

## Mass Times

**Sundays:** 9 am & 11 am  
**Saturday Vigil:** 6.00 pm  
**Tuesday & Friday:** 9.30 am  
**Fr. Michael Keohane Co-PP**



## The Children's Voices



Our church is a very busy place these days as schools rehearse and celebrate their Christmas carol concerts and nativity plays. It's great to hear the voices of the children and young people in the church. We are grateful to their dedicated teachers and school staffs who give so much of themselves in these preparations and celebrations.

This coming week, we say a special word of thanks to Ms. Linda Keane who retires as principal of Scoil Ursula having been principal for the last fifteen years and a member of staff there for many years. Go raibh maith agat Ms. Keane on behalf of all in the Parishes of Blackrock and Mahon. We welcome Ms. Liz Cronin as the new principal of Scoil Ursula in the new year and we wish her every success and blessing in her new role and responsibilities. Fáilte.

Fr. Michael  
[frmichael@corkandross.org](mailto:frmichael@corkandross.org)



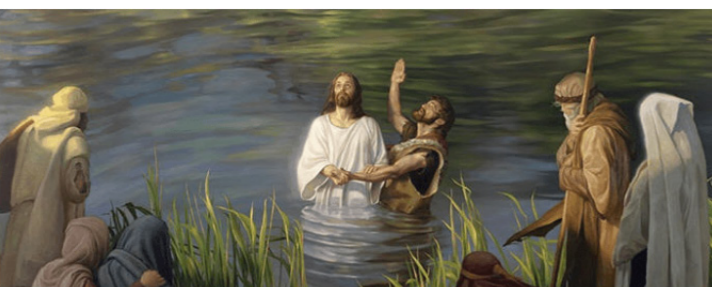
**Christmas Arrangements in St. Michael's –**  
Masses on Tuesday Christmas Eve @ 6pm & 8pm.  
Wednesday Christmas Morning Masses @ 9am & 11am.

**Sacrament of Confession** – after Masses on 21st/22nd December on the Fourth Sunday of Advent.

**Christmas Offering Envelopes** – have been delivered to homes recently and are also available in the church. Thank you all for your generosity and support. It's deeply appreciated. Fr. Michael

**Family of Parishes – Christian Meditation Group** meets each Friday morning at 11am in Blackrock Parish Centre – Contact 087 6477841 for information

**Christmas Bouquet Shared Mass** – available from the Sacristy after Masses.



## A brief introduction on Sunday's readings

**First Reading Zephaniah 3:14-18**  
Happiness is a wonderful thing. Happiness in believing is also wonderful and today's reading describes why faith and being joyful go together.  
**Second Reading Philippians 4:4-7**  
This short reading is remarkable. Paul is now an old man, under house arrest and facing probable death. So how does he feel? Let him tell you himself.  
**Gospel Luke 3:10-18**  
People around John the Baptist were on the lookout for signs of God's presence. They also wondered how to prepare... not a bad question to ask oneself before Christmas.

## The Papers Say.....

**Irish Catholic.** (1). Priests welcome Pope Francis' recent suggestion that priests keep their homilies to a maximum of ten minutes to ensure message is clear. (2) Nuala O'Loan: Many people with disabilities are 'terrified' of assisted suicide bill. (3). David Quinn: Notre Dame is renewed, now for the Church itself. (4). Mary Kenny: A serious point to a temperance drink.

**Messenger.** (1). Fr. Peter McVerry: The pain behind addiction. (2). Why pray for the Dead? (3). Fr. Bernard Cotter: Families of Parishes. (4). Bishop Larry Duffy of Clogher looks forward to new challenges of ministry in his diocese.

**Tablet of 7/12.** (1). Out of the flames, into the light -- After a remarkable restoration, Notre Dame prepares to welcome worshippers for the first time since the 2019 fire that almost destroyed it. (2). The charity debate. -- Is it time to tear off the Band Aid? (3). Turkey. -- Pope may join Nicaea Council celebrations.



**Adi Roche** received the honorary Doctorate of Arts from UCC in recognition of her work as 'a humanitarian and educator of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, campaigner for peace and leadership as an anti-nuclear advocate'. The ceremony took place on 11 December at UCC's historic Aula Maxima, bringing together dignitaries, academics, family and friends to celebrate her achievements, alongside fellow honourees Jeremy Irons, Lord David Puttnam and Dominic Casey.



## PARISH DEFIBRILLATORS

There are 2 Defibrillators located in the Parish, one in the village & one outside Murphy's Circle K PetrolStation. The code to operate both is 2017

## Observations

You could be forgiven for thinking that in today's world and even more in today's church that "joy" is extra to requirement, the honours course, so to speak, while the rest of us get on with the daily grind. Nothing could be further from the truth. Being joyful is a built-in part of believing. The fact that it is a challenge for us today is simply a sign that we need to hear the message again and again. Prophetic figures always help us to think beyond the immediate current situation and access dimensions of life hidden by the everyday and concealed by conventional wisdom.

Joy really is the fruit of an encounter, followed by a paradoxical combination of deep engagement and inner freedom. Precisely because we are fully engaged, because — paradoxically — we are fully free in our commitment, a quiet joy is released in each one of us. It is the joy of being fully ourselves — in ourselves, before others and above all in the presence of God. Joy is a mark of being a Christian.

## Reflections

1. "What should we do?" The common thread in John's answers was to encourage his questioners to be other-centred rather than self-centred, each in the context of their own circumstances. In your experience what difference has it made for you when you changed your attitude in this way?
2. John told the people in a direct and honest way what they should do. Perhaps you have had friends who did not beat about the bush but have told you honestly what they thought about your behaviour when you asked them? In gratitude recall such friends.
3. The humility of John comes out in this passage, happy to acknowledge that he only had a minor role to play in relation to the Messiah. At the same time he was enthused by his mission to "proclaim the good news to the people." What difference has it made for you when you were able to see the good in yourself, and use your gifts without having to score by portraying yourself as greater than someone else?

## PRAYER

Almighty God, you sent your Son into a world where the wheat must be winnowed from the chaff and evil clings even to what is good. Let the fire of your Spirit purge us of greed and deceit, so that, purified, we may find our peace in you and you may delight in us.  
Grant this through him whose coming is certain, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.

**Trócaire Christmas Gifts of Change** bring real hope and opportunity to families and communities living with poverty and injustice across our world, and a chance to create lasting and positive change from Somalia to Guatemala, from Sudan to Palestine. There are gifts for everyone starting at €5 for the Gift of Soap. You can support the gifts by buying them online at [trocaire.org/gifts](http://trocaire.org/gifts); by phone 1800 408 408/021-4275622; by post or in person to Trócaire, 9, Cook Street, Cork. T12 F583.

## TARSUS SCRIPTURE SCHOOL: Advent 2024

Our Advent/Christmas programme this year takes up the theme of the Jubilee, the year of the Lord's favour and a key to Luke's presentation of the Gospel.  
Go to [www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie) to register.

## Medjugorje Pilgrimage May 28th 2025.

Last chance to avail of €100 discount if fully paid by 20th December. Cost €849 pps with discount (€949 thereafter). All who travel with this group entered in to draw for this group only, to win base cost of pilgrimage.  
Group Leader Sean O'Shaughnessy 0862959390.  
Still a few seats available. Tour Operator Joe Walsh Tours

## Thought for the day

"What then should we do?" is both obvious and pertinent. In the maelstrom of life, it is good to stand back and discern what is being asked of me in the many contexts of life: family member, spouse, parent, disciple, leader, pastor, evangeliser and so forth. In these different roles, how should I be, what should I do so as to enable others too to fulfil their own callings, as family member, spouse etc. As in the teaching of John the Baptist, our responses are authentic only if they are practical, down-to-earth and real.

## Prayer

Help me, Lord, to recognise in the everyday what you desire of me. Help me to see what are the practical steps I can take from today onwards so as to be a better disciple of your son, Jesus, the coming one, whom John proclaims today to all who would listen.

K O'Mahony OSA

## ENTRANCE - Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence

Let all mortal flesh keep silence,  
and with fear and trembling stand;  
ponder nothing earthly minded,  
for, with blessing in His hand,  
Christ our God to earth descendeth,  
our full homage to demand.

King of kings, yet born of Mary,  
as of old on earth He stood,  
Lord of lords, in human vesture,  
in the body and the blood.  
He will give to all the faithful  
His own self for heav'nly food.

At His feet the six-winged seraph,  
cherubim with sleepless eye,  
veil their faces to the Presence,  
as with ceaseless voice they cry,  
"Alleluia, alleluia,  
alleluia, Lord Most High!"

## RECESSIONAL – O COME EMMANUEL

O come, O come, Emmanuel,  
To free your captive Israel,  
That mourns in lonely exile here,  
Until the Son of God appear.  
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel,  
To you shall come Emmanuel.

O royal branch of Jesse's tree,  
Redeem us all from tyranny;  
From pain of hell your people free,  
And over death win victory.  
Refrain: Rejoice! Rejoice! O Israel,  
To you shall come Emmanuel.

**Anam Cara**, the organisation that supports bereaved parents, will hold its monthly Parent Support Evening on **Tuesday 17th December at 7.30pm in the Fernhill House Hotel, Clonakilty.**



This event is free and open to all bereaved parents regardless of the age your child died, the circumstances of their death, or how recent their death was. You do not need to register in advance.

If you would like to receive a weekly commentary on the Weekly Scripture Readings, both in AUDIO, VIDEO and in PDF, please log on to [www.tarsus.ie](http://www.tarsus.ie) and register to receive the emails.