

# Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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## Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

21<sup>st</sup> January 2024

### 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

### Recently Deceased



### ANNIVERSARIES

#### LEITRIM

**Sat 20<sup>th</sup>** Henry & Rita O'Hare  
Jackie Quail  
**Sat 27<sup>th</sup>** Evelyn Clarke  
Frank & Margaret McElroy  
Carol Cowan  
Margaret Blaney  
John Anthony Cunningham

#### DROMARA

**Fri 26<sup>th</sup>** Winnie & Gerry Dunniece  
**Sun 28<sup>th</sup>** Annie Taylor MM  
Frank, Mary & Patrick Galbraith  
Teresa Reavey  
Paddy & Eileen Dillon  
Kathleen, John & Sarah Gordon

St Vincent de Paul Finnis, Dromara would like to **thank everyone** who kindly contributed to this year's Christmas Appeal and give donations. Your continued support and generosity is much appreciated and helped ensure no child went without a present at Christmas.

If anyone urgently needs support please contact 077 3883 8191.

SVP Drom 077 3883 8191 / Drum 078 2541 9067

Safeguarding Contact Pat Carville 077 8991 7741

Collections Parish	Dromara	Drumgooland
	£403	£918

*Thank you for your continued contributions*

### Dromore Diocesan Historical Society

The Society will host an online lecture by Geoff Cobb entitled "*From Poverty to Power: the Irish in New York*".

on

**Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan at 7:30pm**

*The ZOOM room will open at 7:20pm.  
The talk will start at 7:30pm sharp.*

We are delighted to welcome back our New York contributor, Geoff Cobb. Geoff, the author of four books on Brooklyn history and a 2021 publication entitled "*The Irish in New York: Profiles of New Yorkers who have Shaped the Empire State*", is vice president for local history for the New York Irish History Round Table and a regular contributor to Irish America magazine.

A link to the talk can be obtained by e-mailing the Hon Secretary [goss.jjm@gmail.com](mailto:goss.jjm@gmail.com) and will be forwarded on Mon 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan

### Serenity Prayer

*God grant me the serenity to  
accept the things I cannot change;  
courage to change the things I can  
and wisdom to know the difference.*

*Living one day at a time;  
enjoying one moment at a time;  
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;  
taking, as He did, this sinful world  
as it is, not as I would have it;  
trusting that He will make all things  
right if I surrender to His will;  
that I may be reasonably happy in this life  
and supremely happy  
with Him forever in the next.  
Amen.*

# Sunday Message

THIRD SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

## THE WORD

Year B • 21 January 2024 • Colour: Green • Psalter Week 3



**We all know about Jonah in the belly of the whale. But we may wonder what this story is doing in the Bible.**

How did this extraordinary story end up being placed in the Old Testament alongside the stories of such significant prophets as Isaiah, Ezekiel, and Jeremiah? Jonah is a very short story of only about 1,300 English words but it has a purpose and a message that is as relevant to believers today as when it was first recorded many centuries ago.

God orders Jonah to go to Nineveh, capital of Assyria, to urge them to repent and turn from their wicked ways. But Jonah resists; he doesn't want to go. He doesn't want to preach salvation to a bunch of foreigners. And so he runs away. He boards a ship bound for Spain but soon a storm brews and the ship is in danger of sinking. The pagan sailors draw lots to see who has brought them bad luck. Of course, they discover it is Jonah, who, knowing God is angry with him, asks them to throw him overboard, which they are happy to do, and the storm settles. God instructs a big fish to swallow Jonah and, after three days, to vomit him up again, still alive.

Now God again asks Jonah to go to Nineveh. This time, though still reluctant, Jonah obeys. He preaches, the population of 120,000 is converted, and God spares the city from punishment. But rather than being happy for the Ninevites, Jonah is angry with God. He doesn't want these foreigners to be saved. He thinks that pagans should not benefit from God's mercy. And so in his anger, Jonah tells God to please put him out of his misery: "It is better for me to die than to live," he says.

He sulks outside the city, shaded from the sun by a plant that God provides. A worm then withers the plant, and Jonah roasts under the heat of the sun. Which again makes him angry enough to want to die. But God says to him, "You pity the plant for which you did not labour, nor did you make it grow," and yet resent my pitying the people of Nineveh "who do not know their right hand from their left?" On that harsh note, the Book of Jonah ends.

How did the story of this reluctant, disobedient prophet end up in the Bible alongside great, obedient prophets like Isaiah? Because the story is not really about Jonah but about God. It is a reminder of God's goodness and how God's love and compassion is available to all - not just Jews, not just those we consider 'good' or deserving. God calls all to repent, no matter who they are, because God wishes everyone to be saved.

Jonah is used as an example, a warning to all narrow-minded Jews that they should not be myopic like Jonah and seek to restrict God and God's mercy. God is not just the God of the Hebrews but the God of all the children of Abraham, whoever they are, wherever they are, whatever they've done. God's mercy and forgiveness is freely available to everyone. Jonah found that too much to accept but, for the rest of us, it is wonderful good news. None of us is excluded from God's love and compassion. ■

## DO

Today's liturgy invites us to think about how we follow Jesus. A good way to follow Jesus is like this:

- Pray every day – if only for a few minutes.
- Be aware of God's presence with you every minute of every day.
- Go to Mass regularly.
- Be honest and just in your dealings with others. Gossip less; forgive more.
- Treat everybody the same.



## PRAY

Think about your attitude to refugees and immigrants. Ask the Lord to give you a heart big enough to exclude nobody from your love.

## SAY

**"Help me, Lord, to see everyone the way you see them. Help me to exclude nobody from my love."**

## LEARN

Following Jesus means always putting him first

To be a disciple means being prepared to follow even where we don't want to go

Our discipleship only has meaning in belonging to a community of faith that follows Jesus along his way

## REFLECT

**A** lesson of the Jonah story is: Don't narrow God. Don't limit God according to your own narrow notions. For a long time, our Church taught that only Catholics could be saved, that salvation was impossible outside the Catholic Church. Thank God, we have moved beyond that idea. Some Christians continue to believe that Catholics cannot be saved unless they

are born again. They exclude Catholics from the Christian community.

There are so many ways in which we can limit God. There is the God who has time only for devout Catholics who go to Mass and the sacraments regularly, the God who has no time for atheists or communists or liberals or those who are woke, the God who rewards only those we consider 'good' and punishes those we think don't measure up.

The Book of Jonah tells us we must always think big about God. God's love extends to all - Jew and non-Jew, Catholic and non-Catholic, the God-fearing and God-denyng - and is freely available to all. God wishes everybody to be saved.

For God, there is no 'outsider,' no 'foreigner,' no 'them and us.' There is only 'us.' Imagine if we could think as big as God thinks. What a very different world we would have. ■