

PARISH OF ST. JOSEPH, ST. BENILDUS & ST. MARY'S

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IF YOU WISH TO
PREPARE NEXT SUNDAY'S
READINGS :
Holy Family
Gen 15:1-6, 21:1-3.
Ps 104:1-6, 8-9.
Heb 18:11-12, 17-19.
Lk 2:22-40.

4th Sunday of Advent

24th Dec 2017

This is the Newsletter for 4th Sunday in Advent and Feast of the Holy Family.

Gospel Reflection for the Fourth Sunday of Advent : Final Answer?

"Hail, full of grace! The Lord is with you Do not be afraid, for you have found favour with God." Imagine for one moment, that instead of the Angel Gabriel speaking those words to Mary, that they had been spoken directly to you. How would you feel? It would of course be a life changing moment ... a moment filled both with great excitement and of great uncertainty. In that moment you would know that life would never be the same again. In that moment you would know that God had great plans for you. How must Mary have felt? It must have taken huge courage for her to agree to conceive God's Son. By saying 'yes' to God's plan she was allowing her whole life to be turned upside down. By saying 'yes' she was to turn her back on the security of the normal life she had planned with Joseph, her husband-to-be.

God's call to Mary is what we refer to today as the "Annunciation" which means an announcement or a calling. There are other places in the Bible where we see people called unexpectedly from the normality of their hum-drum lives to serve God. The calling is always a two-way thing. God requires a response. Of course we don't have to respond to God's call if we don't want to. Mary didn't have to say 'yes' to God's plan. She could have declined and lived out her years in trouble free comfort. God still calls people today. Sometimes the call is insistent, as many who have been called to religious vocation will testify. Often the call is less obvious, and yet we are told that God has called each of us, and that for each of us there is a role to play. We are favoured and chosen just as Mary was. The main difference is that Mary responded fully to her unique role, whilst we remain hesitant and halfhearted, plagued by doubts as to our worth. Answering God's call isn't a comfortable business. Answering God's call might involve difficult decisions and hardship; but it might also be hugely rewarding, exciting and invigorating. How do we see God's call? Do we see it as a great burden, or as a great gift? Although Mary was young and uneducated, she had the faith to see that what the Angel Gabriel was offering her in calling her for God was a great gift.

The call is to us all. How does God call each of us? What talents skills and characteristics do we each possess that God can use? Advent is a time in which we can look for the ways in which God is calling us a time in which we can decide on the answer will give.

Mass Times:

ST. JOSEPH & ST. BENILDUS

Sunday

Vigil 6.30pm, Sunday 10.00am & 12 Noon

Monday-Friday

7.30 am & 10.30am

Saturday 10.30am

Holy Days of Obligation

6.30 Vigil and 11.00am

CONFESSIONS

Confessions immediately following the 10.30am on Saturday and at the parish office by request



ST. MARY'S, BALLYGUNNER

Sunday

7.00pm Vigil, Sunday 11.00am

Holy Days of Obligation

7.00pm Vigil & 11.00am

First Friday:

9.30am

CHRISTMAS ARRANGEMENTS 2017

CHURCH OF ST. JOSEPH & ST. BENILDUS

Saturday 23rd December Masses 10.30am & 6.30pm Vigil
Confessions Monday to Saturday after 10.30am Mass

CHRISTMAS EVE

Sunday 24th December Children's Mass 10am
Mass 12 noon
Confessions 1pm to 2pm

CHRISTMAS DAY – Liturgy of the Nativity of Our Lord

Sunday 24th December Carol Service 8.30pm
Christmas Vigil Mass 9.00pm
Monday 25th December Children's Christmas Mass 10am
Parish Mass 12 noon
No evening Mass Christmas Day

St. Stephen's Day Tuesday 26th December Mass 10.30am
Feast of the Epiphany : Saturday 6th January : Masses 6.30pm Fri (Vigil); 11.00am Sat

ST. MARY'S CHURCH, BALLYGUNNER

CHRISTMAS EVE SUNDAY 24TH Mass 11.00am
Carol Service 8.30pm
Vigil Mass 9.00pm
Monday 25th December Mass 11am
Saturday 6th January Masses 7pm Vigil (Friday)
11am

We wish all our parishioners a Happy and Blessed Christmas

Nollaig agus Athbhliain faoi mhaise do gach éinne

Last Sunday's Collection

€2,758

*Thank you for your
generous offering*

We would like to thank everyone who supported Fr. Liam in the Waterford AC Half Marathon. A total of €443.40 was raised, which was given to Pieta House.

Please take a look at the ads on the back page. It is thanks to the support of these businesses that we have a colourful Newsletter. If you avail of the services of any of these advertisers, please let them know where you saw the ad, so that they will know that they are getting value for their investment !

Since 2012, the Bishops' Conference's Choose Life website has been a dedicated portal to offer resources and promote the protection of the life of the unborn. The website hosts up-to-date news on the life issue as well as prayer materials for parishes and the faithful. The website address is www.chooselife2017.ie, which will automatically update to [www.chooselife2018](http://www.chooselife2018.ie) in the New Year.

IN LOVING MEMORY

PLEASE PRAY FOR THOSE WHO DIED RECENTLY : ROSEMARY GOFF, MICHAEL GALLAGHER

Whose birthdays or anniversaries occur

*John Bradley, Deceased O'Connell Family, Sean McGrath, Tom McDonagh,
Michael, Mary & Catherine Hearne, Brian Fitzgerald, Martin Sullivan, Mary Cummins,
Kevin O'Riordan, Mary O'Riordan, Thomas Broderick.*

MASSES

St. Joseph & St. Benildus

6.30pm Saturday

10.00am Sun

23RD/24TH DEC 2017

Bridget & James Griffin

Michael & Mary Griffin

Kathleen Hearne

12 Noon Sunday

Noeleen Lonergan

St. Mary's, Ballygunner

7.00pm Saturday

William, Mary, Nancy
& Rose Sharpe

11.00am Sunday

Martin Sullivan

30TH/31ST DEC 2017

Michael Kearney

Seamus & Eileen Lennon
Neil Larkin

John & Breda Mullowney

Nicholas & Joan Phelan
John & Eileen Mooney

A Message of Gratitude

At this time of year, the priests of the parish, Fr. John, Fr. Ray and myself wish to thank most sincerely all those who serve our Parish Community and help to build it up through their various ministries, enabling it to be as faithfilled, welcoming, inclusive and supportive as possible.

I begin with members of the **Parish staff**, Anne and Amanda in the **Parish Office**; Christy, Tess and Shay, **church maintenance**, and a very special thanks to Tom O'Brien who acts as **Parish Manager** in a totally voluntary capacity, and without whose expertise the Parish would struggle to remain financially viable, given the extent of the current Parish Debt. Tom also chairs the **Parish Finance Council**.

We thank our **Sacristans**, Betty Flynn, Martha Flood, Vincent Walsh and Gerry Grant, (& David Butler who is helping at Christmas).

In relation to ministry, we must begin with our **Parish Pastoral Council**, under the Chair of Denise Hughes.

Next we thank all involved in Liturgical Ministry: The **Parish Liturgy Group**, Chaired by Mary Lawrence. The Parish **Choirs**, with Directors Br.Ben, Sr.Úna, Dr.Joe O'Beirne and Anne Coady.

Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharistic, Ministers of the Word, Basket Collectors, Welcoming Committee, Altar Society, Flower Arrangers, Altar Servers, Blessed Sacrament Adoration Group, Prayer Group. We are grateful to the **Adult Faith Formation Group** under the Chair of Denise Hughes, and the **Baptism Preparation Team**. Thanks to the **Parish Maintenance and Support Ministries:**

Counters, St.Mary's Church Committee, Envelope Distributors.

We also appreciate the tremendous commitment shown by the **Outreach Ministries: St.Vincent de Paul Society, Hospitality Group, Visitation Group.**

Last, but not least, we thank our **Communications Ministry**, responsible for our **Newsletter** and **Website**, which are produced and updated each week by Angeline with the support of Deirdre .

With every good wish for Christmas & the New Year :

Fr. Liam

Extract from a Reflection by Fr. Pdraig McCarthy on the Submission of the IHREC to the Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC), whose work is of immense importance to the people, met the Oireachtas Committee on the Eighth Amendment on 4 October 2017. They presented a prepared document to the Oireachtas Committee. The document is entitled Human rights and equality considerations in the development of a new legislative and regulatory framework on abortion. Of the 15 members of IHREC, two dissented from the report.

I find the IHREC document utterly shocking. Its 38 pages with over 17,000 words rightly present a strong case for concern for the welfare and health of the pregnant woman. What is shocking is the absence of expressed concern for the welfare and life of the unborn child. One would never suspect from the document that abortion has any impact on any unborn child. It is like writing about the Iraq war, with concern for the impact on the US and allied personnel, and overlooking the impact on the people of Iraq. It is extraordinary that the IHREC could produce such a document. The IHREC website says: "Our vision is of an inclusive Ireland where human rights and equality are respected, protected and fulfilled for everyone, everywhere [their emphasis]." We can then examine whether the IHREC document represents true equality and human rights.

Ms Emily Logan, Chief Commissioner of IHREC, said to the Oireachtas Committee: "Ireland has ratified six of the nine core UN human rights treaties and is bound by those obligations as a matter of international law." One of those treaties is the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The document mentions it 13 times. Not once does it refer to the statement in the Preamble to the Convention: "the child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth."

Perhaps the most fundamental error in the IHREC document is that it sees the Eighth Amendment only through the lens of its impact on abortion in Ireland. The commitment in the Amendment is far wider: "The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right." Any treatment by IHREC in promoting and defending human rights must also be far wider. Consequently, the IHREC document treats abortion as if it were the only remedy imaginable for resolving a crisis pregnancy, and does not consider other approaches which, if implemented and promoted by the State, would be a true application of the Eighth Amendment. Failure to do this is a major failing of successive governments since 1983.

<http://beta.oireachtas.ie/en/debates/debate/>



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