

# St Mary's Parish, Drogheda

Sunday 21st February 2021  
First Sunday Of Lent

Fr Phil Gaffney PP  
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**Hospital Visitation:** is not possible at the moment, however please continue to inform Fr Phil or Fr Ciprian if a relative is ill or in hospital.



The  
Season  
of  
Lent



## First Sunday of Lent - Wilderness

On this first Sunday of Lent, we are invited to embrace the wilderness. The past year has given us experience of wilderness as our world battled a pandemic. Many people were afraid, isolated, alone, and uncertain of what the future would bring. Humanity was adrift in what seemed like a desert moment. However, wilderness can bring opportunity. It can be a time for deep reflection, where we take stock of what is most important to us, a chance to let go of things that are really not important and focus on where we are being called to be. During this past year, what opportunity did this wilderness offer you?

Lent is also a time where people give up something, focus on weight loss or getting fit, take on a course, try to better themselves in some way. And these can be good things, but Lent is so much more than that. It is a retreat time, a time to make room for something deeper. It is a spring-cleaning sort of time, an opportunity to ask, 'what needs clearing out in my life so that I can make more room for God?' 'What changes am I being called to embrace?' Without change we cannot grow, and things fast become stale in our lives. God is always urging us on because God knows just what possibilities there are for each of us. Lent offers us the opportunity to make space for something new, to let go of that which is keeping us from living life to the full.

The Gospel today is short, Jesus is sent into the wilderness, into the desert, and we too are invited into a desert time. Deserts are interesting places which can allow us to reflect, give ourselves space. It is true that we might encounter our demons there, but we should not be afraid because as the Gospel tells us clearly today, this is a Spirit-led desert. God is with us. Let us try to embrace this wilderness. How we make use of this time determines what will be.

'You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful. What you'll discover will be yourself.'

(Alan Alda)



This year Trocaire's Lenten Campaign will focus on exploring the Impact of Conflict on Families in South Sudan. This Lent, we learn more about the suffering of people who have lost their homes and loved ones to war, and how they are rebuilding their lives through love, friendship and solidarity. Trocaire boxes are available at the back of the Church or visit the website <https://www.trocaire.org> for more options to donate.

## Mass Intentions for week beginning Sunday 21st February, 2021

<b>Sunday 21st Feb.</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Michael Mc Nally; Jemmy & Mary-Ann Fay and Joe Fay; Joey Gallagher, Michael, Mary-Kate & Mena Rourke; Declan O'Halloran Michael Keeley; Nancy Smithers & Paddy Mc Gavisk
<b>Monday</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Philomena Keenan <i>Month's Memory</i>
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Brian Clarke
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Vera Black <i>Month's Memory</i>
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Special Intention
<b>Friday</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Jim & Peggy Heeney, Brendan Coyle and deceased members of the Keegan & Heeney family
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Frank Quinn; Teresa Smith; Andy Boylan
<b>Sunday 28th Feb.</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	Maureen Rice <i>Month's Memory</i> ; Veronica (Vera) Gow <i>Month's Memory</i> ; Martha Lowth; Molly Browne & Jack Ball;

## Pope Francis: message for Lent 2021

Pope Francis focuses on the three theological virtues in his Lenten message for 2021, inviting the faithful to "renew our faith, draw from the living waters of hope, and receive with open hearts the love of God."

Grounding his reflection on the Paschal Mystery, the Pope says, "This Lenten journey... is even now illumined by the light of the resurrection, which inspires the thoughts, attitudes and decisions of the followers of Jesus."

He goes on to say that the journey of conversion, through fasting, prayer, and almsgiving, "makes it possible for us to live lives of sincere faith, living hope, and effective charity."

### Accepting and bearing witness to the truth

The Holy Father explains "accepting and living the truth revealed in Christ means, first of all, opening our hearts to God's word." Through fasting, "experienced as a form of self-denial," we are able "to rediscover God's gift and recognize that, created in His image and likeness, we find our fulfillment in Him." Fasting, too, by helping us recognize our own poverty, helps us to love both God and neighbour.

"Lent is a time for believing," the Pope says, "for welcoming God into our lives and allowing Him to 'make His dwelling' in us."

### The 'living water' that helps us on the journey

Pope Francis relates the virtue of hope to the 'living water' that Jesus promises the Samaritan woman at the well. This is not the physical water the woman is expecting, but rather the Holy Spirit who is given through the Paschal Mystery.

Although hope may seem challenging in fragile and uncertain times, "Lent is precisely the season of hope, when we turn back to God."

Hope, he says, "is given to us as inspiration and interior light" through "recollection and silent prayer." The experience of hope in Lent, he says, "means receiving the hope of Christ, who gave His life on the Cross and was raised by God on the third day."

### Love, the highest expression of faith and hope

"Love is a leap of the heart," says Pope Francis. "It brings us out of ourselves and creates bonds of sharing and communion."

The Holy Father emphasizes the need for "social love" in building up "a civilization of love."

"Love is a gift that gives meaning to our lives," he says. Love helps us to see all men and women as our brothers and sisters. Charity is multiplied when given with love, as we see not only in the Scriptures, but in our own lives, too, when we give alms "with joy and simplicity."

"To experience Lent with love," says Pope Francis, "means caring for those who suffer or feel abandoned because of the Covid-19 pandemic." He invites us to "speak words of reassurance, and help others to realize that God loves them as sons and daughters."

### A journey of conversion

After reminding us that "every moment of our lives is a time for believing, hoping, and loving," Pope Francis concludes by saying: "The call to experience Lent as a journey of conversion, prayer and sharing of our goods, helps us – as communities and as individuals – to revive the faith that comes from the living Christ, the hope inspired by the breath of the Holy Spirit and the love flowing from the merciful heart of the Father."

### A prayer for those who died...

**Peter Branigan**, Termonfeckin & formerly Legavoureen Park  
**Olive Traynor (née Conefry)**, Highfield & formerly Hillview  
**Fergal Quigley**, Stockton-on-Tees and formerly Bothar Bruagha  
**Jimmy Keenan**, Mullingar  
**Bill Murphy**, Bryanstown  
**Krzysztof Borowski**, North Strand.

May they rest in peace

### Supporting Our Parish:

Parishioners can leave their envelopes or a donation to the parish in the boxes at the back of the church or you can now use the **donate** button facility on our website. Any contribution will be greatly appreciated.

**Many thanks. Keep safe and well.**