

# SoulSpace

SERIES: NEW YEAR, NEW YOU

Season colour: GREEN

In this series, Gerard Moloney CSsR offers tips for being a better Christian in 2018.

Anne McClean was raised a Catholic and brought her children up in the faith, "but it didn't mean anything," she says. She had parted mentally from the church years earlier as a child, when a priest in confession told her to "speak up or get out". She left.

Years later, she realised she had everything she could want - a wonderful husband, children, career, cars, holidays, and yet "something was missing".

One day through her work, she was introduced to a priest, called Fr Tom. After a while she invited him home to meet her husband and family. She was fascinated by the way he spoke of "my prayer". Over dinner, he told her husband about a form of contemplative prayer that he used, called Centring Prayer. "In minuscule detail I remember everything he said," she recounts.

The next day, without telling anyone, Anne started to do the prayer. It became a daily practice. Three months later her husband turned to her and said, "There is something different about you."

"He had noticed differences I hadn't noticed myself," she says.

And she has changed. At work, she is no longer the 'ice queen' but accessible to all, and trauma resulting from a childhood marred by an alcoholic father has been healed.

More than a decade on from her meeting with Fr Tom, her life is firmly rooted in prayer. Each morning she rises at 6.10am and goes to her 'sacred space' in the living room. "I quiet myself down and take a piece of scripture, often the Gospel of the day. Then I pray for 30 minutes."

In the evening, when she comes home after a hectic day at work, her first stop is the sacred space, for more prayer. "I am on my own, but I feel connected to everyone else." In her spare time she now also works as a spiritual director, and has a great love for the Eucharist.

Anne discovered the power of prayer and it has changed her life. The method she uses is called Centring Prayer - a form of silent contemplation.

## PRAYER CHANGES US

There are lots of different ways to pray. In fact, how we pray and the amount of time we spend praying are not nearly as important as that we do pray.

Prayer is necessary because it is how we connect with God. It's how we relate to the one who has created us and loves us beyond description. A relationship cannot exist if there is no communication. It's like knowing about a relative who lives in another town or country but never contacting that person. For a relationship to exist, to develop and to grow, there has to be regular contact. Prayer is how we connect with the God who has shaped us into life.

Prayer is necessary because we depend on God. We know that God created us, and that all we have and are, we owe to God. Prayer is how we express thanks and praise; it is how we give glory to God, and how we seek God's help. Like the child dependent on its parent, we turn to our heavenly parent for all we need. Prayer is the proper response to the God who loves us unconditionally.

Prayer changes us. Nurturing a relationship with God changes how we relate to God and to those around us. We develop a deeper awareness of God's presence. We become less focused on ourselves and more tuned into the needs of others and of God's creation. We see things differently. We love more. We trust more. We thank more. We become new people.

That's the promise and the reward of a prayer relationship with our God of love. So, in this new year, resolve to pray every day - if only for ten minutes. Resolve to make your life a conversation with God. To listen to what God has to say to you. To be aware of God's presence with you, always. Resolve to attend Mass, at least once a week. Resolve to grow in grace.

Making and keeping these resolutions will transform your life in such a way that everyone will notice. ■



SAY A  
LITTLE  
PRAYER

To pray even for ten minutes a day can seem like a lot to ask but building prayer into your daily routine can make 2018 a truly life-changing year.

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## Today's readings

Jonah 3:1-5.10  
1 Corinthians 7:29-31  
Mark 1:14-20

Today's reading takes up again the theme of the call to discipleship. The death of John the Baptist is the prompt for Jesus to begin his own mission. Mark sums up his preaching in one short verse - the time has come, repent and believe the Gospel. To carry out his plan he needs people to work alongside him. The first four are fishermen, called while they are still practising their trade: they are also two pairs of brothers. Simon and Andrew may perhaps be poorer people than the Zebedee boys. They do not appear to have a boat but fish by casting their net into the lake and then drawing it in. The Sea of Galilee was one of the major sources of wealth in Palestine. Fish was caught for preserving and export. The older Zebedee has a fishing boat and can afford to hire men to work alongside his two sons. Following a homeless prophet was for his sons a major change in lifestyle, yet off they go without question.

## GOD'S WORD TODAY



**THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME**

**21<sup>st</sup> January 2018**

**Sunday within the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity  
(18<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> January)**

Both Jonah and Jesus brought urgent messages of the need for repentance and change in peoples lives. Such change was needed to make them open to the action of God. If there is to be unity among the followers of Christ, we all need to change.

**CHOOSE LIFE**

"In attacking human life in its very first stages, it is also an aggression against society itself. Politicians and legislators, therefore, as servants of the common good, are duty bound to defend the fundamental right to life, the fruit of God's love".

Pope Benedict XVI, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2005

**CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK - JANUARY 28 - FEBRUARY 3 2018**

There will be a special celebration to mark the opening of the week at **12noon Mass**, Sunday January 28<sup>th</sup>. This annual celebration gives us all the opportunity to be more aware of the unique contribution that our Catholic schools make to Irish life. This year's theme is 'Called to be a family of families'. During this week we invite you to take time to reflect on the service that Catholic schools give to children, parents, families and communities. We ask you to consider how best you can offer support to the service that your child's Catholic school provides in so many different ways.

**SAINT BRIGID'S CROSSES** Making of St. Brigid's Crosses will take place in the Gillyooly Hall on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> January at 7.30pm in aid of the Pilgrim fund for Lourdes. All are welcome for some ceoil agus craic.

**CONSECRATED LIFE-WORDS OF POPE FRANCIS**

Consecrated life is called to embody the Good News, in following Christ, dead and risen, making its own the "mode of living & acting as the Incarnate Word of Jesus to the Father and to the brethren".

**DAY FOR CONSECRATED LIFE-FRIDAY, 2<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY  
PRESENTATION OF THE LORD-CANDLEMAS DAY**

Inspired by the words of the canticle "a light to the revelation of the Gentiles" by the 11<sup>th</sup> century the custom had developed in the West of blessing candles to be used in the Church for the year ahead on this day. We would be most grateful for any contributions to help defray the cost of candles for our Cathedral. The blessing of candles will take place at 10.30 am Mass.

**FIRST FRIDAY is 2<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY** Mass will be celebrated at 7.00pm. Confessions will take place before the 8.00am, 10.30am and 7.00pm Masses.

**FEAST OF ST BLAISE-BLESSING OF THE THROATS** To mark the Feast of St. Blaise the Blessing of the throats will take place after all Masses on Saturday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February.

**SUNDAY READINGS for 28<sup>th</sup> January:** 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Deut. 18:15-20; 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 1 Cor. 7:32-25; Gospel: Mk. 1:21-28.

**BINGO, GILLOOLY HALL, TONIGHT**

**SUNDAY 21<sup>st</sup> January at 9.00pm** With a JACKPOT of €3,050 Raffle at interval with refreshments available. All welcome.

**SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH – 2200 FAMILIES**

14<sup>th</sup> January PARISH ENV: €2,187 PL/STAND. ORD: €1,685

THANK YOU for your contribution.

ST MARY'S PRESBYTERY ☎ 071 9162670 SACRISTY ☎ 071 9161261

**WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY**

**18<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2018**

Theme: "That all may be free."

Church Unity Week continues until Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> January. During this time we are asked to pray in a special way for unity among all Christians.

**INTERDENOMINATIONAL SERVICE**

**CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION SLIGO**

**THURSDAY 25<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2018 - 8.00 P.M.**

Bishop Kevin Doran will lead this service.

Homilist: Rev. Canon Patrick Bamber, Calry Parish Church, Sligo.

All are welcome to attend.

**INTRODUCING CHRISTIAN MEDITATION TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

The day will be of particular interest to teachers and parents. It will take a practical, hands-on approach and participants will leave with the knowledge of how to introduce the practice to children in a straightforward and deeply meaningful way. Led by Dr. Noel Keating, it will be held on Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February at Star of the Sea Centre, Mullaghmore. To book: [staroftheseacentre@gmail.com](mailto:staroftheseacentre@gmail.com) or 071 9176722. Cost €20.00 per person (incl hot lunch).

**OFFICIAL FAMILY PRAYER FOR  
WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES 2018**



**God, our Father,  
We are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son,  
One Family, in the Spirit of your love.**

**Bless us with the joy of love.**

**Make us patient and kind,  
gentle and generous,  
welcoming to those in need.**

**Help us to live your forgiveness and peace.**

**Protect all families with your loving care,  
Especially those for whom we now pray:**

**(We pause and remember family members and others by name)**

**Increase our faith,**

**Strengthen our hope,**

**Keep us safe in your love,**

**Make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share.**

**This we ask, through Christ our Lord,  
Amen**

**Mary, mother and guide, pray for us.  
Saint Joseph, father and protector, pray for us.  
Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for us.  
Saints Louis and Zelig Martin, pray for us.**

**PARISH OFFICE at St. Mary's Presbytery ☎ 071 9162670**

Please note that the parish office will open to the public during the coming week at the following times: Monday - Thursday 9.30am - 4pm & Friday 9.30am - 2pm.

**CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

*Upcoming* **EVENTS**  
**THE WEEK AHEAD**

Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> January "Wednesday Tea" after 10.30am Mass.  
Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> January Confessions from 2.00pm to 5.00pm.

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**PRO-LIFE MASS** On Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2018 (Feast Day of St. Brigid, Patron Saint of Babies) a Mass will be celebrated for the protection of the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment in St. John's Church, Carraroe, Sligo at 7.00pm. Please join us in praying for women and the unborn child in the womb. "Every child that isn't born, but is unjustly condemned to be aborted, bears the face of Jesus Christ, bears the face of the Lord" Pope Francis

**WORKSHOP FOR PARISH CHOIRS** with Ephrem Feeley, composer of A Joy for All the World (official hymn of WMOF2018) on Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb 10.30am - 3.00pm in Star of the Sea Centre, Mullaghmore. To book: 071 9176722 or [staroftheseacentre@gmail.com](mailto:staroftheseacentre@gmail.com). Cost €15.00 per person (incl hot lunch).

**OPEN DAY / ENROLEMENT DAY** for September 2018 for St. John's co-educational school, Temple St. Sligo for Junior Infants on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> February from 1.30pm-3.30pm. If you are unable to attend and would like more information please call in or call us on 071 9162537 or email: [scioleinnaofa.ias@eircom.net](mailto:scioleinnaofa.ias@eircom.net) Website: [www.stjohnssligo.com](http://www.stjohnssligo.com)

**ELPHIN DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES** Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> August to Sunday, 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2018. For further information and to book contact JWT on 01 2410800.

**SAVE THE 8<sup>th</sup> VIGIL** Join us on the feast day of St. Brigid (Patron Saint of Babies) for our 24 Hour Silent Eucharistic Vigil as we unite together to pray especially for the protection of the 8th Amendment whilst invoking all the Saints and Martyrs of Ireland also. The Vigil takes place on Thursday 1st February from 9.00am until Friday 2nd February 2018 at 9.00am, in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel beside the Cathedral, Sligo. To sign up for your specified hour please text 087 6274621 or simply sign the sheet on the door. It is imperative at this time that we make a special effort to pray for the protection of the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment and prayer is a powerful way to do this. Thank you.

**TWO LIVES, ONE LOVE – INFORMATION EVENING WITH BISHOP KEVIN**

An hour with Bishop Kevin to explore the LIFE question and to consider how best we can exercise our responsibility as Catholics to respect life and to support women. Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> January at 7.30pm, Percy French Hotel, Strokestown. This is the first of six meetings Bishop Kevin will hold over the coming months. Details of other dates and venues will follow.

**anniversary & remembrances**

DAY	8.00 a.m. Mass	10.30 a.m. Mass
MON 22 <sup>nd</sup>	GERTIE HEGARTY	—
TUES 23 <sup>rd</sup>	JOHN & KATHLEEN MARTYN	TOM & EMILY MURREN
WED 24 <sup>th</sup>	ELAINE MCSHARRY	MICHAEL GILMARTIN
THURS 25 <sup>th</sup>	—	MARGARET CHURCH
FRI 26 <sup>th</sup>	—	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary</b> SAMUEL JOSEPH VARGHESE ☩
SAT 27 <sup>th</sup>	—	<b>Month's Mind</b> PATRICIA MCMORROW ☩

☩ **MONTH'S MIND MASS** for BRIGID KILFEATHER will be celebrated at the 7.30pm Vigil Mass on Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> January.

**rest in peace** Your prayers are asked for the repose of the souls of: FR DESMOND O'CONNOR, Sligo, Kiltegan & USA and HOWARD HIGGINS, formerly Sligo Town. *May God grant them eternal rest and comfort and console their bereaved families and friends.*