

THE STORY OF THE HYMN

We have already met Fr Edmund Vaughan, who also translated 'O Bread of Heaven' (last Sunday). Fr Vaughan's main work as a priest was preaching parish missions. He joined the Redemptorist order in 1851. That was the same year as the order came to Ireland. He had already started his studies for the priesthood in Ushaw College and he continued them in Belgium and Holland where he was ordained. He gave missions in both England and Ireland. Ireland was just recovering from the Great Famine, and the missions gave new heart to a people that had lost much. Mission services required hymn singing by the people. Ireland had very little by way of popular hymns and the missionaries had to teach them some or even write some specially for the missions. Fr Vaughan compiled a large collection of hymns, some of which are still sung. Finding an air to sing the words to was another matter. Often he borrowed the melody from another hymn. The air to this one was borrowed from a French hymn, which Fr Vaughan probably heard sung during his student days in Belgium. It has been suggested that the original melody was by the Italian composer Giovanni Pergolesi (1710-1736). Set to Arabic words, it is also very popular among Christians of Lebanon and Syria.

THE MEANING OF THE HYMN

Originally composed for use on parish missions, the hymn has four verses and a refrain. The opening verse is based on the story of the prodigal son:

"God of mercy and compassion,
look with pity upon me.
Father, let me call Thee Father,
'tis Thy child returns to Thee."

It begins with a clear profession of belief in the mercy and compassion of God. Just as the prodigal recognises that by his abuse of his father's goodness, "I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as one of your hired men" (Lk 15:19), we humbly petition God to be allowed to call him Father. The refrain, repeated after each verse, asks again for pardon and expresses sorrow for sin:

"Jesus, Lord, I ask for mercy;
let me not implore in vain;
all my sins, I now detest them,
never will I sin again."

The second verses look at the price of sin. The first is a bleak vision, expressed in a traditional fear of hell. The mission will have included a sermon on hell and the words of the hymn are one more way of making them memorable:

"By my sins I have deserved
death and endless misery,
hell with all its pains and torments,
and for all eternity."

The third verse opens with the same words, "By my sins" and the price considered here is the loss of heaven and with it the claim to eternal happiness:

"By my sins I have abandoned,
right and claim to heaven above,
where the saints rejoice forever,
in a boundless sea of love."

The fourth verse sets before us a very different picture. It puts before us the sight of the crucified Christ who has paid the price for our sin so that he could offer us the reward of eternal life:

"See our Saviour, bleeding, dying,
on the cross of Calvary.
To that cross my sins have nailed Him,
yet He bleeds and dies for me." ■

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SERIES: SING ONCE: PRAY TWICE.

Season colour: **VIOLET**

Hymns are an important part of Catholic worship. We will look at some of our familiar hymns. Musical versions are available on YouTube.

GOD OF MERCY AND COMPASSION

**Today's readings**

Gen 9:8-15
1 Pet 3:18-22
Mk 1:12- 15

mentioned several times in the Bible as the one who tempts. In the desert, Jesus depends on the providence of God: "the angels ministered to him", just as they ministered to the prophet Elijah.

With John in prison, Jesus can begin his own ministry of preaching. His message is summed up in two very brief statements – the Kingdom of God is at last drawing near, and to be ready for it, people are called to repentance, *metanoia*, a Greek word which means a change of heart and mind, a change of direction in our lives.

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Today's gospel is the shortest of the three gospel accounts of the temptations of Jesus. It is a spare, tense narrative, but each word is carefully chosen. Jesus is "driven out" – compelled to go into the wilderness. The desert or wilderness is dry and barren, home to wild animals and inhospitable to humans. Mark does not specify the temptations to which Jesus was exposed in the desert. Satan is

As we begin the journey to Easter, a journey of conversion of heart, our chosen hymn, 'God of Mercy and Compassion', is particularly appropriate for the season. It is a hymn which has been in use for over 150 years but still remains popular, especially during Lent and for services of reconciliation.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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

1st Sunday of Lent – 21st February 2021

Recently deceased

Patricia Savage, Bannonstown Road

Maggie O'Hare, Old Railway Close

Fr Michael Boyle, SMA

Please remember these anniversaries in your prayers

Sat 20th Patrick Malone
Eileen and Christopher Beehan
Sr Josephine Rooney, Brian and
Colm Rooney

Sun 21st Mary McBride (Downpatrick)
Philip Lundy and Deceased Members
of Lundy, McGrillen and Cauley
Families
Teresa and Patrick and Elizabeth
McCartan

Wed 24th Eileen Cunningham (Moneyslane)

Sun 28th Mae and Dan Flynn

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish
Leo Patrick Savage

Envelopes/collections

Money lodged recently:

	£
Parish	3,316
Priest	1,137
Stole	260
Sick & Retired Priests	138

Thank you for your generosity. All money is lodged
in the appropriate parish account.

I will be in Dromara car park on Sun 28th Feb, from
10am-10.45am, if anyone wishes to leave in envelopes.

Gargory Parochial House and proposed new carpark
Panning permission for demolition and the creation of
additional parking space has been received. It has not
been possible to hold a parish council meeting to
discuss costs and the next steps. It will be discussed
when it is safe to hold meetings. There will be no
work undertaken in the immediate term.

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

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

Leitrim Chapel

The chapel will be closed for private prayer
at the start of the week.

The main aisle and side aisles have been
cleaned, old cement, etc., has been removed
from the tiles. The mosaic floors in the
sanctuary and the mosaic walls (up to 3ft)
have been cleaned of old polish and
limescale. The floors will be resealed and
polished, this should complete the work.
I apologise for the inconvenience.

When it is complete, the church will be open
once more for private prayer.

The sanctuary floor in Gargory will be
cleaned and polished the following week.

St Michael's, Finnis

The phoneline has been installed and the
internal connections are due to be completed
next week. Hopefully when the churches
reopen for mass it will improve the quality
of the streaming service.