

Mass Times

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



Happy New Year

Christmas has been a very special time in our parish. We were blessed with great attendances at all Masses. There was a lovely atmosphere in the church itself and in the community. All the preparations came together to ensure that we truly celebrated the Birth of Jesus. It was lovely to see so many children and young people with their families at Christmas Masses.



We were blessed with beautiful music and singing at all Masses ensuring joyful celebrations. We are grateful to the Parish Choir, Folk Group, 9am Mass musicians and soloists who made Christmas memorable and who contribute so much throughout the year at weekday and weekend Masses.

We thank Donal and Barry, our ever-present and dedicated volunteer sacristans, church collectors and counters, Ministers of the Word and Eucharist and their co-ordinators, those who erected the church crib, our dedicated Altar Society who caringly prepared the church for Christmas and look after things throughout the year, those who voluntarily clean and maintain the church and its environs. So many people volunteer in different ways and we are grateful to them all for making our church and parish such a welcoming and beautiful place.

We thank all our parish representative groups for their support, expertise and involvement. We look forward to developing other parish groups and initiatives in 2025.

May God bless you and your family for 2025 and may the words of the first reading on 1st January, the Feast of Mary the Mother of God and World Day of Prayer for Peace be special for you and your family:

'May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace.'

Fr. Michael

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BLACKROCK ST VINCENT DE PAUL

January Church Gate collection will take place on **Week ending 4/5 January 2025**

Your support as always is greatly appreciated.

THERE WILL BE ONLY 1 COLLECTION ON THE SVP WEEKEND

Sunday Cuppa continues in the Parish Centre after 11 am mass on **5th January 2025** for tea and bikkies and more chat!
Cheaper than the Village 'cos it's free!!
Everyone welcome!

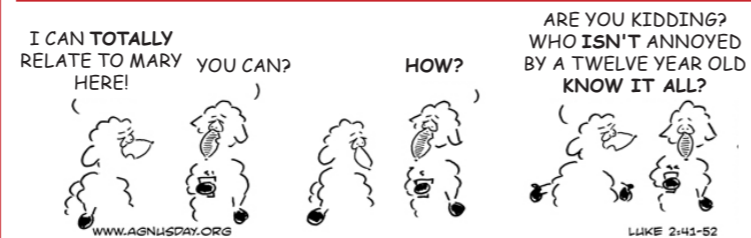


A brief introduction on Sunday's readings

First reading 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28
The birth of Samuel was special. His parents, Hannah and her husband pray for a child and their prayer is heard. They come back to the Temple to dedicate their son to God — he will become the great seer and prophet Samuel.
Second reading 1 John 3:1-2
Our short reading uses family language—we are God's children—this is what we are now and what we will be in the wonderful, unknown future which God has in store for those who love him.
Gospel Luke 2:41-52
This moving story will touch the hearts of parents today and perhaps surprise them. Its real purpose is to foreshadow, to portray in miniature, what the Christ child will become: God's prophet, who will bear the word of God to us.

Celebrating Altar Servers: Altar servers are a really important ministry in each of our Parishes. Since Covid some Parishes have struggled to reengage Altar Servers. The Office for Mission and Ministry and the Coordinator for Youth Ministry are looking at ways of supporting Parishes to develop or introduce Altar Servers. A first step is to gather with all of our Altar Servers and those priests and adult volunteers who look after them to celebrate Altar Serving in a fun atmosphere and to look at how we can together develop this ministry. We are gathering on Saturday, January 25th from 2.30pm to 4.00pm (venue to be confirmed).

Come and Discover Alpha: Would your Parish or Family of Parishes like to find out more about Alpha? We are hosting a 'Come and Discover Alpha' day from **10am to 4pm in the Visitor Centre of the Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Anne on Saturday, January 18th from 10am to 4pm.** In the morning, you will have the opportunity to experience a full Alpha session, and we will be offering workshops in the afternoon on how to run Alpha. Registration is essential: tinyurl.com/mission-ministry



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 and register to receive the emails.

FIRST FRIDAY DEVOTIONS:
Exposition, Rosary and Benediction will NOT take place on JANUARY 3rd, 2025.
We will return to normal in February but will have the Rosary and Benediction at 4.00pm.

Observations

*Good people all, this Christmastide,
Consider well and bear in mind
What our good God for us has done
In sending his beloved Son.*

"Consider well" would make a good translation of a phrase towards the end of today's Gospel:
His mother stored up all these things in her heart.

For all of us, the quality of our relationships is the most life-giving, the most challenging and the most joyful dimension of our lives, as we know. Christmas is a time of when we have more contact than usual with our families and relations. It is no harm to stand back and consider well this important dimension of life: have my loving relationships evolved the way I want them to be? Should I choose to invest more creatively in certain relationships? How can I be a spouse, parent, sibling, friend, so that I may be a blessing to those who meet me? This is certainly something we can consider well.

We can take this a step further. All our important loves are already participations in the love of God. In the letter of St John, the writer speaks plainly and directly

*God is love,
and those who abide in love abide in God,
and God abides in them. (1 John 4:16 NRSV)*

Our alternative second reading for today offers an invitation that we could consider well:

*Think of the love the father has lavished upon
by letting us be called God's children
and that is what we are.*

We don't believe in a God who might be out there somewhere; we believe in God who is love and who loves each one of us with a unique love. That is also something that we can certainly consider well.

Reflections

1. Luke's skill as a storyteller comes through in the details of the story in a way that many people can identify with: the loss of a child, the frantic search, the seemingly offhand speech of the teenager. Let the drama of the story speak to you. Where do you find good news in it?

2. In Luke's Gospel this story serves to give a glimpse of the future greatness of Jesus, the teacher of his people. Sometimes we can look back over our own life, or the lives of others, and with hindsight can see in childhood or teenage years a glimpse of gifts and talents that were later to blossom. Where have you seen this?

3. "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" This seemingly insensitive reply by Jesus to Mary serves to highlight that in his life the mission given him by God would take precedence over family ties, painful though this would be. Perhaps you have known situations in your own life, or in the life of another, where there was pain for family members as you followed your own destiny? Where in the midst of the pain was the good news?

PRAYER

*As your sons and daughters, O loving God, we come before you in thanksgiving, called and united by your eternal Word.
Teach us to ponder the mystery of Nazareth, that we may always find in you the source of our strength and the unity of our families.
We ask this through Jesus Christ, your Word made flesh, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, in the splendour of eternal light, God for ever and ever. Amen.*

Mass cards are available in the sacristy after every mass both at weekend and weekdays.

Thought for the day

Today we have a chance to reflect on the mystery of our own families! It really is a bit of mystery, how we mostly come out okay from this most intense and formative of experiences. We receive so much that we really want to ponder and to treasure. We can also be burdened by attitudes and traits that we might well wish we were without. Yet, through it all, we are grateful. Family is our "first love" and never really loses its importance for us.
Prayer
Bless all our families. We thank you for the very gift of life itself we have through our parents and for all the other many gifts we receive from our families. We have received so much: help us to continue to give. Help us too to know what to overlook and forget, to pay attention to what can be healed and forgiven, and through it all to continue to love. Amen.

K O'Mahony OSA

ENTRANCE - Hark! the Herald Angels sing

Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
Peace on earth, and mercy mild;
God and sinners reconciled."
Joyful, all ye nations, rise,
Join the triumph of the skies;
With angelic hosts proclaim,
"Christ is born in Bethlehem."
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;
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Christ, by highest heav'n adored,
Christ, the everlasting Lord:
Late in time behold Him come,
Offspring of a virgin's womb.
Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,
Hail th' incarnate Deity!
Pleased as man with man to dwell,
Jesus our Immanuel.
Hark! the herald angels sing,
"Glory to the new-born King;

RECESSIONAL - Adeste Fideles

1. Adeste Fideles laeti triumphantes,
Venite, venite in Bethlehem.
Natum videte, Regem Angelorum:

Venite adoremus, Venite adoremus
Venite adoremus Dominum

2. Deum de Deo, lumen de lumine,
gestant puellae viscera
Deum verum, genitum non factum:
Chorus

O come, all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant
O come ye, o come ye to Bethlehem
O come and behold Him, born the King of Angels
O come, let us adore Him O come, let us adore Him
O come, let us adore Him Christ the Lord

Anam Cara - supporting parents after bereavement, are hosting their first Online Bereavement Information Evening of 2025 on Tuesday 7th of January 2025.
This online talk is for bereaved parents only.
Date: Tuesday 7th of January 2025
Time: 7pm - 8:30pm
Guest Speaker: Niamh Finucane

