

Sunday Message

SEVENTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

THE WORD

Year A • 19 February 2023 • Colour: Green • Psalter Week 3

THE EXTRA MILE

(MT 5:38-48)

Today's Gospel offers the last two instances from the Sermon on the Mount in which Jesus puts a new interpretation on the law of Israel. Jesus takes the old Jewish law a big step forward. We are to go the extra mile.

Jewish law was big into external observance. Keep the law, and you were all right. It didn't matter what kind of person you were on the inside – in the heart – so long as you followed the law line by line.

Jesus' law is very different. It's not just about sticking to the letter of the law. It's about the kind of person you are, your whole way of living and relating to others – a move from keeping rules to showing love and mercy.

We see that contrast played out in today's Gospel. Jesus says: "You have learnt how it was said: Eye for eye and tooth for tooth. But I say this to you: offer the wicked person no resistance..."

"You have learnt how it was said: You must love your neighbour and hate your enemy. But I say this to you: love your enemy..."

You see the pattern: "You have learnt... But I say this to you..." The contrast is stark. The old way of living is no longer enough. We must now live according to the far more challenging new law of Jesus. It is a call to go the extra mile.

This new law of Jesus has vast implications for how we see and treat each other. Think of the terrible war in Ukraine. Think of the social divisions that exist in our country. Think of the divisions in our church.

Now listen to the new law of Jesus again: love your enemies; extend the hand of friendship; be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect. We must always go the extra mile. ■

LEARN

The Christian loves everybody without distinction.

The command to love our neighbour is central to our faith.

The Christian keeps the spirit and not just the letter of the law.

PRAY

There is so much hatred in our world today, so much division, suspicion, racism. Pray for a world that lives by the values of the Sermon on the Mount.

SAY

Lord, help me always to be a channel of your love and peace.

DO

Reach out to somebody you have stopped talking to or who has stopped talking to you. Do it no matter how difficult it may be.

REFLECT

Manuel Sanchez drives a refuse truck in California. He noticed that one little boy's favourite activity was watching the garbage being picked up at his home every Monday. Daniel was five years old and autistic.

In a video posted on social media, Daniel's mother explained how her son used to be afraid of the truck but that his fear eventually grew into a love of trash day.

"He waits all week for Monday morning pickup," she said. "He knows exactly which bins are picked up each week, and Sundays are special for him when he takes the bins out with his dad.

"Our garbage recycle man, known only to us as Manuel, is his favourite. He always has a big smile for Daniel, who is faithfully waiting for him every Monday. To Daniel, trash pickup is like a symphony. He synchronises his hand movements with the truck," she wrote.

One Monday morning, Mr Sanchez pulled

up outside the family home as usual, to Daniel's absolute delight, and then asked Daniel's mother if it would be okay to give her son a present.

He then got out of the truck and walked over to Daniel with a bag. Inside was a large plastic truck – a toy version of the garbage truck.

Daniel was so overcome by the gift that all he could say was a quiet "Thank you."

"One man, one moment, touching the life of an autistic child... our hearts are overflowing," Daniel's mother wrote in a Facebook message. The video showing Mr Sanchez's surprise for Daniel quickly went viral.

Later it transpired Mr Sanchez had brought the truck out of his own money. It was a beautiful act of love. He didn't have to do it. Nobody would have expected him to do it – but he did it anyway. You could say he went the extra mile.

And that's what today's Gospel is about too. It's about going the extra mile.

In today's second reading, there is a line that gets to the heart of why we must go the extra mile. St Paul reminds the people of Corinth that they are God's Temple. The Jewish people believed that God dwelt in the great Temple in Jerusalem. The Temple was God's earthly dwelling place. But St Paul reminds us that God lives in each of us, that God's Holy Spirit dwells in each of us. Each of us is a temple of God – and so each of us is unique, precious, priceless, irreplaceable.

Since each of us is a temple of God, that must shape how we see and treat each other. He mightn't have articulated it like that, but that's how Mr Sanchez saw little Daniel – as someone who reflected God's presence in a particularly beautiful way because of his condition.

Living the Sermon on the Mount is about seeing and treating everyone – everyone – as God's holy Temple. What a different world we would have, and what different debates we would conduct if we could act like that. ■

Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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19th February 2023
7th Sunday in ordinary time

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

Ash Wednesday Masses

7am Leitrim 10am Gargory
7pm Dromara 8pm Dechomet
Ashes will be distributed during all masses

Trócaire Boxes are available at the back of the churches

Anniversaries

Leitrim

Sat 18th John McKay
Owen, Rose, Eugene & Brendan McElroy
Sat 25th Patrick Malone

Gargory

Sun 19th Patrick, Elizabeth & Theresa McCartan

Dromara

Sun 19th Mary McBride
Philip Lundy & Deceased Members of
McGrillen & Cauley Families
Marie King
Paschal Hawthorne

Fri 24th Hugh & Elizabeth O'Hare (Drinn)

Sun 26th Dan & Mae Flynn

Dromore Diocesan Historical Society will host an illustrated talk by Martin Goss on "*Church St, Warrenpoint in the 1911 census*" on Mon 20th Feb at 7:30pm, in the Methodist Hall, 44 Church St, Warrenpoint. All welcome.

First Confessions

St Michael's Tues 28th Feb 7:30pm
St Mary's Tues 7th Mar 7:30pm
St Matthew's Tues 14th Mar 7:30pm

SVDP contact numbers:

Dromara 077 3883 8191 Drumgooland 078 2541 9067

Safeguarding contact: P Carville 077 8991 7741

Collections Parish	Dromara	Drumgooland
	£478	£1,029

Financial support – Thank you to all who give so generously to the parish collections. The new envelope boxes will go out in April. If anyone wishes to have a box or wishes to set up a standing order, please let us know by email or by speaking to Fr Peter.

Dromara Choir

Practice on Mon at 6:45pm in the chapel. New members are welcome as well as previous members.

We welcome into Drumgooland Parish Daniel Francis Duffy

Desert Fathers

A Lenten program for men has been developed by an Irish priest to help men make this Lent different. The program contains 4 pillars - Prayer, Penance, Spiritual Reading and Charity. To find out more and join an online group, a zoom information meeting is scheduled for Sun Feb 19th at 8:30pm. Meeting ID 494 625 9738 Password: 997298. Email desertfathers40@gmail.com for a copy of the program

Annual Day of Prayer for Survivors and Victims of Abuse takes place on Fri 24th Feb. Prayers will be offered at Masses on that day for those who have been hurt by abuse in the Church. We are all asked to remember this intention in our private prayers also.

Mary's Meals – Syria Earthquake Appeal

We invite you to join us in prayer for those affected by the two devastating earthquakes in Turkey and Syria, and for the success of emergency response efforts. We have launched an emergency appeal to provide urgent support for children and vulnerable adults in and around Aleppo who are in desperate need. To find out more or donate, please visit www.marysmeals.org.uk or call us for free on 0800 6981212.