

Stou(ace)space

SERIES: GOD IN THE EVERYDAY

Season colour: GREEN

In this new series, **Jim Deeds** finds evidence of the divine in the ordinary and extraordinary events of every day.

Most of us know what it means to be anxious. Some of us know what it means to have life disrupted by that anxiety. And all of us know someone who suffers from anxiety. It's nothing to be ashamed of. And yet, when anxiety messes with us, we can feel lonely. We may think we're the only one suffering in this way. We may feel far from God or that God is far from us. Here is a story about a different reality – that God is always near, loving us in the good times and bad. I've written it about a son, but it applies just as much to daughters.

There once was a loving father who had a good son. The son was talented, loving and special. But the son didn't see it that way. He was always trying to be better and better... and this made him anxious. He worried about things. Would anyone be his friend? Would he have enough lunch money? Would he do his homework well enough? He worried and got a little afraid.

He got so anxious that every morning a big rock of anxiety appeared at the foot of his bed when he woke up. It was cold, grey, spiky. The son was upset, ashamed and anxious about the rock. He thought his father wouldn't like the rock and that his friends would laugh at him. And so he hid the rock at the bottom of the garden. But when he got anxious again, another rock would appear at the foot of his bed. Every time one appeared, he would carry it secretly to the bottom of the garden and cover it up. Pretty soon, a lot of rocks were hidden in that garden. Many years went by, and the son hid his anxiety well.

As he grew to adulthood, he still got anxious at times. He was anxious about different things now. No more anxiety rocks appeared since he'd grown up, but he didn't forget about those hidden in the garden.

Something else began to happen. Every now and then, he noticed that shiny beads of confidence appeared in his pockets. Confidence feels like being strong and able to breathe easily and not being annoyed by worries. This usually happened when he relaxed and remembered the love his father had for him. He liked the shiny beads of confidence, and when they appeared, he forgot about his hidden rocks.

PART OF US

One day, he visited his father. He knocked on the door of his father's house, but there was no answer. He looked through the letterbox and saw that the back door was opened. He peered through it and saw his father working... at the bottom of the garden.

"Oh no!" he thought. "He's going to find my anxiety rocks."

The son thought about running away. But then he thought better of it. His father was kind, and he would explain what had happened. He hoped his father would understand.

He walked around the side of the house and came to the garden gate. What he saw took him by surprise. There was his father sitting at the place where he had buried the rocks. But instead of rocks, there was a pile of shiny beads of confidence identical to those that had been turning up in his pocket. The father had been chipping away at the rocks of anxiety, and he polished the chips until they shone.

The father saw the look of worry on his son's face.

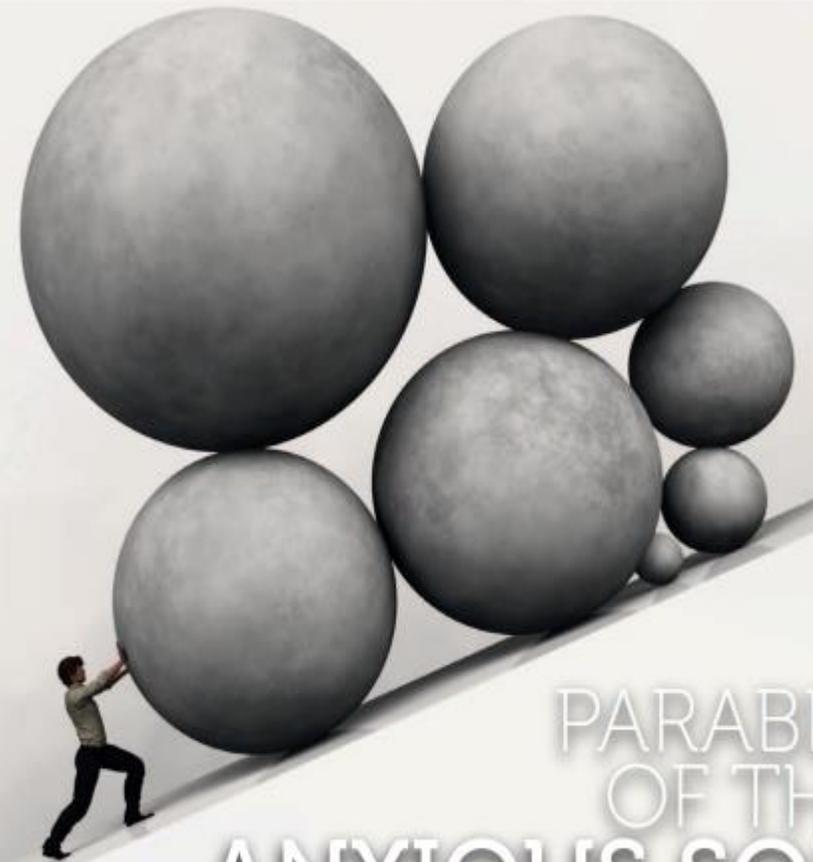
"My son, don't be worried. I've known all along about your anxiety rocks."

"I hated them," said the son.

"I didn't. I loved them. I knew they were part of you and to love you was to love them, too. In fact, I knew that they needed more love than the other parts of you, so I came out here and loved them all the more. That's what transformed them into beads of confidence."

The son began to cry. Tears of sadness came and then tears of happiness. He was sad that he didn't realise the answer sooner – anxiety is not to be feared or ashamed of or shut away. It's to be seen and loved and taken care of. It's to be hugged and spoken of with those who love us. That is how anxiety rocks are transformed into shiny beads of confidence.

Most of all, though, he was happy. Happy he had a loving father who saw and loved all the parts of him. The son learned that day that he, too, could love all the parts of himself. In this way, he knew that anxiety could always be overcome. ■



PARABLE OF THE ANXIOUS SON

When anxiety messes with us, or we feel lonely or afraid, the God of love is close to us, eager to lift our burden.



Today's readings

1 Kg 17:10-16

Heb 9:24-28

Mk 12:38-44

GOD'S WORD TODAY

Jesus called his disciples to let go of so much for the sake of the Gospel – trades, possessions and families. He challenged them to give their very selves for the Gospel. Above all, they were to serve others even to the point of giving their lives. The widow in today's Gospel models Jesus' idea of discipleship for all who would follow him.

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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32nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 7th November 2021

Recently deceased Bridie McMorrow (nee McKenny), Dublin, formerly Ballymaginthy

Anniversary Masses

Leitrim

Sat 6th Pauline Kelly; Alice McAnulty

Sat 13th Rita O'Hare; John Joe Malone
PD Cunningham

Gargory

Sun 7th Felix McCartan and Deceased Family Members

Dromara

Sun 7th Sarah Hughes (Finnis)
Petesy, Brigid and Theresa McGrady

God's Word *From a generous heart*

Throughout his ministry, Jesus goes to the heart of the matter, seeing beyond people's behaviour into the motivation of their heart. In today's Gospel, the elaborate piety of the scribes and Pharisees does not convince him because it is all for show. But what the widow does when she puts her two small coins in the treasury is genuine: it is done for God. The Pharisees and the widow were worlds apart in their religious practice and understanding of God. The religion of the Pharisees served them, and them alone, whereas the widow sought to serve God. It is clear that Jesus judges not only actions but attitudes; not only outward behaviour but what goes on in the human heart. He points out the contrast between self-serving religion and selfless generosity. His judgement is harsh. He wishes to save the Pharisees from themselves, and the generous widow is a model of how things could, and should, be. She is a model for us all.

Parish Collections 31st Oct

Dromara £370

Drumgooland £729

We welcome into Dromara Parish Ronan Ward

Congratulations to Brian Kelly and Cliona Doyle who were married recently

Trócaire

An appeal to address the terrible hunger crisis across East Africa (Ethiopia, Somalia, South Sudan and South Kordofan) which has been driven by escalating climate change, conflict, swarms of desert locusts and covid. Over 30 million, children and adults, are being pushed into starvation. There will be a collection after mass on 13th and 14th November.

Memory Cards in front of the altar - this year I suggest that cards are not placed there to reduce risk of spreading any infection.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament every Monday evening after mass in Dechomet until 8:30pm. This will resume on Mon 15th Nov

P4 Children can leave their leaves (or drawing of a leaf) with the names of those who have died, in the basket with the November Dead Lists, at any stage over this month

Leitrim Cleaners Fri 12th Bridie's Team

Drumgooland St Vincent de Paul

Contact us in confidence on 075 8644 7427

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

Masses for recently deceased

Mon 8th Nov, 7:30pm, Dechomet

Wed 10th Nov, 7:30pm, Leitrim

Fri 12th Nov, 7:30pm, Dromara

The dead are not forgotten and for those who have been bereaved recently, it is a continual remembrance. This year it is not possible to gather as we did over the past number of years. There has been no invite to each family as the churches could not hold everybody that would wish to attend. Since last year there have been 3 deaths around Dechomet, 17 around Leitrim and 8 around Dromara. If family members of the recently deceased do wish to attend, they are welcome but please choose your own safety first. The 1m social distance is essential in church. The masses will be streamed and available to those who wish to pray at home. A candle will be lit for each person who has died over the past year and another candle for all our deceased family and friends. There can be no carrying up of candles this year. Please give priority to the families of the recently deceased, if there is safe space not used others are welcome.