

# Granaghan Parish Newsletter

**SUNDAY 13 DECEMBER 2020**

## **Gaudete Sunday**

### **A bearer of light**

Last week we were introduced to John the Baptist as part of our Advent journey. We hear his story again but this time from the fourth Gospel. Light and darkness is a key theme of the fourth Gospel and in its opening verses proclaims that this light has always shone in the dark; the darkness cannot overpower it. The evangelist goes on to tell us that John the Baptist's mission is that he has been sent by God to 'speak for the light'. John is a light bearer, he is not *the* light, but he points to the light. He is a witness to the light of God in our world, a light that cannot be put out.

We celebrate this light today on Gaudete Sunday, Gaudete which means 'rejoice'. We light the pink candle and we celebrate with joy. As our world continues to battle this pandemic, there is much fear about. People might not feel like celebrating or being joyful. But nature shows us that Spring always follows Winter. Like John, we are called to be light-bearers. To carry Christ's love and light to those we meet in our daily lives. Our world needs light-bearers, especially in these Winter months. It might be a good opportunity to ask today 'Who have been the light-bearers for me in these past months?' And also, 'To whom can I carry light to this week?' In this way we observe Christ's ongoing incarnation in the world today.

*'Lord there is much darkness in society and in our church. We thank you that someone always comes on the scene, sent by you as a witness to speak for the light... teachers, community leaders, grandparents, children, a friend... they bear witness to the rest of us that somewhere in the dark a light shines that darkness cannot overcome. Michel de Verteuil*

*Jane Mellett*

# MASSES

## **\*\*\*CHRISTMAS WEEKEND MASSES \*\*\***

**CHRISTMAS EVE - THURSDAY 24TH - 12NOON & 7PM**

**CHRISTMAS DAY - FRIDAY 25TH - 9AM & 10.30AM & 12NOON**

**ST. STEPHEN'S DAY - SATURDAY 26TH - 12NOON & 7PM**

**FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY - SUNDAY 27TH - 10.30AM**

PLEASE NOTE: EXTRA MASSES HAVE BEEN ALLOCATED THIS YEAR TO ALLOW PARISHIONERS TO MAINTAIN SOCIAL DISTANCING IN SAFE NUMBERS. OUTSIDE SPEAKERS WILL BE TURNED ON ONCE THE CHURCH HAS REACHED THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PARISHIONERS. THIS WILL ALLOW THOSE WHO WISH TO DO SO TO LISTEN OUTSIDE FROM THEIR CARS. PLEASE BE MINDFUL BY ATTENDING ONLY ONE CHRISTMAS MASS IN ORDER TO GIVE ALL PARISHIONERS A CHANCE TO ATTEND OVER THE CHRISTMAS WEEKEND.

# GENERAL NOTICES

**EUCCHARISTIC HEALING SERVICE SUNDAY 13TH @ 5PM**

**WEDDING** - Congratulations to **Mary C McEldowney** and **Connor McGuckian** who celebrated the Sacrament of Matrimony recently.

## **Granaghan& District Women's Group:**

Although most of our online activities are paused now in good time for Christmas, our Sleep Meditations still go out "Live" every Monday at 9pm up until and during Christmas week. The same goes for our Daytime Meditations posted every Wednesday at 2pm. Really relaxing and stress-busting.

Our local women's group has also accessed funding from the Council again this year for the village Christmas tree, including new lights. The annual Switch-on was very low-key this year due to Covid-19.

## Trócaire

This Christmas Trócaire will deliver life-saving support to thousands of families across the developing world. As well as supporting people living through conflict and natural disasters, Trócaire has launched a special appeal to support families who have not been able to grow food or earn money due to Covid-19. Please consider supporting this vital work this Christmas. You can purchase one of 17 gifts for families, or else make a general donation to the Trócaire Christmas Appeal. Trócaire's Christmas Gifts range allows you to buy goats, chickens, water and many more vital items. This year there is a special Quarantine Care Kit Gift. By buying this gift you are providing vital daily care to families who have to isolate. Please visit [trocaire.org](http://trocaire.org) to make a donation or buy a gift.

## Can you Foster?

Could you give a home to a vulnerable child when they need it most? Fostering is about giving them a safe, secure place to live for a few weeks, months or even years. Barnardo's Fostering NI is looking for foster carers. Foster placements can be: long-term, short-term, emergency, short breaks and parent and child together. You must be over 21 to foster and must have a spare room in your home. Foster carers are offering a fostering fee and allowances; they are given training and support. To earn more please telephone 90652288 or visit our website <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/foster>.

**Season of Advent:** An Advent wreath symbolises this season. The wreath is made of evergreen or holly. The origins of the Advent wreath are obscure, but it is said it was a family custom widely practised in northern Europe during the 19th century. It is a simple way to start a tradition of family prayer in the home. The wreath is the shape of a circle which represents eternity, since a circle has no beginning or no end. Like God's love, which is everlasting. The evergreen, which is always green, illustrates life, growth, hope and the never changingness of God. There are five candles on the wreath, three purple, one pink and one white in the centre. This weekend we light the second purple candle continuing our journey in anticipation of the birth of the Christ-child.

Advent is the season four Sundays before Christmas in which we prepare for the coming of Christ. The word Advent comes from the Latin word 'adventus', which means 'coming'. Advent is a time of waiting, conversion and of hope. Advent has a two-fold character - it is a time of preparation for the Solemnities' of the Christmas Season, in which the first coming of the Son of God to humanity is remembered, and in its turn in anticipation of Christ's Second coming at the end of time. (Advent Season - Year B)

Join the journey through Advent this year at [www.catholicbishops.ie/advent-calendar](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/advent-calendar) **'Lord our God, help us to prepare for the coming of Christ your Son. May He find us waiting, eager in joyful prayer. 'Come, Lord Jesus'.**

**Prayer Resources for Advent:** A series of Prayer resources for Advent has been created by the Diocese, in conjunction with the Northern Pastoral Network and the Catechetical Centre, for family prayer at home during the season of Advent as we prepare for the coming of Jesus at Christmas. These resources contain lots of creative ideas and tips to help families and parishes during Prayer resources for Advent the Season of Advent. A family prayer booklet has been compiled specifically with families in mind. The Gospel for each Sunday of Advent is accompanied by a family activity, prayers and a reflection. The booklet can be downloaded at this link: <https://www.derrydiocese.org/news/advent-prayer-service-for-use-at-home> Family activities for Advent including prayers, how to create a Jesse Tree, an Advent Wreath and lots more are available to view on the Catechetical Centre website at: <https://catecheticalcentre.org/family-resources/preparing-our-hearts-for-christmas-adventresources>.

**An Advent Prayer** - Lord Jesus, you came among us, to share our humanity and transform our lives. We are people of hope and joy, because we know You will always be with us. Encouraging and supporting us in every part of our lives. We will never be alone again. We want to prepare our minds and hearts to celebrate your coming, in a spirit of gratitude for all you have done and continue to do for us. Send your Holy Spirit to us, so we can spend these weeks of preparation thinking about what your coming among us truly means. And about the mystery of your love for us, which surpasses all our hopes and expectations. Amen.

**Sacraments of Initiation:** [MyFaith.ie](http://MyFaith.ie) is a parish-based programme of preparation for First Holy Communion and Confirmation. It releases new modules every two weeks or so as the children and their families prepare for the Sacraments. Each module begins with a short lesson - for parents - on the content of that module before the next item, a taught lesson for the children. The programme is highly interactive and learning is reinforced through challenges, quizzes and interactive games which are scored but can be repeated indefinitely. This is offered to parents/guardians as a format of instruction during the pandemic.

**Face Coverings/Numbers at Services:** The wearing of face coverings are now mandatory upon entering and leaving the church. Some people are exempt from the wearing of face coverings, even in situations which would otherwise be mandatory. Please continue to observe social distancing, to use the hand sanitiser on entering and leaving each of our churches. Also, with immediate effect the number of people who can attend funerals and weddings are restricted to twenty-five people.

**Diocesan Paper 'The Net':** The December edition of The Net is now available online, on [www.derrydiocese.org](http://www.derrydiocese.org). As always, it features a wide variety of news, interesting and inspiring interviews, articles and photos from parishes across the diocese. You are invited to read The Net, on the diocesan website, at your convenience.

**ACCORD Virtual Interactive Marriage Preparation Programme - 2021**  
Course Dates: 12th/ 13th January 9th/ 10th February and 9th/ 10th March.  
Booking now online at [www.accordni.com](http://www.accordni.com).

**Sisters from the St. Elisabeth Convent:** (Minsk, Belarus) are launching the very first Online Christmas Market, so that people from all over the world can purchase Christmas presents and souvenirs made with love and continuous prayer. Please, click here to participate: <https://catalog.obitel-minsk.com/christmas-market> Every item purchased at the Online Market is a donation towards one of the Convent's ministries.

## **Radio Maria**

Thank God and sincere thanks also to our many listeners and supporters as Radio Maria Ireland continues to grow. As an Irish-run Catholic Talk-Radio Station we enjoy commercial free broadcasting – Prayer, Catechesis, Uplifting Music, Talks, Interviews and Testimonies – do join our growing faith family! Here's how you can listen:

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Why not drop a line to our Priest Director, Fr. Eamonn McCarthy, or come and pay us a visit at Radio Maria Ireland, St. Anthony's Business Park, Ballymount Road, Dublin 22.

**Advent *Christina Georgina Rossetti***

This Advent moon shines cold and clear,  
    These Advent nights are long;  
Our lamps have burned year after year,  
    And still their flame is strong.  
"Watchman, what of the night?" we cry,  
    Heart-sick with hope deferred:  
    "No speaking signs are in the sky,"  
    Is still the watchman's word.

    The Porter watches at the gate,  
    The servants watch within;  
The watch is long betimes and late,  
    The prize is slow to win.  
"Watchman, what of the night?" but still  
    His answer sounds the same:  
    "No daybreak tops the utmost hill,  
    Nor pale our lamps of flame."

    One to another hear them speak,  
    The patient virgins wise:  
    "Surely He is not far to seek,"—  
    "All night we watch and rise."  
    "The days are evil looking back,  
    The coming days are dim;  
Yet count we not His promise slack,  
    But watch and wait for Him."