

# Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

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## First Sunday of Advent

3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023

### 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  
*Feast of the Immaculate Conception*  
**Thur 7<sup>th</sup> 7:30pm Leitrim**  
**Fri 8<sup>th</sup> 10am Gargory**  
**7:30pm Dromara**

*The sick & housebound will be attended this week*

### ANNIVERSARIES



#### DECHOMET

**Sat 2<sup>nd</sup>** Margaret Gilmore  
Olivia Fitzpatrick  
Alfie King  
**Mon 4<sup>th</sup>** Sr Margaret McCartan  
**Sat 9<sup>th</sup>** John & Margaret Leonard

#### LEITRIM

**Sat 2<sup>nd</sup>** Fr Lionel Murray  
Mary Teresa Murphy  
**Wed 6<sup>th</sup>** Joe & Sinead Ward  
**Sat 9<sup>th</sup>** Rosie McAleenan & Margaret O'Hare  
Patrick Charles McAleenan  
Arthur James & Seamus Doyle  
Deceased Members of Behan Family

#### GARGORY

**Sun 3<sup>rd</sup>** John King  
**Sun 10<sup>th</sup>** John Hartnett & Deceased Family Members

#### DROMARA

**Sun 10<sup>th</sup>** Davy McKay  
Laura Armstrong, Hughie, Isabella  
& Hugh Lavery

### Our Lady's Grammar School Open Evening

**Tue 5<sup>th</sup> Dec 7:15pm-9pm** Catherine McAuley Hall.  
Principal's address 7:30pm & 8:30pm.  
Students who are interested in applying for A Level  
Study in Sept are also most welcome to attend.

### Support the Benedictine Community

Buy your Christmas gifts at the shop of

#### **Holy Cross Abbey, Rostrevor**

Candles and Soaps made by the monks,  
books and a range of different gifts.

Shop opens 9-11am & 2.30-5pm

[www.benedictinemonks.co.uk](http://www.benedictinemonks.co.uk)

**SVP** Drom 077 3883 8191 / Drum 078 2541 9067

**Safeguarding Contact** Pat Carville 077 8991 7741

**Collections Dromara Drumgooland**  
Parish £403 £801

*Thank you for your continued contributions.*

**John Paul II volunteers**, please come forward  
and let us know how you wish to be involved.  
All help will be gratefully received.

### Dromara Parish Council

Meeting **Mon 4<sup>th</sup> Dec 8pm** St Michael's Hall

**Gargory Altar Rota** *Dec Rita & Clare*  
**Leitrim Cleaners** *Dec Patricia, Tina, Nadine, Anne*

**St Vincent de Paul Finnis, Dromara**  
**Christmas Collection will be on Sun 10<sup>th</sup> Dec**  
Thanks for your support throughout the year.

**Leitrim Choir Practice** for *Christmas Eve Mass*  
**11<sup>th</sup> Dec at 7:15pm.** All new members  
(both adults & children) very welcome.

**St Matthew's Primary School, Magheramayo**  
**Christmas Play Wed 13<sup>th</sup> Dec 9:30am & 7pm**  
*in Liatroim Clubrooms.* **Christmas Raffle &**  
**Cake Sale** at both shows. Everyone welcome!

### Assumption Grammar School

#### **Carol Service Thur 14<sup>th</sup> Dec 7pm**

*St Patrick's Church, Ballynahinch*

to raise funds for the Music Department trip to  
New York in March 2024, where the school will be  
taking part in the annual St Patrick's Day Parade.  
Any support would be much appreciated!

### Finnis Church Cleaning Groups

Welcome to the new volunteers for the  
Finnis Church Cleaning Groups. Thank you to  
Caoimhe, Leanne and Roisin for joining and, also  
a big Thank You to the existing Cleaning Groups  
for their continued efforts, both past and present.

Your support is much appreciated.

### St Vincent de Paul, Finnis, Dromara Christmas Appeal 2023

An Amazon Wish List had been setup:

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

to purchase a Christmas present for a local child.  
If you have any difficulties or if you would prefer  
to make a donation towards heating oil/food  
hampers please contact Mary on 07738838191.

Many thanks for your continued support  
St Vincent de Paul Finnis, Dromara.

### Adoptive Parents Needed Urgently

*Babies to approx. 5 years old*

Tel: 028 90 691133 [email@familycareadoption.org](mailto:email@familycareadoption.org)

# Sunday Message

FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year B • 3 December 2023 • Colour: Violet • Psalter Week 1



He was so broke he sold wood on St Louis street corners in order to feed his young family. Everyone looked on him as a failure. He had been kicked out of the army for drunkenness, he was given a farm by his new father-in-law but couldn't make the crops grow.

In the end, his brother took pity on him and gave him a job as a clerk in his leather goods shop. He wasn't even good at that. For the proud West Point graduate and Mexican War veteran, the future looked bleak.

Then, in 1861, civil war broke out in America. As an ex-soldier, he offered to help organise local volunteer regiments on the Union side. And immediately, having been given permission to proceed, the old soldier began to shine. He displayed extraordinary strategic and leadership skills. He moulded those local Illinois regiments into a glittering, fighting army. Soon he was put in charge of entire divisions, and won battle after battle. In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln appointed him commander of the entire Union army - a force of over a million men. One year later, the terrible civil war was over, the Union army had won.

Those who knew him of old were astonished by the change in Ulysses S. Grant. In just a few years, he had gone from certified failure to victorious Lt. General of the US army, the first man to achieve that rank since George Washington. In 1868 he was elected president of United States, serving two terms, the first president to serve two full terms in more than 30 years.

In less than a decade, Grant had gone from selling firewood to living in the White House. He had gone from zero to hero, from pitiable to idol. For Grant, shame had turned to fame. He had never lost hope, and it enabled him to accomplish extraordinary things.

The need to hold onto hope is what characterises the season of Advent. We are on edge. We are seeking reassurance. We long for peace, joy, security. We await Jesus' coming. We hope.

Hope is not only a great Christian virtue, it is an essential human requirement. For without hope, we are lost. Without hope, there is no point in going on. Without hope, we die. ■

## DO

Make Advent a special time for your family. Light an Advent candle and spend some time together in prayer each day.

## PRAY

Advent invites us to be both people of hope and bearers of hope. Pray for a deeper appreciation of the meaning of this season.

## SAY

"Come, Lord Jesus, come fully into my heart and into my life. Fill me with your hope."

## LEARN

Advent is the great season of hope. It reminds us that darkness does not have the last word, because into that darkness a light has come and is coming - Jesus, God-with-us, the light of the world.

Advent reminds us that God has heard the cry of God's people, and God responded to that cry by sending his Son as one like us to save us. Hope has taken shape in Jesus. Darkness has been destroyed.

## REFLECT

Hope seems in short supply at the end of this year. We're worried about the future. What kind of world, with climate change and political unrest and the frightening advances in Artificial Intelligence, are we leaving to our children? Despite all our progress in science and technology, despite how sophisticated we have become, despite the gains we have made in human rights, our world seems as broken as in the past. Racism, populism and xenophobic fear-mongering are on the rise.

The season of Advent cautions against despair. It assures us that we are not alone. It urges us forward knowing that, with God on our side, we need not be afraid. Hope will overcome.

Writer Roy Scranton gave one of his books about climate change a gloomy title. He called it *We're Doomed, Now What?* But even though his analysis of the future sounds depressing, he refuses to let go of hope. He offers a good definition of hope. He links it with faith.

"For me, hope is always connected to faith because you don't hope that you'll go to work in the morning," Scranton said in an interview. "I don't hope I'll change my daughter's diaper, I just do those things. You hope for things that you don't have any control over. I do have a faith in human resilience and the human ability to adapt to difficult situations and still find ways to lead meaningful and rich lives."

Hope is trusting in God's promises while working to build God's kingdom by putting into practice the Sermon on the Mount. Hope is about not looking away in the face of adversity, but facing it head on in the knowledge that God is with us.

That's what Advent is all about. And that's what we need to keep our focus on in the frenetic build-up to Christmas Day. Remember what we celebrate this season; remember what is far more important than decorations and presents and parties; remember why for us this isn't a mere secular feast, a handy excuse to eat and drink and max out our credit cards. This is the feast of our hope, the feast of God-with-us, and it offers a timeless template for how we must approach all life's challenges.

As Ulysses S. Grant knew, even when things seem at their bleakest, hope still beckons us on. ■