

Mass Times

Sundays: 9 am & 11 am
Saturday Vigil: 6.00 pm
Tuesday & Friday: 9.30 am
Fr. Michael Keohane Co-PP



Recently Deceased

John Carey, Mahon and formerly of Marian Park
Anne O'Donnell, Blackrock
Sr. Mary Ignatius McManus.
Bessboro & Belcoo, Fermanagh.
May the light of God surround them forever.



Baptism

Darragh Cormac ó Faoláin
We welcome him into the Christian Family



Happy Christmas

This has been a hard year for many people and families. While advertisers and social narrative suggest a perfect world, we approach Christmas looking for comfort and reassurance that the promise made to us in our faith will be fulfilled that 'A Saviour is born to us, He is Christ the Lord'.



Our schools celebrated some lovely nativity plays and carol concerts in the church in recent days. During one of these, a number of Ukrainian children sang Silent Night in their own language. It was very poignant and moving. It illustrated the welcome of our schools and community as well as the natural solidarity of children with one another.

This year we also pray for the Holy Land. As we pray in front of our church crib, let us remember the children and families facing war. Let us also pray for so many people and families facing hardship and worries. Please visit the crib over Christmas. Bring the children and grandchildren. Pray with them as we thank for so much and pray for those in need.

May you have a Holy and Blessed Christmas with your family and may 2024 bring new blessings trusting in God and in Mary our Mother.

Fr. Michael



Christmas Arrangements 2023

Sunday 24th December
Morning Masses @ 9am & 11am
Vigil Masses @ 6pm & 8pm
Christmas Day, Monday 25th December
Masses @ 9am & 11am
St. Stephen's Day, Tuesday 26th December
Mass @ 9.30am

A brief introduction on today's readings

First reading 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8-11, 16
This important reading makes its point with wittily. King David wanted to build God a house, meaning a temple; God refuses but promises instead to built him a house, meaning dynasty to which God will always be faithful. Remember we are told in Matthew, that Joseph was "of David's house and line". In today's Gospel, Luke says the same.

Second reading Romans 16:25-27
How you end a piece of writing is just as important as the start and today we have the very last verses of the great letter to the Romans. After all the complicated argument, Paul opens his heart in prayer.

Gospel Luke 1:26-38
Our attention falls naturally on the interaction between Mary and the angel. To hear is afresh, perhaps you might listen out for what is said about the baby to be born, whose birth we mark on Monday.

The Papers Say.....

Irish Catholic. (1). Fr. Bernard Cotter: GAA stalwarts deserve local church's support. (2). Prayer, coffee and a cig with the Poor Clares. (3). Vatican rules on cremated remains. (4). Fr. Rolheiser: Connecting the dots between the Crib and the Cross.

Tablet. (1). Stanbrook at 100. -- 'Enclosed nuns with unenclosed minds'. (2). The Synod, sex and gender. -- Are we home yet? (3). Irish bishops issue letter to boost Mass-going.

Synodal Times. (1). 'Frightening and unsparing' -- reactions to stark results of new Church study for Germany. (2). Africa's leading role in the Synod reflects its growing influence in the Church. (3). Synodality offering hope in an unstable climate.

Thank you

We take this opportunity to thank everyone who contributed to the growth and life of our parish in 2023. Without the assistance of so many in our parish, our Celebration of the Eucharist would not be the same. Have a Peaceful Christmas.

Sunday Cuppa continues in the Parish Centre after 11 am mass on 7th January 2024 for tea and refreshments and more chat! Everyone welcome!



Anam Cara Cork, the organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding its monthly Parent Evening for bereaved parents on Wednesday 3rd January at 7:15pm in the Maryborough Hotel, Maryborough Hill, Douglas, T12 XR12. 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. We also offer an online service. For more info call 01 4045378.



Observations

This year, Advent is really short — the shortest possible. Still, even with Christmas Day on the Monday, it is worth pausing on the readings of this day. The Annunciation disclosed a rich understanding of the meaning of Christmas

Reflections

1. "Greetings, favoured one. The Lord is with you". We are all favoured ones and God is with us. Sometimes we are more aware of this than others. How have you experienced being a favoured person, one blessed by God? How have you experienced God's presence? Who has been Gabriel to you...a messenger of good news?

2. "Do not be afraid." Mary was perplexed by the words of the angel. Perhaps you too have sometimes been perplexed by life's path and wondered what it all meant. Perhaps at times you have doubted if God was really with you. In your troubled moments who has been an "angel" helping to lower your anxiety?

3. The angel told Mary that it was through her fruitfulness that she would realise the truth of the greeting. New life would come into being through her, and it would be through the Spirit of God working in her. How and where have you experienced yourself as a source of life for others? Have you at times had the sense that the Spirit of God was at work in you?

4. Mary was taken by surprise by the invitation, but she did not tell the angel she was not ready, nor ask him to return later. She was prepared to go with the invitation even though it was not the "right moment." "Here I am Lord." What invitations have come to you at the "wrong time" and how have you responded.

5. Mary's response serves as a model for us—as one saying "yes" to what life offers. What is it like for you to say "yes" to life? Perhaps at this moment in your life you are being invited to say "Here I am, Lord"?

PRAYER

Here in our midst, O God of mystery, you disclose the secret hidden for countless ages. For you we wait; for you we listen. Upon hearing your voice may we, like Mary, embrace your will and become a dwelling fit for your Word. Grant this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PARISH DEFIBRILLATORS

There are 2 Defibrillators located in the Parish, one in the village & one outside Murphy's Circle K PetrolStation. The code to operate both is 2017



FIRST FRIDAY EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT On Friday 5th January 2024

There are sheets on the tables in the Church where Parishioners can indicate the times most suitable for them to be present. We would like that there would be at least 2 people present for each period. If there are vacant periods we would appreciate volunteers to fill these times by putting their names on the list. THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION.



Thought for the day

The season of preparation is drawing to a close. Like Mary, our getting ready involves deep listening to what God is asking of me now and an interior willingness to say "let what you have said be done to me." What is God asking of me now, as a person, in the family, at work, and indeed within the faith community of the Church? Have I noticed a pattern of "nudges" from God calling me to a deeper, perhaps different engagement as a disciple? Are my gifts—tokens of God's grace—fully at the service of my neighbour?

Prayer

Great and loving God, open my ear to your word, open my heart to your call, open my life to your service. Give us all the strength to live according to the Good News of your Son, Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

K O'Mahony OSA

ENTRANCE - O COME EMMANUEL

O come, O come, Emmanuel,
To free your captive Israel,
That mourns in lonely exile here,
Until the Son of God appear.
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel,
To you shall come Emmanuel.

O royal branch of Jesse's tree,
Redeem us all from tyranny;
From pain of hell your people free,
And over death win victory.
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel,
To you shall come Emmanuel.

RECESSIONAL - THE LORD MADE KNOWN TO ISRAEL

The Lord made known to Israel,
His great redeeming plan.
He speaks to us his people now
Through Christ his Son made man.
We have been called like Israel,
To witness to God's grace,
A people he has made his own,
A royal priestly race.

God brought his people to the mount,
As we are gathered now,
To hear His holy word proclaimed
And their allegiance vow.
We have been called like Israel,
To witness to God's grace,
A people he has made his own,
A royal priestly race.

If you would like to receive a weekly commentary on the Weekly Scripture Readings, both in AUDIO, VIDEO and in PDF, please log on to www.tarsus.ie and register to receive the emails. K O'Mahony OSA

BLACKROCK ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Church Gate collection will take place on
Week ending 6th/7th JANUARY 2024
Your support as always is greatly appreciated.

Christmas Dues

Dues envelopes have been delivered to homes and are also available in the church. Contributions can also be made via the donate button on the parish website. Thank you always for your generosity which is much appreciated.