

Recently, glancing out the window as I travelled along a motorway, I caught sight of an old dwelling that had gone to ruin. Its walls were half-fallen, its roof was long gone, and all manner of vegetation was sprouting all over it. It stood in silent dereliction, abandoned. It was a striking sight, and it got me thinking.

In years gone by, who knows what that building might have looked like? Who knows who might have lived there? Perhaps several generations of children were born in that house. The crumbling walls may have once stood strong. Inside, they might have been painted brightly or papered in a design that pleased its occupants. Perhaps photos of those who lived there hung on the walls alongside treasured paintings or memorabilia. The walls offered protection from the wind and rain, providing refuge in difficult times and a focus for gatherings in happy times.

Now they are derelict – a sad sight. But let's look again, though.

There was a greenness to the scene that spoke to me of new life. There were leaves and twigs and branches, plants and grass and soil. Even in its dereliction, life is working in these walls. I imagine small animals finding shelter within these walls and being thankful for it. I can picture the flowers that will bloom on the branches and amongst the grass. I can almost smell their wonderful scent and hear the soil as it provides nutrients to this new life in a selfless act of giving. Viewed in this way, the scene I saw as one of dereliction becomes one of beauty.

Most of all, when I think of the house that these walls made, I am struck by the fact that it 'is.' It still is. It is still standing. Of course, it's not standing in the same way as before, but it still serves a purpose. It inspires those who take the time to really see it, encouraging them to reflect and to think, not only about the house but about themselves and their own lives.

Many times in our lives, we feel derelict – abandoned, decrepit. We feel that things have changed, but not for the better. Perhaps we have aged and think our lives don't have the 'pizzazz' they once had. We can feel we

have no purpose, that the measurements of success – money, possessions, youth, shapely bodies, perfect relationships, knowledge – don't apply to us. And these negative thoughts are often reinforced by the messages we receive from others, from the media, and our own internal critic. In these circumstances, it's easy to feel down, dilapidated, even depressed.

DEEPER LOOK

But, inspired by the image of that derelict house, perhaps we could take a longer, deeper look. If you feel derelict, down or in ruins, consider who you are at your core: You are beautiful. In so many ways, you are beautiful. Outside and in.

Sure, things change, and change can be difficult. But no matter how significant or traumatic that change may be, your life's purpose continues. Though you may not always realise it, you count to many people who would be lost without your wisdom, your presence, your acts of love.

Appreciate yourself. Get your hair done. Enjoy a nice meal. Talk to someone who loves you. Listen to or play a song that opens up your heart. Walk in the most beautiful place you know. Give to a stranger in need. Write a list of the times and ways you've been blessed.

Remember, there is a God who dreamt you up and loves and admires the person you are becoming. Far from being abandoned, you have a constant companion and supporter in God.

In these strange and worrying times of global pandemic, many of us can become worried, upset and disconnected from others as well as from our own inherent worth. So, perhaps, as well as taking something from those key messages above, you might share them with someone you know who needs to read or hear them. We are one big family of God's children, a communion of saints, and so must look out for one another.

I pray this week that we may look again at our lives and see not dereliction and purposelessness, but that we are still standing and moving forward with purpose and hope, in God's loving hands. ■



Today's readings

Deut 6:2-6

Heb 7:23-28

Mk 12:28-34

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Today's Gospel cautions against developing an "us" versus "them" mentality, especially in relation to other Christian churches. Jesus and the scribe do not let this happen. In their mutual affirmation of love of God and of neighbour, they recognise God at work in each other. This is a lesson all people of faith can take on board.

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SERIES: GOD IN THE EVERYDAY

Season colour GREEN

In this series, **Jim Deeds** finds evidence of the divine in the ordinary and extraordinary events of every day.

BEAUTY BEYOND THE RUINS



In these difficult, challenging times, it's easy to feel derelict, down and in ruins, which is why we need to remember who we are at our very core.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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31st Sunday in Ordinary Time – 31st October 2021

Recently deceased

Anna O'Hare, formerly Katesbridge Rd, Drumodonnell
Sean Fegan, Newcastle

Anniversary Masses

Dechomet

Sat 30th Peter Joseph Kelly (Derryneil) and
Deceased Family Members

Leitrim

Sat 30th Rose McAleenan and Nicholas Duggan
Annie B Morgan and Deceased Family
Members (Legananny)

Patsy, Jeanette and James Savage

Wed 3rd Michael and Margaret McCartan and
Deceased Family Members
(Ballydrummond)

Sat 6th Pauline Kelly
Alice McAnulty

Dromara

Sun 31st Bridget, Peter and Frank McEvoy

Fri 5th Frank McEvoy (MM)
Pearl McEvoy

Sun 7th Sarah Hughes (Finnis)
Petesy, Brigid and Theresa McGrady

Gargory

Sun 7th Felix McCartan and Deceased Family
Members

November Dead Lists please return these to the
chapels or parochial house. The dead will be prayed
for at all masses in the parishes during November and
thirty masses will be offered for them.

Drumgooland St Vincent de Paul

Contact us in confidence on 075 8644 7427

Gargory Altar Society Nov – Rita & Clare

Congratulations to Laura Dixon and Jason Vanderburg
who were married recently

Parish Collections Dromara £1098 Drumgooland £819

Hospice £1200 received so far. Next weekend will be
the closing date for receiving donations and passing
them on.

Masses for recently deceased

Mon 8th Nov, 7:30pm, Dechomet

Wed 10th Nov, 7:30pm, Leitrim

Fri 12th Nov, 7:30pm, Dromara

The dead are not forgotten and for those who have
been bereaved recently, it is a continual remembrance.
This year it is not possible to gather as we did over the
past number of years. There has been no invite to each
family as the churches could not hold everybody that
would wish to attend. Since last year there have been
3 deaths around Dechomet, 17 around Leitrim and
8 around Dromara. If family members of the recently
deceased do wish to attend, they are welcome but
please choose your own safety first. The 1m social
distance is essential in church. The masses will be
streamed and available to those who wish to pray at
home. A candle will be lit for each person who has
died over the past year and another candle for all our
deceased family and friends. There can be no carrying
up of candles this year. Please give priority to the
families of the recently deceased, if there is safe space
not used others are welcome.

Decorating Dromara Altar – volunteers are needed
to decorate the altar each month, the parish will
reimburse expenses. Please step forward, no
expertise is required, simply a desire to help.

St Joseph's Young Priests Society - a Mass for our
deceased priests, religious and members of the Society
will be celebrated by Archbishop Eamon Martin in
Newry Cathedral, Wed 10th Nov at 7.30pm. This
invitation is extended to all throughout the Dromore
Diocese, including priests, religious, members of St
Joseph's Young Priests Society and parishioners.

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

Wed 7:30pm Leitrim

Fri 7:30pm Dromara

Masses for All Saints and All Souls

There is no obligation to attend mass at the moment.
In order to create an opportunity for those who wish to
attend mass over the two days there will be a mass in
each church

Mon 1st Nov 9:00am Leitrim and
7:30pm Dechomet

Tues 2nd Nov 9:00am Dromara and
7:30pm Gargory

Sick and housebound - the visitation of those who are
unable to come out to mass is now able to begin again.
Over November I will touch in with those that I have
not yet seen. I will sanitise my hands and wear a face
covering, visits will be short and it is up to the
person/family if they wish a visit or not at this time.

Holy Water – there will not be Holy Water in the fonts,
but containers have been filled and blessed. This is for
people who wish to fill their own Holy Water bottles.
Please do not use the containers to dip your hands in,
only to fill your own container.

Support the Benedictine Community

Buy your Christmas gifts at the shop of Holy Cross
Abbey, 119 Kilbroney Road, Rostrevor. Candles and
Soaps made by the monks, Books and a range of
different gifts. Shop opens 9:00-11:00am and 2.30-
5:00pm. See www.benedictinemonks.co.uk