



Parish of St. Bernadette



22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time



Sunday 30th August 2020

Sunday Cycle A

Psalter Week 2

Parish Contact Details

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UPDATED RECOMMENDATION

FACE COVERINGS IN CHURCHES

The Church leaders, including Archbishop Eamon Martin, following recent consultations with public health authorities, are formally recommending and encouraging the use of face coverings at all Masses and other liturgical celebrations, along with the ongoing maintenance of 2 metre physical distancing, from Sunday 30th August 2020, and earlier if practicable.

It should however be noted that some people are exempt from the wearing of face coverings, as outlined in public health agency guidance: <https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/coronavirus-covid-19-face-coverings>

It has become increasingly clear that the wearing of face coverings, in conjunction with hand washing etc, is likely to reduce the spread of Coronavirus, thus helping to protect others. The use of face coverings is therefore one way in which we can evidence protection for the most vulnerable, support for our health workers and practical love for our neighbour.

Scripture Readings

First Reading

Jeremiah 20: 7-9

Jeremiah laments but cannot fail to speak in God's name.

Psalms

Psalms 62: 2-6, 8-9

Our souls yearn for God.

Second Reading

Romans 12: 1-2

Paul encourages the Romans to stay faithful to God.

Gospel

Matthew 16: 21-27

Jesus speaks of his Passion and rebukes Peter for his objection.

Reflection

In last week's gospel we saw the disciples riding high. They had, through Peter, acknowledged that Jesus, their teacher and friend, was no less than the long-awaited Messiah-King of Israel. "You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God." It must have been a really exciting moment for them. This, in turn, brought from Jesus a commission of the highest responsibility to Peter and his fellow disciples. Through Jesus, they were to be given the authority of God himself within their future communities. Peter himself is spoken of as a rock, firm and unshakeable, on which the *ekklesia*, the Church community, will be built.

It is hard to imagine that this was not a moment of particular joy and satisfaction for the disciples. They now were thinking that Jesus, in line with Jewish expectations, would be a glorious and powerful king. And they, of course, as his followers and companions would have a special share in the glory and privileges that went with it. (Later, would not two of them go so far as to ask, rather cheekily and behind their brothers' backs, for special places in the Kingdom, to sit on the right and left of Jesus?)



A shock

However, the euphoria was not to last very long. Very soon after this, "Jesus began to make it clear to his disciples that he was destined to go to Jerusalem and suffer grievously at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, to be put to death and to be raised up on the third day." This, undoubtedly, comes as a terrible shock. This was not at all part of the scenario for the coming of the Messiah! What is worse, the agents of Jesus' humiliation and death will not be some hostile outsiders (like the pagan and barbaric Romans) but the leaders and most distinguished people of their own community. The elders, chief priests and scribes were the people who formed the Sanhedrin, the ruling body of the Jews in Palestine.

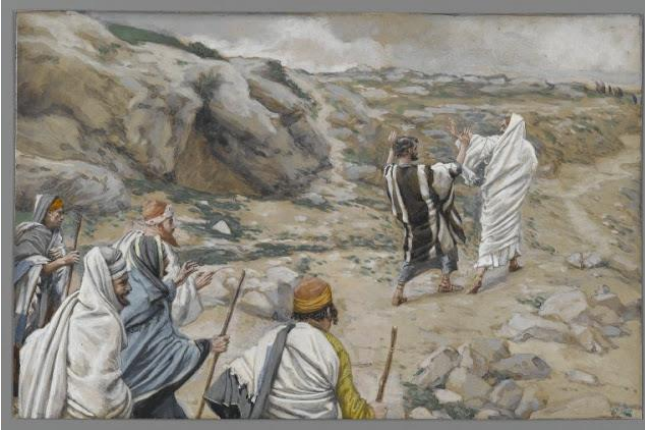
Furthermore, it would happen in Jerusalem, the holy city, the site of the Temple where God dwelt among his people. It might be remembered, however, that Jerusalem was the city where prophets died. ("O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, killing the prophets and stoning those who are sent to you!" – Jesus' words to the Pharisees [Matthew 23:37].) The disciples must have felt very disturbed and confused indeed.

A protest

So, it is not surprising that at this point, Peter, still flush with his newly-acquired status, takes Jesus to one side, speaking to him almost on equal terms. "Heaven preserve you, Lord! This must not happen to you." How can this happen to the Messiah-King of Israel? The angry reaction of Jesus must have come as somewhat unexpected, to say the least. Turning to face Peter, Jesus says: "Get behind me, Satan!" These are strong words for someone who just now was being given leadership of the community Jesus would leave behind. It is not to be understood that Peter is literally a demon but the disciple's words are understood as a real temptation to Jesus to turn away from the path he is to follow. Unwittingly and with the best of intentions, Peter is doing the devil's work – trying to steer Jesus away from the path laid out for him by his Father. How often have we been such a temptation or stumbling block to others? Perhaps more often than we care to think.

"You are an obstacle in my path, because the way you think is not God's way but that of a human being." Peter is seen as an obstacle, a scandal (*skandalon*, skandalon), a stone in one's path which causes one to stumble. Ironically, the 'rock' which Jesus just now had said would be the foundation of his 'church' is now seen as an obstacle to Jesus' work and mission!

The mind of Christ



Jesus is angry for, though his disciples may have acknowledged that he is the Messiah, they clearly have no idea whatever what kind of Messiah-King Jesus is going to be. They are, as he says, thinking in purely human terms and have not yet got “the mind of Christ” (Philippians 2:5).

They shall have to change completely their ideas about what the Messiah is going to be like. He will not be a great political and military leader who will sweep away all of Israel’s enemies. Even after the resurrection they were still thinking in those terms. “We had hoped that he was the one that would redeem Israel”, said the two fellows on their way to

Emmaus (Luke 24:21), not realising the irony of their words. “When will you restore the kingdom of Israel?” the disciples asked Jesus as he prepared to leave them at the Ascension.

Yes, Jesus will be a King, but he will be a King of love, a King who will rule by serving. Because he loves and serves them, he will, if necessary, be prepared to die for them, for this is the greatest love that a person can show for his friends. This is not to say that Jesus wants to die on the cross but he is totally prepared to suffer and die, if the service of love demands it – and it will. Ultimately, the disciples will see that the death of Jesus was the source of his greatest glory and power. “When I am lifted up from the earth [on the cross and into glory], I will draw everyone to me” (John 12:32).

The prophet’s lot

The other readings give examples of people who had similar experiences to Jesus. In the First Reading Jeremiah seems to regret that he was called by God to be his prophet. “You have seduced me, Lord, and I have let myself be seduced.” As a result he became an object of people’s ridicule, “everybody’s butt”. Every time he opened his mouth, he had to warn of violence and disaster coming on God’s people. In return he got nothing but insults and derision. He decided he would not speak about God. “I will not think about him, I will not speak in his name any more.”

But that did not work. “There seemed to be a fire burning in my heart... The effort to restrain it wearied me, I could not stand it.” He just had to go on speaking God’s message, which was like a fire in his heart, to his people whatever the cost to himself. It is a situation like this which explains why a person would risk insults, suffering and even death in order to witness to Truth and Love. Many people languishing in jails today for expressing their religious and political beliefs know this feeling. We have seen how political or religious dissidents released from jail show no signs of “conversion” and continue the struggle for human dignity. It is something which those who see life in terms of material comfort and power simply cannot understand.

Paul, in the Second Reading, also knew all about this. He urges his fellow-Christians to offer their “living bodies as a holy sacrifice, truly pleasing to God” and not to “model [themselves] on the behaviour of the world around [them]”. They need a “new mind”, the way of thinking which Jesus had and which Peter certainly did not yet have in today’s Gospel.

Walking with Jesus

Today’s Gospel goes further than just asking us to understand why the glory of Jesus our King and Lord was to be found through suffering and the shameful death of the Cross. There is a further call for us to walk the same road with Jesus. “If **anyone** (not just the heroic martyr or the saint) wants to be a follower of mine, let him renounce himself and take up his cross and follow me.” Jesus is asking each one of us to dedicate our lives in totally loving and serving others even if, at times, this involves misunderstanding, ridicule, pain and even death itself.

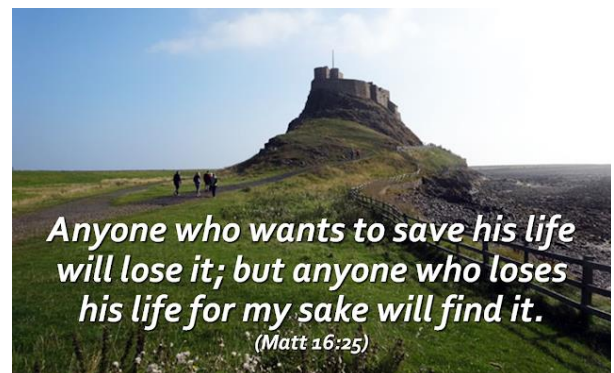
It would be altogether wrong to think that Jesus is asking us to lead miserable lives in order to be good Christians, although one gets the impression that some people interpret the passage in that way. To follow Jesus fully, we must be able to see life as he sees it, we must have that “mind of Christ”.

When we have the mind of Christ then we can only see our lives in terms of loving and serving others and not in the pursuit of purely self-centred or even family-centred ambition. When we have the mind of Christ, the whole direction of our life changes. Our whole concept of happiness changes. Jesus is calling us not to a life of sacrifice and suffering but rather to a life of total love and freedom. The person who can go to jail for his beliefs is more free and usually a lot happier than the one who is tied to the pursuit of material things, social position, pleasure and the fear of pain.

“Renouncing oneself” is not a suppression of one’s personality. It is rather to let go of oneself so that one can really find oneself.

This is what today’s readings are saying, namely, that Jesus is calling us to where true success and happiness are. Maybe when we walk the way of Jesus there will be people who criticise us, think we are stupid and even attack us. Yet those who have chosen the way of Jesus again and again confirm that their lives are full of freedom, happiness and peace. Isn’t that what we all would like to experience?

(Living Space, www.sacredspace.ie)



Reflection Questions:

Do we have a choice; can we reject the invitation of Jesus? Of course we can. What is given to us today is an invitation, not a command. “Whoever wishes to come after me....Whoever wishes to save his/her life....”

Jesus wants us to be fully aware of what we are taking on. But we won’t always feel the divine pat on the back for a job well done. Like Jesus, we may just have to keep going, trusting the call we once heard.

Jesus invites us into the same daily journey. What might we lose? In following Jesus, we might

- find ourselves at odds with our family’s fundamental choices and criteria for success
- refuse to practice unethical behaviour, even at the risk of our academic advancement or careers
- choose forgiveness against voices telling us to be “realistic” and not naive
- do an honest day’s work, even when the boss is not looking and others are cutting corners and telling us “everyone else does it”
- treat co-workers with respect, despite their job skills, level of education or social status
- welcome the newcomers into our social grouping, and treat them as “one of us”

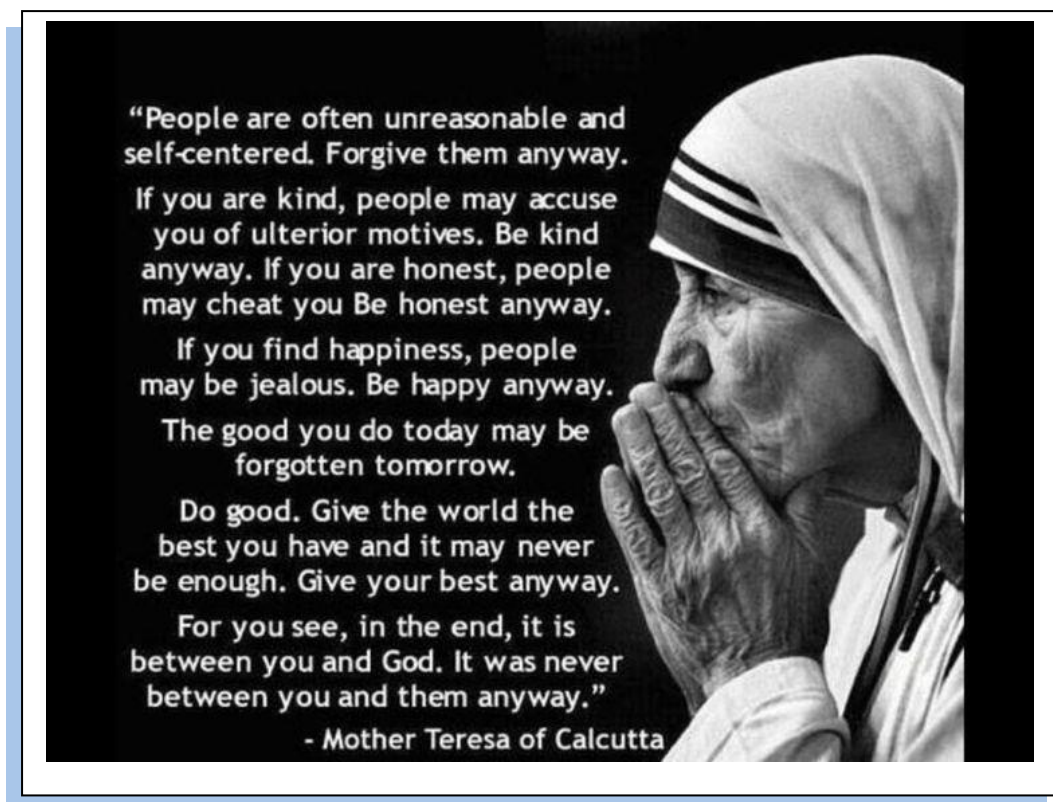
Jesus invites you into the same daily journey. What might you gain? Only you can answer this question for yourself. Spend some time this week reflecting not only on the risks of discipleship, but also on its rewards.

Saints of the Week

Sunday	30 th September	22 nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Monday	31 st August	St. Aidan of Lindisfarne, missionary
Tuesday	1 st September	22 nd Week in Ordinary Time (World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation)
Wednesday	2 nd September	22 nd Week in Ordinary Time
Thursday	3 rd September	St. Gregory the Great, pope & doctor of the Church
Friday	4 th September	St. Mac Nissi, bishop
Saturday	5 th September	St. Teresa of Calcutta

St. Aidan of Lindisfarne was of Irish descent and was a monk on Iona. When Oswald, the exiled king of Northumbria who had fled for refuge to Iona, returned to his throne in 634, he invited Aidan to come to reconvert his people. Aidan made his headquarters in Lindisfarne. With the aid of the king as interpreter he was very successful in his mission. He died in 651.

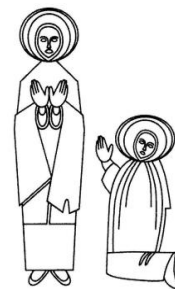
St MacNissi: Oengus Mac Nissi took his name from his mother Cnes or Ness. It is claimed that Patrick baptised him and taught him the psalms. He chose the district of Connor for his hermitage, but later became bishop of his clan. He died early in the sixth century.





Parish of Holy Rosary and Parish of St. Bernadette

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July 2020

Dear Parishioners of Holy Rosary and St. Bernadette's,

I hope you are keeping well in these extraordinary times. In this letter I would like to raise three important issues with you.

1. Consultation on the Possible Re-unification of the Parishes.

When I was appointed by Bishop Treanor to serve as Parish Priest to the parishes of Holy Rosary and St. Bernadette's, the Bishop also spoke of the possibility that the two Parishes might become one again. Indeed, a number of parishioners, when I arrived, thought that the Parishes had been reunited. Since coming to the Parish, I have gradually come to know that there is already much interlinking between the two parishes for Mass, Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals etc. However, at the time I stressed that this could only come about after a process of consultation. During our Pastoral Council meetings, in both parishes, we had hoped this consultation would have begun by now. The pandemic prevented that from happening. I understand completely and desire that this process must take place with prayer and a great deal of sensitivity and transparency. This is a process that is already taking place in many areas of our Diocese, as decisions are taken for the future provision of pastoral services within parishes and Pastoral Communities.

I am, therefore, inviting you over the next number of months to write to, or email me, and share your thoughts, both positive or negative, regarding the possible re-unification of the Parishes of Holy Rosary and St. Bernadette's. Your contributions will greatly assist in our reflections and conversations within our Pastoral Councils and Finance Committees.

2. Revised Mass Schedule

Currently our Masses at the weekend are at the following times: two 6pm Vigils, 9.00am, 10am, 10.30am. two at 12 noon and 1.15pm. It will become increasingly difficult to maintain this schedule in the near future. If one or more of the priests is absent from the two parishes because of illness, holidays or for some other reason, (e.g. with the declining number of priests we may have to cover Mass in another Parish within the Pastoral area), we will not be able to cover the current schedule. Therefore, we need to revise the number and times of Masses.

Ideally, Canon Bob, Fr. Michael and I would have wanted to consult parishioners on any proposals to change Mass times. It is with regret that, due to present circumstances, we have not been able to do so. However, there is a certain urgency about this issue now, as our Churches re-open for public worship. We have had the opportunity to consult the Parish Pastoral Councils and have received their support.

We have also discussed the matter with the priests in the six parishes of the South and East Belfast Pastoral Community, some of whom are revising Mass schedules too.

The new schedule for weekend Masses is set out below and will take effect from the weekend of **the 11th/12th July.**

New Weekend Mass Schedule

St. Bernadette's Church:	Vigil 6.00pm and Sunday 11.00am
Good Shepherd Church:	Sunday 9.00am 10.30am and 12.30pm

We are aware that some parishioners will be upset because the Mass they usually attended, does not appear on the new schedule, but we ask for your understanding and support. This schedule will be kept under review.

3. The Re-opening of Churches for public worship.

It is our intention to re-open Good Shepherd Church and St. Bernadette's Church for the public celebration of Mass from **Monday 6th July 2020**, but to do so in a way that is safe for all of us, in accordance with the civil law and the Diocesan guidelines. For the months of July and August, the weekday Masses will be as follows

Weekday Mass Schedule for July and August

St. Bernadette's Church	Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at 9.30am
Good Shepherd Church	Thursday, Friday, and Saturday at 10am

With social distancing requirements, the capacity of the Churches will be greatly reduced. The number of parishioners able to be present for the celebration of Mass will depend upon the mix of individuals and family groups. In the Church of the Good Shepherd we will have 40 available pews and in the Church of St. Bernadette we will have 86 available pews for parishioners who intend to come.

It is particularly important to remember a number of things:

- a) Those who are clinically at risk of Covid19, or who have been advised to shield, or those who display symptoms, SHOULD NOT attend.**
- b) Please remember that the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays/Holy Days has been dispensed with during the COVID 19 pandemic crisis.**
- c) We will continue to offer online celebrations of Mass from St. Bernadette's Church. A webcam has also been recently installed in the Good Shepherd Church which may be accessed at www.holyrosaryparishbelfast.net**

As you are aware each Church must be cleaned and sanitised after each celebration of public Mass. We are very grateful to the teams of volunteers who are currently cleaning the Churches to ensure that they can stay open for private prayer, but we cannot overburden them, especially as many may be away on holiday or back to work. So, we are urgently appealing for more volunteers to clean and/or act as stewards.

I am aware that there is a lot of information in this letter. We are in a rapidly changing situation and we appreciate your patience. On behalf of Canon Bob, Fr. Michael and myself, I thank you for your commitment, example, support, and prayers, especially through these difficult months.

I wish you all health, peace, and every blessing for a good summer.

Yours sincerely,

Fr. B. Hickland

NEW WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE (FROM 11TH/12TH JULY)

St. Bernadette's Church: Saturday Vigil 6.00pm and Sunday 11.00am.

Good Shepherd Church: Sunday 9.00am, 10.30am and 12.30pm.

WEEKDAY MASS TIMES FOR JULY & AUGUST

Monday	St. Bernadette's	9.30am
Tuesday	St. Bernadette's	9.30am
Wednesday	St. Bernadette's	9.30am
Thursday	Good Shepherd	10am
Friday	Good Shepherd	10am
Saturday	Good Shepherd	10am

Masses are open to the public again from Monday 6th July. All Masses in Good Shepherd and St. Bernadette's are broadcast live on the internet.

Visit www.holyrosaryparishbelfast.net and Click on "Holy Rosary Webcam".

Visit www.stbernadettesparish.org and Click on "Watch Live".

CHURCH OPENING TIMES FOR PRIVATE PRAYER

Good Shepherd and St. Bernadette's churches are still open for private prayer but please note the new days and times (mornings only).

Monday	St. Bernadette's	9am - 12 noon
Tuesday	St. Bernadette's	9am - 12 noon
Wednesday	St. Bernadette's	9am - 12 noon
Thursday	Good Shepherd	9.30 am - 12 noon
Friday	Good Shepherd	9.30 am - 12 noon
Saturday	Good Shepherd	9.30 am - 12 noon

Our Faithful Departed

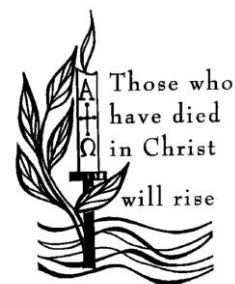
We pray for those who have died recently and for those whose anniversaries occur around this time.

Recently Deceased

Eugene McCarney, Rita Mc Gettrick, Billy Linden, Fr. Stephen Rooney (Detroit), Rosaleen Bloomer.

Anniversaries

Rose Mullan, Orla Sheridan, Gareth Farry, James Cassidy, Patsy Vize, Paddy Woods, The Hagan Family, Mairead, Patrick & Mary Hoey, Molly Lavery, Marie Mullan



Bethany Bereavement Support Group

Our Parish Bethany Bereavement Support Group offers listening and support to those who have been bereaved. Telephone No. 07733773758.



Parish Collections

Many thanks to all those who have been able to contribute to the parish finances through standing order, PayPal or the parish envelopes.

We recognise that this is a time of financial worry for many, and for that reason giving to the parish should be secondary to your own particular needs.

Parish Draw

500 Club

The winners for Week 50 are: Kathleen Mc Sorley and Peter Livingstone. Congratulations to the lucky winners. Each receives £50.

Due to falling numbers, and since the Draw has been going for many years, it was agreed that the 500 Club will terminate on Monday, 7 September 2020 with the last weekly draw for prize-winners.

We express our thanks to all the promoters who have collected the subscriptions over the years. Also, a big thank you to all the members who have been so loyal and to the various members of the Committee, through the years, who have given so much of their time and energy to the organisation of the Draw.

St. Bernadette's SVP conference



Dear Parishioners,

despite the Covid 19 crisis the work of St. Bernadette's SVP conference has not stopped. We continue to provide vital assistance to those in need. Our main source of income has always been your generous donations via the red box collections after Mass. Unfortunately the cessation of public Mass has understandably seen a significant reduction in donations. If you are able to, could you please consider making a donation via the donation box in St. Bernadette's church or via the parochial house at 28 Willowbank Park (marking your envelope St. Bernadette's SVP)? Your generosity, as always is very much appreciated and never so important as in this health and economic crisis.

Baptisms& Weddings

On Monday 6th July 2020 the NI Executive Office issued the following statement in relation to the celebration of Baptisms and Weddings.

"Ministers have agreed that places of worship will be enabled to resume baptisms from Friday, July 10."



So baptisms resumed in Holy Rosary and St Bernadette's parishes on Monday 13th July. Only one child can be baptised at any one ceremony. Contact the parish office for further information or to book a baptism.



The NI Executive also agreed that indoor marriage ceremonies in places of worship can resume from Friday, July 10th. The number of persons attending the wedding may be up to the capacity determined for the Church for the celebration of Mass, as per the risk assessment and following all requirements in relation to hygiene and social distancing.

Dates for the Celebration of First Holy Communion 2020

We will celebrate this Sacrament with the children and their parents, from all schools within our parishes, in the church of St. Bernadette on the following dates:

Primary School

St. Bernard's	Saturday 12 th September at 11am
St Michael's	Friday 25 th September at 11am
Holy Rosary (and Forge)	Saturday 26 th September at 11am



We pray for the boys and girls and their families as they continue to prepare to celebrate this Sacrament.

Dates for the Celebration of First Confession (Reconciliation)

will be given in due course.

First Friday Visits & Sick Calls

In relation to home visitation, first Friday visits and 'sick calls' are **still suspended**. The Diocese is seeking professional advice as to best practice in relation to home visitation, so that these may be resumed safely, protecting everyone's health and wellbeing.



Thank you to all those who have volunteered to clean the chapel after Mass each day. Thank you also to all those who have been acting as stewards in the church. Your help is greatly appreciated and ensures that the church is able to be open for public and private prayer.

New volunteers are always needed and welcome. E mail the parish office if you wish to volunteer.



Best wishes to all the children and young people who are starting back to school this week and next week.

Prayer For Young People

Lord, we pray that you guide and protect young people and all who work with them. Be with them as they experience sorrow and joy, success and failure, sickness and health. Encourage them to make the right decisions as they journey through life and help them to know your presence in their lives as you walk by their side.

Amen. (Fr. Richard Gibbons)

Prayer for a New School Year

Gracious God,
as the summer begins to fade, new possibilities lie on the horizon. Bless all of those who are beginning or returning to their roles as teachers as well as those who lead and support students by their efforts. May this school year be a time of grace and potential as they teach, share, and challenge others to grow in faith, knowledge and wisdom. Bless the children and youth, along with their parents, as they begin a new school year. May their minds be open to learning and to the wonder of discovery and insight. Be with us as we embark on this new school year. Amen.

Upcoming Events:

Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living

Drumalis, Larne – commencing Monday, 14 September (online by Zoom)

Due to the success of last year's course, applications are now being accepted for the new intake of this one-year programme for those who want a closer relationship with God. Living out faith isn't easy against the backdrop of our fast-paced, noisy and instantaneous culture. The **Growth in Prayer and Reflective Living** course will give you the tools and space to become attuned to God's voice in the midst of the clamour.

Taking place over 30 Monday Evenings from 7 pm – 9:30 pm, the course will take place initially by Zoom and eventually in-house when Drumalis re-opens. Please note that it will also be possible to attend the whole series by Zoom if this is your preference.

For further information, please contact 028 28276455/28272196 during office hours (Mon-Fri, 9 am – 5 pm) or email maura@drumalis.co.uk Details are also available on the Drumalis website - <http://www.drumalis.co.uk>



Supporting Parents after Bereavement

Anam Cara Belfast, the organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding its monthly Parent Evening for bereaved parents on Wednesday 9th September at 7:20pm in the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Belfast, BT8 7XP. This event is free and open to all bereaved parents regardless of the age your child died, the circumstances of their death, or whether their death was recent or not. * subject to change in accordance with government guidelines*

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DESTINED	JERUSALEM	ELDERS
SCRIBES	SATAN	OBSTACLE
RENOUCE	CROSS	LIFE
WORLD	GLORY	ANGELS



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Gospel Today

Twenty-second Sunday in Ordinary Time | Matthew 16:21-27

The message Jesus had for His disciples is the same for us today. Being a follower of God requires love, strength and difficulty. When we follow Jesus, He is with us and hears our prayer when we need help.

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TAKE UP YOUR CROSS

...follow Me.

Matthew 16:24

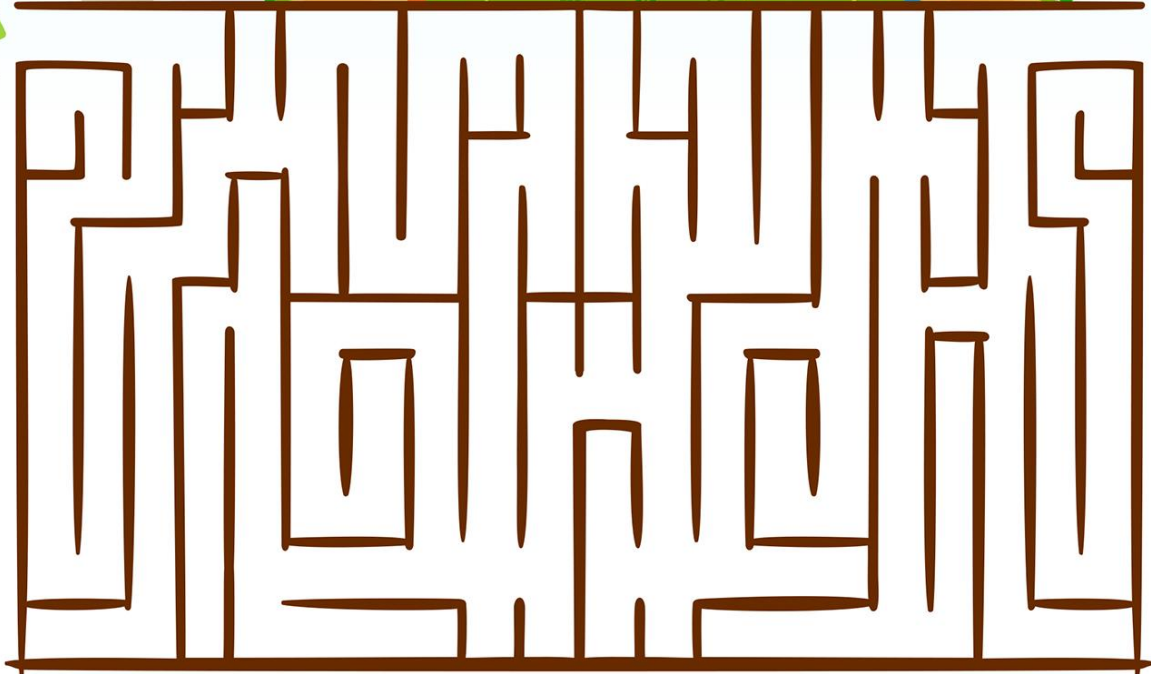
For the Son of Man will come with His angels in His Father's glory, and then He will repay everyone according to his conduct.

Matthew 16:27



start

finish



Do not be afraid to follow God's way!

Peter had a hard time accepting God's way - Jesus had to remind him God and man do not think alike (Peter was thinking like a man).

What do you have trouble accepting?

