

Parishes of Glendermott & Strathfoyle

Sunday 18th January 2026

John the Baptist

He had the insight to see the presence of God at work and the courage to give witness to what he saw. John pointed out Jesus for others.

Today's gospel traces a journey of growth in his understanding of Jesus. From a situation of not knowing Jesus (v. 31) he comes to recognise him as the lamb of God who is to take away the sins of the world (v. 29), as the one who baptises with the Holy Spirit and makes holy (v. 33), as the chosen one of God (v. 34).

In stating what Jesus does John is telling us the kind of salvation that we actually need. We come to know how necessary salvation is not just through reflection on life but, more importantly, through the way that God has shown us his mercy. God shows us why and where we need his saving presence.

John met stern resistance to his message. Many preferred to stay in denial rather than let the word of God be the measure of their lives. Among those who came to listen to John many were utterly unaware of just how defensive they had become in their relationship with God. God wanted a living relationship, an attentive listening to his word plus an active seeking out how best to respond especially through justice in all relationships. John brings a message of hope. His hope is not based on the goodness of his hearers but on the mercy of God. Spurred by a God-given desire to be authentic, people flocked to hear John. The mercy of God was at work.

John the Baptist presented what continues to be a challenging summons to conversion.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity – The week of Prayer for Christian Unity is traditionally observed from ***18th – 25th January*** the octave of St Peter and St Paul.

For 2026 the theme is "There is one body and one spirit" (Eph 4:4) and the suggested prayer and texts were provided by the Armenian Apostolic Church along with the Armenian Catholic Church. In the Waterside area our Unity service will take place on ***Wednesday, 21st January*** beginning at Ebrington Presbyterian Church at 7.00pm and finishing at St Columb's church for prayer and cup of tea/coffee.

Our Churches are monitored by CCTV cameras and by live streaming cameras. Live streaming can be viewed online at the parish website. The Diocese of Derry Privacy Notice is displayed on the parish website and Church notice board, or you may obtain a copy from the Parish Office.

Deaths – We offer our sympathy to the family and friends of **Fr Eugene Hasson PP**, Omagh, **Ann Coyle**, Shearwater Way, Jackie Elliott, Shearwater Way

Anniversaries – We are asked to remember in our prayers *Joyce Harte, Manix Doran, Vincent Ward, Kathleen & Damien O'Neill, Noel Martin, Philomena Quinn, Jim Cassidy, Billy McGowan, Pat Callan, Susan Doherty, Roslyn Henry, Grace Grimes, James McGurk, Bernie Willis.*

Offertory Collection: Glendermott: £4705.00 Strathfoyle: £585.00
Thank you for your generosity to the parish collections.

Vocations Retreat Weekend for anyone (18+) interested in the diocesan priesthood, in Drumalis Retreat Centre, Larne, **Friday 6th – Sunday 8th March 2026**. For further information, please contact the Diocesan Vocations Director, Fr Pat O'Hagan at pgoh2111@gmail.com

Lectio Divina – Praying with the Scriptures takes place on Thursdays in the side Chapel of St Columb's Church after the 7:30pm Mass.

Derry Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2026: Monday 29th June – Friday 3rd July (4 nights) ex City of Derry Airport. Cost £895 inclusive of local taxes but exclusive of single supplements and insurance. The Pilgrimage office will open for bookings on Saturday 11th January 2026 at 11.00am. However, Gift Vouchers to any value are now available from the Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry.

Marriage Enrichment Weekend – Friday 20th – Sunday 22nd March 2026 at St Mary's Retreat Centre, Knock, Co Mayo. Marriage Enrichment has for many years supported married couples in their Sacrament of Matrimony by offering them a sacred space to deepen their relationship, renew their commitment, and grow together through reflection, prayer and dialogue.

Medjugorje: 4th -11th September from Belfast: £849: Flights and Half Board. Contact Maria at 028 81648357 or 07768395038 for special offer. Spiritual Director: Fr Pat O'Hagan.

Children in Crossfire Appeal – As Our Advent Appeal Draws to a Close
Children in Crossfire sincerely thank parishioners for their generous support of our Advent Appeal. For anyone still wishing to donate, Advent Boxes may be returned here next weekend.

IT'S EASY TO SEE WHAT ALCOHOL IS DOING TO THE DRINKER BUT CAN YOU SEE WHAT IT IS DOING TO YOU? These questions can help you identify if someone else's drinking is affecting you. If your answer is yes to any of the following, Al-Anon Family Groups can help.

- Do you worry about how much someone else drinks?
- Do you tell lies to cover up for someone else's drinking?
- Are you afraid to upset someone for fear that it will set off a drinking bout?
- Do you feel that if the drinker loves you, he will stop drinking to please you?
- Do you feel like a failure because you can't stop the drinking?
- Do you make threats such as "If you don't stop drinking, I'll leave you"?
- Do you search for hidden alcohol?
- Do you feel angry, confused or depressed most of the time?

For further information contact the Al Anon confidential helpline on 0800 0086 811 or email helpline@al-anonuk.org.uk. Alternatively, tel 028 9068 2368.

Rosary on the Beach – Benone Beach **Sunday, 18th January** at 3.00pm.

Thought for the week - While the Baptist plays a unique role as the first witness to Jesus, he is first of many witnesses. Later in John's gospel, Jesus tells his own disciples that, when they receive 'the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father', they, too, will be his witnesses (cf Jn 15:26-27). We, too, have been given the same commission. We have been baptised in the Spirit and empowered to witness to Jesus as the Chosen One of God, the Light of the World, and to lead others to him. In carrying out this commission, we have a great model in John the Baptist. Like him we are challenged to point away from ourselves towards Christ.

The role of being a witness to Christ is memorably expressed by the great fourth century theologian, St Augustine, in the following words:

*I listen he is the one who speaks.
I am enlightened he is the light
I am the ear he is the Word.*

We must not stand in the way or block the light of Christ; we must reflect it.

Parish Mass & Confession Times

Sunday

St Columb's Church	10:00am, 12:30pm & 6.00pm
Church of Immaculate Conception	10:15am & 12:15pm
St Oliver Plunkett's Church	11:15am
St Mary's Oratory	9:15am

Monday to Friday

St Columb's Church	10:00am & 7.30pm
Church of Immaculate Conception	9:15am (Monday – Friday)
St Oliver Plunkett's Church	11:00am
St Mary's Oratory (Wednesday only)	11:00am

Saturday

St Columb's Church	10:00am & 7.00pm (Vigil of Sunday)
Church of Immaculate Conception	6:00pm (Vigil of Sunday)
St Oliver Plunkett's Church	6:00pm (Vigil of Sunday)

Confessions

St Columb's Church	Monday to Friday 7:00pm-7:25pm Saturday after 10:00 Mass
Church of Immaculate Conception	Saturday 5:30pm-5:55pm
St Oliver Plunkett's Church	Saturday 5:30pm-5:55pm

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YouTube Channel: www.youtube.com/WatersideParish

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SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND VULNERABLE ADULTS – If you are concerned about the welfare and safety of children or a vulnerable adult contact: Designated Diocesan Person Ms Marie Gormley at 07596500793 or marie.gormley@derrydiocese.org or PSNI 101.