

## PART ONE

We quieten ourselves and make three short acts:

- 1 an act of faith in the presence of God;
- 2 an act of humility to humble oneself before God and ask for forgiveness;
- 3 a prayer for guidance, to seek God's light in order to spend this time well.

## PART TWO

The meditation itself:

This is a time for reflection. Alphonsus suggested that we reflect on whatever will draw us to experience a deep love of God. His own favourite subject was the passion of Christ. But any incident in the life of Jesus is suitable for reflection. You may need to use a book to get started, the best of all being the Gospels. But don't read it for information or enjoyment. Read it so that it may move your heart.

When this happens, put the book aside. Reflect on it. Listen to God speaking to you through it. Stay with it. It is as though God has spoken to you, so now you respond and speak to God - what St Alphonsus called the fruits of meditation. Again, these are threefold:

- 1 Affections: Let your heart express your love, gratitude, sorrow, desire to get closer to God, and so on.
- 2 Prayers: Sometimes when your heart is dry or nothing seems to be happening, Alphonsus suggests turning these affections into acts of the will. In other words, turn them into prayers. Even though you may feel

nothing, express your desire to be able to love and appreciate God's goodness and your desire to stay close, etc.

- 3 Resolutions: To keep your feet on the ground, conclude this part of your meditation with practical resolutions, for example, to overcome some habitual fault for that day, maybe to show kindness to someone who needs it, to control your temper or whatever. Who would want to be near someone who spends loads of time in prayer and who would bite the nose off you immediately afterwards?

## PART THREE

The conclusion is made up of three short acts:

- 1 to thank the Lord for the lights and graces received;
- 2 to offer to the Lord the resolutions you have made;
- 3 to ask the Lord for help to keep the promises you made during the meditation.

St Alphonsus recommends spending 30 minutes at mental prayer each day. But I suggest that you start slowly or you'll give up too easily. By this time next year you may find even a half-hour too little. For Alphonsus, meditation offers a means by which we can experience a real loving union with God while waiting in hope for the blissful eternity we will spend with him. ■

quotes ends



### Today's readings

Is 42:1-4, 6-7  
Ac 10:34-38  
Mt 3:13-17

### GOD'S WORD TODAY

On this day we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord.

Irrespective of who we are, there is probably one thing we all (certainly, the vast majority of us) share in common: the fact that we were baptised as infants. We were only days or weeks old when we became members of the church, part of the Body of Christ. We did not know we were being baptised. We did not choose it. We were not aware of the promises that were made on our behalf that day.

And, arguably, that is one of the problems with infant baptism. Because we did not consciously choose it, we may not fully appreciate the meaning of our baptism or the implications it has for the kind of lives we lead every day.

For some families today too, the baptism of a child is more a social event, a 'naming' party, than a religious celebration, a statement of faith.

This feast of the Baptism of the Lord is a good time to think about our baptism and what it means to us. It is a good time, too, to think seriously about why we choose to baptise infant members of our family. It should be a decision we make only out of a strong faith commitment.



# Soul Space

8 January 2017 – Baptism Of The Lord Year A

Psalter Week 1

SERIES: STRETCH YOUR SOUL IN 2017

Season colour: WHITE

In this short series, Fr George Wadding looks at different kinds of New Year resolutions.



## MEDITATION

Last week we considered contemplation as part of our New Year's regime to help stretch our soul. Alternatively, you might try some mental prayer (meditation).

The founder of the Redemptorists, St Alphonsus de Liguori, urged priests and missionaries to teach people a method of meditation that could be used at home or in church or anywhere. He suggested a method for doing this. It is in three parts.

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**THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD**  
Today, Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> January 2017

At his baptism Jesus was revealed as the Son of God and began his work of bringing the vision of God, his justice and his liberation to people. At our baptism each of us is given a share in this mission, so we become children of God.

**CATHEDRAL OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**  
SUNDAY – JANUARY 8  
MASSES – 8.30 a.m., 10.30 a.m., 12.00 noon and 7.00 p.m.  
WEEKDAY MASSES FROM MONDAY – JANUARY 9  
8.00 a.m. & 10.30 a.m.

**THANK YOU**

The priests of the parish would like to thank all who contributed to the Christmas collection for the Support of the Clergy. Amount collected to date €8552. Deep gratitude to all involved.

**WORDS from POPE FRANCIS on the FAMILY**

*“The experience of love in families is a perennial source of strength for the life of the Church” (Amoris Laetitia, Par 88)*

**READINGS FOR SUNDAY NEXT, 15<sup>th</sup> January** 1<sup>st</sup> Reading: Is 49 3 5-6; 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading: 1 Cor. 1:1-3 ; Gospel: Jn. 1:29-34.

**PRAYER FOR THE WEEK** . Loving God, your Spirit renews humanity & sustains us always; continue to support us by your grace. Amen.  
**FEAST DAYS THIS WEEK:** Sun 15<sup>th</sup>: St. Ita, Virgin Monday 16<sup>th</sup>: St. Fursa, Abbot and Missionary Tue 17<sup>th</sup>: St. Anthony, Abbot

**A CALENDAR PRAYER FOR 2017**

*Loving and caring God, in my calendar you document my past, herald my future and focus my now. You remind me of duties, you keep me in touch with friends, and teach me the value of time. I ask your blessing on all my promises and on all my remembering. Bless all that I arrange, all that I do, all that I encounter in this New Year. Amen.*

**MASS FOR NEWLY BAPTISED**

On this Feast of the Baptism of the Lord we wish to celebrate all who were baptised in our Cathedral over the past year. We welcome the newly baptised with their families, especially the parents and children to our 10.30am Mass today. We ask for our parishioners to keep all in your prayers, those who pass on the faith and those who will grow in the faith over the coming months and years.

**BINGO - GILLOOLY HALL - RESUMING tonight Sunday, 8<sup>th</sup> January at 9.00 p.m.** With a jackpot of €2,950.

SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH – 2200 FAMILIES  
SUNDAY 1<sup>st</sup> JANUARY PARISH ENV: €1,613 PULSTAND. ORD: €2,030  
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.

**WEDNESDAY 25TH JANUARY 2017**  
**CHURCH UNITY WEEK**

**Theme “ CROSSING BARRIERS ”**

Dean Arfon Williams invites us to join his community in St John's Church of Ireland Cathedral, John St., Sligo on Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> January at 8pm.  
The Preacher will be Pastor Steffan Arras of the Lutheran Church in Ireland. **All are Welcome.**

**Visit Our Christmas Crib**

*Come and pray with us at our Christmas Crib:*

God of every nation and people, from the very beginning of creation you have made manifest your love: when our need for a Saviour was great you sent your Son to be born of the Virgin Mary. To our lives he brings joy and peace, justice, mercy, and love. Lord, bless all who look upon this manger, may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise up our thoughts to Him, who is *God-with-us* and Saviour of all, and who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

**GETTING MARRIED IN 2017/8**

Couples wishing to book their wedding in the Cathedral should contact St. Mary's Presbytery on 071 9162670 or email [finance@sligocathedral.ie](mailto:finance@sligocathedral.ie).

**Please remember:** If you are getting married over the next six months, make sure all paperwork is completed in good time. By the Law of the State you must give three months notice - contact Markievicz House on 9155115.

**MUSIC FOR WEDDING CEREMONIES** The Cathedral in consultation with our Musical Director has produced an extensive list of appropriate hymns that can be used at a Wedding Ceremony. This is available online on our website under **‘Marriage & Family’** or from our Parish Office. *Book your Pre-Marriage Course early with either Accord 071 9145641 or Esker Retreat House on 091 844549.*

**DIOCESAN VOCATIONS** “They shall beat their swords into ploughshears 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)

**HAPPY 105<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY TO SR. AIDAN BEIRNE**

Congratulations to Sr. Aidan Beirne a member of the Sisters of Mercy Congregation who celebrated her 105th birthday last Monday, 2nd January. She is a member of the Mercy Community at 3 St. Patrick's Avenue and has worked in Sligo since 1932. We wish her every happiness and God's continued blessing.

**CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION**

**Upcoming EVENTS THE WEEK AHEAD**

Wed. 11<sup>th</sup> “Wednesday Tea” after 10.30am Mass  
Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> Confessions 2.00p.m. - 4.00p.m.

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**50TH WORLD DAY OF PEACE** Pope Francis' message for the 50<sup>th</sup> World Day of Peace is available on [www.elphindiocese.ie](http://www.elphindiocese.ie) along with Bishop Kevin's homily at Mass for Peace on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2017.

**CHURCH GATE COLLECTION** for Irish Heart Foundation this weekend, 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> January. Please support generously.

**PARKINSON'S SUPPORT GROUP - SLIGO** Do you or a member of your family suffer from Parkinson's ? You are welcome to come and join us at our support group which will be held on Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> January at 3pm in St Michael's Family Life, Centre, Sligo. All welcome.

**MASS ST. BERNADETTE'S CHAPEL** will be celebrated on Monday, 9<sup>th</sup> January at 5.15pm.

**FR FLANAGAN PRAYER GROUP** The JANUARY 2017 MEETING of FR. FLANAGAN will take place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of the month, 10<sup>th</sup> January, at the earlier time of 7.00 p.m., in St. Mary's Presbytery. New members always welcome.

**SLIGO SAMARITANS SPRING TRAINING SELECTION EVENINGS** Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm sharp or Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> January at 6pm sharp. VENUE Sligo Samaritans Centre, 3 The Mall, Sligo (opposite Model Arts). Please attend on whichever evening suits you.

**WEEKEND RETREAT ON ST JOHN PAUL'S TEACHINGS ON THE FAMILY**

A weekend retreat will take place in Star of the Sea Retreat Centre, Mullaghmore, Sligo on February 3rd – 5th to expound on St. John Paul's teachings on Family and Prolife issues. It will be a weekend of formation, prayer, intercession and fellowship. The retreat will be directed by Fr Maurice Colgan O.P. Full board €140 with own private room. Please contact Angela 086-3342289/Lisa 087-6284621 for more information.

**PILGRIMAGE TO MEDJUGORJE** on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2017 for 7 nights. €699 per person. For information please contact Marita Concannon Tel: 098 64017 or 089 4146331.

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

**Anniversary & remembrances**



DAY	8.00am	10.30am
MON 9 <sup>th</sup>	MAE & JOHN FLYNN & BABY MICHAEL	<b>Month's Mind</b> MICHAEL (GINGER) COEN †
TUES 10 <sup>th</sup>	—	EAMON HENRY
WED 11 <sup>th</sup>	ANNIE KELLY	CATHERINE MULLEN
THURS 12 <sup>th</sup>	MARY CULLEN	PATRICK & MARY ELLEN LYNCH
FRI 13 <sup>th</sup>	AGNES FOWLEY	—
SAT 14 <sup>th</sup>	WILLIAM & MARY O'HANLON & SONS PAT & EDDIE & DAUGHTER IN LAW MARY & SON IN LAW SEAMUS	<b>Month's Mind</b> BERTIE MCGUINN †

**Rest in peace** Your prayers are asked for the repose of the souls of: SEAN MC GUINNESS, Market St.; MICHAEL McDONAGH, Nazareth Hse & Benbulbin Tce. and BETTY NOONEY, Jink's Avenue. *May God grant them eternal rest and comfort and console their bereaved families and friends.*