

Sunday Message

SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year A • 4 December 2022 • Colour: Violet • Psalter Week 2



DESERT EXPERIENCE

(MT 3:1-12)

It was an extraordinary sight that bewildered the religious leaders. Here were good people, respectable people, people from Jerusalem and Judaea and all the surrounding countryside, heading out into the desert to listen to a preacher and confess their sins.

It might be understandable enough if this preacher were part of the religious establishment, a priest or Pharisee, a respectable man, but he was not. He was the opposite of an establishment figure. There was something different, even unpleasant, about him. His clothes were made of camel hair. He ate locusts and wild honey. He had the look of a wild man, the sort of person you would keep a million miles away from. Yet the people went out to see him in their thousands.

And it's not as if his message was cuddly and heartwarming. He was no politician telling people what they wanted to hear. Instead, his words were challenging and uncompromising. He used strong language. He told his listeners to repent, reform, turn their lives around and become new people. He told them to get ready for the coming of the reign of God.

The extraordinary thing is that people welcomed it rather than being put off by this tough talk. They journeyed out into the inhospitable desert to listen to him. They stepped forward to confess their sins and be baptised in the Jordan. They saw that, unlike other religious leaders, John spoke with authority. They saw that this desert prophet wasn't interested in promoting himself or feathering his own nest but only in pointing people towards God.

And so they took his message on board. They listened to him. They heeded him. They confessed their sins, were baptised and sought to turn their lives around.

John's uncompromising message is directed to each one of us individually also. We must wake up, repent, and change whatever in our lives needs changing so as to be ready for Christ's coming. ■

DO

Read today's Gospel slowly. Picture the scene. Imagine you are there. How would you have responded to the words of John? How do you respond today?

PRAY

Pray for your local parish community and Christians everywhere that they will have the courage to change whatever needs changing so as to be ready spiritually for Christmas.

SAY

Lord, help me to turn towards you. Strengthen me to serve you every day of my life. Amen.

LEARN

The Christian is always aware of the importance of repentance.

The Christian turns towards God every day.

Think about what it is you are waiting for this Advent.

REFLECT

In 2018 in a parish in west Cork, I attended the wake of a local man. His wife had died only 11 weeks before him. She was a Limerick woman, and even though she had been out of the county for more than half a century, she had always remained a keen fan of the Limerick hurling team.

Two years earlier, she was diagnosed with terminal cancer. The cancer got worse in the spring and summer of 2018, but Limerick's progress in the hurling championship helped keep her going. She even managed to get to the All-Ireland final and then to the celebrations in Limerick afterwards. Her daughter showed

me a photograph of her mother holding the Liam MacCarthy cup over her head, a beatific smile on her face.

Less than three weeks later, she was dead. She lived to see the unexpected glory. You could say she had waited to see Limerick's unlikely victory.

Advent is the great season of waiting. We are waiting for the coming of the Lord at Christmas. We are waiting expectedly for his coming.

Advent is about two different comings of Jesus. The first refers to his birth as our

Saviour over 2,000 years ago. The second refers to his future return in glory at the end of time. It is only from the Fourth Sunday of Advent that the coming of the Christ-child at Christmas moves into centre stage.

This season is a reminder to prepare not just to welcome the Lord at Christmas but for an even more wondrous coming – of the Lord at the end time. Advent challenges us to consider how we are preparing for the Lord's arrival. What is it we are waiting for? Are we living day to day in such a way that he will find us ready when he comes? ■

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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4th December 2022

2nd Sunday of Advent

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

Feast of the Immaculate Conception masses (8th Dec)

Wed 7th 7:30pm Leitrim

Thur 8th 10:00am Gargory 7:30pm Dromara

Fri 7:30pm Dromara

The sick and housebound will be attended this week

Do This In Memory 10th/11th December

Choir Rehearsals for Christmas Masses

St Mary's Church, Dechomet - after 6pm Sat Masses

Leitrim Chapel - Tues 6th 7-8pm & Tues 13th 7-8pm

All new members would be very welcome

Dromara Chapel - Tues 6th 6pm Everyone welcome

Anniversaries (2023 Anniversary Book now available)

Dechomet

Sat 3rd Margaret Gilmore
Brian Doyle

Leitrim

Sat 3rd Fr Lionel Murray
Joe Ward
Charles, Brigid, Jim, Jerome and
Phelim Shields

Wed 7th Rosie McAleenan
Margaret O'Hre (Backaderry)

Sat 10th Pat Charles McAleenan
Eamonn McAnulty

Gargory

Sun 4th John King
Alfie King

Sun 11th Betty McGreevy (MM)

Dromara

Sun 4th Isabella and Hugh Lavery
Laura Armstrong

Sun 11th Davy McKay and David McKay Snr

Safeguarding contact: P Carville 077 8991 7741

| Collections Parish | Dromara | Drumgooland |
|--------------------|---------|-------------|
| | £ 252 | £715 |

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Ryan Middleton

Congratulations to Orla McCrickard and Patrick McMullan who were married recently

Christmas Bingo join the 'Friends of St Michael's Finnis Parents Group' for a festive bingo today (Sun 4th) at 3pm in the Parish Hall. Doors 2:30pm

SVP Dromara Christmas Appeal 2022

An Amazon Wish List had been setup for anyone who wishes to purchase a present for a local child to receive this Christmas. Any support, no matter how small, is greatly appreciated and will go directly to local families in need of support during these difficult times. The Wish List can be found at:

https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1RET2PL08GHHT?ref=wl_share

If you have any difficulties, or if you would prefer to make a donation towards heating oil/food hampers, please contact Mary on 078 5478 0974. Many thanks for your continued support, St Vincent de Paul Finnis, Dromara.

SVP - If you are struggling with food/heating bills, etc., please contact us:
Drumgooland 078 2541 9067
Dromara 077 3883 8191

St Michael's P.S Finnis Open Night

Mon 5th Dec from 6.30pm - 7.30pm. Children who turn four on or before the 1st July 2023 can start Primary One Class in September 2023. Children who turn four from the 2nd July 2023 until June 2024 can start Reception Class the Monday following their fourth birthday. Please spread the word. If date or time is not suitable you can make an appointment to visit the school by contacting Patricia on 02897532404 or Mrs Malone via email (kmalone397@c2kni.net)

Veritas Shop on the Mall, Newry, for Christmas Cards, Candles, Cribs, Books and a range of different gifts. Open Mon-Sat 9am-5pm