

WHAT IS PURGATORY?

Many people find Catholic teaching about purgatory confusing. The word 'purgatory' is not mentioned in the Bible, and popular preaching and devotion has not always given the best interpretation of what it means. A good place to begin might be in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. "The Church gives the name Purgatory to the final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire. As for certain lesser faults, we must believe that, before the Final Judgment, there is a purifying fire. He who is truth (Jesus) says that whoever utters blasphemy against the Holy Spirit will be pardoned neither in this age nor in the age to come. From this sentence we understand that certain offenses can be forgiven in this age, but certain others in the age to come."

Popular talk about purgatory has sometimes reduced it to a miniature version of hell – a place of punishment by fire and other torments with the only difference being that hell is forever, purgatory for a time. Popular talk also went on to calculate the length of time one might spend in purgatory. It usually agreed it was long – depending on the amount of sin, it might last for centuries or even for thousands of years.

THE OPTIMISM OF PURGATORY

The first thing about purgatory is that it is an optimistic teaching. It is the fruit of a Catholic theology of God's mercy and forgiveness that is generous. If a person dies who has not radically turned

away from God by deliberate mortal sin, then purgatory is an offer of the divine mercy. Since our concept of time ceases to have much relevance after death, we do not know how long purgatory will last. What does matter is that it is a final chance of radical cleansing.

I like to think about purgatory in two very human ways. Imagine first of all that you are invited unexpectedly to a grand party. You have been working at a messy job. Your clothes are dirty, your hands need a good scrub and your hair needs combing. You say: "Yes, I'd love to come, but please let me clean up first. I am not going to let myself down by appearing like this!" The English poet, George Herbert, writes about how God's loving invitation can shock and embarrass us:

Love bade me welcome,
Yet my soul drew back,
Guilty of dust and sin.

Purgatory, then, is recognising how deeply our sin has offended a generous God.

WAITING SEEMS LIKE ETERNITY

When you were at school, did you ever get 'detention' – being kept behind in the classroom while your pals went off to play games or went home for tea? If you did, every minute probably seemed like an hour. You really did not want to be there, but you had made a fool of yourself and you had to pay the price. Purgatory is a bit like a school child looking out the window at a fine sunny afternoon, knowing they should be laughing and having fun. The greatest pain of purgatory is not the pain of spiritual power but the pain of waiting, of realising you are missing the most wonderful thing there is – the vision of God and meeting once again all those people you loved so dearly during life. ■



Today's readings

Prov 31:10-13, 19-20, 30-31
1 Thessalonians 5:1-6
Matthew 25: 14-30

One easy way of applying the parable of the Talents is to urge people to use your talents to the best of your ability. This is commonplace advice from school-teachers or sports coaches and appropriate in those settings. But the Bible is concerned about God and our relationship to the Lord: it is not a self-help manual designed to show us how to improve ourselves in a purely human fashion. The servants in the story represent different reactions to the coming of the master and the reckoning which will follow. Two apply themselves responsibly to the task in hand: the third claims that he has done nothing constructive out of fear, but the master accuses him rather of simple laziness and even wickedness. Matthew is telling us that the Son of Man will return and that we should live our lives with that in mind. The purpose of the master in the story is not just to find out the capabilities of the servants but also to decide who should share with him in his joy.

There are two extremes which we might try to avoid: one is becoming so fearful of encountering the Lord that we become paralysed and do nothing, like the lazy and wicked servant in the parable; the other is that we try to do so much that we end up exhausted but still feeling that we could - and should - have done more.

GOD'S WORD TODAY

SoulSpace

19 November 2017 – 33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time Year A

Psalter Week 1

SERIES: REMEMBERING OUR DEAD

Season colour: GREEN

In this short series, Fr Brendan McConvery remembers the dead during the month of November.



PURGATORY

The month of November is traditionally dedicated to remembering the souls in purgatory. For some people, it is a short 'winter Lent' during which they can do some of the practices that are common in the Pre-Easter Lent, such as attending daily Mass, cutting back on the amount of alcohol consumed or visiting the cemetery where loved ones are buried. Remembering our dead this month keeps us in touch with our roots.



THIRTY-THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

**World Day of the Poor
19th November 2017**

How often fear and anxiety prevent people from producing their best, from using their God-given talents to the full. In today's parable Jesus shows that a God who inspires fear may inspire little else. His image of God as a loving father inspires confidence and so enables us to develop what he has given us.

CHOOSE LIFE

"With great affection I urge all future mothers: keep happy and let nothing rob you of the interior joy of motherhood. Your child deserves your happiness. Don't let fears, worries, other people's comments or problems lessen your joy at being God's means of bringing a new life to the world." Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia*, 171

WORLD DAY OF THE POOR

Pope Francis has designated Sunday, 19th November as the first "World Day of the Poor". At the conclusion of the Jubilee of Mercy, Pope Francis wanted to offer the Church a World Day of the Poor, so that throughout the world Christian communities can become an ever greater sign of Christ's charity for the least and those most in need. *The theme for the day is "Love not in word, but in deed".*

Read Pope Francis message on www.elphindiocese.ie

NOVEMBER—MONTH OF THE HOLY SOULS

CEMETERY ROSARY The Rosary will be recited in Sligo Cemetery on all four Sundays during the month of November at 3.00pm.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL THANK YOU

We thank most sincerely the outgoing members of the P.P.C. for their loyalty, commitment and dedication during the many years they served on the council. Deep gratitude to all.

We also take this opportunity to welcome the new members of the council and to pray every blessing on them as they work for the good of our parish.

ROSARY BY THE COAST As part of a national prayer initiative, you are invited to join with thousands of others who will pray the Rosary around the coast of Ireland for the protection of life. Meet at any of the following locations in Sligo on Sunday 26th November at 2pm: Strandhill - Meeting at the canon; Rosses Point - Meeting at statue of the Lady by the Shore; Streedagh Beach; Mullaghmore Beach - Meeting at Star of the Sea Retreat Centre at 2.15pm. For more info and other locations see www.coastalrosaryireland.ie

**BINGO, GILLOOLY HALL, TONIGHT,
SUNDAY 19th November at 9.00pm**

TONIGHT'S JACKPOT €2,700.

Raffle at interval with refreshments available. All welcome.

SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH – 2200 FAMILIES

SUNDAY, 12th November PARISH ENV: €1,976 PL/STAND. ORD: €1,647

THANK YOU for your contribution.

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

✉ email us at info@sligocathedral.ie We welcome your comments.

CHRISTMAS FAIR IN ST. MARY'S PARISH

A Christmas Fair will be held in the Gillooly Hall on Saturday, 9th December 2017. Anyone who is interested in having a stall in the Christmas Fair is asked to contact the Parish Office on 071 9162670. We are also looking for Volunteers to work on the day and donations of unused decorations for the Hall. Please contact the Parish Office if you can assist with any of this.

Thank you.



DATE FOR DIARY

Please reserve Sunday, 17th December for our Carol Service which will be at 8.15pm in the Cathedral.

SPRING CLEAN OF THE CATHEDRAL There will be a major clean-up of the Cathedral on Friday, 1st December from 7.30pm to 8.30pm. All welcome to join in. Thank you for your support.

VOLUNTEERS FOR GLOBE HOUSE Volunteer Centre in Sligo are looking for volunteers who can give some time to befriend residents from Globe House in conjunction with Diversity Sligo. Do you have 1 or 2 hours to share in a week? Volunteers are invited and will be matched in a befriending role with a resident of Globe House, the accommodation centre for asylum seekers. Volunteer Role includes: Accompanying and showing the person the various shops, and services around town such as second hand shops along with places of interest like the library, historical landmarks, where art exhibitions & events are held, maybe taking a walk by the lake or river, and or accompanying a resident at free events, etc. A central part to the role includes 'mutual sharing'; chatting, listening, and introducing residents to Irish culture and customs while sharing in the story and culture of where the resident comes from. Anyone interested can phone us on 071 9111042 or contact us on our website by registering your interest to volunteer on <http://www.volunteersligo.ie/>

DEMENTIA INFORMATION EVENING in the Clayton Hotel (previously called The Clarion Hotel), Sligo town on Thursday, 30th November 2017 at 8pm. **Home Instead Senior Care**, in partnership with The Alzheimer Society of Ireland and Callan Tansey Solicitors, invites you to a free information evening for anyone directly or indirectly affected by Dementia / Alzheimers. Topics covered on the night are; 1) Understanding Dementia, 2) Living Well with Dementia, 3) Legal & Financial Concerns, 4) Caring with Confidence, 5) Family Carers Wellbeing and Support. You will be able to listen to a number of speakers covering these topics, ask questions or indeed chat one to one with any of the panel. Refreshments will be served on the night. This is a free event. However it is advisable to RSVP to Home Instead Senior Care, Sligo by Tuesday, 28th November at 071 9317051.

SUNDAY READINGS for 26th November: 1st Reading: Ezek. 34:11-12. 15-17; 2nd Reading: 1 Cor. 15:20-26. 28; Gospel: Matt. 25:31-46.

CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Upcoming **EVENTS**
THE WEEK AHEAD

Wednesday 22nd November "Wednesday Tea" after 10.30am Mass.
Saturday 25th November **Confessions** from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

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

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

DATES TO REMEMBER

SLIGO ANTIQUES, COLLECTABLES & VINTAGE FAIR will be held on Sunday, 19th November at the Sligo Clayton Hotel from 11a.m. to 6p.m. Admission is €3.50 (€2.50 for students and OAPs) and is free for children under 16 who are accompanied and supervised by an adult. Everyone is welcome. There is quite literally something for everyone!

PRAYER SERVICE in remembrance of all deceased children will be held in the outpatient department (LEVEL 3) of Sligo University Hospital on Wednesday, 22nd November at 7.30pm. Further enquiries to: Paediatric / Neonatal Units, Sligo University Hospital 071 9174634/ 9174452.

MASS FOR DECEASED STAFF MEMBERS OF IRISH RAIL / BUS EIREANN will be held on Thursday, 23rd November at 8.30pm in Sligo Station Foyer. All families and friends are welcome.

ANNUAL MASS for deceased members of An Garda Síochana Sligo/Leitrim Division will be celebrated on Friday, 24th November at 7pm in The Embassy Rooms, Kennedy Parade. Family members welcome.

CAKE SALE IN AID OF MITCHELL SISTERS INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT will be held in Ransboro N.S. on Sunday, 26th November from 10.30am - 2pm. Baked items may be left in the school hall on Saturday, 25th November from 4pm - 6pm or Sunday morning from 9.30am. All baked items would be greatly appreciated. Contact Nuala on 086 0894890.

ADVENT PREPARATION EVENING geared towards adults with an interest in Sacred Scripture will take place in Summerhill College Sligo on Tuesday, 28th November from 8.00pm to 9.15pm. Guest speaker: Fr. Eugene McLoughlin PP Athleague-Fuerty. All welcome.

HEART SUPPORT GROUP meeting will be held in Sligo Park Hotel on Wednesday, 29th November at 7pm. Speaker: Lorraine Boyd, Social Worker for older people in Sligo/ Leitrim. Topic: Future Planning.

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 your CV to jobs@rhshomecare.ie or call Aoife on 090 6625988.

SPECIAL OLYMPICS CONNAUGHT is calling on Sligo to get 'Freezin' for a Reason' this December and raise funds for local athletes with intellectual disabilities. First ever Polar Plunge will take place at Rosses Point on 9th December at 11am. If you are interested you can sign up on www.specialolympics.ie and click on Freezin for a Reason go to the Rosses Point event you can register there.

anniversary & Remembrances



| DAY | 8.00 a.m. Mass | 10.30 a.m. Mass |
|------------------------|-------------------------|--|
| TUES 21 th | MICHAEL & LILY HUGHES | Recently Deceased ANGELA MCGOWAN ☩ |
| WED 22 nd | THOMAS O'CONNOR | BRIDGET & PAT MCMORROW |
| THURS 23 rd | — | GEORGE GETHINS |
| SAT 25 th | DENIS & BREEDGE FARRELL | Month's Mind JOHN CONNOLLY ☩ |

☩ **MONTH'S MIND MASS** for UNA MURRAY will be celebrated at the 7.30pm Vigil Mass on Saturday, 25th November.