

I have a Great Dane called Mac that is a sight to behold. He's about three feet tall to his shoulders, with another foot to the top of his head. And he loves nothing more than to go for a walk with me and my other two (smaller) dogs, meeting and being petted by all we come across. I say he loves nothing more, but of late he has found a new favourite thing to do; he likes to stand with his head in a hedge! Seriously. A big dog who likes to stick his head inside a hedge and just stand there looking around. It's got to the stage that whenever I stop to talk to someone, if there's a hedge, Mac goes straight for it. It's comical to see the rear end of a dog the size of a small horse sticking out from a leafy green hedge. But there you have it – Mac has found his happy place, and I can see that in his happy place, he finds a sense of peace and calm. He looks relaxed and, at the same time, seems to be engaged with what's around him.

Where is your happy place? In asking myself that question lately, I recalled a childhood memory. I remember sitting with my mother at Mass one evening in St Teresa's Church, Belfast. It must have been autumn or winter because the light was low outside the church window. Inside the church, not every light was on, so it had a half-light feel to it. I was cuddled into my mother's coat, listening to the rhythmical chanting of prayers and hymns, and I felt just what I think Mac feels in his happy place. I felt calm and at peace, relaxed and engaged. I felt safe.

I have taken this love of churches with me through my life. I love to visit them wherever I go. They offer me a happy place to be. In particular, I love visiting a church during day time when there are few people around. I find I can fall into a time of deep prayer and relaxation. I can catch the faint smell of incense and candles, which remind me of times gone by. They transport me back to that time sitting beside my mother as a boy. It means that no matter where I am, I can find my happy place.

WIN-WIN SITUATION

As I have grown, though, it's not just a memory of a boy's love for his mother (the mother and the love both still very much alive) that has sustained me in finding my happy place in church. It has been my insight into who else is present in the church, the one Thomas called My Lord and My God. It is this deep connection to God and God's special presence in the church, so clearly, literally and mystically present in the tabernacle, that allows me to come in, sit and heave a sigh of relief that I have once again come to my happy place. All sorts of turmoil invade my life, but a visit to a church and conversation with God allows for calm and a sense of perspective to return. And the great thing is I can take this calm with me back out the door where God is also just as present. Time in my happy place allows me to live with more happiness outside of my happy place. The more times I visit my happy place, the more I see the core element of that happy place – God's loving presence – in all places. It's a win-win situation.

The flip side is I've noticed that I feel its absence when I neglect my happy place and don't go there often. I miss the gifts that my visits give me – peace, calm, relaxation, engagement, safety. And the world around me also seems bereft of these gifts.

Jesus, too, had a happy place. His was a quiet place. In the Gospels, we read how he often withdrew to a quiet place to pray. He did it at key times in his ministry. He did it when things got tough. He did it to give himself the strength to do awesome things. For Jesus, a quiet place was his happy place. And if it was good enough for Jesus...

Perhaps it's time to discover or rediscover your happy place, where you can rest easily with God in peace, calm, relaxation, engagement and safety. ■



Today's readings

Wis 7:7-11
Heb 4:12-13
Mk 10:17-30

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Jesus wants to assure his disciples that, though discipleship costs, its rewards far outweigh the sacrifices. That is why he tells them that anyone who leaves house, or work or family for his sake will be rewarded one hundred times over, not only in the next life but in this life too. As Christians, that is our assurance and our hope also.

10 October 2021 – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time Year B

Psalter Week 4

Stu()space

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.



WHERE'S YOUR HAPPY PLACE?

Churches are my happy place, where I can rest easily with God in peace, calm, and safety.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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28th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 10th October 2021



SLIEVE CROOB COMMUNITY FIRST RESPONDERS WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

We are seeking your help. We are looking for volunteers who will undergo training with NIAS to become Community First Responders. As a trained volunteer you will provide assistance in certain medical emergencies until an ambulance arrives (initially within Castlewellan, Ballyward, Leitrim, Dechomet, Moneyslane, Legananny, Finnis, Clonvaraghan, Slievenisky and Backaderry areas).

We are also looking for volunteers to join our Management Committee, assist with Fundraising Activities and help us raise our profile by communicating our message.

If you are interest and would like to find out more, please join us at our Open Public Meeting on Wed 13th Oct from 7pm to 8:30pm, The Lodge, Castlewellan. You will be most welcome.

You can contact us via our Facebook Page Slieve Croob Community First Responders or Enquiries to slievecroobcfr@gmail.com

By giving just 2 hours per month will help Us make a difference

Collections	Parish	Priest
Dromara	£592	£542
Drumgooland	£1836	£1643

Southern Area Hospice

A door collection will be held after all masses on 23rd/24th Oct. All donations to this collection are gratefully received. If anyone wishes to assist with this collection, please volunteer.

2021 marks the 32nd Year of Southern Area Hospice Services and this year £3million must be raised to continue providing the specialist palliative and end of life care services free of charge to patients living in the Southern Trust Area. In 2019, collections in parishes across the Southern Trust Area raised over £25,000 for our Hospice and with your support again this year we hope to build on this amount.

Any person who wishes to put a donation in an envelope marked *Hospice* can leave the envelope in the parochial house or in the basket at the church door.

Thank you for your support.

The Diocese of Dromore has opened a Redress Scheme for survivors and victims of sexual abuse perpetrated by members of the clergy and others acting under the authority of the Diocese. Details of the Scheme can be found on the following website: www.dromoredress.org

Drumgooland St Vincent de Paul
Contact us in confidence on 075 8644 7427

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 recently deceased in November

All masses will be at 7:30pm

Dechomet	Mon 8 th
Leitrim	Wed 10 th
Dromara	Fri 12 th

Sick and housebound If anyone wants to talk about receiving Holy Communion, please ring me

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Grace Quinn

Congratulations to Caitlin McCartan and Aidan Clarke who were married recently

Anniversary Masses

Dechomet

Sat 9 th	Bernard McElroy
Sat 15 th	Michelle Doyle

Leitrim

Sat 9 th	Anthony Pat McEvoy
Wed 13 th	Rory Savage
	John McCrickard
Sat 15 th	Marc McAnulty

Dromara

Sun 17 th	Peter, Catherine, James and Peter McKenny
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