

Culmore Parish Newsletter

Sunday, 13th June 2021 – 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

'It is like a mustard seed.'

Something we may not often think about is Jesus' earthly relationship with creation. Jesus walked everywhere, went to quiet places to pray, preached from mountains, from boats on the water; his followers included fishermen in tune with the rhythm of the sea. In Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'* – On Care for Our Common Home, he reminds us that Jesus '*was in constant touch with nature, lending it an attention full of fondness and wonder*' (Laudato Si', 97). Jesus' parables are full of imagery from the natural world and in today's Gospel we have an example of this in the parable of the mustard seed. People of Jesus' time may have preferred the image of the lofty 'cedars of Lebanon' to explain God's kingdom, mustard plants however, only stand a few feet tall. Jesus is turning the ideals of power and triumph on their head. There is an ancient text which forbade planting mustard seeds in Palestinian gardens because the shrub takes over wherever it is planted and attracts unwanted birds. Author and activist, Shane Claiborne, compares it to *kudzu*, a wild vine that could blanket entire mountain areas, smother trees, even crack cement buildings. This mustard seed image of God's dream for this world is one which suggests that it will grow even in places where it is not wanted, putting cracks in seemingly mighty structures.

The New Testament not only tells us of the earthly Jesus and his tangible and loving relationship with the world. It also shows him risen and glorious, present throughout all of creation (Col 1:19-20). '*The very flowers of the field and the birds which [Christ's] human eyes contemplated and admired are now imbued with his radiant presence*' (Laudato Si', 100). As we watch out for traces of the mustard seed kingdom this week, let us also embrace the joy of Christ in all of creation. *Jane Mellett*

LOUGH DERG 2021

Lough Derg regrets that it will not be possible in 2021 to reopen Station Island for the Traditional Three-Day Pilgrimage or even for the autumn programme of Day Retreats. Lough Derg will again offer the opportunity to "*Do Lough Derg from wherever you are*" on 3 – 5 July. The outdoor *Pilgrimage on the Lough Shore Pilgrim Path* will also be available as the summer goes on. Further information from Lough Derg office 0 (0353) 71 9861518 or www.loughderg.org.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE?

Catholic Engaged Encounter: A 'Zoom' online Marriage Preparation course is planned for [11-12 September 2021](#). This 2-day course is a positive way of preparing for Marriage where you will discover how you can enrich your future relationship.

Information/Booking: marriageencounter.ie or [028276 38512](tel:02827638512)

FOSTERING INFORMATION EVENTS

Northern Ireland Adoption & Foster Care is hosting four virtual Fostering Information Events for those interested in finding out about becoming a foster carer for an unaccompanied / separated

child or young person. These events are open to anyone across NI. Social workers who work alongside these children and young people will be available to answer any questions you may have. Dates and times: Tuesday 15 June, 1.00pm; Wednesday 16 June, 1.00pm; Thursday 17 June, 6.00pm; Friday 18 June, 10.00am. The sessions last 45 minutes – 1 hour. To sign up, telephone 0800 0720 137 or email your name, contact details and postcode to info@fostering.hscni.net

PRAYER FOR OUR PROTECTION

We ask for prayers for those affected by the Coronavirus. Placing all our trust in the Lord, and asking Our Lady to intercede for us, we invite everyone to pray these prayers:

Extract from Saint Patrick's Breastplate

Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me, Christ in every eye that sees me, Christ in every ear that hears me.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection, implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother. To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer. Amen.