

## CHALLENGE

**T**oday, the church and all Christians are challenged to live more authentic lives. More than this, we are being asked to become 'evangelisers', people who announce the "good news" of God's reign for the world. The word 'evangelisation' has taken on increased importance in the messages of all four recent popes and, since John Paul II, we find ourselves invited to take part in what is called 'the new evangelisation'.

## NEW EVANGELISATION

**W**hat then is this "new evangelisation"? First, we need to be clear that the church's call to evangelise is something at the heart of its life, mission and identity. This has been true through all times and ages. However, there are 'new' challenges which spring from a fast-changing world and a church confronted by its own weaknesses. We live at a time when many once-Christian societies are becoming post-Christian – or even anti-Christian. We also live at a time when the failure of Christians, including priests and other religious, is frequently highlighted in the media.

So, as Pope Paul VI said over thirty years ago, the first task of the church is to "be evangelised herself".

More recently, Pope Francis made a similar plea when he stated that being a Christian is not a matter of belonging to a club. Moreover, he calls on the church to be true to its mission of "evangelising to the ends of the world" rather than being "a sick church turned in on itself".

## ADVENT

**T**he "new evangelisation", then, requires two important steps. The first is the Advent challenge of the Baptist: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand". We must listen to the Word and Spirit of God so that, like the church of Pentecost, our own hearts will be set on fire with God's love and mercy.

Second, we must witness to and proclaim Jesus Christ to the world in such a way that he is accepted and received. For Pope Francis, this requires a new approach and attitude. We do not effectively preach the Gospel like soldiers conquering the enemy on the battlefield. Rather, we engage with others in a spirit of humility. Indeed, the Christian must "listen to everyone" and "build bridges, not walls!"

In the words of Australian poet Kenneth Sless: "Jesus has to be born afresh in every age". In this sense, evangelisation is always new. Today, that task has particular urgency in light of the challenges facing our church and world. So, let us be attentive to the birth of Christ in our own lives – and for the life of the world. ■



## Today's readings

Is 11:1-10  
Rm 15:4-9  
Mt 3:1-12

## GOD'S WORD TODAY

Be prepared!

John the Baptist's message is blunt and to the point:

"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand." John was a prophet calling for the renewal of Israel. As a symbol that they were willing to become part of that renewal, he invited his hearers to be baptised in the river Jordan. Total immersion as a way of obtaining religious purity was a long-standing practice in Judaism. But John gives it a new twist.

It is no longer simply a way of obtaining release from ritual impurities such as touching something that was unclean. For John, it is a symbol of conversion of heart and repentance.

In his preaching, John is particularly hard on the self-righteous religious leaders like the Pharisees and the self-serving aristocrats who controlled the Temple, the Sadducees. Even when they come to him for baptism, he questions their sincerity. If they want to repent, he tells them, they must abandon easy slogans boasting of their pure Jewish blood as descendants of Abraham. In the times that are coming, racial purity will count for nothing because God can raise up children of Abraham from the very stones! True love of God is what counts.

# Stou( )space

4 December 2016 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent **Year A**

Psalter Week 2

SERIES: ADVENT JOURNEY

In this series, we celebrate Advent & Christmas.

Season colour: **PURPLE**



## ADVENT & EVANGELISATION

**A**dvent, the season of hope, is also a time of challenge: how effective are we, as Christians, in living and proclaiming the Gospel? Such challenge is central to the message of Israel's prophets, including John the Baptist and Jesus himself. Isaiah tells us the Word of God is like "a rod that strikes the ruthless"; the Baptist refers to some of the Pharisees and Sadducees as "a brood of vipers"; Jesus confronts both Pharisees and his own disciples for their blindness to the ways of God.

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**SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT**  
**Today, Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2016**

Through the scriptures God has given us the hope of justice for the poor and a longing for peace and harmony among people. Christ came to fulfil that promise, but to receive it we must turn our lives away from everything that is sinful.

**ADVENT JESSE TREE** The Jesse Tree is a way of reflecting on the key people who prefigure the coming ('adventus') of Jesus.

Symbols for the Jesse Tree are:

**ADVENT JESSE TREE - WEEK TWO**

The Ram symbol represents ISAAC

The Ladder represents JACOB

The Water Jar & Coat represent JOSEPH

The Tablets & Paschal Lamb represent MOSES.

**ADVENT PRAYER** Father, in the wilderness of the Jordan, you sent a messenger to prepare people's hearts for the coming of your Son.

Help me to hear his words and repent of my sins,  
so that I may clearly see the way to walk,

the truth to speak, and the life to live for him,

Our Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

**ADVENT 2016 IN SLIGO PARISHES CLUSTER**

**SHORT ADVENT REFLECTIONS** by Fr. Niall Ahern available to listen and to podcast at [www.elphindiocese.ie/advent-reflections](http://www.elphindiocese.ie/advent-reflections). Series offers a lovely reflective journey through the Advent season.

**ONLINE ADVENT CALENDAR** produced by the Bishops' Conference is available on [www.elphindiocese.ie](http://www.elphindiocese.ie). It continues this Sunday, the Second Sunday of Advent.

**THE WAY OF GENTLENESS** Led by Fr. Niall Ahern

8pm Strandhill Church on Mondays 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> & 19<sup>th</sup> December

**ADVENT PRAYER AND REFLECTION FOR THE FAMILY**

7.00pm Carraroe Church on Tuesdays of Advent

**AN ADVENT JOURNEY WITH POPE FRANCIS: CARING FOR THE EARTH**

Guided by Colette Furlong, the Cluster Catechist

10.30am St. Joseph's Parish Centre (45 mins)

Wednesdays 7<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> December

**WAY OF GENTLENESS SPECIAL** Led by Fr. Niall Ahern

At 8pm St. Anne's Day Chapel on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December

**PRAYER BEFORE THE WAITING MANGER - Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> Dec at 8pm - The Cathedral**

These Advent days are a time when the Church invites us to wait for the coming of Jesus. Waiting can be a time when we let go and let God and embrace his will. Everybody and everything associated with the birth of Jesus waited patiently for his coming even the manger. After his birth his mother Mary wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in the manger, his humble cot. We invite you to come and pray with us as we gather around the waiting manger so that we may patiently await his coming and be ready to welcome him into our humble lives and allow him to rest within us so that we can reveal his presence to the world through our lives. All welcome, please join us.

**SLIGO CATHEDRAL CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE**

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO JOIN OUR CATHEDRAL COMMUNITY DURING A SERVICE OF LESSONS AND CAROLS ON SUNDAY - 18<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER at 8.15pm. FEATURING THE CATHEDRAL CHOIR UNDER THE DIRECTION OF CHARLES O'CONNOR  
All most welcome.

**SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH - 2200 FAMILIES**

SUNDAY 20<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER PARISH ENV: €1,849 PLUSTAND. ORD: €1,490  
THANK YOU for your contribution.  
**ST MARY'S PRESBYTERY** ☎ 071 9162670 SACRISTY ☎ 071 9161261  
✉ email us at [news@sligocathedral.ie](mailto:news@sligocathedral.ie) We welcome your comments.

**FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

**THURSDAY 8<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER - HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION**

In celebrating Mary's Immaculate Conception we recall that, from the very moment of her own conception, the Blessed Virgin Mary was free from the stain of original sin; that she was in a state of grace and chosen to be the Mother of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

**Vigil Mass:** Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> December 7.30 P.M.

**Thursday Masses:** 8.00 A.M.; 10.30 A.M. and 7.00 P.M.

**DO THIS IN MEMORY PROGRAM** The next D.T.I.M. Mass for those preparing for First Holy Communion in our Parish takes place next Sunday, 11<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am. All are encouraged to attend.

**24 HOUR SILENT EUCHARISTIC VIGIL** for the protection of the Unborn Child in the Womb, for all Women and for the Protection of the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment will take place in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel beside the Cathedral, on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> December (the Feast of the Immaculate Conception) from 9.00am until 9.00am on Friday 9<sup>th</sup> December. Please sign up for an hour by contacting Lisa on 087 6274621 with your specified time, or simply sign the sheet on the Blessed Sacrament Chapel door. Thank you to all those who have given their time to pray for this very important intention.

**Sligo Cathedral Christmas Bazaar**

The countdown is on to Sligo Cathedral Christmas Bazaar in **GILLOOLY HALL** on **SATURDAY 10<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER** from **11.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m.**

You can **MAKE ROOM FOR CHRISTMAS** by donating good quality items, Christmas crafts, homewares, gifts etc. We also appeal to all the many Housewife of the Year nominees for delicious, homemade goodies, mince pies, Christmas puddings, cakes, meringues, jams, breads, chutneys and biscuits - all welcome. Come and join us in our **CHRISTMAS CAFÉ** serving winter warming soup & rolls, teas, coffees and a variety of tasty treats. You can donate directly to **Gillooly Hall** on **Thursday 8<sup>th</sup>** from 2-4pm and **Friday 9<sup>th</sup>** from 4-6pm. If you can donate or contribute in any way please contact the Parish Office team. Thank you.

**EXAMPLES OF ITEMS GRATEFULLY RECEIVED:** Bottles of Spirits, Bottles of Wine, Cakes, Homeware, Beauty Sets/ Toiletries, Boxes of Chocolates, Unused Gifts, Handbags, Xmas Puds, Games, Christmas Cakes, Boxes of Biscuits, Art & Crafts, Books, Home Baked Goods, Chinaware, C.D.s, Toys, DVDs, Ornaments, Jewellery, Sweets, Glassware, Selection Boxes, Buns, Other Good Quality Saleable Goods.

**CHRISTMAS 2016**

**CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

**SUNDAY - DECEMBER 18<sup>th</sup>**

**CHRISTMAS CAROL SERVICE - 8.15 p.m.**

**MONDAY - DECEMBER 19<sup>th</sup> - FRIDAY - DECEMBER 23<sup>rd</sup>**

**MASSES - 8.00 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.**

**SATURDAY - DECEMBER 24<sup>th</sup> CHRISTMAS EVE**

**MASSES - 8.00 a.m. - 10.30 a.m.**

**CONFESSIONS - 11 a.m. - 5.00 p.m.**

**9.30 p.m. CHRISTMAS CAROLS**

**CHRISTMAS VIGIL MASS 10.00 p.m.**

**9.30PM PASTERKA (POLISH MASS) IN THE GILLOOLY HALL CHRISTMAS DAY**

**MASSES - SUNDAY - DECEMBER 25<sup>th</sup>**

**8.30 a.m. - 10.30 a.m. - 12.00 noon**

**POLISH MASS - 5.00 p.m.**

**BINGO - GILLOOLY HALL - TONIGHT, 4<sup>th</sup> December at 9.00 p.m.**

This week's jackpot is €2,800.

**BINGO - GILLOOLY HALL - NEXT WEEK, 11<sup>th</sup> December at 9.00 p.m.**

CHRISTMASS SPOT PRIZES GALORE

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**HOLY HILL HERMITAGE** Bishop John Fleming will be celebrating Mass today, Visiting Sunday, 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. Mass will be at noon followed by tea and a tour for anyone interested.

**PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP** Today, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December at 3pm in St Michael's Family Life Centre, Sligo.

**ST BERNADETTE'S CHAPEL**, Rockwood Parade. Mass will be celebrated on Monday, 5<sup>th</sup> December at 5.15 p.m. All welcome.

**DRUMCLIFFE CHURCH CHRISTMAS TREE & CRAFT FESTIVAL** will be held in Drumcliffe Church and grounds from 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> December. The crafts will be the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>. Proceeds will be shared between Drumcliffe Parish Church and the Samaritans in Sligo. The event will close with a **COMMUNITY CAROL SERVICE** on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> at 7pm. Opening hours 3-9(Thursday), 11-9 (Friday-Saturday) and 11-7(Sunday). All welcome.

**CHRISTMAS CRAFT, CAKE & BRIC A BRAC SALE** In aid of St. Joseph's Special School, Ballytvnan on Friday, 9<sup>th</sup> December in School Hall 2-5pm. All Welcome. Your Support would be appreciated.

**YOUTH 2000** invites all young adults between ages of 16-35 to a **CATHOLIC WEEKEND RETREAT** taking place from 16<sup>th</sup> - 18<sup>th</sup> December 2016 at Newbridge College, Co. Kildare. Newcomers very welcome. Booking is essential. For information on the event or to book a place see [www.youth2000.ie](http://www.youth2000.ie), Youth 2000 Ireland Facebook page or Tel: 01 6753690

**DAY RETREAT FOR FAMILIES**, 10am - 5pm on Saturday, 7<sup>th</sup> January 2017 in Summerhill College, Sligo. Guide donation €70 per family. To book phone Therese on 086 8228174 or email [info@livingfamily.ie](mailto:info@livingfamily.ie). Advance booking essential before 30<sup>th</sup> December.

**RHS HOME CARE** is a Non Commercial Home Care Provider bringing professional home care services to those who need assistance to remain living in their own homes. We are now recruiting new Healthcare Assistants in your area and would love to hear from you. Potential applicants must have the required Fetac/QQI level 5 (two modules completed care skills and care of the older person). Please email you CV to [jobs@rshshomecare.ie](mailto:jobs@rshshomecare.ie) or call Aoife on 090 6625988.

**DIOCESAN VOCATIONS** "They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks...." If you think that God is calling you to serve the Lord of the harvest as a priest, Contact: Fr. Jim Murray at 071-9162136 or Fr. John Coughlan at 071-9662012, or email [vocations@elphindiocese.ie](mailto:vocations@elphindiocese.ie)

**WORDS from POPE FRANCIS on the FAMILY** "The Christian ideal, especially in families, is a love that never gives up" (Amoris Laetitia, Par 119)

**Anniversary & remembrances**

DAY	8.00a.m.	10.30a.m.
MON 5 <sup>th</sup>	DECEASED BOYLE & DURKIN FAMILIES	—
TUES 6 <sup>th</sup>	MAI, JOHN & MICHAEL HOWLEY & DECEASED HOWLEY, BOLAND & HALLINAN FAMILIES	ROSE McCAFFREY
WED 7 <sup>th</sup>	ELIZABETH, MARY & MICHAEL KELLY	CLIVE HOWARD (Snr.)
FRI 9 <sup>th</sup>	—	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary</b> NORA CLARKE ✠

**Rest in peace** Your prayers are asked for the repose of the souls of: KEVIN DEEHAN, Dromahair, and Formally Calry & Churchill, MARTIN GILROY, Rathedmond Estate & MICHAEL COEN Jinks Ave *May God grant them eternal rest and comfort and console their bereaved families and friends.*