

JOURNEYING WITH TIM

While teaching in Western Pennsylvania, I decided to join the Pennsylvania Prison Society and since I was a stranger in the area, I was asked if I would journey with Tim, a troubled young man who was in solitary confinement because of his repeatedly bad behaviour. I was doubtful whether I could do anything but said a YES in faith!

Our initial contacts in an all glass-panelled room with an armed security guard were formal and somewhat stilted. Gradually, over the weeks, trust began to grow and while I had no idea what Tim's crime was, I found that deep-down he was a very likeable character. His doubts about me and my motives began to ebb away.

I went there week in and week out and I came to cherish the time with this young man. He told me about his early life, his marriage and his children. He spoke lovingly but broken-heartedly about his mother, with whom he had lost touch after his crime. More than anything, he wanted a Christmas card from her to hang on his prison wall. I asked him how long it had been since he had heard from her and he answered, "Three years." I agreed to call her and ask her to mail Tim a card.

A MOTHERS' LOVE

Tim's mother and I spoke for a long time on that first call. I think my Irish accent intrigued her and she was wondering why I was bothering

with her errant son. She, too, was a broken, proud woman, shamed by her son's murder of an innocent man in a botched robbery that went horribly wrong. However, she agreed to reach out to her son. The card arrived!

WOW, with this information I doubted whether I could really help Tim and yet, as Pope Francis says so eloquently, "Mercy is that force that reawakens us to new life and instils in us the courage to look to the future with HOPE."

FROM DOUBT TO TRUST

I was faithful to my visits with Tim, and over the months noticed a change. On one of my visits, the warden of the jail asked to speak with me. He told me that Tim had become a model prisoner and believed part of the change was due to my contact and faith in him. Tim will serve out another seven years for his heinous crime; one he now readily acknowledges was a terrible, terrible act. He attends catechism classes, has finished his General Certificate in Education and was baptized last year.

One of the Spiritual Works of Mercy—Counsel the Doubtful—brought Tim and me together: a nun from Northern Ireland and a young man from Pennsylvania. Our journey together from doubt to trust is proof of the spirit of Mercy at work in our world. ■



Today's readings

Ex 32:7-11, 13-14
1 Tm 1:12-17
Lk 15:1-32

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells three parables about things lost and found – a lost sheep, a lost coin and a lost child. The reason Jesus tells them was because the professional religious people, especially the scribes and the Pharisees, were aghast that a man who claimed to be speaking in God's name was welcoming all sorts of people without demanding that they first perform the religious rites needed to bring them back into good standing in the community. The parables are Jesus' response to the exclusive nature of the religion of the Pharisees. Each parable speaks of a God whose love and concern for his people goes way beyond what we would regard as rational or normal behaviour. Why would a shepherd risk losing ninety nine sheep in order to go looking for a stray that wanders off? It doesn't make sense. Why would a woman spend the entire day turning her house upside down searching for the equivalent of a single penny and then invite her neighbours to celebrate with her over finding it? Her neighbours would think she was mad. Why would a parent throw a party for a renegade son, who had treated him so badly and squandered his inheritance? No wonder the elder son is indignant. And yet, Jesus says that this is what our God is like – a God who loves us like mad, who forgives us unconditionally, who includes rather than excludes. And that's the model for how we also should behave.

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Stou()space

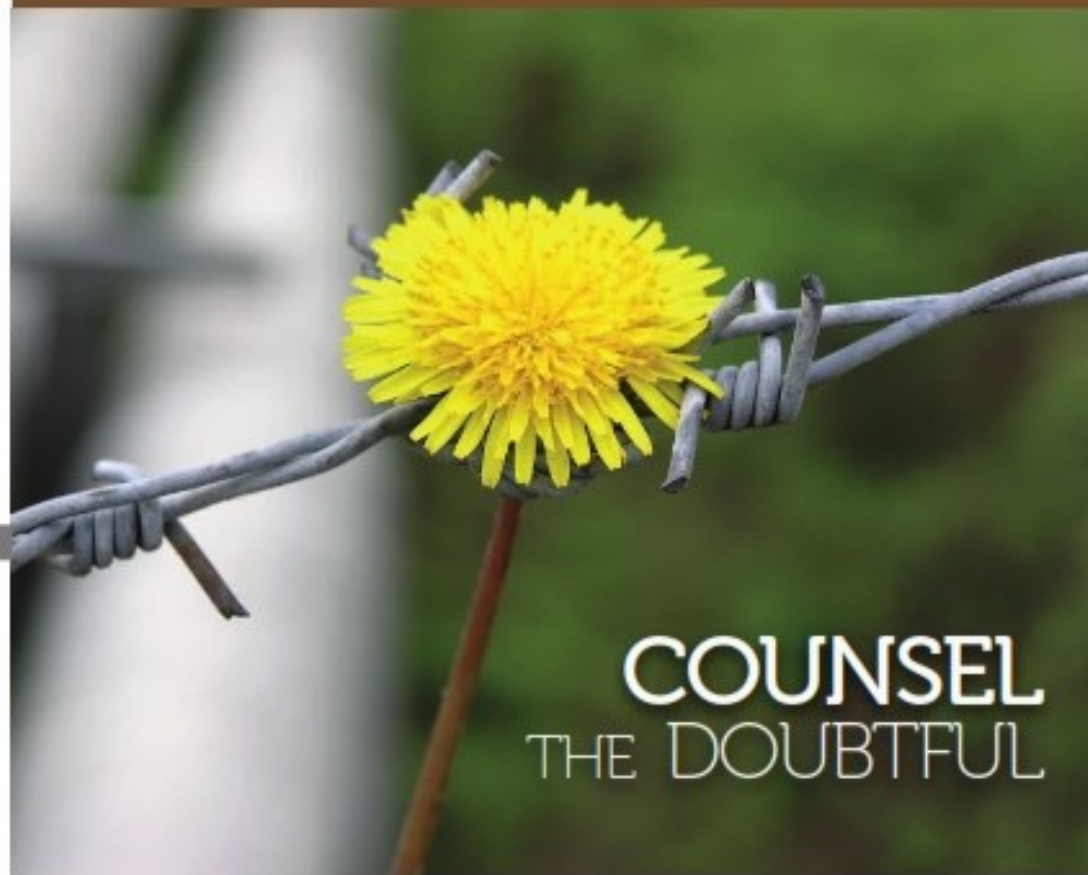
11 September 2016 – 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year C

Psalter Week 4

SERIES: EXPLORING THE SPIRITUAL WORKS OF MERCY

Season colour: GREEN

In this series, Deirdre Mullan RSM, explores the Spiritual Works of Mercy.



COUNSEL THE DOUBTFUL

Sometimes doubts can arise from reasonable questions. When we come to the aid of our neighbour, works of Mercy most often have a two-way flow of benefit. As I found in the story of Tim, doubt is a great teaching gift. It taught both Tim and me that "With God, all things are possible."

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Sunday 11th September 2016
TWENTY-FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME
 The joy in heaven over one repentant sinner explains why Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. God hates sin, but he loves the sinner. He is so full of pity that he is more anxious to give forgiveness than we are to ask for it.

JUBILEE OF MERCY FOR EDUCATION "To Learn and Teach Mercy" – A Year of Mercy one day conference for those involved in education organised by the Diocese of Elphin. Speakers: John Waters: Writer and Journalist; Senator Joan Freeman: Founder of Pieta House; Kevin Doran, Bishop of Elphin; Kate Liffey, National Director for Catechetics, Irish Episcopal conference, John Carroll, Chaplain, Sligo University Hospital. The day will involve a prayer service with the participation of local schools and end with a panel discussion. Saturday 24th September 2016, Summerhill College, Sligo; 10.00am—4.00pm (Lunch Included); Booking Essential: contact: tomlinson.p@hotmail.com or by telephoning 071 9151083; Donations welcome on the day – All are welcome!

PARENTS OF 1st HOLY COMMUNION CHILDREN A meeting of all parents of children making their 1st Holy Communion in 2017 will be held on Monday 19th September at 8pm in the Gillooly Hall.

PARTNERS in the GOSPEL
 Bishop Kevin invites lay people to apply for a new ministry in the diocese, Volunteer Catechist. Successful applicants will undergo a four year training and formation programme and, on completion, will be formally commissioned as official leaders of faith-based education programmes and opportunities for partnership in mission with the priests and parish communities. For more info see www.elphindiocese.ie

PARISH DEVELOPMENT & RENEWAL GATHERING
 Elphin Diocese's 2016 Parish Development & Renewal Gathering to take place on Saturday, 15th October. Details available at www.elphindiocese.ie/gathering. All welcome.

YOUTH ALPHA
 Interested in supporting Christian Faith enquiry / development of teenagers? See www.elphindiocese.ie/youth-alpha for details of upcoming Youth Alpha Information & Training Evenings in Sligo (28th September) and Athlone (5th October). All welcome.

ANAM CARA - the national organisation that supports bereaved parents, is holding a Bereavement Information Evening on Thursday 15th of September from 7.30pm to 9.30pm in the Family Centre, Chapel Street, Castlebar. The guest speaker for the evening is Michelle Ni Thiarnain. This is a free event open to all bereaved parents. As Anam Cara will need to confirm numbers for event, please RSVP to info@anamcara.ie before Wednesday 14th September or call the Information Line on 085 2888888.

CEMETERY SUNDAY for **Sligo Cemetery** takes place THIS Sunday, 11th September with Mass being celebrated at 4.00 p.m.

SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH – 2200 FAMILIES
 SUNDAY 4th SEPTEMBER PARISH ENV: €2,365 PL/STAND. ORD: €1,550
 THANK YOU for your contribution.
ST MARY'S PRESBYTERY ☎ 071 9162670 SACRISTY ☎ 071 9161261
 ☎ email us @ news@sligocathedral.ie We welcome your comments.

BINGO - GILLOOLY HALL - TONIGHT, 11th September at 9.00 p.m.
 This week's jackpot is €2,200.

JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY - POPE FRANCIS' WORDS
 "What a great gift the Lord has given us in teaching us to forgive and in this way to touch the Father's mercy!"

SLIGO PARISHES CLUSTER MISSION
 Sligo Parishes Cluster Mission starts Sunday 25th September, 2016, in the Cathedral at 7.30pm and will continue each evening at 7.30pm until Friday 30th September. The mission is being conducted by the Redemptorist Mission Team from Limerick. School mission activities will take place during the week of the mission.

DAILY SCHEDULE
Monday - Friday at 7.00am Mission Mass in the Cathedral (replacing regular 8am Mass)
Monday - Friday at 7.30am Mission Café in the Gillooly Hall for a spot of breakfast after Mass.
Monday - Friday at 10.30am Mid morning Mass in the Cathedral including a brief reflection from a mission team member on the theme of the day.
Sunday - Friday at 7.30pm. Evening session in the Cathedral.
Sunday - Thursday at 9.00pm Night time prayer on the theme of the day by candlelight in the Cathedral.

MISSION THEMES
Sun 25th Sept God calls us to gather!
Mon 26th Sept Gathering around the God who speaks with us
Tues 27th Sept Gathering around the God who gives us the Eucharist. Part 1
Wed 28th Sept Gathering around the God who gives us the Eucharist. Part 2
Thurs 29th Sept Gathering around the God who heals us
Fri 30th Sept Gathering around the God who anoints and commissions us
Concluding event of the Mission is 7.30pm on Friday, 30th September.
 This mission will surely be a wonderful opportunity for all of us to renew our faith, and maybe for some of us 'to start again', and thus begin again to appreciate the joys of active faith practice! So all are invited to participate in the mission, and parents do please encourage your children to get involved not only in the school mission activities, but also in the standard mission ceremonies.

For further information please log into www.sligocathedral.ie

CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Upcoming EVENTS
THE WEEK AHEAD
 Sunday 11th **Cemetery Sunday** for **Sligo Cemetery** with Mass celebrated at 4pm
 Weds. 14th **Wednesday Tea'** Upstairs in Cathedral Sacristy immediately after 10:30 a.m. Mass
 Thursday 15th **Coffee Morning** in aid of **NORTH WEST HOSPICE** from 8.30am in the Gillooly Hall.
 Saturday 17th **Confessions** 2:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
 Sunday 18th **Baptisms** Cathedral 1.00 p.m.

DATES TO REMEMBER

ST. JOSEPH'S YOUNG PRIESTS SOCIETY Next meeting will take place tomorrow - **Monday, 12th September**, immediately after the 10.30am Mass in the Upper Room of the Cathedral Sacristy. New members welcome.
FR. FLANAGAN PRAYER GROUP - Next Meeting - **Tuesday, 13th September at 8.00p.m.** in St. Mary's Presbytery. All are most welcome.
ACTIVE RETIREMENT ASSOC.—Meeting - Presbyterian Hall - Tuesday, 13th September at 2.30 pm. All welcome.
YEATS SOCIETY POETRY READING starting Wednesday next, 14th September in Yeats Memorial Building from 10.30 am to 12.30 pm. Tel: 086 3224402. All welcome.
ANNUAL CHARITY AMATEUR GOLF EVENT Thursday 15th September at Co Sligo Golf Club, followed by a Gala Dinner Event at 8pm in the Radisson Blu Hotel in aid of the North West Hospice & The NW Simon Community. To book golf and/or gala dinner places call 071 9140008 or email info.sligo@radissonblu.com.
NORTH WEST HOSPICE COFFEE MORNING - Gillooly Hall on Thursday 15th September starting at 8.30am. Please support.
HEALING & RENEWAL RETREAT— Friday 16th—Sunday 18th September led by John Pridmore international speaker and author of 'From Gangland to promised Land' and St. Patrick's Community. Venue: Ards Friary Retreat Centre, Creeslough, Co. Donegal. Tel: Ards Friday 074 9138909 or email info@ardsfriary.ie.
ST MARY'S LADIES GAA are in the County Final next Saturday, 17th September, in Markievicz Park at 1.45 p.m. Please come along and support the girls.
POSITIVE PARENTING— SLIGO Positive parenting with psychologist Shane Martin in Summerhill College Thursday 22nd September at 7pm.
'PARABLE', an exhibition by Patricia Curran-Mulligan, Hyde Bridge Gallery, Yeats Memorial Building, 30th August - 24th Sept, Gallery Hours: Tues. - Sat. 10am-5pm.
LISSADELL CHURCH Presents 'A Night of Country & Gospel' with singer James Kilbane in concert on Sat. 24th September @ 8pm. Tickets €15 from Drumcliffe Teahouse, Grange Pharmacy, Veritas Sligo or by calling Heather 087 1655880.
CONFIRMATION YOUTH FEST will take place in Boyle on Saturday 15th October. See www.elphindiocese.ie/youthfest for more information.
SLIGO PARISHES CLUSTER PILGRIMAGE TO ROME 2016 28th October to 2nd November. Group leader: Fr. Michael Duignan. Exploring many wonders of Rome and crossing the threshold of the Holy Door of St Peter's in this Jubilee of Mercy. Cost €680 pp incl. flights, B&B, taxis and transfers. To book please contact Colette Furlong on 087 6132985.

Anniversary & remembrances

DAY	8.00 A.M.	10.30 A.M.
MON 12 th	NOEL GILLIGAN	—
TUES 13 th	BILL & BATTY CAWLEY	MAUREEN CASEY
THURS 15 th	GEANIE & MARGARET FOY	ELIZABETH COLLINS
FRI 16 th	JAMES O'HEHIR	—
SAT 17 th	JIM McDONNELL	—

Rest in peace Your prayers are asked for the repose of the souls of:
 MICHAEL BYRNE, Cummeen. *May God grant him eternal rest and comfort and console his bereaved family and friends.*