

THE BALLINCOLLIG PARISHIONER



St. Mary & St. John
Station Road

Sunday 19-December-2004

Fourth Sunday of Advent

It was through Our Lady's faith and perfect obedience to God's will that Christ was born, the promised Emmanuel, God - with - us. God continues to be with us if we receive His Son in faith.



Christ Our Light
Innishmore

Prepare a way for the Christ Child this Christmas

Several winters ago a blizzard hit the north east of Scotland. Two feet of snow drifted to five and six feet in places. The telephone rang in the doctor's house. The time had come for John Campbell's wife to have a baby. It was impossible for the doctor to get through those deep snow drifts. John Campbell rang his neighbours: "Can you help the doctor to get through?" In no time, from all directions, came men with tractors, four-wheel drives and shovels. They worked very hard with all their strength for several hours until finally the old doctor was able to make it, just in time to deliver the Campbell baby.

In this Advent time, to all of us comes another call from another father. Our Father in Heaven, "Prepare a way for the Lord". His son is to be born again in a special way in a few weeks. The call comes through the Father's messenger, the prophet Isaiah and is urgently repeated by the Divine Child's cousin, John the Baptist who is also his forerunner as too says "Prepare a Way".

We are called, not to remove piles of snow, but piles of thoughtlessness, piles of neglect and piles of sin. The things that make it difficult and often impossible for the Divine Child to come into our homes and hearts at Christmas time.

To prepare the way we must think of what Christmas means. We must beg that he will come into our hearts and into the hearts of all people. We must do what will please Him. Be kind to one another, reach out to those in need, go out of our way to make someone more comfortable, more happy and more appreciated.

Yes, we all know that there is considerable material preparation for the coming of Christ. Gifts, cards decorations, food, planning and preparing for family celebrations. All of this good but there must be more.

We must prepare His way as a group, a parish community. That helping community of good neighbours in Scotland who cleared a way through the snow for the doctor gives us an idea how we too can clear the way for the Divine Child of Bethlehem to come into our world and into our hearts this Christmas time of 2004.

John O'Donovan

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

Priest

Let us bring our prayers to the Lord, the King of Glory.

Reader

For all who follow Christ, that they may prepare their hearts for Christmas this week.

**Lord, Hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.**

For parents who look forward to the birth of their child, as Joseph and Mary did, that they may have safe delivery and the gift of a healthy child.

**Lord, Hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our relatives and friends travelling home during this week, that they may travel safely, and find refreshment while staying with us.

**Lord, Hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.**

For people who dread Christmas because of bereavement or loneliness, that our support may help them through it.

**Lord, Hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.**

For those who have gone before us in faith, that they share in Christ's resurrection from the dead.

**Lord, Hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.**

For our own needs, for those who have asked our prayers.

**Lord, Hear us,
Lord, graciously hear us.**

Priest

O God, yours is the earth and its fullness, Bless your people by hearing the prayers we make, through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

Reflection for Parents

How often have our young children called out to us in fear. Maybe they're afraid of the night, or a bad dream, or an insect. They call out to us with complete trust that we will run to their side as soon as we hear their cry. It's important that we remind our children that God is with us always. Like a loving parent, God is there when we call out. It is reassuring for our children to hear about examples from our own lives that recall times when we were afraid and God was present to us.

Best Wishes for a Happy and Peaceful Christmas

The priests of the parish join in sending their Christmas greetings to all members of the parish and to all readers of the Ballincollig Parishioner. We thank you all for your help and co-operation during the past year.

You will be remembered in our Christmas Masses.

George O'Mahony, John O'Donovan, Michael O'Mahony & Paul O'Donoghue

Let the Lord enter! He is the King of glory.

Visit Our Website: www.ballincolligparish.ie

THE SUNDAY READINGS

First Reading: Isaiah 7:10-14
 The first reading contains Isaiah's prophecy of the events we celebrate at Christmas.

Second Reading: Romans 1:1-7
 Paul's message is another reminder of what we are preparing to celebrate.

Gospel: Matthew 1:18-24
 Matthew recounts the circumstances of Jesus' birth by telling us the story of Mary's engagement to Joseph and the child she carried originating from the Holy Spirit. This reality made no sense to Joseph, but he did not want to dishonour Mary so he planned to quietly divorce her. An angel came and told Joseph not to be afraid, that Mary's child was conceived by the Holy Spirit and that they should call him Emmanuel meaning, "God is with us."



SAINT OF THE WEEK

St. Frances Cabrini 22-December-2004

Maria Frances Cabrini knew early in life she would make religious work her life's vocation. Of her confirmation in 1857 she remarked, "...from that moment I was no longer of the earth...I knew the Holy Ghost had come to me."

As an expression of her religious motivation, Cabrini began teaching and working in orphanages, taking formal religious vows in 1877. Since no missionary order admitted women at the time, she then founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus in 1880. As superior, she saw the new order grow rapidly to seven convents in as many years. Pope Leo XIII wrote that he found her "a woman of marvellous intuition and of great sanctity."

In 1889, Mother Cabrini relocated to New York City at the direction of the Pope to minister to the growing numbers of impoverished immigrants, many of whom were Italian, in American cities. For the next 25 years, she travelled throughout the Americas and Europe, founding convents, schools, orphanages and hospitals. With amazing speed, she opened institutions in Panama, Argentina, Brazil, Paris, Madrid, Turin and London. Ultimately, she directed 67 houses, staffed by 1,500 nuns who aided the poor, the illiterate, the unskilled and the sick.

In 1909, Mother Cabrini became a naturalised citizen, and in 1910 she was named superior general for life over the order she had founded. Pope Pius XII canonised her, the first American to become a Saint, in 1946. In 1950, the Pope named her "the patron saint to immigrants."

Carol Concert Sunday 19th December

St. Mary & St. John Church @ 8.00 pm

Parish Choir
 Scoil Mhuire
 Cantoiri Muscraí

Reconciliation Service

Church of Christ Our Light @ 6.30 pm
 Church of St. Mary & St. John @ 8.00 pm
 on Monday 20th December 2004

ISPCC Holly Days Appeal

Unfortunately, this Christmas will not be a happy one for many Children in Ireland today. The holiday season is the most difficult to deal with for some. During the festive season, the ISPCC is there to help. Year after year, Childline is inundated with calls around Christmas time, and we offer help and support to those who need it most. Leanbh, which aims to stop child begging, and our many other services for Children, are also at their most active at this time of year.

You can help the ISPCC to make this a happy Christmas for Children in Ireland by supporting our Holly Days Appeal.

We urgently need volunteers to sell Holly badges at local supermarkets, shopping center, or town center, or to place a box locally in shops, factories, or place of work.

We will provide you with badges, boxes and posters.

Before you celebrate Christmas.....celebrate Childhood
 The ISPCC believes that abuse of children can almost always be prevented, provided the will to do so is there. Please help us to help Children this Christmas

For further information please contact John O'Mahony, 12 Mary St. Cork, (021) 4962949, or johnispcc@eircom.net.

Thank You

The Priests of the Parish would like to say a sincere "Thank You" to all the members of the Parish of Ballinacollig for their support and fidelity to the Church during 2004.

Many young parents bring their newly born babies for Baptism, the churches were packed for the First Communion, and so many wished to attend the Confirmation ceremonies that the Bishop came to the parish on three occasions as the churches could not hold the invited guests.

There is a great test of Christianity, it is the test that Jesus himself applied when he said, "I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, naked and you clothed me ...". The sincerity of our belief in Jesus is ultimately tested by our generosity to those in need.

The list of those who contribute their time to parish activity is too long to mention here. Choirs, Altar Societies, Parish Council, 'Parishioner', Offertory Collectors, Counters, Envelope Distributors, Legion, S.V. de P., Ministers of the Word & Eucharist, Servers, Parish Organisations, Children's Mass organisers, Folk Groups, Cantors, Musicians and Boards of Management etc. etc. are all volunteers who work for God and the parish. You will not see their pictures in the newspapers. You may not know their names, but we do see the results of their contribution in the liturgical, educational, cultural and social life of our community.

Our wish is that the Lord will reward you all with a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Prosperous New Year.

MINISTERS OF THE WORD

Dec-26-2004

St. Mary & St. John

Christ Our Light

8:30 am
Triona Collins
10:00 am
Grace Buttimer
12:00 Noon
Declan Chalmers

11:00 am
Bernard Vallely
12:30 pm
Con O'Connell
5:30 pm
Tom Reck

MASS TIMES

St. Mary & St. John

Christ Our Light

8:30 am, 10 am & 12 noon	Sunday	11 am, 12:30 pm & 5:30 pm
9:30 am	Monday	8:30 am
9:30 am	Tuesday	8:30 am
9:30 am	Wednesday	8:30 am
9:30 am	Thursday	8:30 am
9:30 am, 6 pm & 10 pm	Friday	8:30 am, 6 pm, 8 pm & 12 Midnight
8:30 am, 10 am & 12 noon (No Vigil Mass)	Saturday	11 am, 12:30 pm (No Vigil Mass)

CONFESSIONS

After 10:00 am Mass & before 6:00 pm Mass **Saturday** After 9:00 am Mass

BAPTISMS

5:00 pm **Saturday** 7:15 pm
12:45 pm **Sunday**

PARISH CLERGY

Priest on Duty 087-2479140

Fr. George O'Mahony P.P. 021-4871206
Fr. Michael O'Mahony C.C. 021-4877161
Fr. Paul O'Donoghue 021-4876055
Fr. John O'Donovan C.C. 021-4870434

MINISTERS OF THE EUCHARIST

Dec-26-2004

St. Mary & St. John

Christ Our Light

8:30 am Helen Kelly
Annette Murphy
10:00 am Miriam Maunsell
Mary Buckley
Breda Ring
Jerry O'Connor
Mary O'Regan
12 Noon Louie O'Leary
John Walshe
Pat Kelleher
Irene O'Brien
Ellen O'Sullivan
Chris Cotter

11:00 am Mary O'Mahony
Margaret Brown
Mona Bowen
Billy Barry
12:30 pm Mary Twomey
Terry O'Driscoll
Bernie O'Driscoll
Maura O'Driscoll
5:30 pm Garreth Irish
Shelia Curran
Phil O'Connell

May the Child Jesus rest at the inn of your heart this Christmas



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THE ORIGIN OF 'SILENT NIGHT'

A holy night, a silent night, with Mother and child, all is calm, all is bright.

This inspiring hymn came to us because an organ in Germany broke down about one hundred years ago.

Without an organ the parish priest in a small country church said it would be a 'Silent Night'. The organist would compose a melody. The priest would write the lyrics and the choir would just sing the soft praises of this hymn for Midnight Mass. That is all it was meant to be, just a simple hymn sung once and forgotten. Then a snowstorm prevented the man who fixed the organ from coming until the snow melted in the spring. After he finished he noticed the music left on the organ since Christmas night and took it back to Munich. the rest is history. "Silent Night" has reverberated throughout the ages. With its quiet sounds of love and peace it has inspired millions and millions, touching the lives of countless people.

MARY'S DREAM

'I had a dream, Joseph. I don't understand it, but I think it was about a birthday celebration for our son. The people in my dream had been preparing for about six weeks. They had decorated the house and bought new clothes. They'd gone shopping many times and bought many elaborate gifts. It was peculiar though, because the presents weren't for our son. They wrapped them in beautiful paper and stacked them under a tree. Yes, a tree, Joseph, right inside their homes! They'd decorated the tree with sparkling ornaments. There was a figure like an angel on the top of the tree. Everyone was laughing and happy. They gave gifts to each other, Joseph, not to our son. I don't think they even knew him. They never mentioned his name. I had the strangest feeling if our Jesus had gone to this celebration, he would have been intruding. How sad for someone not to be wanted at his own birthday party! I'm glad it was only a dream. How terrible, Joseph, if it had been real!

REFLECTION

I pray Lord, for the needy of our world:
 come among us as one who will help,
 and call us all to help the hungry and sick,
 the uneducated and homeless,
 those who are victims of violence and war,
 the lonely and depressed.
 May your coming this Christmas be for them a
 time of peace and love;
 may we bring to them, in what way we can
 the joy of your coming.

CAMÁN YE FAITHFUL!

Again this Christmas in the time-honoured tradition we are once more in reminiscent mode reflecting on times past and warmly remembering old friends long departed to their eternal reward. An anecdote special to this writer is hereby fondly recalled.

Back in the early fifties as the week-end approached my gran-uncle, Denny, would invariably enquire of this hurling-mad youngster, 'Are we going to the 'Goal' in the Park on Sunday? The answer in the affirmative would come back with alacrity! Sundays were strictly reserved for Mass and matches so after lunch we duly embarked on the seven-mile trek from Ballincollig on our trusty bicycles. This was a weekly pilgrimage and yours truly clearly recalls pedalling fast through the village so as to avoid the gaze and comments of loitering school-pals.

Onward we motored not breaking our journey till we alighted safely on the tree-lined Marina only to hear that familiar cry 'Look after your bikes, sir? My gran-uncle gladly parted with the parking fee of 1/6d and headed off for our 'theatre of dreams' located twixt the Showground's and the Atlantic Pond on the banks of the Lee. Creature-comforts, however, were in sparse supply in this corrugated-iron enclosure - standing-room only for the faithful followers with only a tiny stand offering the only covered accommodation.

Imagine our joy then when a few years later rows of concrete seating running the full length of one side of the pitch beckoned invitingly to weary cyclists from afar. These were our 'corporate boxes' and we always arrived early to make sure of a seat near the half-way line! Even on darkening autumnal days, it was the magic of Christy Ring, above all, in the colours of Cork and Glen Rovers, that unfailingly illuminated the hurling landscape for all and sundry.

Childhood inevitably gave way to manhood and we were to return again for the final time in 1975 (and then by motor-car!) to view the rising edifice of a modern stadium - Pairc Ui Chaoimh. 'It's a great place, altogether' he opined totally overcome by the transformation that greeted our eyes. Sadly a few months later, my uncle Denny - the salt of the earth and soul of ould decency - was called ashore by the Good Lord but I strongly suspect that in his mind's eye he had already seen a glimpse of the 'promised land' on that memorable day on Marinaside.

May we all rejoice in this season of goodwill - 2004 - with our loved ones and our very own treasured memories of childhood days.

Nollaig faoi shéan is faoi mhaise díobh go léir.

J.T