

Gratitude is the combination of feeling thankful along with a readiness to show appreciation for kindness we have been shown. In other words, it's a verb – an action word. We experience gratitude, and we pay it on to others. We know that God is to be found in the gifts we receive, and God is the ultimate giver of all those gifts. These gifts are often the people we encounter in life. Therefore, God is present in those we encounter. To show gratitude to others is, de facto, to show gratitude to God. Indeed, at Mass, we hear the priest proclaim, "It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation, always and everywhere to give you thanks." How awesome a statement for us to believe that our very salvation lies in gratitude to God.

Recently, I had two encounters with gratitude I would like to share. The first came with a group of health professionals I have been leading in a series of relaxation sessions. These workers are on the front line caring for the most vulnerable in society, often caring for them right to their last breath. Much of the illness and death they see are caused by Covid-19. They are courageous, compassionate people.

When leading groups in meditation, I always invite them to hold on to at least one thing they are grateful for. The experience of gratitude is a good way of getting a person to open up to a more compassionate way of being with themselves and the world around them. After all, it is difficult to be both grateful and angry or frustrated or anxious at the same time. Sure, those other feelings might still be there afterwards, but in the moment of feeling and experiencing gratitude, all else is quietened. This makes it an excellent tool for those who want to relax and feel at peace.

I was concerned that this group who had seen so much illness and death wouldn't be able to travel with me to this place of gratitude. But my anxiety was unfounded. We all agreed we would create a 'bank account' in our minds – a 'gratitude bank account'. Each day we would put something into that account – a person, a thing, an experience for which we are grateful

– and we would 'make a withdrawal' from the account in stressful times by remembering those things for which we are thankful.

KEY WORKERS

My second encounter with gratitude came on one of my daily walks with my dogs. It was early, and the streets where I live were quiet. But there was one vehicle, a bin lorry, ahead of me. Beside the lorry were three workers who were collecting and emptying bins. While we often, and rightly, think of those in healthcare as key workers in the response to Covid-19, they are not the only ones. Those who keep society going by, in this instance, collecting our rubbish, are all key workers. As I approached the men, I felt a deep gratitude for them and the, no doubt risky, work they were doing. I called out, "Thank you for the work you do." I can't remember ever saying thank you to refuse collectors before, for doing such vital work that is often taken for granted. And I have a feeling that those I thanked weren't used to being thanked in this way either, because each stopped what he was doing and thanked me for thanking them! This encounter with gratitude left each of us with a smile on our face.

Gratitude is a muscle to be exercised daily. Like any muscle, the more we use it, the stronger it becomes. These are challenging times to be alive. These are challenging times in which to feel gratitude. But the bigger the challenge, the bigger the prize of rising to it.

One challenge is to make time to recognise the things we should be grateful for. Perhaps you could open your own 'gratitude bank account'. Another challenge is to make the effort to show gratitude to those around you. Who are those you might have forgotten to thank? In rising to these challenges, our lives will be grounded in gratitude for ourselves, for others, for fragile life itself, and gratitude to and for God. After all, to do so is our duty and our salvation. ■

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.

THANK
YOU

AN ATTITUDE OF
GRATITUDE



Today's readings

Nm 11:25-29

Jm 5:1-6

Mk 9:38-43.45.47-48

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Jesus' talk of amputations and hellfire in today's Gospel is not easy for us to hear. His original audience understood well that he was not talking literally but in metaphors, and we need to understand this too. However, his challenge to us is much tougher than his metaphors. He is emphasising that life in the Kingdom of God is something of supreme importance. It is so important that his disciples must do everything possible not to lose it.

As Christians, gratitude is both our duty and our salvation.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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26th Sunday in Ordinary Time – 26th September 2021

God's Word this month (taken from Reality magazine)

Called to root out sin

If you take Jesus' words in today's Gospel literally, they make for astonishing listening. Jesus uses violent imagery to describe the steps the Christian must take to avoid sin. "If your hand - or your foot - should cause you to sin," Jesus says, "cut it off. And if your eye should cause you to sin, pluck it out." Rough language, indeed.

But it would be a mistake to take these words of Jesus absolutely literally. Jesus is not advocating self-mutilation, or that we remove perfectly healthy body parts so as to increase our chances of gaining eternal life.

That is not the point of the passage. Jesus deliberately uses colourful, vivid, exaggerated language in order to get his message across. And his message is this: The Christian must be ruthless about cutting out anything that comes between him or her and God. Whatever it is that causes us to sin, whatever obstacle hinders our journey to God, whatever takes over from God in our lives, we must rid ourselves of it. We must root it out, we must let it go, whatever the cost.

For the Christian, nothing - absolutely nothing - must come before Jesus Christ and the Gospel.

Leitrim Cleaners Fri 1st Geraldine's Team

Gargory Altar Society Oct Marion

Drumgooland St Vincent de Paul

Contact us in confidence on 075 8644 7427

Collections

Dromara	£271
Drumgooland	£643
Pope's collection	£694

Parish

Recently deceased Mary Campbell, Aghalee.
Stanley Wright, Mossvale Terrace, Dromara

Anniversary Masses

Leitrim

Sat 25 th	Teresa Wright Patsy Madine Mary and James Malone John and Belle Malone
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Wed 29 th	Patricia Quail Maria O'Hare Pat and Mary Theresa Morgan
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Sat 2 nd	Barney and Joey McAnulty
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Dromara

Sun 26 th	Wesley Hunter Barney, Cassie and Peter Cunningham
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Gargory

Sun 3 rd	Peter and Kathleen McAtee
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Midnight Memory Walk 2021

Southern Area Hospice Services invite you, your family and friends to join their 13th annual Midnight Memory Walk. Remember a loved one on Sat 2nd Oct from St Colman's College. There is also an option for you to complete your own Memory Walk at a time and place that suits you. Please register at:

<https://www.southernareahospiceservices.org/midnight-memory-walk>

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

Apologies for the non-immediate streaming of masses on Friday and Saturday. The setting had moved to private rather than public, but that has been changed and those masses are now available for viewing.

Celebration of Confirmation and First

Communion will be on a similar style to this year. The dates will not be set at this stage but can be agreed next year when it is clearer under which restrictions and guidelines that we are working under.

Do This in Memory

The P4 preparation programme.

The materials will go out to parents soon. It is not possible at this stage to have direct involvement of the children at mass but they will be prayed for on the particular Sundays.

We welcome into Dromara Parish Finn Hanna