



PARISHES OF GLENDELMOTT & STRATHFOYLE

Sunday, 3rd December 2023

"Watch", "Stay Awake"

The key words in today's Gospel are 'watch', 'stay awake,' be on your guard!' God wishes us to be vigilant for his arrival. When Jesus came on the first Christmas night very few were awake to receive his gift. He asks us for alertness so that we do not miss the opportunity he presents.

His gifts are too good to ignore. Joy is one of them. It flows from knowing God's great love for us. The prophet Isaiah has foretold, "With joy you will draw water from the wells of salvation." (Is 12:3) Advent and Christmas presents us with an opportunity to savour that joy and share it.

The real challenge of Advent is to bring joy to others, because joy is the true gift of Christmas as opposed to expensive presents that demand time and money. Joy is the best Christmas present, deep joy of knowing God through his son.

During advent God invites us to be patient, to give ourselves time to grow into appreciation of his salvation. He makes himself known to those who have learned how to wait, because waiting tests the quality of our hope.

The readings from the word of God in Advent and at Christmas provide superb examples of this waiting in Zachary and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simon and Anna. They wait in hope, they stayed awake and found profound spiritual joy in the gift of Jesus our Saviour.

Thought for the coming week – "We come to love, not by finding the perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly" (Sam Keen)

Masses for Feast of Immaculate Conception – Friday, 8th December

St Columb's Church: Vigil (Thurs) 7.30pm, 10.00am, 7.30pm

Church of Immaculate Conception: Vigil (Thurs) 6.00pm, 9.15am, 6.00pm.

St Oliver Plunkett Church: Vigil (Thurs) 6.00pm 11.00am.

Baptisms – We welcome into the family of God **Braeden Bear Doherty**, Bawnmore Place; **Freya Faith Coyle**, Campion Court; **Isaac Alfie Vincent Morrison**, Rossdale.

Anniversaries: We are asked to remember in our prayers **Chris Francis, Philip McCauley, Mary Parke, Reggie McClay, Goretti McMenamin, Cassie Miller, Marjorie Coyle, Aidan McLaughlin, Liam McGuinness, Paddy & Nellie Kelly, Annie Bryson, Sarah Deeney, Sadie Conaghan, Hugh Diver, Mary Gibbons, Tommy and Maureen Morrison.**

Grant them, O Lord, we pray, and all who sleep in Christ, a place of refreshment, light, and peace.

Offertory Collection: Glendermott: £3,572.00 Strathfoyle: £515.00

Thank you for your generosity to the church collections.

St Vincent de Paul Annual Collection will be taken up outside the churches next weekend **8th** and **9th December**. All donations gratefully appreciated.

Mass and Vigil for Vocations in St Patrick's Church, Dungiven on **Friday, 8th December** 8.00pm – 9.30pm. May be viewed on parish website.

Courage It is I – In partnership with An Chroi Community Hub in Top of the Hill, the parish of Glendermott is offering a four-week programme on knowing and understanding our mental health for adults continues in An Chroi Community Hub, Trench Road, Derry. For further information please contact Parochial House, Chapel Road Tel. 71342303.

Lectio Devina – Scripture Meditation on **Thursday** evenings at 8.15pm in St Columb's Church, Chapel Road. All welcome. (Please note change of venue).

Long Tower Annual Solemn Novena - in honour of Our Lady of Perpetual Help continues in St Columba's, Long Tower, Derry. This year's theme: **'Year of Vocations to Diocesan Priesthood'**.

Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help in St Joseph's Church, Galliagh continues for 9 Mondays ending with a Penitential Service on **18th December**. Theme: **"Our Lady's Fiat"** with reflections on the Seven Sorrows, Candlelit, Rosary, Adoration, Benediction, and speakers. Everyone welcome.

Vocations – St Paul says, “I thank him that you have been enriched in so many ways, especially in your teachers and preachers...”We pray for the future priests/preachers of our diocese, that the Holy spirit will inspire and guide their words.

Vetting of Parish Employees and Volunteers; We have been asked by the Safeguarding Office to renew the vetting status of all Parish Employees and Volunteers following the Covid 19 Pandemic.

This applies to the following employees and Volunteers in our Parish: Sacristans, Choir Leader, Childrens Liturgy Leads and Eucharistic Ministers (only those of you who bring the Eucharist into Care Homes or into any of the Hospital settings.)

Top of the Hill Christmas Appeal: Once again this year Hillcrest Trust and Hillcrest Youth Club in conjunction with Waterside parish will be supporting families and individuals over the Christmas Period. We are asking if you can donate no matter how small it will be much appreciated. Items we need include the following:

Non-perishable Goods: Tins, Cans. Jars and dried foods. Tins of Biscuits, Sweets or Selection Packs. Toiletries or Gift Sets. New – Children’s Toys/Clothing (all Sizes). Please leave donations at An Chrio, Trench Road by **Friday, 8th December**. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Mary -- The Greatest of all Saints

We don’t often speak of Mary as Saint Mary. Yet today’s feast celebrates Mary’s sainthood, her sanctity. We consider her the greatest of all the saints because we believe that she was holy from the first moment of her conception.

No more that any of the other saints, Mary was not removed from the struggles and sufferings of the human condition.

She was initially disturbed by the words of the angel Gabriel. She was full of questions in response to Gabriel’s good news: “How can this come about?’ Luke goes on to tell us in his gospel that Simeon announced to her that a sword would pierce her soul.

According to the Gospel of John, she stood at the foot of the cross suffering the agony of watching her only Son die a slow and painful death. It was in the midst of all the struggles and pains of life that she lived out her ‘yes’ to God’s will for her life.

Mary’s holiness from her conception does not remove her from us. She is our companion on our pilgrim journey. She is given to us as a perpetual help. She prays for us. We need to be as generous as she was in responding to God’s purpose for our lives.

Mass Schedule

Sunday

St Columb's Church	10:00am, 12:30pm, 6:00pm
Immaculate Conception	10:15am & 12:15pm
St Oliver Plunkett	11:15am
St Mary's Oratory	9:15am

Monday - Friday

St Columb's Church	10:00am, 7:30pm
Immaculate Conception	9:15am
St Oliver Plunkett	11:00am

(11am mass in St Mary's Oratory on Wednesdays)

Saturday

St Columb's Church	10:00am, 7:00pm (Sunday Vigil)
Immaculate Conception	11:00am, 6:00pm(SundayVigil)
St Oliver Plunkett	6:00pm (Sunday Vigil)

Confessions:

St Columb's – Saturday after 10am Mass, Friday 5-6pm during Adoration and Monday – Thursday at 7pm before evening Mass

Immaculate Conception – after 11am Mass every Saturday and at 5.30pm before evening Mass on a Saturday

St Oliver Plunkett – Every Saturday 5.30 before the Vigil Mass

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