
You know us from the inside out.
No deeds or seas or others
Could ever erase that.

John O'Donohue



St. Patrick and St. Joseph

The season of Lent is punctuated by two great feasts which we celebrate right in the middle of the month,
St. Patrick on 17 March and St. Joseph on 19 March.

St. Patrick,

Patron Saint of Ireland



Saint Patrick's Confession

My name is Patrick. I am a sinner, a simple country person, and the least of all believers.

The St. Patrick's Centre - Downpatrick

<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&p=d98ad9dc73de863cJmItDhM9MTcwNzk1NTlwMCZpZ3VpZD0xZGViODkyMS1iOGY0LTZhNDitMWJmYy05YWw5YjlmNDZiNjYmaW5zaWQ9NTMxOQ&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=1deb8921-b8f4-6a42-1bfc-9ac9b9f46b66&psq=st+patrick+downpatrick&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuc2FpbmRwYXRyaWNrY2VudHJlLmNvbS8&ntb=1>

St. Patrick's:

- **Costal Camino**
- **Camino, Downpatrick**
- **Way, Camino and Canoe Adventure**

Patrick was born a Christian, son of a deacon/local official. He didn't pay much attention to his religion when he was young. At the age of 16 years, he was kidnapped and brought to Ireland. He was sold to a slave-master and spent six years of force labour tending animals on an Irish hillside. During this time, he suffered hostility, hunger and loneliness. He became more aware of God and he began to pray. He had two dreams: first, telling him that he would soon go home to his own country; and second, telling him his ship was ready. He believed these were signs from God and he ran away from his master. He was finally reunited with his relations in Britain and years later he became a priest. In a dream, he heard the voice of young Irish people calling him back to Ireland. He was made a bishop and sent to Ireland in 432 AD. He spent over 30 years as a missionary in Ireland and despite serious difficulties of resistance and misunderstanding, he was successful. Patrick did much to make Ireland a Christian island by the end of the fifth century. He wrote his 'Confession' and died in 461AD at Saul in Co. Down where he is buried somewhere in Downpatrick, possibly within the grounds of the Cathedral.



What can we learn from St. Patrick today?

To entrust ourselves, our Church, our country to God's protective care

To have full confidence in the Lord's healing presence and power. "The Lord's is the earth and its fullness, the world and all its peoples" Ps 23

To give thanks for God's special care and call to each of us, knowing that God took the initiative in our vocation and will sustain us day by day

To be devoted to reading the Gospels so that we take on the mind and heart of Christ Jesus and make decisions according to the mind of Christ

To be receptive to God's will in all our trials, to trust him unreservedly, God uses these trials to shape our hearts and conform us to Christ Jesus

To be alert to all the opportunities we are given each day to proclaim the Gospel, and to know that whatever good we do is through God's boundless grace

To believe in the importance of intercession for our people and all people at this time

Towards the end of his Confession, Patrick makes perfectly clear that he "never had any reason, beyond the Gospel and its promises, ever to return to the people from whom I had formerly, barely escaped."

Source: Mother Marie Fahy, Abbess of St. Mary's Abbey, Glencairn. Co. Waterford

Wonderings - Fr. John Cullen

St. Patrick: The Outsider Who Became Our Insider

The Sacred Heart Messenger, March 2024

I wonder where your help and strength come from at this time?

What does the future hold for you?

What are the truths being disclosed to you?

What is your dream for the future?

What is the beauty of this present time?

How do you nurture God in your heart?

Does Patrick still 'bestow on you a sweet smile'?

When did loss become a means of grace for you?

How do you pray best? Where do you pray best?

How does God answer your prayers? Why do you pray?

St. Joseph

March 19

A Man of Honour

A Man of Courage

A Man of Faith



“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because she has conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son and you must name him Jesus, because he is the one who is to save his people from their sins.” **Matthew 1:16, 18-21, 24**

Joseph believed and allowed his life to be shaped by a dream even though he cannot be certain that it is true. That dream changed Joseph’s plan for his life completely. In it he saw an angel telling him not to be afraid but to take Mary home as his wife, because it was through the Holy Spirit that she had conceived. I wonder if he ever had doubts. We can ask, “Why did Joseph believe”? Joseph lived his life supporting Mary. He was a vital part of God’s plan from the beginning.



The feast of St. Joseph on March 19, celebrates the fact that Joseph was a worker, a carpenter from a town in the middle of nowhere.

Joseph got shelter for Mary when she was about to give birth.

Joseph joined Mary in her desperate search when they found Jesus in the Temple – “your father and I have been worried.”

We do not know exactly when Joseph died, but we do know that it was most likely sometime in Jesus’ young adult life, which means that Jesus had the benefit of Joseph’s example during his childhood and teens years. He learned from His earthly father how to treat His mother, how to speak the truth, how to love the unloveable, how to use a hammer, how to be silent when necessary, how to defend the dignity of a woman, how to show kindness and how to help those who are less fortunate. Jesus learned from the example of Joseph, through his daily life what it meant to live a life of faith, obedience, courage, fortitude and love.

Excerpt: 100 Saints Every Catholic Teen Should know

Who is St. Joseph? – Meet the Saints

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Guide to Holy Week



Palm Sunday

Sunday before Easter. Celebration of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Observed with palm branches, parades, and celebration.



Maundy Thursday

Thursday before Easter. Commemorates the Last Supper. Often observed with foot washing, stripping of the altar, and overnight prayer vigil to keep watch with Jesus in the garden.



Good Friday

Friday before Easter. Most solemn day of the church year. Observes the day Jesus was crucified. Observed by praying the Stations of the Cross and three hours of silent prayer while Jesus was on the cross.



Holy Saturday

Saturday before Easter. Observes the day Jesus was in the tomb. This is a day of somber reflection, reflecting on what we'd miss in a world without Jesus.



Easter Sunday

Hallelujah! Christ has risen! This day we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus. Sing hallelujahs and celebrate with great joy.



Holy Week covers themes from Eucharist to Death to New Life and the Resurrection.

We are invited to celebrate and remember these events in the life of Jesus.

The Easter Ceremonies are full of ritual: the washing of the feet on Holy Thursday, the kissing of the Cross on Good Friday, the lighting of the Paschal Fire and its procession through the church on Holy Saturday night. These gestures are a physical affirmation of our faith in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The ritual of the Holy Week ceremonies are profound moments of experience which give us our identity. Our faith is in the Risen Jesus who lives within and among us now.

We reflect on these events and what their relevance and meaning are to our lives and how we live.

“The question for us to ask during Holy Week is where we stand during the Passion of the Lord? Am I acting the part of Pilate, Peter, Judas or am I instead aligned with the women of Jerusalem, Mary or Veronica, Simon of Cyrene or the good thief? This is not the week that was but the week that is because every day people drag their crosses up a million Calvaries. When the cross is laid upon Jesus’ shoulders it is the image of James Joyce’s, Here comes Everyman, Chrst comes looking for us in his agony, in the countless Gethsemanes and Golgothas that are not in Jerusalem.” Fr. Ronan Drury



Palm Sunday is the commemoration of our Lord’s triumphant entry into Jerusalem just five days before His crucifixion.

Matthew 21:1-11, Mark 11:1-11, Luke 19:29-44

and John 12:12-19.

The people who welcomed Jesus into Jerusalem shouting ‘Hosanna’ are the same people who shout ‘Crucify him’ days later.

Palm Sunday has a dual focus, with the blessing and distribution of palms to remember our Lord’s entry into Jerusalem and a reading of the Lord’s Passion, setting out for us the events of Holy Week. Remembering Jesus’ triumphal entry into Jerusalem with the procession and blessing of the palm, reminds us that we too are called to welcome Jesus into our hearts. It is our tradition to bring blessed palm home and to give it a prominent place, perhaps on the mantel piece or above a door. It is a sign for us of God’s presence in our home and our willingness to follow his Way.

Holy Thursday remembers the events in the upper room the night before Jesus died.

Matthew 26:20-30, Mark 14:17-26,

Luke 22:14-35 and John 13-17



The institution of the Lord's Supper, the Passover meal and the Washing of the Feet takes place.

On **Holy Thursday**, at the end of Mass, the altar is stripped, in preparation for Good Friday. This symbolizes Christ's being stripped by the Roman soldiers prior to His crucifixion.

After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus explained what He did and why. *"You should wash one another's feet,"* He told them. *"I have set an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them."* **John 13:1-17** Jesus performed this task as one of His last acts which gives us an important message of how we are supposed to be as Christians. The foot washing ceremony is an important call for us that we too should be willing to serve others.

Washing Feet

A sacred action

A form of healing

A blessed deed.

Humility needed

Gentleness a must

Courage to carry

the basin and the towel.

To wash the feet of another is difficult.

To allow another to wash my feet is much more difficult.

Would you mind if I wash your feet today?

Would I mind asking someone to wash my feet today?

Would I mind if some one offered to wash my feet?

An Act of Service.

Anna Hennessy



Good Friday was the last day of Jesus' life on earth before his resurrection. He was betrayed by Judas and denied by Peter.

His disciples scattered.

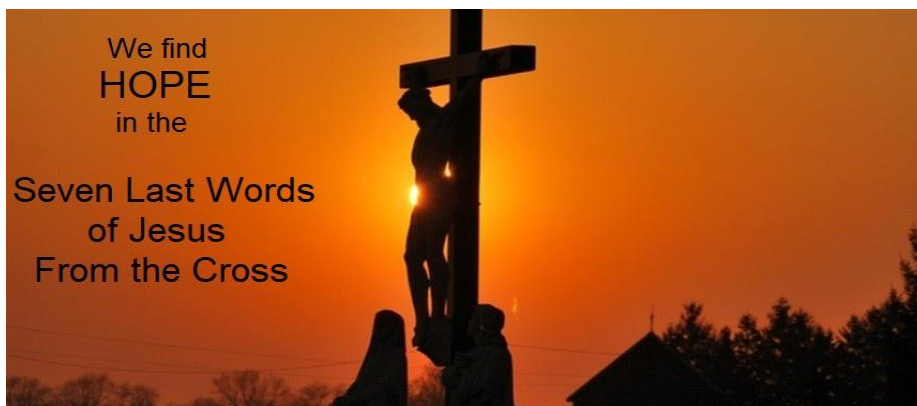
Luke 23:39-43

Jesus was arrested on **Good Friday**. He was placed on trial, condemned, beaten and mocked. He was required to carry His own cross. He was crucified and he died.

“The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head.”

They stripped Him of His clothes and cast lots for them.

Two prisoners were crucified alongside Jesus. One of them mocked Him, but the other said, *“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”* Jesus answered him, *“Truly I tell be with me in paradise.”* **Luke 23:39-43**



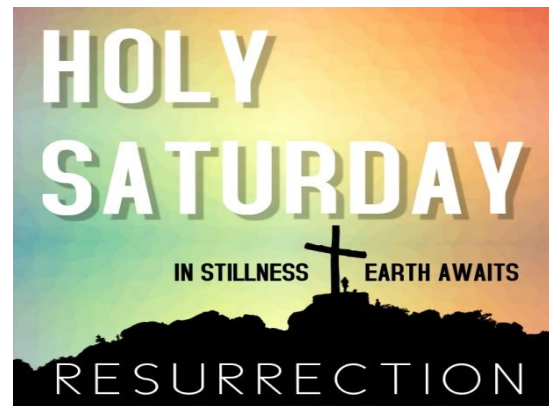
1. Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do. **Luke 23:24**
2. Today, you will be with me in paradise. **Luke 23:43**
3. Woman, behold, thy Son! **John 19:26-27**
4. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? **Matthew 27:46**
5. I thirst. **Matthew 27:46**
6. It is finished. **John 19:30**
7. Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit. **Luke 23:46**

On the cross, Jesus spoke these seven life-giving words teaching us about the way of the cross and leading us into His light and love.

Jesus' body rested in the tomb on
Holy Saturday.

We await the resurrection of Jesus with the
proclamation.

"This is the night when Jesus Christ broke the
chains of death and rose triumphant from
the grave" - **Exsultet**

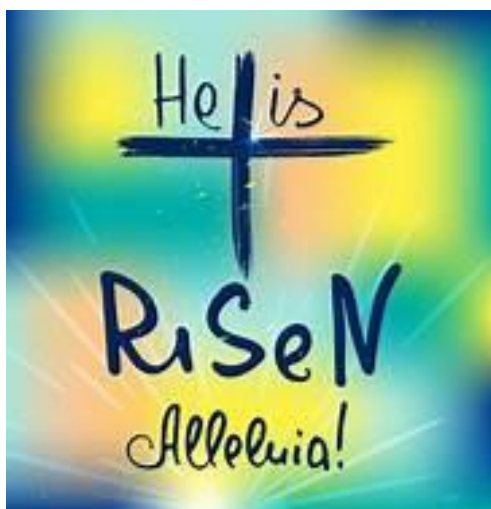


Preparations were made for Jesus' body and placement in the tomb.

"The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it. Then they went home and prepared spices and perfumes. But they rested on the Sabbath in obedience to the commandment." **Luke 23:55-56**

As we await the resurrection of Jesus, perhaps we might take time on Holy Saturday to reflect on our own sufferings and sorrows and those of our troubled world.

*"In our lives there are many kinds of tombs in which we find ourselves – poverty and want, expectations and desires, injustice and oppression, boredom and loneliness. Tonight, Jesus us to rise with him to a new life. As we relive the story of God's love for us from the scripture readings we roll back stones that burden us. We break out of our tombs as we draw strength from our risen Saviour. We need never ask ourselves, like the pious women on their way to Jesus' tomb, 'Who will roll back the stone for us?' **Mark 16:3.** If we have faith in Christ our Saviour, no stone will keep us imprisoned in any tomb; no stone will block our path to new life." **God's Word - Daily Reflections 2023***



On **Easter Sunday**, Jesus rose from the dead.

Early in the morning, the women who had prepared the spices before the Sabbath returned to Jesus' tomb to find it empty.

"He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay." **Matthew 28:6**

Mary Magdalene arrived first. "Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalen came to the tomb early, while it was still dark, and saw that the stone had been taken away from the tomb." **John 20:1**

Two men, angels, appear to the women to tell them Jesus has risen. **Matthew 28: 2-7**

The women, both afraid and joyful, remained first silent, and then quickly went to find the disciples.



Resurrection

*Shoots in the garden
green and flowered
warmed in the sun.*

*Lambs dancing in the fields
emerging from the darkness
and me, cementing blankets to limbs
ignoring morning anthems
of a welcoming day.*

*Yet Springs breaks in, even into my room
even in me,
groaning, struggling,
making it happen.*

*until Jesus lifts me gently
out of my tomb
into his springtime.*

Margaret Brophy C.S.B.

Eastertide is a wonderful time in the life of the church and is a time of special grace and blessing in our lives. The resurrection of Jesus is the greatest feast in the Liturgical Calendar. We believe in the Resurrection of Jesus. We are a resurrection people... Let us rejoice... Our ancestors believed that the sun danced and that nature celebrated on Easter Sunday because Jesus had risen from the dead.





NUA: Easter

A 3 part video series that provides a fresh perspective on Easter and why it matters for us today.

Aimed at 9 - 14yrs.

Episode 1 - The Origins of Easter **Episode 2 - The Story of Good Friday** **Episode 3 - The Meaning of the Resurrection**

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An Easter Message from Bishop Fintan Monahan – You Tube

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Ceiliúradh Tráth na Cásge.

Eastertide - An Ghaeilge

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Instrumental Hymns, Peaceful instrumental Piano and Flute Music, "Easter Sunday"

<https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&p=c29c95b16dc4d91bJmItdHM9MTcwODQ3MzYwMCZpZ3VpZD0wNTc4NzA4Zi0xYjBhLTZiNDktMTZhYi02NGEzMWFiMTZkNzAmaW5zaWQ9NTUwNg&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=0578708f-1b0a-6c49-16ab-64a31ab16d70&u=a1L3ZpZGVvcy9yaXZlcnZpZlZxcvcMVsYXRIZHJpZGVvP3E9cGVhY2VmdWwrZWVzdGVyK211c2ljK3lvdSt0dWJlJm1pZD05MTEyMTc5MjUzQjM1RjA0RElwnNTkxMTIxNzkwNTNzVGMDREUjA1KzPuk09VkiSRQ&ntb=1>

Malakai Bayoh sings Mozart 'Alleluia' at Royal Albert Hall

<https://www.facebook.com/ClassicFM/videos/malakai-bayoh-sings-mozart-alleluia-at-royal-albert-hall-debut-classic-fm/539146645028534/>

To Conclude:

“Easter is the courage to daily begin again..... Easter is being grateful for the time we have to make a change in our own lives..... Easter is being the tears of God in our hurting world.....

Easter is a compassionate heart, a kind word and a helping hand”.

“Despite all our prayers, pleadings, activism and good intentions at the hurting edges, God does not come to rescue us from horrible situations. Easter reveals not a “rescuing” God but a “redeeming” God who promises a new kind of life after death, but also empowers humanity to establish ‘in Christ’ a kinship of justice in the here and now. How do we step into this invitation, so that resurrection is not an historic event but an on-going, transforming force in history”? Brother Martin Byrne – Kinship at the Edges

EASTER BLESSING – John O’Donohue

On this Easter morning, let us look again at the lives we have been so generously given and let us let fall away the useless baggage that we carry – old pains, old habits, old ways of seeing and feeling – and let us have the courage to begin again. Life is very short, and we are no sooner here than it is time to depart again, and we should use to the full the time that we still have.

We don’t realize all the good we can do. A kind, encouraging word or helping hand can bring many a person through dark valleys in their lives. We weren’t put here to make money or to acquire status or reputation. We were sent here to search for the light of Easter in our hearts, and when we find it we are meant to give it away generously. The dawn that is rising this Easter morning is a gift to our hearts and we are meant to celebrate it and to carry away from this holy, ancient place the gifts of healing and light and the courage of a new beginning.

May God help us in the coming weeks to live what we have celebrated this Easter. Let us be a blessing in each other’s company and be faithful to what God asks of us.

*He is Risen. Alleluia, Alleluia,
Alleluia.*

*Beannachtaí na Cásta ort,
Sr. Bernadette and Sr. Concepta*



