

Groundhog Day is one of the most popular films of the last 25 years. It stars Bill Murray as Phil Connors, an arrogant TV weatherman who is asked to do a news report on the Groundhog Day festivities, which take place annually on February 2 in the little town of Punxsutawney. According to folklore, if it's cloudy when a groundhog emerges from its burrow on this day, then spring will come early; if it's sunny, the groundhog will see its shadow and retreat back into its burrow, and winter will continue for six more weeks.

Phil doesn't like this job. He grudgingly gives his report, then rushes to get out of town, but a blizzard shuts down all travel. Phil and his TV crew are forced to stay in town another night.

Next morning Phil wakes up to find that he is reliving February 2. The day plays out exactly as it did the day before, with no one but Phil aware of the time loop.

The same thing happens the next day. Phil wakes up to discover that it is still February 2. He is caught in a time loop, repeating the same day again and again. No matter what he does, he cannot get out of the time loop.

It's only when he begins to improve himself and to help others, only when he begins to re-examine his life and priorities, that he breaks the loop and wakes up to discover it's February 3. He has broken out of the loop. Phil is a reformed person, and it's no longer Groundhog Day.

STUCK IN A MOMENT

Sometimes it can seem like we are all going through Groundhog Day. We get up at the same time, eat the same breakfast, put on the same clothes, take the same transport, do the same work or study, go home, eat dinner with the same people, watch the same TV programmes. Then next day we do it all over again. We can do the same thing over and over

maybe without even thinking about it very much. In the words of a U2 song, we can be "stuck in a moment and we can't out of it."

The Season of Lent is an invitation to step outside the time loop we are in and to look at ourselves. This is important because we can be so preoccupied with the normal business of living, so caught up with our daily routines, just so busy, that we don't take time or make time to look at the big picture, to see if we're on the right track, to discover how or what we might need to change.

Lent invites us to not be trapped in our own Groundhog Day, repeating the same pattern over and over. Like Bill Murray in the film, it challenges us to look at the shape our life is in now, to look at our values, our priorities, at how we treat those closest to us, at how we treat God – and then change what needs changing in order to be our very best selves. ■



Lent originally began on the first Sunday, giving six weeks of Lent with six fasting days (excluding Sunday). In order to bring the number up to 40, additional days from Ash Wednesday were included and Ash Wednesday became the 'official' beginning of the Lenten Season. Still, there is something particularly solemn about the First Sunday of Lent. Today is the first gathering of the whole community as it begins its Lenten journey.



Today's readings

Genesis 9:8-15
1 Peter 3:18-22
Mark 1:12-15

but it is also the beginning of a lifetime commitment, and that the newly baptised person should expect to be put to the test in one way or another.

In the Gospel tradition, Jesus has to face up to what it means to be the Son of God, and the struggle will be repeated at Gethsemane when the final test, the Passion, is about to begin.

GOD'S WORD TODAY

The Gospels do not simply tell the story of Jesus; they mirror also the experience of the community from which they emerge. An important theme in the First Gospel, the Gospel of Mark, is that of discipleship, what it means to be a follower of Jesus. In our reading today, which sets the scene for our liturgical season of Lent, we are told that baptism may be the end of the initial period of conversion,



Stuck Space

SERIES: AGENDA FOR LENT

Season colour: **PURPLE**

In this series, **Gerard Moloney CSsR** explores the meaning of Lent and how to make the most of this holy season.



GRASP THE MOMENT

It's easy for us to get stuck in a rut or fall into bad habits. The Season of Lent is an opportunity to do something about that. It's a chance for us to retreat, to step back, from our regular routine to see what and how we might need to change.

FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT
18th February 2018

As we begin Lent again, we learn that we need to be purified of our sins. Jesus went out into the desert to be put to the test for us, to overcome Satan. If we go into the desert with him, whatever is evil in our lives can be overcome.

CHOOSE LIFE

"I am asking you to make a personal commitment to some form of prayer and penance during this season of Lent, in a way that perhaps some of us have not done for quite some time. Do it as a specific expression of your desire to "Choose Life" and to respond generously and constructively to the challenges of life"

Bishop Kevin, Lent 2018

The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference produce weekly newsletters called *Choose Life* to encourage discussion in families on the value of every human life. Issue Three is now available at www.elphindiocese.ie

HUNGER LUNCH ASH WEDNESDAY - THANK YOU This year our Huger Lunch held on Ash Wednesday in Gillooly Hall raised **€519 for Trócaire**. We would like to thank all those who supported this event with a special thank you to the coordinator, Hilary, all those who volunteered especially the transition year students of the Ursuline & Mercy Colleges and Nessa for making the tasty soup. Sincere thanks to O'Hehirs Bakery once again for their generous donation of delicious bread rolls.

ACCORD ELPHIN is recruiting marriage care facilitators for the presentation of Pre-Marriage courses in the Sligo, Boyle and Roscommon areas. Full training provided. These are part voluntary and part paid positions. Details from Accord Sligo at 071 9145641.

MEDJUGORJE IRISH CENTRE PILGRIMAGES: 7 nights B&B and Airport Shuttle service from €279 per person. Book any flight—any time and we provide guaranteed airport shuttle service. Call us for further info and book the dates that suit you. Tel: 01 4434510 or email: reservations@med-irishcentre.com

A CROSS BORDER HOSPITALITY & CATERING CAREERS EXPO will be held on Thursday 1st March in the Mount Errigal Hotel, Letterkenny. The event will run from 10.00am until 2.00pm. Employers will have a number of job offers available on the day. Bring your CV. Admission is free. There is also an online event: to register go to www.europeanjobdays.eu/en. The event is being co-hosted by Eures Cross Border Partnership, the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, and the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland.

SUNDAY READINGS for 25th February: 1st Reading: Gen. 22:1-2. 9-13. 15-18; 2nd Reading: Rom. 8:31-34; Gospel: Mk. 9:2-10.

BINGO, GILLOOLY HALL, TONIGHT
SUNDAY 18th February at 9.00pm With a JACKPOT of €3,250 Raffle at interval with refreshments available. All welcome.

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.

SLIGO CATHEDRAL PARISH - 2200 FAMILIES
11th February **PARISH ENV: €1,482 PL/STAND. ORD: €1,596**
THANK YOU for your contribution.



LENT IN THE CATHEDRAL 2018

THEME: "STATIONS OF THE CROSS"

STATIONS OF THE CROSS - LENT 2018

On each Wednesday and Friday during Lent there will be a short meditation on the Way of the Cross. All are encouraged to attend.

BUSY PERSONS STATIONS OF THE CROSS on Wednesdays from 6.00pm to 6.15pm in Sligo Cathedral.

STATIONS OF THE CROSS on Fridays after the 10.30 a.m. Mass in Sligo Cathedral.

CATHEDRAL LENTEN SCRIPTURE SHARING GROUP will meet at 7.30pm on the Thursdays in Lent (excluding Holy Thursday), continuing 22nd February. Upstairs—Gillooly Hall. You are all welcome.

POPE FRANCIS ON THE FAMILY You are invited to sessions of guided discussion and reflection on family life in preparation for the World Meeting of Families 2018 in Summerhill College Library on Wednesdays 28 February, 7 March and 14 March 8pm - 9pm. These sessions will be in an informal, friendly atmosphere, followed by a cuppa. Everyone is welcome - we are all family!

BISHOP KEVIN'S MESSAGE FOR LENT 2018 "A Season of Transformation" can be read online at www.elphindiocese.ie

SCRIPTURE SHARING GROUPS reflections available to download from www.elphindiocese.ie/ Lent Other prayer booklets available from Justin Harkin, contact justin@elphindiocese.ie / 087 6171526. Support also available for new groups.

THE WAY OF GENTLENESS a personal enrichment journey for Lent will take place in St Patrick's Church Strandhill on Mondays February 19th and 26th and March 5th, 12th and 19th.



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 23rd February at Star of the Sea Centre, Mullaghmore. To book: staroftheseacentre@gmail.com or 071 9176722. Cost €20.00 (incl hot lunch).

MINDFULNESS AND CHRISTIAN MEDITATION WITH DR. NOEL KEATING

This workshop will be held on Saturday 24th February (10.30am - 3.30pm) at Star of the Sea Centre, Mullaghmore. To book: staroftheseacentre@gmail.com or 071 9176722. Cost €40.00 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.



CATHEDRAL of the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION

Upcoming **EVENTS**

THE WEEK AHEAD

Wednesday 21st February "Wednesday Tea" after 10.30am Mass.
Saturday 24th February **Confessions** from 2.00pm to 4.00pm.

DATES TO REMEMBER

"MARION MOVEMENT" A Day with Mary will take place in St. John's Church, Carraroe on Saturday, 24th February from 11.30am to 4.00pm. Day will include Mass, Adoration and Rosary.

AN AFTERNOON OF HEALING WITH EDDIE STONE in Boyle Church on Saturday 24th February at 2pm. Mass will be celebrated & Confessions are available. All welcome.

WOMEN'S WORLD DAY OF PRAYER in Calry Parish Church, The Mall, Sligo on Friday, 2nd March at 8.00pm. Theme for 2018: "All God's creation is very good". For over 80 years people of all Christian denominations have come together on the first Friday of March to pray. The 2018 service has been prepared by the Christian women of Suriname. All are most welcome.

WORKSHOP FOR PARISH CHOIRS All involved with Parish choirs are invited to a workshop with Ephrem Feeley, composer of A Joy for All the World (official hymn of WMOF2018) on Sat 3rd March 10.30am - 3.00pm in Star of the Kilbride Community Centre, Four Mile House, Co Roscommon. To book: Justin 087 6171526 or justin@elphindiocese.ie Cost €15.00 per person (incl hot lunch)

CREATIVE WRITING COURSES at Yeats Memorial Building, Sligo. begins Tuesday March 6 10.30am-12.30pm for 6 weeks and Wednesday March 7 6.30-8.30pm for 6 weeks. Places strictly limited. Ph:083 8561559.

MARIE VADIA powerful speaker and Intercessor for Healing. Maria will be at THE CLAYTON HOTEL, Sligo on Sunday 11th March 2018 from 9.00am to 5.30pm. Booking essential - please contact: 085 7765294 or 086 8383725.


EVENING OF SACRED MUSIC with the Ulster University Choir in the Cathedral on Friday 6th April 2018 starting at 8.00pm. All welcome.


SLIGO UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER SERVICE Are you friendly, motivated, a good communicator and available 4 hours a week, if so why not help out at Sligo University Hospital. For further information., contact 071 9171111 Ext: 2609/4210/4302

WORLD MEETING OF FAMILIES 2018-NATIONAL COLLECTION Please support the third National Collection for WMOF2018 which will be taken up in our parish next weekend - 24 & 25 February 2018. For all information about the upcoming World Meeting of Families 2018, check out their website www.worldmeeting2018.ie

FRANCISCAN FRIARS OF THE RENEWAL MINI-MISSION A **Lenten Mini-Mission** will take place in **St. Anne's Parish, Cranmore Road, Sligo** continuing to **Thursday 22nd February**. The Mission will continue tonight, **Sunday at 6.30pm** followed by **Mission Session/healing, then Monday to Thursday with Mission Mass at 6.15pm** followed by **Mission Session and Healing Service at 7pm**. For more info visit www.stanneschurchsligo.ie/ or www.cfrfranciscanfriars.co.uk

anniversary & remembrances

DAY	8.00 a.m. Mass	10.30 a.m. Mass
MON 19 th	PEIG MCKEON	—
TUES 20 th	SPECIAL INTENTION	MARY & JAMES KEANEY
WED 21 st	SPECIAL INTENTION	JOHN & ALICE PRIOR
THURS 22 nd	—	ARTHUR HARRISON
FRI 23 rd	PATRICK SWEENEY	—
SAT 24 th	—	Month's Mind DOROTHY O'GRADY 

 **MONTH'S MIND MASS** for TERESA FORDE will be celebrated at the 7.30pm Vigil Mass on Saturday, 24th February.

Rest in peace Your prayers are asked for the repose of the souls of: TOMMY BREHENY, Oakfield Rd, Sligo; BRIDIE WHILE, The Oak's, Woodtown Lodge, Sligo and MAY DUNNE (NEE DYKES) St Anne's Tce & England.
May God grant them eternal rest and comfort and console their bereaved family and friends.