

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

11th February 2024

Weekend Masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet & 7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory & 11:00am Dromara

Weekday Masses

Mon 9:00am Leitrim & 7:30pm Dechomet
Tues 9:00am Dromara


Ash
Wednesday 14th Feb

7am Leitrim 10am Gargory
7pm Dromara 8pm Dechomet

Fri 7:30pm Dromara

Recently Deceased



ANNIVERSARIES

DECHOMET

Sat 10th Mickey Turley & Ellie Morgan
Mon 12th Kevin Gregory

LEITRIM

Sat 10th Fr Frank Lyons
Rita Murray
Maggie, Mary & Annie O'Hare
& Deceased Family Members

Sat 17th Patrick Malone

DROMARA

Sun 11th Peter McEvoy & Martin Drake
Mary O'Hare (*Dunbeg*)
Marie King (*Gransha*)
Paschal Hawthorne

Sun 18th Mary McBride (*Downpatrick*)
Philip Lundy & Lundy, McGrillen
& Cauley Families

GARGORY

Sun 18th Teresa, Patrick & Elizabeth McCartan

SVP

Dromara 077 3883 8191

Drumgooland 078 2541 9067

Diocesan Safeguarding contact:

Stephen Sherry 073 0124 6329

Email: safeguardingdirector@dromorediocese.org

Collections Dromara Drumgooland

Parish £595 £980

Priest £773 £1,439

Figures include Jan standing orders

Thank you for your continued contributions

Do This in Memory

The First Communion programme
continues this weekend

Trócaire Boxes are available at the back
of the chapels. Please take one home and
place it in the house. A simple reminder
that others need help and we can
contribute to improving their lives.

Parish Council Meeting

Dromara Mon 12th Feb 8pm

Dromore Diocesan Historical Society

The Society is delighted to welcome
Dr Geraldine Foley of the Inland Waterways
Association of Ireland to present a talk
entitled "*From Newry to 'Demerari': James
Blair, merchant, sugar planter and slave owner.*"

Mon 19th Feb 7:30pm

Newry Parish Centre

Newry man James Blair was an owner
of plantations in the West Indies.
He entered Parliament in 1818 to protect
the interests of slave-owners. Blair sat in
the House of Commons from 1818 to 1830,
and later from 1837 to 1841.

**St Mary's PS Dechomet Parents' Support
Group** would like to invite you to a **Family
Bingo Night** in Liatroim Fontenoy's GAC
Hall on **Fri 23rd Feb at 6.30pm.**

Solitude Saturday 24th Feb

An opportunity to take some time for
yourself, in the beautiful surroundings of
Glenvale Convent to refresh mind and body.
Beginning with Mass at 10am and ending at
3.30pm. Refreshments and a light lunch
included. Suggested donation £20
Places limited so early booking essential
contact (028) 3083 2828

Sunday Message

SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year B • 11 February 2024 • Colour: Green • Psalter Week 2



THE POWER OF TOUCH

MARK 1:40-45

Think of what it would be like to be deprived of touch, to be starved of it, to never experience it at all. In the 1960s, a social scientist called Harry Harlow carried out an experiment on infant rhesus monkeys.

He cut them off from all contact and deprived them of touch for a full year. He wanted to see how it would affect them. After 30 days, he assessed the monkeys as being enormously disturbed. The longer they were isolated, the more it affected their immune systems and their behaviours. They began to self-harm. After a full year, they were largely incapable of functioning at all. They were suffering from what social scientists call 'skin hunger,' touch deprivation. Harlow's results are replicated each year by the estimated 80 thousand American prison inmates held in solitary confinement. Experts say skin hunger is a major factor in incidents of depression among humans, just as it was among those monkeys.

Now consider the power of loving, gentle touch, skin on skin. Almost a decade ago, I developed chronic lower back pain. Even after five major surgeries, the pain remained as persistent as ever. Loving me as intensely as they did, my parents felt my pain. A wonderful source of comfort to me during that time was when my mother would give me a back rub. She would gently run her hands over that part of my back where the pain was most acute. It was extraordinarily soothing. For just a little while, my pain was eased. Her loving, gentle touch brought me wonderful comfort and consolation. The healing power of a mother's touch.

Jesus's ministry was all about healing, transforming, making whole what was broken. And he knew the power of touch. We see it over and over again in the Gospels. See how Jesus reaches out and touches the man with leprosy in today's Gospel. A gentle touch is all it takes and he is healed.

Time and again in the Gospels we find the same story repeated. Jesus meets someone in distress and reaches out to touch them. He touches them, and their health is restored. He touches them, and they are made new. The blind see, the crippled walk, haemorrhages dry up, the dead are restored to life. All because of Jesus' touch.

Jesus didn't need to physically touch them. His word alone would have been sufficient. But he chose to do so. He wanted to do so. He was deliberately, consciously tactile, because he knew the power and necessity of human touch, its capacity to soothe and heal. ■

DO

Give someone close to you a gentle hug or hold their hand. Let them feel your loving presence.



PRAY

Pray that the Lord will touch you, as he touched the man with leprosy, so as to make you the kind of person he wants you to be.

SAY

"Jesus, help me to reach out to others in a way that is life-giving. Amen."

LEARN

A sacrament is a grace-filled encounter with Christ. In the sacrament of the sick, in the anointing with oils on the forehead and on the hands, Christ touches us. Christ comes to us, to wrap us in his tender embrace, to bless us in our weariness, encourage us in our sadness, strengthen us in our weakness, ease us in our pain, forgive us in our sins, lift us in our worries, sustain us for whatever lies ahead.

In the Eucharist we encounter Christ in a most intimate way. We receive his own Body and make it part of ours. His gentle, grace-filled touch nourishes us for the journey of life.

REFLECT

Unless we live in solitary confinement, we touch people every day – family, friends, work colleagues – and it's good to think about how we touch them.

We touch them not only through physical touch, but also through word and gesture. The way we touch others can be positive or negative. It can build up or knock down. It can be constructive and life-enhancing or destructive and life-diminishing.

We can touch someone with a warm hug or embrace. Or we can touch someone with a slap or a beating. Domestic violence

and physical and sexual abuse are major problems that we still need to address as Church and society.

We can touch someone with a word of encouragement or gratitude or love. Or we can touch someone with a word of contempt or anger or abuse. We know all too well that words have the power to wound even more deeply than a physical blow, and that bullying in schools and in the workplace is a major problem, made even worse now by the internet.

We can touch someone with a gesture that shows respect or appreciation or thanks. Or

a gesture that shows anger or contempt or impatience. Think of the many incidents of road rage we hear about today.

Jesus' touch gave people life. All he said and did gave people life. He gives us life even now when we are touched by him in the Eucharist and in the sacrament of the sick.

And that is our challenge – to invite Jesus to touch and transform us, in the Eucharist, in the sacraments, in our life of prayer. And we are challenged also to bring the gentle touch of Jesus to all those whose lives touch ours. ■