

Mass Times

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



Recently Deceased

Bryan Forde, Beaumont
Paul Boyling, Blackrock
May the light of God surround them forever.



Baptism

Élise Mary Ann Duggan.
Eleanor Julia Nagle.
We welcome them into the Christian Family



Pray, Fast, Give Alms

There was a fine attendance for Mass on Ash Wednesday as we started the Season of Lent. This weekend the gospel reading is ordinarily the account of the temptations of Jesus in the desert. The gospel writer, Mark does things a little differently by simply stating that Jesus was driven into the desert by the Spirit. Also, we have the opening words of Jesus. These first words are crucial. The moment someone speaks or introduces oneself, we get a good idea of their character and their intentions. Jesus does not do any introductions or pleasantries, he simply announces the task. It is like saying that this is what I am about. The agenda is simple i.e. repent/convert/turn your heart to the Father and let us get on with it.

This is also the journey for Lent. It is a time to do something to change our heart. It is time to act. This has always been the way and there is a traditional wisdom in taking on something or 'giving something up.' There must be some reason why things are the way that they are. This has not gone out of fashion. It is not necessarily a time for a long discussion but a time for action.

Though the faith landscape is changing and the sacredness of Lent may be lost on many, these weeks are a time to prepare for Holy Week and Easter. We will get there but we use these days and weeks well to pray, to fast and to give alms.

Join us to celebrate 140 years of Blackrock National Hurling Club!

It is with great pleasure that we extend an invitation to all Rockies to join us for a forthcoming celebration of the club's 140th anniversary. Taking place at **Blackrock National Hurling Club at 7.30pm on Saturday, March 9th**, players from our Cork Senior Hurling Championship triumphs will be the guests of honour. It promises to be a memorable evening as we savour the opportunity to mark the club's historic achievements. The event is open to all members and supporters. We look forward to seeing you there!

Ballinlough, Blackrock, Blackrock Road, Mahon Family of Parishes
Eilis Casey from the Office of Mission and Ministry in the Diocese at Masses in Blackrock next weekend 24th & 25th February

Finding hope in a hopeless world – Lent 2024: This is a seven-week programme for Parish groups or individuals which will be available on the Diocesan website (www.corkandross.org) from Ash Wednesday (February 14th). This programme explores how we can still be people of faith and hope in today's world. It includes a series of reflections, Scripture readings and prayers, and a guide on how to use this resource in your Parish/Family of Parishes.

A brief introduction on today's readings

First reading Genesis 9:8-15

Covenant with all of creation
Like ourselves, the ancients wondered about natural phenomena, like the rainbow, and what it could mean. It was a brilliant (!) move by the bible writers to use the rainbow to remind people of faith that "all will be well", in the words of Julian of Norwich.

Second reading 1 Peter 3:18-22

The flood as "type" of Christian baptism
In the early church, Lent was a journey towards baptism. But what does it mean to be baptised? Using the biblical myth of the flood, this reading takes us back to what happened for us in Jesus' death and resurrection, into which we have been baptised.

Gospel Mark 1:12-15

Jesus' proclamation
As we hear this reading for the second time this year, let ask ourselves again: what did Jesus mean by "good news" and does it make a difference to me?

The Papers Say.....

Irish Catholic. (1) John Bruton -- views of a compassionate statesman. (2) David Quinn: Why Ireland needs another John Bruton. (3) Charles, the most Christian king --Defender of the persecuted church and bridge to Islam. (4) Breda O'Brien: Pushback needed against smartphones which are eroding childhoods. (5). As local and European elections loom, pro-life supporters can play a part in influencing the outcome

Trócaire's Lenten Campaign 2024

The Diocese of Cork and Ross together with Trócaire will host an evening to reflect on Trócaire's Lenten Campaign for 2024. This event will take place in the **S.M.A. Parish Centre, Wilton, Cork on Wednesday 21st February 2024 commencing at 7.30pm**. This year's campaign will explore the issues of water justice and climate change. The evening will also have a moment of prayer and reflection. Salome Mumba from Trócaire's Malawi Office will address the gathering and share Trócaire's work in the region. Bishop Fintan will share some of this experiences of his trip to Malawi in November and looks forward to meeting as many people as possible at this event.

Prayer for the Formation of a Parish Council
Heavenly Father, we come before you with grateful hearts as we embark on the journey of forming our parish Council. We seek your guidance, wisdom, and grace to build a vibrant parish council that reflects the love and teachings of your Son, Jesus Christ.

Lord, bless our efforts and help us to recognize the unique gifts and talents you have bestowed upon each of us. May we be open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as we discern the needs of our community and strive to fulfill your mission here on Earth.

We entrust the formation of our parish council to the intercession of Mary, our Mother, who stood by your Son in moments of joy and sorrow. May she guide us in imitating her example of faith, humility, and loving service.

We offer this prayer in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Observations

A springtime of faith

Even with a relatively early start to Lent, the lengthening of days is already evident (in the northern hemisphere, that is) and we appreciate more light each day and we notice the first signs of spring. In this way, nature itself reminds us that these forty days are our springtime of faith, a special time of both restraint and growth, conversion and joy, pilgrimage and liberation. Our hope is to arrive at the Easter Festival having grown in our faith, with a new sense of joy and, not least, of being set free.

Reflections

1. We are at a major turning point in the life of Jesus when he is about to start his public ministry. Mark tells us this was preceded by a deep inner struggle when his resolve to take on his God-given mission was tested. Recall important decisions in your own life. Were they accompanied by struggle and doubt? Who were the angels who supported you at that time? Give thanks for them.

2. Such periods of anxiety may seem like wilderness experiences at the time with nothing positive about them. Later, with hindsight, we may see it as a necessary testing that was for our good. Perhaps, like Jesus, you recall a time when the Spirit of God led you into the wilderness to be tested and after the experience you had a clearer sense of your own identity or your purpose in life?

3. The arrest of John the Baptist was the occasion of the start of the public ministry of Jesus. When has some event outside of your control unexpectedly led you into some new and fruitful activity?

4. Convert and believe the good news was the heart of the message of Jesus. It was not a call to penance but to a change of heart, a change of attitude, leading to a change in behaviour. The kingdom of God is a kingdom of right relationships: with God, with one another, with creation, with ourselves. It is a change that leads to a fuller life. When have you found that a change in your attitude towards God, others, yourself, or the world around you, has led you to a more fulfilled or more fruitful life?

5. There is immediacy about the call of Jesus: "the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near". Recall when you had a realisation that now was the moment of opportunity – for a change in your life, for a spiritual renewal, or a time to give a wholehearted yes to life. At this moment to what do you believe you are invited to say yes?

Croí na Gaeilge (Tel. 085 1213189 after 6 p.m. only)

is holding a Leaving Certificate Honours Oral Irish 1-Day Preparation Course (worth 40% of total exam marks) open to current Leaving Cert/5th Year students on Sunday March 3rd from 11-6 p.m. given by an experienced Oral Examiner/Teacher. All topics covered (including sraith pictiúr, general conversation, poetry reading, Gaeltacht phrases and nathanna cainte).
Míle buíochas,
Peadar Ó Murchú.

The Mass and Novena Prayers in honour of Matt Talbot will begin on Monday 19th February at 7.30 p.m. in the Way of the Cross Church Togher and will continue each Monday in Lent. In our Novena we pray for individuals and families who are suffering because of addiction, but also for those who are dealing with crosses or challenges of any kind. The Novena can be viewed online at www.churchservices.tv/togher.

The next meeting and **A.G.M. of Cork Regional Pioneer Council** will take place on Wednesday 21st February at 8p.m. in the Wilton Parish Centre.

Trocaire Boxes are available in the church from this weekend. Please take one to your home and keep it prominent there during the coming weeks of Lent.

Thought for the day

In Italian, Lent is *quaresima* or forty (days). In German, it is *Fastenzeit* or time for bodily restraint. Our English word comes from an older Anglo-Saxon word for spring—len(c)ten— whence our Lent. Italian tells us how long it will last (with its symbolic overtones). German tells us what to do in that time. But English tells us what is supposed to happen, that is, we are supposed to experience a *springtime of faith*, a time growth and new life.

Prayer

God of new life, bless us on our pilgrim way towards the great feast of Easter. Help us to know our need of your presence, breathe your Spirit into our reading of the Word, teach us to set aside whatever hinders our true discipleship so that we may come to life in abundance and know in our hearts the joy of the Gospel. Amen.

K O'Mahony OSA

ENTRANCE - Be Still, for the Presence of the Lord

Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here. Come, bow before him now, with reverence and fear. In him no sin is found. We stand on holy ground. Be still, for the presence of the Lord, the Holy One, is here.

Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around; He burns with holy fire, with splendour he is crowned. How awesome is the sight, our radiant King of Light! Be still, for the glory of the Lord is shining all around.

Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place; He comes to cleanse and heal, to minister his grace. No work too hard for him; in faith receive from him. Be still, for the power of the Lord is moving in this place.

RECESSIONAL – How Great Thou Art

Oh Lord, my God, when I in awesome wonder consider all the worlds Thy hands have made I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder, thy power throughout the universe displayed.

CHORUS: Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art. Then sings my soul, my Saviour God to thee: How great Thou art, how great Thou art.

When Christ shall come with shout of acclamation and take me home, what joy shall fill my heart; Then I shall bow, in humble adoration, And then proclaim, my God, how great Thou art. *CHORUS: Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee etc.*

Cork Alzheimers Café a safe place for people with Alzheimers and other dementias, their carers, family and friends along with social and health professionals to meet. **Last Friday of each month 11- 12.30 pm in St Finbarrs Hospital, Douglas Road.** Light refreshments provided free of charge. All welcome. Friday 23rd February - Next meeting



Anam Cara West Cork the organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding a Parent Evening on **Tuesday 20th February at 7:20pm in the Fernhill House Hotel, Clonakilty, P85 X322.** This is a free event and open to all bereaved parents. We also offer a free online monthly support meeting. For further information please contact us on 085 288 8888 or info@anamcara.ie



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