



PARISHES OF GLENDELMOTT
& STRATHFOYLE

Sunday, 17th December 2023
Third Sunday of Advent

John the Baptist - a figure of Hope

"One day our generation will regret not just the caustic words and ugly deeds of evil people but also the deafening silence of good people" (Martin Luther King)

Every generation requires witnesses with conviction and the courage to stand for Christ.

One such witness many years ago was John the Baptist. By his words, his actions and his witness John points the way to Jesus Christ. When we realise that we have enough we are truly rich. John the Baptist was content with what God had given him; it was enough for his mission in life. He had no need to pretend that he was more than the Lord made him. He declared that he was not Elijah, nor the Christ. Presenting himself as a humble prophetic voice he pointed beyond himself to Christ. He was a voice that prepared the way for God who was to be born into our world.

Crowds flocked into the wilderness to listen to what John had to say. They risked the journey into the wilderness to hear him because they wanted to catch God's way. John the Baptist is a figure of hope. He wanted his hearers to experience the God who had touched his life, who filled him with courage and conviction, enthusiasm, and hope. John's desire was that all who came to him would return home with their thirst for God deepened and determined in their resolve to act justly.

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The First Crib - This Christmas as we celebrate 800 years since St Francis recreated the scene of the first Christmas night, gaze into the crib, and see your God, your Saviour lying in a feeding place for animals.

See the simple clothes wrapped around the newborn baby. See the little ones, Mary and Joseph wearing the clothes of the poor. See and smell the animals. Feel the cold of the cave, lighted by the guiding star.

Come in and stay a while and adore our poor humble God. This child became one with us so He could know the greatest love and the sharpest pain. See the hands that will touch and heal. His arms will embrace all people, all sinners, all the rejected, and all those whose heart desires to know Him. (continued over leaf)

The presence of the poor and the lowly in the nativity scene reminds us that God became man for the sake of those who feel most in need of his love and who ask to draw near to them. Jesus, "gentle and humble of heart", was born in poverty and led a simple life to teach us to recognise what is essential in life and to act accordingly.

The nativity scene teaches clearly that we cannot let ourselves be fooled by wealth and fleeting promises of happiness. From the manger, Jesus proclaims, in a meek yet powerful way, the need for sharing with the poor as a path to a more human and fraternal world in which no one is excluded or marginalised.

This Christmas may you be blessed by the Christ child who was born for you.

St Vincent de Paul wishes to thank all those who contributed so generously to their Annual Collection. The amount donated came to over **£10,000 pounds**.

Deaths– We offer our sympathy to the family and friends of **Fr Frank O’Kelly** formerly Chapel Road.

Anniversaries: We are asked to remember in our prayers: **Bridie Harvey, Patrick Jordan, Bobby O’Donnell, Moira Callan, Jim Monaghan, Noel Elliott, Pat Boyle, Gary Quigg, Jackie Dalton, Maureen Doherty, James Stone, John Gillespie, Billy Quigley, Hugh Quigley, Isaac Duddy, John Devine, Cyril Callan, Peggy Curran, Kathleen Ayling, Kieran Houston, Eileen Boyle.**

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

Offertory Collection: Glendermott: £3,628.00 Strathfoyle: £450.00

Thank you for your generosity to the church collections.

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

Canticle at Christmas - Join Canticle, the Sacred Music Society from Queen’s University Belfast on **Sunday 17th December** at 6pm in St Joseph’s Church, Fincairn for an evening of music, song, and readings. Admission free with retiring collection. All welcome.

Prayer by Telephone - The Sisters of Mercy "Bethany" 34 Point Road, Dundalk Welcome any person who may wish to request prayer, especially during these difficult times. All requests are confidential. 9am - 9pm. Telephone: 042 9331602 or ROI 00353 42 9316021 One of the Sisters will be happy to LISTEN and PRAY WITH YOU

Vocations – Our prayer this weekend for the seminarians of the diocese of Derry and for those discerning their vocation is taken from the words of St Paul in our second reading: “May the God of peace make you perfect and holy, and may you all be kept safe and blameless, spirit, soul, and body.... God has called you and he will not fail you.”

Carols by Candlelight – A Candlelight Christmas Celebration on **Wednesday, 20th December** at 7.00pm in St Mary’s College. Tickets £5 with proceed going to St Mary’s College Choir.

Children in Crossfire’s 2023 Advent Appeal – Packs are now available at the church porches. This year, they are raising funds to support a programme in Tanzania.

Concern Worldwide - Currently 3.1 million children under 5 are dying annually from hunger related causes. If you wish to help, **Concern Derry** is opening a pop-up donation office in the Millenium Forum on **Saturday 16th December** from 10am until 5pm. Donations can also be made at the Concern Bookshop, Ferryquay St.

Accord Ni – Marriage courses for January – March 2024. Venue Everglades Hotel. The courses are held on a Friday evening and Saturday morning. The dates are... **January 19th/20th, February 23rd/24th** and **March 22nd/23rd**. Booking online at www.accord.com

*Mass times for next weekend, Christmas Eve and
Christmas Day*

Saturday, 23rd – usual Saturday evening Masses

Sunday, 24th – usual Sunday Morning Masses.

Christmas Eve: 6.00pm Church of Immaculate Conception
6.00pm St Oliver Plunkett Church
8.00pm St Columb’s Church
8.00pm Altnagelvin Hospital

Christmas Day: 9.15am St Mary’s Oratory, Newbuildings
10.00am & 12.30pm St Columb’s Church
10.15am & 12.15pm Church of Immaculate Conception
11.15am St Oliver Plunkett Church

Please note no Mass on Christmas Evening

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	09:15am

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 (Sunday Vigil)
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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