

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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2nd Sunday of Christmas

5th January 2025

Weekend Masses

Sat 6:00pm Dechomet 7:30pm Leitrim
Sun 9:00am Gargory 11:00am Dromara

Feast of Epiphany

Mon 6th 6:30pm Dromara 8pm Leitrim

There will be no weekday mass this week

Weekend 11th / 12th Masses as usual

The sick and housebound will be attended week beginning Mon 13th Jan

I will be on holiday until Sat 11th Jan.

If there are any emergency sick calls or deaths, please try Fr Brian Brown at 07496737619 or 028 97562410

*We welcome into Drumgooland Parish
Éireann Eimear McAleavey*

Collections	Dromara	Drumgooland
Parish 22 nd	£434	£932
Parish 29 th	£1,196	£1,252
Christmas	£2,065	£3,374

Thank you for continuing to support your parish

Recently deceased



***Liz McKay (nee Flynn), Ballynahinch
Mary McAnulty (nee O'Hare), Carryduff***

ANNIVERSARIES

Leitrim

Sat 4th Sean Keary MM
Eddie H & Rose E Ward
Bridie Madine

Sat 11th Pat & Aidan McAnulty

Gargory

Sun 5th Francis Cunningham
Peter & Una Gribben

Dechomet

Sat 11th John & Margaret Leonard
Margaret Doyle
John Fitzpatrick

Dromara

Sun 12th Winnie & Jimmy McEvoy

SVP contact numbers

Dromara 07738838191 / Drumg 07825419067

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Stephen Sherry
07301246329 / safeguardingdirector@dromorediocese.org

Dear Parishioner,

The recent days have had a mixture of light and darkness, it will take time for us to notice the increase in light in the coming weeks, but to know that it is happening is a comfort. The end of the year is one for looking back and looking forward.

In 2024, the new cemetery at Dromara was blessed by Archbishop Eamon Martin. This was a project that took longer to come to fruition than expected, but hopefully it will serve the parish for many decades to come.

There was additional car parking created at Gargory, it is well used and met a need that thankfully reflects a desire for people to come together and celebrate the Eucharist.

In 2025, Dromara will mark the bicentenary of the beginning of the building of St Michael's Church.

In 1825, a second schoolhouse was built at Magheramayo. There were churches at Gargory and Leitrim, the building work at Dechomet had begun in 1822. There was a mass house in Finnis at this time. Catholic Emancipation was not granted until 1829, clearly the people were ahead of the times. These buildings were funded by private subscriptions and other Christian churches did donate to the costs. Thank you to everyone who keep the parishes alive, to all who offer their time and service in the various ministries. Thank you for your generous financial support to the parishes and myself. Your support is greatly appreciated, and it is not taken for granted. In 2024, there were 16 baptisms in Dromara and 29 in Drumgooland. There were 7 marriages celebrated within the parishes. Sadly, there were 24 funerals. The grief stays with people, you are held in prayer throughout the year, but there is an awareness that these days can be particularly difficult.

May we continue to pray for each other.

Fr Peter

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year C • 5 January 2025 • Colour: White • Psalter Week 2

GOD'S PITCHED TENT

JOHN 1:1-18



The whole New Testament is really an attempt to answer the question Jesus put to his followers: "Who do you say I am?" But the Gospels are not biographies of Jesus. They don't tell his story from birth to death; rather, they are reflections on his significance in God's plan of salvation for the world.

Today's Gospel offers St John's wonderful account of who Jesus is. In this prelude to his Gospel, John outlines the bare bones of the story, which he will fill in as the narrative unfolds.

John's reflection springs from the very beginning of creation. Jesus is the Word of God, present with God before time began. Through him all things came to be, and he gives life to all that exists. He is God's only Son, through whom all of creation has the opportunity to share in God's life. He has pitched his tent in the midst of our world and begun his mission, announced by John the Baptist. Christ is the light that shines so brightly no darkness can overcome it. Some people have refused to recognise the light, and they languish in the darkness. But those who do hear the Word and respond to him will be called children of God.

As Christians, we are called to respond to God's word and to be God's voice and light in our world today through our lives and by our example. ■

DO

Light a candle as a reminder that Christ has come into your life.

SAY

"You, Lord, are the light of the world. Help me to place my trust in you."

LEARN

Actions reveal the true measure of our words

Jesus is the Word of God, the Word of life

We are called to speak God's word to others

PRAY

Pray that you will bring the mercy and compassion of God to all you meet.

REFLECT

MASH was one of my favourite TV shows growing up. The letters stand for Mobile Army Surgical Hospital, and the show was about a U.S. MASH unit in Korea during the 1950s' war. It used humour to highlight the horror of war. The lead characters played the role of medics, and the operating theatre was a large canvas tent, a moveable field hospital. Through a combination of skill and humour, they sought to repair troops injured in battle.

Pope Francis likes to describe the church as a MASH unit. "I see the church as a field hospital after battle," he says. "It is useless to ask a seriously injured person if they have high cholesterol and about the level of their blood sugars. You have to heal their wounds. Then we can talk about everything else."

It's a beautiful image of church – as a MASH unit, a field hospital, where wounds are healed, hope restored, and mercy is abundant—the church as a big tent, offering respite and refuge to all.

Today's Gospel contains one of the most famous lines in all of Scripture: "The Word became flesh and lived among us." But the original Greek translation puts it like this: "The Word became flesh and pitched tent among us."

God pitched tent among us. God established a field hospital right here on earth. That pitched tent, that Word, John says, is Jesus.

The idea of God pitching tent among humanity draws on the richness of the Old Testament. Today's first reading from Ecclesiasticus tells us that the wisdom of God pitched her tent among the people of Israel. In the book of Ezekiel, God promises Israel: "My dwelling place shall be with them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

During Israel's wandering in the desert after their escape from Egypt, the tent was the place where God dwelt. God instructed Moses to put up a Tent of Meeting in the desert. This tent was a moveable, temporary, holy place where they could encounter God and was the forerunner of the great Temple of Jerusalem.

A tent has several advantages over a temple. A temple is a permanent structure; a tent is moveable. As the people made their slow trek to the Promised Land, they brought the tent with them, to be pitched wherever they set up camp. A symbol of God always in their midst.

We find the same image in today's Gospel. With the phrase 'pitched his tent,' St John captures how God journeys with God's people and is always available to them. Like the MASH unit that pitches tent wherever it's needed, God is available to us any time, anywhere.

Jesus is God's pitched tent, right here in our midst. We no longer have to think of God in the abstract, try to conjure what God is like. Jesus shows us what God is like. Jesus shows us the face of God.

The image of a pitched tent also reminds us of the fragile nature of the incarnation. A tent is a temporary dwelling place, delicate, vulnerable. In pitching tent among us, God takes on all our weaknesses and limitations. In Jesus, God knows what it means to hunger, thirst, be misunderstood, suffer a broken heart. God even knows what it's like to die. In Jesus, God has wholly embraced the human condition.

A pitched tent is a beautiful image of God-with-us. How should we respond to it? First, to always remember that God has pitched tent amongst us. This means we can turn to God at all times and in every situation – in our tears and laughter, happiness and despair, when all is well with the world and when it's not. This is the consoling truth our war-weary world badly needs to hear as we venture into another new year.

Second, it reminds us that we must become the kind of church Pope Francis wants: a field hospital. In other words, that, collectively and individually, we be Christ to others. In what we do, what we say, the compassion we display, the love we show – we are a sign of God's loving, healing presence in our world, a tangible, concrete sign of God's pitched tent.

You could say we are the Hawkeye Pierce's, the Margaret Houlihan's, the Fr Mulcahy's of the MASH unit that is the church. Like those timeless characters from that classic show, we must bind up wounds and offer comfort, healing, love and laughter to all we encounter along life's story road. ■