

Culmore Parish News

Sunday, 7th February 2021 – 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time

Jesus the Healer

In today's Gospel we read about Jesus' first healing in Mark's Gospel. Jesus hears of the illness of the mother of Simon's wife and goes to her. Due to the purity laws of his time this scene would have been considered controversial. His first healing is of a woman and we are told that he touches her, raises her up; he completely restores her to health. Many of his actions here would have been considered inappropriate.

The '*whole city*' was crowded around the door as many people wanted to be healed. What a commotion! Jesus, very early on in his ministry is clearly a very popular and attractive figure. Another important aspect of this story is that Jesus does not remain comfortable in this house. He keeps moving, keeps going outward. This requires so much energy and an outpouring of love for those in need. Jesus shows us in today's Gospel what it takes to stay energised for our various ministries: quiet time and space for real encounter with God. Even then, the people hunted for him and said, '*Everyone is searching for you*', and still today, everyone is searching.

We too are called to bring healing to others in any way that we can, to those who are seeking, those who are lost, those who are isolated. Jesus shows us that to do this we must be connected to that Divine Presence within us and in our world. Today we can ask ourselves, what do I need healing from? Bring this to Jesus in prayer. And also, how can I reach out, with a healing presence, to others, especially during this time of pandemic?

'I ask God to prepare our hearts to encounter our brothers and sisters, so that we may overcome our differences rooted in political thinking, language, culture and religion. Let us ask him to anoint our whole being with the balm of his mercy, which heals the injuries caused by mistakes, misunderstandings, and disputes. And let us ask him for the grace to send us forth, in humility and meekness, along the demanding but enriching path of seeking peace'. (Pope Francis, Fratelli Tutti, 254).

Jane Mellett

Feasts of the Week

Week Beginning Sunday 7th February

Monday 8 February – St Jerome Emiliani; St Josephine Bakhita, virgin

Wednesday 10 February – St Scholastica, virgin

Thursday 11 February – Our Lady of Lourdes; St Gobnait, virgin

Week Beginning Sunday 14th February

Wednesday 17th February – Ash Wednesday

World Day of the Sick

Pope Francis has issued a message for The World Day of the Sick which takes place on, 11th February, the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The past year has been an extraordinary one. As a deadly and disruptive virus circled the world, we became more acutely aware of the importance of healthcare provision and the contribution of those working on the frontline. Pope Francis, in his message, states that the World Day of the Sick provides an **"opportunity to devote special attention to the sick and to those who provide them with assistance and care both in healthcare institutions and within families and communities"**.

Pope Francis entrusts the sick, healthcare workers, and all those who assist the suffering to the care of Our Lady. In the midst of the health crisis caused by Covid-19, we encourage all the faithful to take part in the Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes, from 3-11 February, to pray for those who are sick, for all who work in the medical profession, and for an end to the pandemic.

Novena Prayer

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Our Lady of Lourdes, we come to you like little Bernadette at the grotto. We pray with childlike trust in you.

Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception, when you appeared in Lourdes, you made it a holy sanctuary where many have obtained the cure of their infirmities, both spiritual and corporal.

We pray with confidence for your holy intercession. (State your intentions here)

Holy Mother of the Rosary, we feel confident that your prayers on our behalf will be graciously heard by God. Immaculate Mother, show us your mercy, O Mother of God.

Amen

Vatican says use of anti-Covid vaccines “morally acceptable”

Some people have asked questions about the use of the vaccines developed to protect against the Covid-19 coronavirus. The Vatican statement on this issue, published on 21st December, can be accessed at <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/vatican-city/news/2020-12/vatican-cdf-note-covid-vaccine-morality-abortion.html>

The Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith focuses on the moral aspects of receiving vaccines and if you have concerns you are encouraged to read it in full at this time.

Ash Wednesday

Ash Wednesday is on 17th February and it is a day of both fast and abstinence. Fasting – having only one meal and two small meals – is obligatory for those aged between eighteen and sixty, with the exception of those who are ill or have a medical condition. Abstinence, which means abstaining from meat, is obligatory for all those who are over fourteen years of age.

Preparing for Marriage?

Catholic Engaged Encounter: A 'Zoom' online Marriage Preparation Course is planned for 27 – 28 March 2021. This two-day course is a positive way of preparing for Marriage where you will discover how to enrich your future relationship. For information and booking telephone 0287638512 or log on to marriageencounter.ie

Western Health & Social Care Trust FREE Mental Health Courses

The WHSCT Recovery College is running free courses on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Courses start in March, and at the moment we are planning to deliver them via Zoom, but if Covid-19 restrictions allow later in the term we intend to run face to face workshops as usual in Derry, Enniskillen, Omagh and Strabane. We would encourage people to register even if they do not have computer access. Some shortened courses are already available free to watch online on the Recovery College page on the Trust website www.westerntrust.hscni.net/service/recovery-services/recovery-college and the Western Trust's YouTube channel. To enrol telephone 82252079 or 82833291 or email: recoverycollege@westerntrust.hscni.net or download an enrolment form at <https://westerntrust.hscni.net/service/recovery-services/recover-college/>

St. Angela's College, Sligo

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The course is open to: Qualified primary school teachers; qualified post-primary school teachers who wish to transfer to primary school teaching. Parents, sacramental preparation teams and parish catechists who have a specific interest in the area of primary religious education may also apply. Closing date is Friday 14 May 2021. This date may be extended. For more information and application forms contact Mary Kearns, Senior Administrator, School of Education, St. Angela's College, Lough Gill, Sligo. Email: mkearns@stangelas.nuigalway.ie or visit www.stangelas.nuigalway.ie

Can you Foster?

Could you give a home to a vulnerable child when they need it most? Fostering is about giving them a safe, secure place to live for a few weeks, months or even years. Barnardo's Fostering NI is looking for foster carers. Foster placements can be: long-term, short-term, emergency, short breaks and parent and child together. You must be over 21 to foster and must have a spare room in your home. Foster carers are offered a fostering fee and allowances; they are given training and support. To learn more please telephone 90652288 or visit our website <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/foster>.