

## JUST AS GOD NEVER GIVES UP ON US, WE SHOULD NEVER GIVE UP ON GOD

In 1995 Lena Paahlisson lost her wedding ring. The woman who lives with her family on a farm in Sweden had designed the ring herself, a white-gold band, set with seven small diamonds. She had taken the ring off to do some baking, but it disappeared from the work surface where she had left it.

The family searched everywhere, and years later even took up the tiling on the kitchen floor during renovations, in hope of finding the ring.

Then one day in 2013 when Lena was pulling up carrots in her garden, she noticed a carrot with a hard object fastened tightly around it. It was her ring. It was on a carrot so small she had been about to throw it away.

"The carrot was sprouting in the middle of the ring. It is quite incredible," her husband said.

The couple believes the ring fell into a sink back in 1995 and was lost in vegetable peelings that were turned into compost or fed to their sheep.

"I had given up hope," Lena said. "I thought I would never find it again."

### KEEP ON HOPING

It's easy to imagine the relief, the excitement in the Paahlisson household when the lost ring was found.

It's easy for us to identify with Lena Paahlisson. We all lose things. We misplace things. Stuff goes missing. We search, we might even pray to St Anthony. Most of the time we are lucky. We find our wallet, or the car keys, or the piece of jewellery. But other times we are not. We search and we search, and the lost object is never found. We lose all hope of finding it. We give up.

We can lose non-material things, too. A relationship that has come apart, a career or job or home we have

had to give up or that was taken from us; a loved one lost to dementia or Alzheimer's disease; a family member we have lost track of; a soul mate who has gone to the grave. Losses like these are harder to cope with because they are final. Reunion is impossible this side of eternal life.

And there is another kind of loss – the loss of trust in the church, the loss of faith in God. Giving up on the church might be understandable. The revelations of abuse and misuse of power by priests and religious have been scandalising. The church lost respect; it deserved to. But losing faith in God is more serious, because while the church can let us down, God never lets us down, and we will need God for help and hope when the difficult times come.

### IMAGE OF GOD

Today's Gospel reminds us that God never lets us down, never gives up on us, never wants to lose us. We may lose faith in God but God never loses faith in us.

Often, the focus of this Gospel is on the son – how he lost his way and then comes to his senses and returns home. But the story is really about the father, the parent, who longs for the lost to return, who spends every day waiting for the lost to return, and who then rejoices when the lost finally comes home.

It tells us that ours is a God who hates seeing anyone lost, who longs for the return of all who go astray, who never gives up on anyone. Even when we throw in the towel, God doesn't throw in the towel on us. When our faith crumbles, God is there for us; when our relationships flounder or life goes belly up, God is there for us; when all seems bleak and we don't know where to turn, God is there for us – always there for us.

Like Lena Paahlisson, like the prodigal father, God never, ever quits. Neither must we. ■



### Today's readings

Josh 5:9-12

2 Cor 5:17-21

Luke 15:1-3, 11-32

the professionally religious people of his time, especially the scribes and the Pharisees, were aghast that a man, who claimed to be speaking in God's name, was welcoming all sorts of people without demanding that they first perform the religious rites needed to bring them back into good standing in the community.

### GOD'S WORD TODAY

The story of the Lost Son is the best known parable from the Gospel of Luke. Its meaning is so obvious and it requires little explanation. It is the final in a series of three parables about things lost and found – a lost sheep, a lost coin and most importantly of all, a lost child. Today's reading preserves the introduction to the whole chapter, but omits the shorter parables. Jesus told these parables because

# Stu(space)

31 March 2019 – 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday) Year C

Psalter Week 4

## SERIES: LESSONS FOR LENT

Seasonal colour: PURPLE or ROSE

In this series, Fr Gerard Moloney CSsR examines some of the challenges Lent offers.



Today's Gospel reminds us that God never lets us down, never gives up on us.

It is the story of the Prodigal Father, who longs for the wandering son to return. When the lost son finally comes home, the father shows just how lavish his love is. We may be tempted to lose faith in God, but God never loses faith in us.

# Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

Fr Peter McNeill Tel: 406 50207    Emergency Tel: 079 69403762    Email: dromaradgooland@aol.co.uk    www.dromaradgooland.org

## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday) – 31<sup>st</sup> Mar 2019

### Anniversary Masses

#### Dechomet

Sat 30<sup>th</sup> – Stephen McElroy

Sat 6<sup>th</sup> – Mary and Henry O'Hare and Deceased Family Members

#### Leitrim

Sat 30<sup>th</sup> – Kathleen Cunningham; Deidre McCabe

Wed 3<sup>rd</sup> – Michael and Christopher Malone

Sat 6<sup>th</sup> – Margaret and Teresa Murphy; Brigid Cowan; Brendan Boyd; John and Agnes Boyd

#### Dromara

Sun 31<sup>st</sup> – Mae Flynn (MM); Art Gilmore

Fri 5<sup>th</sup> – Patrick Joe and Mary McEvoy

Sun 7<sup>th</sup> – Mary Ann Lundy and Deceased Family Members

### Weekday Masses

Mon – 9:00am Leitrim

Mon – 7:30pm Dechomet

Tues – 7:00am Leitrim (each Tues during Lent)

Tues – 9:00am Dromara

Wed – 7:30pm Leitrim

Fri – 7:30pm Dromara (Exposition after Mass)

### Sunday Mass times

Sat Evening - Dechomet 6:00pm

Leitrim 7:30pm

Sun Morning - Gargory 9:00am

Dromara 11:00am

The sick and housebound will be attended this week

### First Communion Stall

Leitrim - Sat 20<sup>th</sup> Apr

Finnis – Sun 21<sup>st</sup> Apr

Dechomet – Sat 27<sup>th</sup> Apr

Gargory – Sun 28<sup>th</sup> Apr

### Collections

Parish 24<sup>th</sup> Mar

### Dromara

£405

### Drumgooland

£1355

### Holy Week Ceremonies

#### Holy Thursday

6pm Leitrim 8pm Dromara

#### Good Friday

6pm Gargory 8pm Dromara

**Stations of the Cross** 3pm Dechomet/Leitrim/Gargory

#### Holy Saturday

9:00pm Dromara

#### Easter Sunday

9:00am Gargory 10:00am Leitrim  
11:00am Dromara 12noon Dechomet

### Pioneer Total Abstinence Association

Annual Pioneer Dinner Dance on Fri 26<sup>th</sup> Apr at 8pm in INF Hall, Hilltown. For tickets, or if you think you are due to receive a Silver, Gold or Fr Cullen Certificate please contact Susie Brannigan on 07803163476 or Maureen Kearney on 07763640875.

### St Colman's High & Sixth Form College

Post – 16 Information Evening 2019

Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Apr, 3.30pm – 5.30pm

Tel: 028 97562518

### Dromore Diocesan Historical Society

Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Apr at 7:30pm in St Peter's Hall, Lurgan.

A talk and discussion on George William Russell (AE), his life and its impact led by Jim Conway and Brian McKernan of the 'Lurgan & North Armagh George Russell Festival Society'. George William Russell, who wrote under the pseudonym AE, was an Irish writer, editor, critic, poet, painter and nationalist. He was born in Lurgan on Apr 10<sup>th</sup> 1867. Everyone welcome.

**Congratulations to the children** who were confirmed last week and all who made the celebration so rich.

**Congratulations to the children** who have celebrated First Confession over the last few weeks, to their parents and teachers from whom they have learnt the power and necessity of forgiveness.

### Parish Council Meetings

Drumgooland – Parochial House Mon 1<sup>st</sup> Apr 8pm

Dromara – St Michael's Hall Mon 8<sup>th</sup> Apr 8pm

**The Annual Accounts** are printed on the reverse of the bulletin.

There was only one school payment in 2018 - £21,050 St Michael's PS. This money is paid by the Dept of Education to the parish and the parish pays the contractor.

Thank you to all who support the parish and the priests. The priest's collection totalled £35,359. I received £19,200, the same as all other PPs. The surplus goes to pay other priests in the Diocese.

**Leitrim Cleaners** w/e 5<sup>th</sup> Apr - Geraldine's Team

**Gargory Altar Society** Apr - Carmel & Geraldine

**Dechomet Altar Society** Apr – Rosemary & Noelle

**Children/Adult Safeguarding** P Carville 07789917741

**Prayer Shawl Ministry** requests to 07704915346

**SVP Helplines** Drom 07738838191/Drumg 07979815269