

# Sunday Message

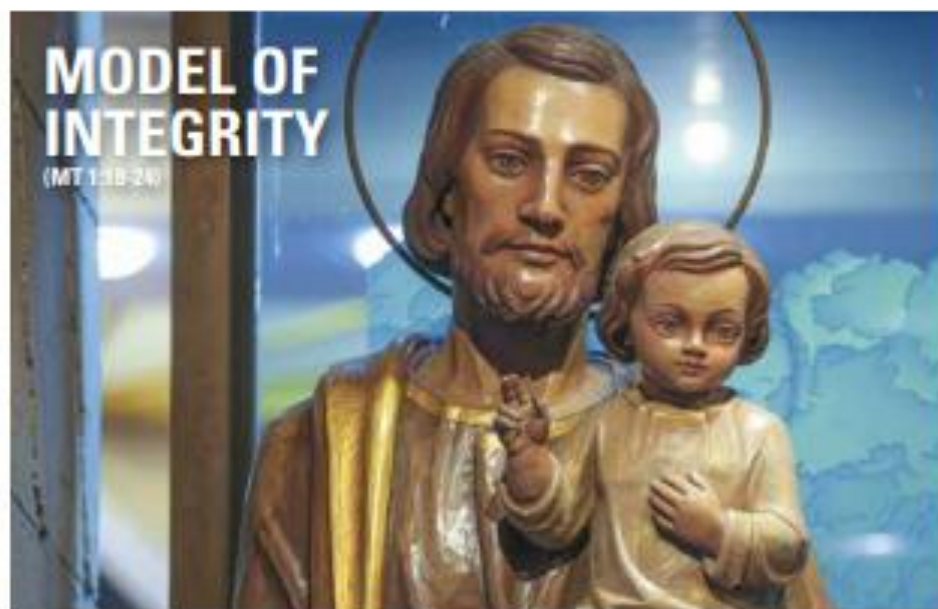
FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year A • 18 December 2022 • Colour: Violet • Feaster Week 4

## MODEL OF INTEGRITY

(MT 1:18-24)



The central figure in today's Gospel is Joseph, the often forgotten hero of the Christmas story.

Christian art has never been kind to St Joseph. It usually depicts him as an elderly man. What of the real Joseph? We know little about him, except that he was a native of Bethlehem, and by trade he was a carpenter, a word that can include many aspects of the building trade. The Joseph of this story was probably a reasonably young man. Marriage took place early in Judaism. The usual age for men to marry was in their late teens. As the story opens, this young man's future happiness is clouded by an event he finds hard to understand.

Matthew uses only one word to describe Joseph: "he was a just man." That is the highest praise the Old Testament can lavish on any person. We hear not a word from Joseph in today's Gospel or throughout the entire two chapters of Matthew's account of Jesus' birth. For Matthew, what is more important is that Joseph is an obedient man. He responds without question to the challenges set before him. He embarks on marriage with a young woman who has conceived her child by the Holy Spirit. He will emigrate to a foreign land to protect the child and his mother. He will return, again without question, and settle in Nazareth, far from his kin, to give the child a secure future. Above all, he will provide the child with a name and a father's love.

Joseph is a model of integrity and uprightness, a model of what it means to seek to do God's will. ■

### PRAY

Joseph and Mary were people of extraordinary faith. Despite the confusion and pain they must have experienced after discovering that Mary was pregnant, they trusted in God and his plan for them. Pray that you, too, may have the radical faith of Joseph and Mary.

### LEARN

Like Joseph, we Christians are called to listen attentively to what God asks of us.

Jesus is the fulfilment of God's promise to humanity.

### SAY

Lord, I look forward to your coming. Help me to be always aware of your presence.

### DO

We can be so busy in the run-up to Christmas that we lose sight of what it is all about. Take some time this week to reflect on what we are celebrating on the feast of Christmas.



## REFLECT

Advent is running out of time. In just a few days, Christmas will be on us. Lest we forget, the readings today are tripping over each other to remind us what Christmas is all about. The first reading reminds us of Isaiah's prophecy made many centuries earlier: "The maiden is with child and will soon give birth to a son whom she will call Emmanuel, a name which means 'God-is-with-us'."

In the second reading, St Paul reminds us of Christ's origin: In the body, he was a human descendent of King David, and

in the order of the Spirit, he was Son of God. The Gospel tells us how Jesus was miraculously conceived in the womb of Mary and given the name of Jesus, meaning Saviour. The prophecy had been fulfilled.

So now the scene is set. Are you ready? Can you share in Mary's astonishment when Gabriel told her she was to become the mother of the Messiah? Can you realise with Joseph that something extraordinary is about to happen? Can you feel the excitement of knowing that the

God of the universe has put on our human nature? Are you thrilled by the knowledge that he who humbled himself to share in our humanity has offered us a share in his divinity?

In the days left, step aside for a while from the hustle and bustle of Christmas presents and Christmas dinners and let yourself be caught up in the intense joy of that night in Bethlehem. With Mary, can you find time to treasure all these wonderful events in your heart? ■

# Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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## 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022

4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent

### 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

### Confessions

**Mon** 19<sup>th</sup> Dechomet 6:45-7:15pm  
**Wed** 21<sup>st</sup> Leitrim 6:45-7:15pm  
**Fri** 23<sup>rd</sup> Dromara 6:45-7:15pm  
**Sat** 24<sup>th</sup> Gargory 10-10:30am

I will use the confession boxes. The wearing of face covering will be the choice of the person coming to confession

### Christmas Masses

#### Christmas Eve Vigil

Gargory 7:00pm  
Dromara 7:00pm  
Dechomet 8:15pm  
Leitrim 9:30pm

#### Christmas Morning

Gargory 9:00am  
Dromara 11:00am  
Leitrim 10:00am

There will be no weekday mass 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> nor 28<sup>th</sup> Dec

**Altar Servers Rotas 2023** are available in the sacristy

I will be on holiday from Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Jan to Sat 14<sup>th</sup> Jan

**Leitrim Clearners** Fri 23<sup>rd</sup> Geraldine's Team

**SVP** - If you are struggling with food/heating bills, etc., please contact us: Drumgooland 078 2541 9067 and Dromara 077 3883 8191

**Safeguarding contact:** P Carville 077 8991 7741

**NI Blood Transfusion Service** - Blood Donation session Fri 30<sup>th</sup> Dec, St Malachy's High School, 12:30pm to 4pm and 5pm to 7pm. To book appointment please telephone 08085 534 653

Collections	Dromara	Drumgooland
Parish	£331	£1005
Priest	£960	£1464

**Recently deceased** John McMullan

### Anniversaries

#### Dechomet

**Sat 17<sup>th</sup>** William James Doyle  
Willie Doyle (The Rock)  
**Sat 24<sup>th</sup>** Daniel, Mary Rose and Martin  
Matheson and Jack Murphy  
John Greeran

#### Leitrim

**Sat 17<sup>th</sup>** Patsy Bannon  
Barney and Agnes Morgan  
Patrick Smyth  
Mary Theresa, Catherine,  
Pat and Cecilia Murphy  
Peter Bannon  
**Wed 21<sup>st</sup>** Brendan Cunningham  
**Sat 24<sup>th</sup>** Kathleen and Annie Cunningham  
Mary Burns

#### Dromara

**Sun 18<sup>th</sup>** Canon Gerry McCrory  
Mary and Gerard McGrillen  
**Fri 23<sup>rd</sup>** Peter and Eileen O'Hare; Bernard and  
Kathleen O'Hare and Deceased  
Family Members  
**Sat 24<sup>th</sup>** Mary Rice (Dree)

### Mary's Meals Festive Walk

**Wed 28<sup>th</sup> Dec**, starting at Leitrim pitch at 10am.  
For more details on the walk contact Rita Greeran on 07597416505.

### SVP Dromara Christmas Appeal 2022

Amazon Wish List can be found at:

[https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1RET2PL08GHHT?ref=wl\\_share](https://www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1RET2PL08GHHT?ref=wl_share)

If you would prefer to make a donation towards heating oil/food hampers, please contact Mary on 077 3883 8191.

**We welcome** into Dromara Parish Mila Burns

**Congratulations** to Miceal Murphy and Patricia Kehoe who were married recently