

# Parishes of Dromara and Drumgooland

Fr Peter McNeill Tel: 406 50207 Emergency Tel: 079 69403762

Email: [dromaradrumgooland@dromorediocese.org](mailto:dromaradrumgooland@dromorediocese.org) Web: [www.dromaradrumgooland.org](http://www.dromaradrumgooland.org)

## *Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time*

4<sup>th</sup> February 2024

### 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

The **sick and housebound** will be attended this week.  
If anyone wishes to be added to the list, please let me know.

### *Recently Deceased*



*Margaret Mary Reavey,  
formerly Munínabane*

### ANNIVERSARIES

#### LEITRIM

**Sat 3<sup>rd</sup>** Fr Jim Mooney  
Patsy McGlue & Paul McEleney  
**Sat 10<sup>th</sup>** Fr Frank Lyons  
Rita Murray  
Maggie, Mary & Annie O'Hare &  
Deceased Family Members

#### DROMARA

**Sun 4<sup>th</sup>** Kathleen O'Hare (*Dree*)  
**Sun 11<sup>th</sup>** Peter McEvoy & Martin Drake  
Mary O'Hare (*Dunbeg*)

#### DECHOMET

**Sat 10<sup>th</sup>** Mickey Turley & Ellie Morgan

Collections	Dromara	Drumgooland
Parish	£467	£740

*Thank you for your continued contributions*

Finnis Hall hire £50

### Parish Council Meetings

Drumgooland Mon 5<sup>th</sup> Feb 8pm

Dromara Mon 12<sup>th</sup> Feb 8pm

### The Five Consecutive First Saturday of the month devotions continues

**Sat 3<sup>rd</sup> Feb** in Dechomet,  
with confessions at 5:30pm,  
the 6pm Mass, followed by the  
Rosary and 15-minute meditation.  
Along with receiving Holy Communion,  
everything is offered in reparation to  
Our Lady's Immaculate Heart for peace  
as requested in Fatima.  
Confessions can be obtained within 20 days.

### Do This in Memory

The First Communion programme  
continues on **10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> February**

### Lent begins on **Wed 14<sup>th</sup> February**

Gutterings replaced recently on  
Gargory Chapel cost £3,360

**Gargory Altar Rota**  
**Feb** *Carmel & Geraldine*

**Leitrim Cleaners**  
**Feb** *Geraldine, Deirdre & Siobhan*

### SVP

Dromara 077 3883 8191  
Drumgooland 078 2541 9067

### Safeguarding Contact:

Stephen Sherry 073 0124 6329  
Email: [safeguardingdirector@dromorediocese.org](mailto:safeguardingdirector@dromorediocese.org)

## THE PROBLEM OF SUFFERING

JOB 7:1-4, 6-7



You're probably familiar with the film *Shadowlands*, about Belfast-born writer, C.S. Lewis.

For years his life has followed the same comfortable, predictable patterns. He is a lecturer and a writer, a pipe-smoking bachelor who lives in his book-lined Oxford home with his brother. His Narnia books and his theology have made him famous, and he gives comforting talks about God and religion.

One of his books, called *The Problem of Pain*, explores the mystery of suffering. Lewis is confident that he knows the purpose of suffering: it is God's way of perfecting us, of carving away the wrong parts, of leaving a soul ready to enter heaven. It's a nice, rational way of thinking of suffering.

And then, Lewis's life is disrupted. He meets a divorced American named Joy Davidman. She wrote him an admiring letter, which led to her first visit to England, along with her young son.

Joy and Lewis are very different. She is loud and vivacious. He is in a comfortable rut - dinners at his college dining hall, evenings in front of the fire, reading while the wireless plays classical music.

Lewis received her as a courtesy, but soon he begins to bring her along to his events and they grow close. But he is so settled in his ways that he hardly knows what to do when he begins to realise he is in love. This buttoned-down intellectual surprises himself by falling in love. Joy turns his life upside down.

Then tragedy strikes. She contracts terminal cancer. When she finds herself in awful agony, his theory about pain and all his certainties

begin to fall apart. Grief overwhelms him. He has just found love, and now he's losing it.

After Joy dies, he writes a very different book about pain called *A Grief Observed*. It describes his reactions, as a Christian, to his wife's death. His rational faith fell to pieces when confronted with devastatingly personal suffering. He writes, "Where is God? Go to him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence."

But though Lewis's rational faith is tested by Joy's death, it does not collapse. Through the darkness of this experience he even claims to have come to love his wife even more. God had helped him realise that because the love he and Joy had for each other had reached its earthly limit, it was ready for its heavenly fulfilment.

Lewis's loss is like Job's in today's first reading. Job's life is a success. He is a prosperous landowner, blessed with a happy home, and a strong religious faith. God boasts to Satan about how virtuous Job is, but Satan retorts that Job's faith would collapse if his prosperity collapsed.

God lets Satan test Job, and then everything goes wrong for Job. He loses his money, his family, everything. His friends' pious words of comfort offer him no consolation. Still, Job clings to his faith. Though it is tested, he won't let it go. The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.

Suffering, especially innocent suffering, is one of the great tests of faith. Like Job, like C.S. Lewis, we hold onto our faith because we know that it gives us the strength and fortitude to face the difficult times. ■

## REFLECT

Like Job and C.S. Lewis, we're all acquainted with suffering. Marriages collapse, relationships sunder, debts pile up, sickness strikes, loved ones die. The world seems full of injustice, cruelty, caprice, misery. There are three things we can say in the face of pain.

First, to always appreciate the now, the present moment - your health, your loved ones, the beauty of life and the people who make your heart leap. Towards the end of *Shadowlands*, Lewis doesn't want to talk to Joy about her dying, but she says, "The pain now is part of the happiness then. That's the deal." The sadness you experience now is because of the happiness you had before. Appreciate the good you have now, in this moment. Treasure it.

Second, God is with us when we suffer. Jesus entered fully into the darkness of human suffering. In C.S. Lewis's words, on the cross Jesus turned to God and found a door slammed in his face when he cried out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Yet God did not forsake Jesus, but brought him through death into the fullness of life. The Jesus nailed to a cross is the same risen Lord who is with us in our own suffering, just as he was with the suffering and the broken in today's Gospel. He is with us as one who knows our experience from the inside. And so we can confidently turn to him in our distress.

Third, do not be afraid. In 2018, English politician Tessa Jowell spoke in the House of Lords about the brain cancer that would soon kill her. Her words, she said, in the face of suffering were the same last words Seamus Heaney uttered before he died: "Don't be afraid."

Because we are Christians, at the end of the day, no matter what faces us, we know we don't have to be afraid. ■

## DO

Visit or contact a loved one or neighbour who is ill or housebound. Spend quality time with them.

## SAY

"Lord, help me to know that you always hold me in the palm of your hand."

## LEARN

God is close to those who suffer. God never abandons us.

## PRAY

Pray today for all who are suffering and those who care for them.