

ENTRANCE ANTIPHON

Cf Is 66:10-11

**Rejoice, Jerusalem, and all who love her.
Be joyful, all who were in mourning;
exult and be satisfied at her
consoling breast.**

OPENING PRAYER

O God, who through your Word reconcile the human race to yourself in a wonderful way, grant, we pray, that with prompt devotion and eager faith the Christian people may hasten toward the solemn celebrations to come. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Amen

FIRST READING

2 Chron 36:14-16. 19-23

A reading from the second book of Chronicles

All the heads of the priesthood, and the people too, added infidelity to infidelity, copying all the shameful practices of the nations and defiling the Temple that the Lord had consecrated for himself in Jerusalem. The Lord, the God of their ancestors, tirelessly sent them messenger after messenger, since he wished to spare his people and his house. But they ridiculed the messengers of God, they despised his words, they laughed at his prophets, until at last the wrath of the Lord rose so high against his people that there was no further remedy.

Their enemies burned down the Temple of God, demolished the walls of Jerusalem, set fire to all its palaces, and destroyed everything of value in it. The survivors were deported by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon; they were to serve him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power. This is how the word of the Lord was fulfilled that he spoke through Jeremiah, 'Until this land has enjoyed its sabbath rest, until seventy years have gone by, it will keep sabbath throughout the days of its desolation.'

And in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, to fulfil the word of the Lord that was spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia to issue a proclamation and to have it publicly displayed throughout his kingdom: 'Thus speaks Cyrus king of Persia, "The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth; he has ordered me to build him a Temple in Jerusalem, in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all his people, may his God be with him! Let him go up."'

The Word of the Lord
Thanks be to God

RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 136

Response:
**O let my tongue
cleave to my mouth
if I remember you not!**

1. By the rivers of Babylon there we sat and wept, remembering Zion; on the poplars that grew there we hung up our harps. **(R)**

2. For it was there that they asked us, our captors, for songs, our oppressors, for joy. 'Sing to us,' they said, 'one of Zion's songs.' **(R)**

3. O how could we sing the song of the Lord on alien soil? If I forget you, Jerusalem, let my right hand wither! **(R)**

4. O let my tongue cleave to my mouth if I remember you not, if I prize not Jerusalem above all my joys! **(R)**

SECOND READING

Eph 2:4-10

A reading from letter of St Paul to the Ephesians

God loved us with so much love that he was generous with his mercy: when we were dead through our sins, he brought us to life with Christ – it is through grace that you have been saved – and raised us up with him and gave us a place with him in heaven, in Christ Jesus.

This was to show for all ages to come, through his goodness towards us in Christ Jesus, how infinitely rich he is in grace. Because it is by grace that you have been saved, through faith; not by anything of your own, but by a gift from God; not by anything that you have done, so that nobody can claim the credit. We are God's work of art, created in Christ Jesus to live the good life as from the beginning he had meant us to live it.

The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

**Glory and praise to you, O Christ!
God loved the world so much
that he gave his only Son;
everyone who believes in
him has eternal life.
Glory and praise to you, O Christ!**

GOSPEL

John 3:14-21

The Lord be with you.
And with your spirit.
A reading from the holy Gospel
according to John
Glory to you, O Lord.

Jesus said to Nicodemus: 'The Son of Man must be lifted up as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so that everyone who believes may have eternal life in him. Yes, God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not be lost but may have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world not to condemn the world, but so that through him the world might be

saved. No one who believes in him will be condemned; but whoever refuses to believe is condemned already, because he has refused to believe in the name of God's only Son. On these grounds is sentence pronounced: that though the light has come into the world men have shown they prefer darkness to the light because their deeds were evil. And indeed, everybody who does wrong hates the light and avoids it, for fear his actions should be exposed; but the man who lives by the truth comes out into the light, so that it may be plainly seen that what he does is done in God.'

The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

PROFESSION OF FAITH

**I believe in God,
the Father Almighty,
Creator of heaven and earth,
and in Jesus Christ, His only Son,
our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
He descended into hell;
on the third day He rose again from
the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
and is seated at the right hand of God
the Father Almighty;
from there He will come to judge the
living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Holy Catholic Church,
the communion of Saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and life everlasting.
Amen.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

We place before you with joy these offerings, which bring eternal remedy, O Lord, praying that we may both faithfully revere them and present them to you, as is fitting, for the salvation of all the world. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

MEMORIAL ACCLAMATION

My Lord and my God.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON

**Jerusalem is built as a city bonded as one
together. It is there that the tribes go up,
the tribes of the Lord,
to praise the name of the Lord.**

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

O God, who enlighten everyone who comes into this world, illuminate our hearts, we pray, with the splendour of your grace, that we may always ponder what is worthy and pleasing to your majesty and love you in all sincerity. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen

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Please contact the Parish Office for the arranging of Anniversary & Month's Mind Masses, applications for Baptism & Marriage, bookings of the Parish Centre & other Parish-related enquiries

OFFICE HOURS: Monday, Tuesday & Wednesday: 9am - 1pm

TEL: 028 406 62136 - Voice Messages can be left at this number outside Office Hours

Email: seapatrickparish@dromorediocese.org

PARISH PRIEST: Fr Andrew McMahon 028 406 29551

PARISH DEACON: Rev. Michael Rooney 028 406 71401

MASS TIMES (Winter Schedule)

St Thérèse's Church, Scarva Road	
Saturday Vigil	5.30pm
St Patrick's Church, Dromore Street	
Sunday	9am, 10.30am & 12 noon
Tues - Fri	10am

SACRAMENT of RECONCILIATION

Confessions are heard each Saturday between 4.15pm and 5.15pm in the Church of St Thérèse

CHILDREN'S LITURGY

12 noon Mass, today, Sunday 10th March.
Parental Permission is required in advance and can be completed using this QR code or:
seapatrickchildrensministry@outlook.com



SOLITUDE SATURDAY, GLENVALE CONVENT

Saturday 23rd March £20

An opportunity to take some time for yourself, beginning with Mass at 10am and ends at 3.30pm
Refreshments and a light lunch included.
Early booking essential - contact **02830832828**

DROMORE DIOCESAN HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Monday 11th MARCH 2024 @7:30pm
in Newry Parish Centre

The Society welcomes Una Walsh to speak on "The legacy of Fr Tom in South Armagh: Reflections on the life of Cardinal Tomás Ó'Fiaich." All welcome.

PARISH DRAW WINNERS – 7th March 2024

£100 Winning No: 3396

Winner: S & M Quinn, Harberton Park

Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults

Diocesan Designated Person:

Mr Stephen Sherry [t] 07301246329

[e] safeguardingdirector@dromorediocese.org

DISTRIBUTION of NEW ENVELOPES

New Offertory Envelopes will be available for collection in the Meeting Rooms after the 9am, 10.30am & 12 noon Masses today, Sunday 10th March.

Envelopes may also be collected after the 5.30pm Mass on next Saturday, 16th March, in the front porch of St Thérèse's Church.

You may request a Standing Order Mandate or box of envelopes by leaving your name, address and telephone number in the Parish Office: 028 406 62136
[e] seapatrickparish@dromorediocese.org

Eucharistic Adoration for Vocations

As we come towards the end of the Year of Prayer for the Diocesan Priesthood, we invite parishioners to be part of our Day of Eucharistic-centred Prayer for Vocations, taking place this Monday - 11th March.

The day begins with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in St Therese's Church, from 10am-12noon - during which time some children and young people from local schools will be attendance. Parishioners are very welcome during these hours.

Exposition then continues in St Patrick's Church, from 12noon through until 12 midnight.

Please note the following times of prayer in common:

- 12noon:** Angelus
- 1pm:** Rosary for Vocations
- 3pm:** Chaplet of Divine Mercy
- 5pm:** Rosary for Vocations
- 6pm:** Angelus & Evening Prayer of the Church
- 8pm:** Rosary for Vocations
- 10pm:** Rosary for Vocations
- 11.30pm:** Night Prayer of the Church & Benediction



You are encouraged to come along and share in Adoration during any of the above times - and offer your own personal prayers for vocations. You are, also, welcome to join in any of the communal prayer times.

*'Pray continually and, in all things, give thanks to God'.
(1 Thess. 5: 17-18)*

Dear Parishioner

Last summer I spoke about the precarious state of parish finances and of a concern to arrange our Sunday and weekday Masses differently - with a view to reducing utility costs and prevent the parish sliding into an even deeper deficit situation during the coming winter. This led to the 'Winter Pilot' schedule, which involved re-locating almost all of our Masses to St Patrick's Church.

I indicated - in a letter in the bulletin of 20th August - that this arrangement would "continue through until next April, when it will be followed by an alternative summer schedule for the warmer months."

As we gradually move, therefore, towards the end of that Winter Pilot, the Parish Finance Council has asked me to share, with you, the figures for our churches' utility costs for the winter months just past. These are given below, alongside comparative costs for the previous winter:

St Therese's Church			
	Gas	Electricity	Total
Oct '22 – Feb '23	£17,890.31	£784.96	£18,675.27
Oct '23 – Feb '24	£5,957.13	£835.81	£6,792.94
Total Saving: £11,882.33			

St Patrick's Church			
	Oil	Electricity	Total
Oct '22 – Feb '23	£3,418.69	£386.45	£3,805.14
Oct '23 – Feb '24	£2,631.53	£291.17	£2,922.70
Total Saving: £882.44			

Total Winter Pilot Saving to date
(Oct '23 – Feb '24)
£12,764.77

We obviously await relevant figures for March and April and the Parish Finance and Pastoral Councils are keen that - after those become available - parishioners would be given the opportunity to reflect on the Winter Pilot, overall, and to offer feed-back on the experience of recent months. This will help inform our evaluation of the pilot itself and guide our on-going planning for the parish.

Meanwhile, the Pastoral Council has been working with me to finalise a 'Summer Pilot' schedule, to begin after April. I hope to be in a position to publicise this very soon, so that we can begin to make the necessary preparations for as smooth a transition as possible to that summer schedule.

Fr Andrew McMahon

Remembering the Faithful Departed

'It is a holy and wholesome thought to pray for the dead.'

2 Maccabees 12:46

ANNIVERSARIES

Sunday 10th March

Brendan Fitzpatrick, Mount Royal
Jane & Desmond Moorhead, Scarvagh Heights
Peggy McAteer, Ballycross
Kathleen McElherron, Newry
Gary Derby, Loughbrickland Road
Liam McDermott, Chinauley Park
Deirdre Moore, Primrose Gardens
John & Georgina Fitzpatrick, Huntly Bungalows
Donald Tumilty, Granville Gardens
Jackie Rooney, Granville Gardens
Edward & Ellen McCusker, Smythshill, Drumnagally
Angela Murtagh, Brookfield
Charles, Maureen & Patsy McCourt, Moorefield
Eamonn McEvoy, Castlewellan Road
Mary Agnes, James Patrick & Aidan Lavery, Victoria Gardens
Brian Cull, Mountainview Park
Denis Kelly, Enniskillen
M.M. Tony McGivern, Edenderry Gardens
Wednesday 13th March
Augustine & Kathleen Munster, Drogheda
Friday 15th March
Sheila Rooney, Primrose Gardens
RECENTLY DECEASED
Bernard (Bernie) Feeney, Downshire Gardens
Molly McParland, Glencar Meadows

Lenten Inter-Church Gatherings

Inter-Church Gatherings for the Sunday evenings of Lent continue this Sunday 10th March, at 7pm in Methodist Church, Downshire Place.

STATIONS of the CROSS

each Thursday evening at 7pm in St Patrick's Church.

Evening Masses during Lent

Wednesday evenings at 7.30pm in the Parochial House, Scarva Road, & Thursdays, St Patrick's Church at 7.30pm.

Exploring the Sunday Scriptures

You are invited to discuss the Sunday readings for Lent: **Wednesday 13th March at 8pm** in the Parochial House, Scarva Road and **Thursday 14th March at 10.30am** in the Meeting Rooms, Dromore Street

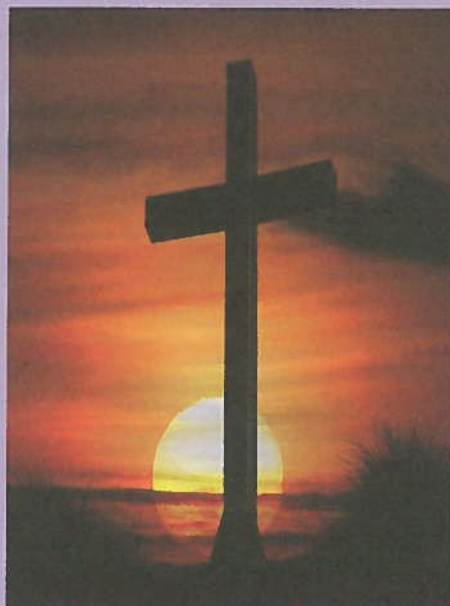
This fourth Sunday of Lent is known as 'Laetare Sunday'. In Latin laetare (rejoice) is the first word of the entrance antiphon: "Rejoice, Jerusalem..." Joy is the theme of today's Liturgy.

Can joy be turned on and off? Can you experience joy just because today is the 4th Sunday of Lent? "He who binds to himself a joy / Doth the winged life destroy," wrote William Blake. And besides, what an unlikely season for it, you might say! You must kiss it as it flies, said Blake; you cannot arrange it.

"At night there are tears, but joy comes with dawn," (Psalm 29:5). You can no more arrange for joy to descend on you than you can arrange for the sun to rise. Joy is a fruit of God's Spirit, not a feeling that can be turned on and off. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control" (Galatians 5:22). Notice that St Paul places it directly after love, so close is it to the heart of the Faith. It is a gift, not a purchase.

"God loved us with so much love... It is through grace that you are saved,"

(2nd reading). "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son..." (today's gospel reading). God loves us: this is the source of our joy, whether we actually experience it or not at the moment. Quite often we see the Christian faith diminished to a morality, an account of what we should do: how we should love God and our neighbour...



But St John wrote, "In this is love, not that we loved God but that God loved us" (1 John 4:10). "We love because God first loved us" (1 John 4:19). This is the source of our joy.

Happiness is conditional: it depends on good fortune, pleasant surroundings, congenial friends, a good digestion... But joy is unconditional. It depends on nothing. You can even experience joy in times of unhappiness. It is like a ray of sunshine that suddenly penetrates the clouds, a reminder that it is always there, whether you see it or not. Such is God's love. Even when we are at our worst, God still loves us. "God loved us when we were not, and when we were God's foes," said Meister Eckhart. "Whether we go near or far, God never goes far away but always stands nearby; and even if He cannot remain within, He never goes further than outside the door." There is an Irish proverb, "God's help is nearer than the door." *Is gaire cabhair Dé ná an doras,*

Fr Donagh O'Shea, O.P.,
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