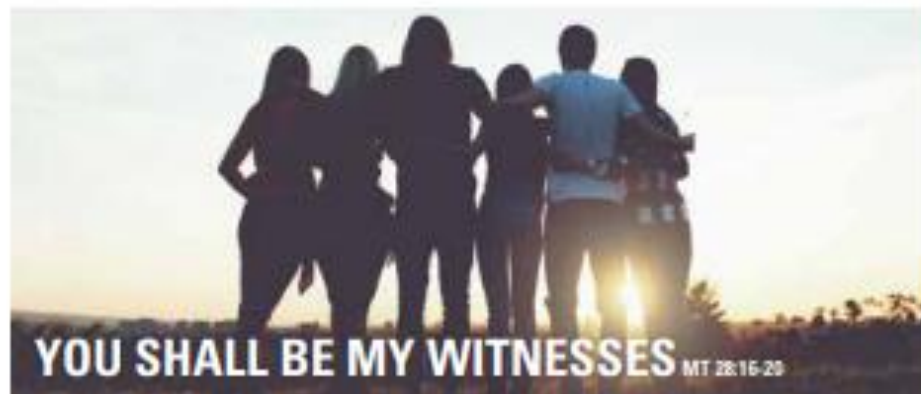


# Sunday Message

THE ASCENSION OF THE LORD

THE WORD

Year A • 21 May 2023 • Colour: White • Feaster Week 3



Today we celebrate the feast of the Ascension. Jesus has gone to his father in heaven, and the disciples feel his absence. They are alone again.

We can only imagine what it must have been like for them to experience the joy of the resurrection - having the risen Jesus back with them, though different in form - and then to experience his absence once more when he leaves them to ascend to heaven. Even though he promises to send them the Holy Spirit, they might well have sung with Gilbert O'Sullivan: "Alone again, naturally."

The period between Ascension and Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit will come, is called the in-between time. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit will descend on the disciples to strengthen them and fill them with a powerful sense of God's presence. But meanwhile, they find themselves all alone.

It can feel the same for us. There are times when we feel as if God is not with us. Ours is a broken world plagued by all kinds of suffering, injustice, violence, and pain. None of us escapes the harsh reality of the human condition.

But the promise Jesus made to his disciples is true: God has not abandoned God's people. God is with us. The Holy Spirit is with us. The Second Vatican Council says that the Church, and all the People of God, are imbued with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit gives us the strength to cope with the difficulties that come our way and the courage to witness to the Gospel. ■

## LEARN

As Christians, we are called to be the face of Christ to all we meet

No matter how difficult life might be for us at times, we know that God is with us. We can be sure of God's promises

## PRAY

We live in a world where there is so much violence, tragedy, and pain that it can be hard to believe in God's presence with us. Pray this week for an increase of faith.

## SAY

"Lord, help me to be an effective witness to you. Amen."

## DO

We can be embarrassed these days to talk openly about our faith. Be bold this week. Speak to someone about Jesus and your faith in him.



## REFLECT

What do you think of when you hear the word 'witness'? Maybe, like me, you think of courts and court cases. Witnesses are important in court cases. Barristers love when they have a powerful witness on their side. The evidence of a credible witness can make all the difference.

The readings for the feast of the Ascension speak about being a witness, though not in the legal sense. Jesus is about to return to his heavenly Father. In his final pep talk to his disciples, he promises them the gift of the Holy Spirit. This gift will enable them to be his witnesses. They will witness to him, from Jerusalem to the ends of the earth.

And that is what they did. They witnessed to the Risen Lord, beginning from Jerusalem. We wouldn't be here today if they had not heeded Jesus's instruction. Christianity would have remained just

another minor religious sect. We are called to follow the example of those first Christians by bearing witness to Jesus in our time and place.

There are several definitions of the word witness. To witness is to see, hear, experience something in the flesh; to personally see, hear, smell, sense, savour it. To witness is to experience personally. It's one thing to hear about the atmosphere in Anfield when Liverpool is on a roll, but I know what the atmosphere is like because I've been there and felt it for myself. I have been on the Sea of Galilee and experienced its tranquility and power. I have been to St Peter's in Rome and marvelled at its majesty. My breath has been cut short by the splendour of the Grand Canyon.

To witness is to give evidence. The most powerful evidence in a court of law, outside of DNA or a smoking gun, is eyewitness testimony. Circumstantial evidence is less powerful in proving a case than a living,

breathing, sentient witness, someone who was there, who heard, who saw.

To witness is also to demonstrate by example, to model a way of behaviour. If I want to show my children the value of books, I will read to them, let them see me reading, surround them with books. If I want them to appreciate the importance of hard work, I will try to demonstrate it. It's the same with prayer. Bearing personal witness is the most authentic testimony of all.

That's what Jesus asked his followers to do before he left them. It's what he asks of us, too. We are to bear witness to our faith in Jesus and our personal experience of him. To bear witness to Jesus is to speak about him to everyone whose lives touch ours. To demonstrate his values, show his love. What do people see when they see me? What do they encounter when they encounter me? Do they hear the Holy Spirit speak in my heart? ■

# Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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## 21<sup>st</sup> May 2023

### The Ascension of the Lord

#### 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

#### Anniversaries

##### Leitrim

Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Nora McEvoy  
Denis, Roseanne & Michael O'Prey  
Annie Moorehead  
Annie, John, Patrick, Thomas &  
Sean Cunningham  
Sat 27<sup>th</sup> Owen, Philomena, Janet & Christopher Rice

##### Gargory

Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Owens Family (Ballymaginthy)

##### Dromara

Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Michael Reavey and Deceased Family  
Members  
Seamus & Cecilia McCullough  
Patrick McEvoy  
Fri 26<sup>th</sup> Barney & Kathleen O'Hare  
Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Vincent & Desmond O'Hare  
Rosey Williams  
Jerome Fitzsimmons  
Deceased Members of O'Hare Family  
(Dree & Muninabane)

#### SMA Dromantine

##### Family Fun Day Sun 11<sup>th</sup> Jun 1:30-5:30pm

*Grand Draw, Country & Western Music, Vintage Tractors, Bouncy Castles, Obstacle Courses. Stalls, Food, Refreshments and much more!*

Adm £5 donation per car. Everyone Welcome.

#### Free Guided Tours of Newry Cathedral

Wed 14<sup>th</sup> Jun 7pm; Wed 5<sup>th</sup> Jul 2pm; Wed 19<sup>th</sup> Jul 7pm  
Wed 16<sup>th</sup> Aug 2pm; Wed 30<sup>th</sup> Aug 7pm  
Meet at the main door of the Cathedral

Leitrim Cleaners Fri 26<sup>th</sup> May - Geraldine's Team

SVDP: Drom 07738838191/Drumg 07825419067

Safeguarding Contact: P Carville 07789917741

Collections Parish	Dromara	Drumgooland
	£412	£719

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Ruán Patrick Clarke Murray

#### Cemetery Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> May

Gargory after 9am mass Dromara 12 noon  
Leitrim 3pm Dechomet 5pm

The day works well due to the many volunteers who help with parking of cars; collectors; readers, etc. If you can help in any way, please step forward.

Parking for the less abled will be reserved as follows:

Finnis and Leitrim - church car parks  
Dechomet - front of the church (Closkelt Road).  
Leitrim - for those who are less abled and wish to park in the car park, please by there by 2:45pm to ensure that you get parked. There is plenty of space around the Parochial House, on the tarmac and the grass, please use it, but leave the exits free. Please co-operate with those who are generous enough to assist with the parking. Please do not park in a way that blocks a private entrance.

A collection will be taken up at each service towards the cost of maintaining the cemeteries. Thank you to all who tidy up in the cemeteries. Please use the bins and skips provided or take the refuse home. Please do not put plastic wrapping, oasis or plastic boxes in the brown bins.

#### Dementia Awareness Workshop

Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> May 7-9pm Liatroim Clubrooms  
To register your interest please contact 07765 253999 or email [liatroimfontenoys@gmail.com](mailto:liatroimfontenoys@gmail.com)

#### Missionary Sisters of the Holy Rosary

Sr Mary Gallagher will speak at the masses weekend 27<sup>th</sup>/28<sup>th</sup> May to promote mission awareness.

#### Gala Concert - Music for a Summer's Evening

Fr Eugene O'Hagan and Margaret Keys  
Sat 10<sup>th</sup> Jun at 7:30pm in St Malachy's Church, Castlewellan. Tickets £20, available from Eventbrite.ie or call 078 1258 8010