

A short reflection on today's Gospel Mark 1: 1-8

Today's Gospel presents us with John the Baptist, who cuts a powerful, unorthodox figure dressed in camel-skin and living on locusts and wild honey. Far from the seats of worldly power and influence, John preaches redemption and salvation in the wilderness; everywhere he goes he is followed by crowds eager and excited to hear his words.

Redemption and salvation: two powerful concepts. If we truly repent, we find our minds opening and our hearts becoming tender. We find ourselves turning fully towards God and in so doing, we find that we have recovered our soul's former beauty. We become the humans God intended us to be.

John seeks to prepare the way for the coming of Jesus, and to that end he urges his followers to change their ways: to repent, and by repenting to turn their faces back to God and salvation. His passionate mission is to open their minds and to soften their hearts so that they will be receptive to Jesus' mission of love and healing.

In this season of Advent, we are preparing ourselves for Christ's coming. The message of Advent is change, the change which begins with the world within us and results in a new way of being: a beautiful gospel of shared life. We may find ourselves in the wilderness at this present time, but there is hope and joy in that wilderness.

National Year of Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood – We pray for our diocesan seminarians and for those currently discerning their vocation to the priesthood that, like John the Baptist, they will prepare God's people for the coming of Jesus at the end of time and as He comes to us every day.

The season of Advent -take some time out from the pressures of getting ready for Christmas to pray and meditate on the true meaning of Advent.

Morning Prayer of the Church will be prayed in the Cathedral each morning at 7.45am, Monday to Friday.

Late opening: In preparation for Christmas, the Cathedral will open late on Mondays during Advent (11th and 18th December) from 8.00pm to 10.00pm. During this time there will be an opportunity for Confession and prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

St Dymphna's Mass, Tuesday 19th December at 7.30pm with Anointing of the Sick.

Eucharistic Adoration: every Sunday from 3.00pm to 6.00pm and every Tuesday from 10.30am until 7.20pm.

Saint Eugene's Carol Service will take place in the Cathedral at 4.00pm on Sunday 17th December. St Eugene's Cathedral Choir will lead the carols. We invite children to bring presents of new unwrapped toys and adults to donate sweets, biscuits, vouchers, or cash. St Vincent de Paul Society will distribute the gifts.

Saint Eugene's Cathedral Christmas Mass Bouquets are available for purchase from the Parochial House. Cost £2.

A **prayer booklet** has been created by the diocese in conjunction with the Northern Pastoral Network, for use during the season of Advent. The booklet contains a Gospel reading for each Sunday of Advent accompanied by a reflection, prayers and links to music. It can be downloaded at: <https://www.derrydiocese.org/advent>

Sympathy

We offer our sympathy to the family and friends of:

Marie McNally

May she rest in peace

Anniversaries

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

Eilish Lafferty

Patsy Bradley

Paula Doherty

Cormac Wilson

Alfie O'Connor

Peggy Caldwell

Norah McCafferty

Lily Cassidy

Betty McDevitt

May they rest in peace

Readers 16th / 17th December

06.15 pm Oran Gartland

07.30 pm Stephen Orr &

Caitlin Horner McLaughlin

09.30 am Barry McDaid

11.00 am McGinley Readers

12.30 pm Marie Canning

07.00 pm Anna Begley

Collection

Last week's collection: £4,862

Parish Development: £955

Thank you for your generosity

Thank you

Fr Farren acknowledges with thanks the following donations for:

Mary's Meals: £20

Smile Train: £20

Concern: £250, £20

Hungry Children: £5

Children in Crossfire: £20, £20, £250

Sight Savers: £250

Water Aid: £250

Sick Visitation

Fr Shaun Doherty will attend the sick and housebound in his care during the coming week:

Tuesday: Fairman Place, Academy Terrace, Tutor Close, Northland Parade, Glenbank Road, Glenbank Gardens, Marlborough Road, Marlborough Avenue, Beechwood Avenue, Creggan Road, Helen Street, Oakfield Crescent

Friday: Glenowen Park, Cashelmore Park, Hatmore Park, Turasmore Park, Ardglan, Nassau Crescent, Rosemount Gardens, Rosemount Avenue, Osborne Street, Joseph's Place, Beechwood Avenue

Children in Crossfire's 2023 Advent Appeal packs are now available at the entrance to the Cathedral. This year, they are raising funds to support a new programme in inner-city Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. If you would like to support their appeal online, please visit their website: www.childrenincrossfire.org/donate-advent

St Mary's College presents Carols by Candlelight - A Candlelight Christmas Celebration on Wednesday 20th December 2023 at 7.00pm in St Mary's College. Tickets cost £5. Featuring our Award-Winning Choir, our School Orchestra, accompaniment by Trevor Burnside, Anne Marie Hickey and special guests. Festive refreshments will be served after. With proceeds going to St Mary's College Choir.

Online Lough Derg Christmas Shop is now open at www.loughderg.live/shop: Mass Bouquets, Christmas Cards, the limited edition Lough Derg Christmas Candle, a large range of Nativity Sets and other gifts are available. The Christmas shop provides much needed financial income to support the mission and ministry of Lough Derg outside of the Pilgrimage Season. Thank you for your support.

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Trócaire School Volunteers: Are you a retired teacher or someone who has experience presenting to groups of schoolchildren? Trócaire is looking for volunteers to support its School Talks Programme for Lent 2024 in parishes of the Derry Diocese. If you think you have the right skills and experience and will have a few free hours during Lent then we would love to hear from you. For more information call Casey Schell on 028 90 808 033 or email casey.schell@trocaire.org

Priests: Fr Paul Farren, Fr Shaun Doherty

Concern Derry is opening a pop-up donations office in the Millenium Forum on Saturday 16th December from 10.00am until 5.00pm. Donations may also be made at the Concern Bookshop, Ferryquay Street, Derry, during normal opening hours.

Radio Maria Ireland Christmas Fundraiser - Thursday 14th December in The Drummond Hotel, Limavady, Derry. Doors open at 6.00pm followed by a four-course meal and live music by Louise Irvine and Kathy O'Hara. Meet some new friends and learn more about Radio Maria. Come along and enjoy a great night and help a Catholic charity and bring some friends! To book a ticket (€70/£65 per person) you can contact the station on +(00) 353 1 4 123 456. To listen to Radio Maria: 1. Digital TV: Freeview, 2. Free App: "Radio Maria Ireland" 3. Website: www.radiomaria.ie, 4. Facebook: 'Listen Live Radio' & 5. Phone: +353 (0) 1 437 3277 (no extra charges apply).

Foyle Hospice Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme is now open. The scheme helps Foyle Hospice secure much needed funds whilst offering people the opportunity to have their tree disposed of in an environmentally friendly way, for a suggested donation of £10. Shredded trees are then used in our gardens throughout the year. Trees can be registered for collection through the website - foylehospice.com - or by calling Foyle Hospice fundraising office on 02871 359888. Registration closes on 7th January 2024.

Sean Davis "3-day Indoor Christmas Fun Soccer Academy" takes place at Templemore Sports Complex from Wednesday 27th to Friday 29th December 2023. For boys and girls aged 5 to 18 years. Times: 10:00 am to 3.00 pm daily. For further details Tel. Sean Davis FAI, IFA, FA European A Licence Coach on 028 71263044.

St Eugene's Cathedral is monitored by CCTV cameras and by two live streaming cameras. Live streaming can be viewed online at www.churchservices.tv, www.watchmcnmedia or the parish website. The Diocese of Derry Privacy Notice is displayed on the parish website and Cathedral notice board, or you may obtain a copy from the Parish Office.

Safeguarding Notice: If you have any concerns regarding the Safeguarding of children or adults in need of protection within the Church please contact Marie Gormley, the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP) at 07596500793 or at mariegormley@derrydiocese.org or contact the Safeguarding Office, Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry, BT48 6UJ or PSNI (Police Service of Northern) **101** or **Social Services: Gateway Services, Western HSC Trust, 71314090** and ask for the Duty Social Worker.