

LISTEN TO HIM

One fail-safe way to tune in to God is to listen attentively to the words of Jesus. We heard this two weeks ago in the Gospel of Mark when God instructed: "This is my Son, the Beloved. Listen to him" (Mk 9:7). The instruction is repeated in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke (Mt 17:5; Lk 9:35), so let's not ignore it. Let's take a little time now to reflect on how we might follow these three small words and "listen to him".

BIRDSONG

I remember a couple of years ago, going away with a friend of mine. The thing that stays with me most from that week is discovering my friend's ability to name birds simply from their birdsong. We would be walking along and suddenly my friend would stop, smile, and say "Listen to that." We would pause for a moment, and then a bird would sing. Not only would he be able to name the bird, but he would tell me what kind of call the bird was making (for example, an alarm call warning other birds of a threat, a contact call simply keeping in touch, or a mating call seeking a 'love' interest). We would look in the direction of the birdsong and then my friend would catch sight of the bird, and confirm his identification.

Why am I telling you this? Because listening to Jesus is a bit like birdwatching! You see, the most important aspect of birdwatching and finding birds is listening, as often a bird can be heard before it can be seen. In order to locate the bird, the one seeking must first settle down and listen, and then follow the sound in order to get a visual of the bird. It can be the same in our spiritual life. In order to find God in my life, I need

to listen. I need to settle down, to be still, and to take the time to listen for his voice. When I hear his voice, I must then follow the sound until I get a visual on Jesus.

EXAMEN

Born in Spain in 1491, St Ignatius of Loyola is well-known for his 'Spiritual Exercises' and his *Examen* Prayer in particular. This core practice of Ignatian spirituality involves deep listening and helps the user to stay in touch with how Jesus is speaking to them in their daily life.

Taking time each evening to pray the *examen*, we first try to quiet down. We become attentive to our bodies, our mood, and how we are feeling. This kind of listening takes time, because our deeper thoughts and feelings take time to rise to the surface. Next, we reflect on all that has happened to us over the day. We are invited to see every aspect of our life as gift – our family, friends, colleagues, neighbours, strangers – every person and every encounter. We are invited to notice the desires and thoughts that influenced our decisions and actions throughout the day and to become aware of how God was present in these; noticing how we responded to God – did we ignore, resist or cooperate with God's promptings? Finally, we turn our thoughts to the day ahead and to consider what the good is that God wants us to do during that day.

Practising the daily *examen* is just one way of pausing, quieting down, and listening to Jesus in our lives. I invite you to try it, to introduce a contemplative moment into each day and 'tune in' and "listen to him". ■



Today's readings

2 Chr 36:14-16. 19-23

Eph 2:4-10

Jn 3:14-21

combines both the horror of crucifixion and the life-giving nature of the death of Jesus. Judgement and eternal life are not reserved for the remote future. Jesus, the light of the world, provokes people into making an option for light or for darkness.

GOD'S WORD TODAY

The story of Moses and the bronze serpent refers to an episode during Israel's desert wandering. Not for the first time, they complain about how God is treating them. As a punishment, God sends a number of poisonous snakes among them. When they realise the folly of always wanting their own way, the people repent. God instructs Moses to make a bronze serpent and set it on a pole so that anyone who is bitten can look at the serpent and survive. It may at first glance appear to be a strange image for the cross, but a moment's reflection will show how it

14 March 2021 – 4th Sunday of Lent Year B

Psalter Week 4

Stu(space)

SERIES: JUST THREE WORDS

Season colour: VIOLET

In this series, **Clare Gilmore** explores the sheer depth contained in 'just three words'.

LISTEN TO HIM



Do you ever find it hard to listen to God's voice, to hear him speaking to you in the midst of all that is going on in your life? Our world is full of voices – voices that come to us from the television or radio, from newspapers, internet, and social media, from WhatsApp and email; voices that come to us from family, friends, or work colleagues; voices that we speak to ourselves in our own inner talk... Amidst the noise and distractions that surround us every day, how is it possible to tune in to the voice of God?

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

Fr Peter McNeill Tel: 406 50207 Emergencies: 079 69403762 Email: dromaradrumgooland@dromorediocese.org Web: www.dromaradgooland.org

4th Sunday of Lent – 14th March 2021

Recently deceased Cathal Ward, Bannonsdown Road, Ballymginthy
Mary Morgan, Attical

Please remember these anniversaries in your prayers

Sat 13th Maggie O'Hare (MM)
Anne Bannon
Denis Bannon
Mick McCartan

Sun 14th Mary Hughes (Derry)
Pearl McEvoy
Joe and Margaret Rice

Tue 16th Malachy Savage
Susan and Patrick Rice

Sat 20th Patsy McKay

Sun 21st Margaret McElroy (MM)
Brigid King
James Gerard Kelly (Backaderry)

Cemetery Services

It is likely that no large gatherings will be possible for many months to come.

The service can be done online, as it was done last year. The service could be on a Sunday afternoon or week evening.

I would value your feedback.

We welcome into Dromara Parish Harry Gilmore

Congratulations to Leanne Brennan and Owen Kelly who were married recently

Census 2021 will take place on 21st Mar

Census Packs are to be posted to every house next week. Anyone who does not receive a pack can ring the contact centre for free on: 0800 328 2021, or visit the website at www.census.gov.uk/ni

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Any person who wants a prayer shawl, lap blanket or prayer angel, for themselves or for another person, can contact Mary Jo (07875733142)

Parishes' Accounts *(further analysis will be provided later)*

| | <u>Dromara</u> | <u>Drumgooland</u> |
|-------------------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Income | 39,034 | 89,172 |
| <u>Expenses</u> | | |
| Church & Cemetery | 7,274 | 17,740 |
| Leitrim Parochial House | 3,865 | 7,387 |
| Parochial Hall | 1,766 | - |
| Diocesan Levies | 4,160 | 10,032 |
| Administration | 5,274 | 16,532 |
| Priest Support | 10,171 | 23,070 |
| Net Surplus | <u>6,524</u> | <u>14,411</u> |
| Bank Balance | <u>113,603</u> | <u>154,128</u> |

Weekend Masses: Sat 6:00pm Sun 9:00am

Weekday Masses: Mon 9:00am Fri 7:30pm

St Patrick's Day masses: Tue 7:30pm
Wed 10:00am

Donations banked this week

Parish £366

Priest £180

Sick and Retired Priests £15

Online Service of Reflection and Contrition

It is not safe to offer Confessions at this time. I will stream a Service of Reflection on God's Mercy and Forgiveness on Tue 23rd March at 7:30pm.

Whilst absolution is not possible, it is always helpful to come before God aware of his desire to forgive us.

Confirmation and First Holy Communion

There have been no dates agreed. When the schools re-open fully and the churches open for the celebration of Eucharist it may be possible to fix dates to celebrate these sacraments. Priority will be given to Confirmation. First Communion may be celebrated in this school year or in early Autumn.