

## A short reflection on today's Gospel Luke 3:15-16, 21-22

'I am baptizing you with water but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

John the Baptist's passionate allegiance to the ministry entrusted to him by God and made manifest in the powerful eloquence of his preaching, convinces many of his followers that he is the promised Messiah. John's response to their assumption is beautiful in its clarity, its truth, and its humility. It prepares his followers for the greatness which is to come in the person of Jesus, the true Messiah, the Son of God and the Saviour of humankind, the One who will baptize, not with water, but with the Holy Spirit and with Fire.

There follows the baptism of Jesus by John on Jesus' own insistence.

Jesus, the sinless one, insists on being baptised by John and by doing so, becomes one with the kingdom of God on earth. He becomes one with humankind in this as in everything else: suffering, grief, terror, loneliness, rejection, death. And his heavenly Father lovingly and dramatically acknowledges His Son's courage.

Jesus, we kneel humbly before the magnificence and courage of your sacrifice on the altar of our salvation. May we always honour the promises made at our baptism to be faithful to the powerful love beating at the heart of your ministry. Let us seek and find the pure and innocent heart of the child which lies sleeping within us, waiting for us to awaken it and let it lead us joyfully through the green and fresh pastures of our true home.

**Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood** – As we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus which marked the beginning of His public life and ministry, we pray that each of us will respond positively to the universal call to holiness, thinking especially of those the Lord is inviting to serve His people as priests of the diocese of Derry.

**Catholic Schools Week 2025 begins on Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> January and continues until Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January.** The theme for this year is "Catholic Schools: Alive in Christ". During Catholic Schools Week families, parishes and schools are invited to participate in a week of celebration of Catholic Schools, reflecting on their contribution to the common good of society.

To launch Catholic Schools Week in our diocese, the Eucharist will be celebrated by Bishop Donal McKeown in Saint Eugene's Cathedral, Derry on **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> January at 10.00am** and everyone is welcome to attend.

The national resource pack with ideas to help schools and parishes celebrate this week is available online at Catholic Schools Week 2025 – Alive in Christ! Catholic Education Partnership.

**St. Eugene's Cathedral Pilgrimage to Fatima – 19<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> October 2025.** Cost £795 per person sharing with a single room supplement of £155 (subject to availability). For more information, please contact Anne Marie Hickey on amhickey@derrydiocese.org or phone Parish Office on 028 71262894.

**St Vincent de Paul (St Eugene's Conference)** acknowledges with gratitude receipt of donations of £620, £380 and £1,000.00.

### Sympathy

We offer our sympathy to the family and friends of:

*Anna McIntyre  
Paul Smyth*

May they rest in peace

### Anniversaries

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

*Seamus Downey  
Kieran McKinney  
Patsy & Letty Gillen  
Matt McColgan  
Dorette Gillen  
Laurence Moran  
Manny Carlin  
Jim Sharkey  
PJ Doyle  
Patrick McGonagle*

May they rest in peace

### Collection

Last week's collection: £ 5,208  
Parish Development: £1,050

### Thank you

Fr Farren acknowledges with thanks the following donations for:

**Mary's Meals:** £100, £25  
**Gaza Appeal:** £20  
**SVdP:** £25, £100  
**Cathedral Funds:** £30  
**Trócaire:** £20  
**Smile Train:** £50  
**Save the Children:** £40, £20

### Readers 18<sup>th</sup>/19<sup>th</sup> January

06.15 pm Karen O'Brien  
07.30 pm Stephen Orr  
09.30 am Rua Sweeney/  
Eva Marie Mallon  
11.00 am Model PS  
12.30 pm Michael Wilson  
07.00 pm Anna Begley

**To mark Christian Unity Week later this month, City Centre Churches are holding a Walking Service on Monday 20<sup>th</sup> January, starting at First Derry Presbyterian Church at 7.00 pm.** We will visit several areas of the city's business and residential sectors before finishing at Carlisle Road Methodist Church, approximately an hour later, with light refreshments. In the event of the weather being unsuitable, we will meet in First Derry Presbyterian Church at 7.00pm and hold our event there. **The Waterside Christian Unity event will take place on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> January, starting at 7.00pm in St Columb's Church, Chapel Road and ending in Ebrington Presbyterian Church.** Everyone is most welcome at one or both events.

**Children in Crossfire would like to thank everyone for supporting their Advent Appeal this year,** which will help children in inner-city Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. If you wish to donate, please remember to bring your box/envelope back to the Cathedral over the next few weeks. Any support you can give is greatly appreciated.

**A new guide "Teach us to Pray" is now available online and can be downloaded free at [www.derrydiocese.org/news/teach-us-to-pray](http://www.derrydiocese.org/news/teach-us-to-pray).** The Dicastery for Evangelization has created the handbook to accompany Christian communities and individual believers on the path of preparation for the Jubilee 2025.

**You are cordially invited to a Book Launch celebrating the Life of Dr Tom McGinley, founder of the Foyle Hospice, in St Columb's Hall on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> January at 7.15pm.** Doors open from 6.45pm. Entry is free. Booking is essential. Book at [www.ticketsource.co.uk/stcolumbshall](http://www.ticketsource.co.uk/stcolumbshall). The new book is written by Dr Keith Munro. £15 per book (cash only, please). Proceeds to Foyle Hospice.

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**Saint Columb's College Open Day will take place on Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> of January.** Session 1: 9:45am-11:30am (Surnames A-L). Session 2: 12:00-1:30 (Surnames M-Z).

**Priests: Fr Paul Farren, Fr Shaun Doherty**

**St Joseph's Boys School cordially invite you to attend their rescheduled Open Night on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025,** all welcome to attend 5.30pm - 7.30 pm. Principal address at 5.30pm.

**Lumen Christi College Open Evening – Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025.** Prospective pupils and their parents/carers are invited to visit Lumen Christi College for the annual Open Evening on Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> January 2025 between 4.00pm and 6.30pm. Principal's Address: 4.00pm in College Assembly Hall. Details may be accessed on the College website- [www.lumenchristiccollege.co.uk](http://www.lumenchristiccollege.co.uk)

**Pre-School or Primary One places for September 2025.** There are three excellent Catholic Schools in the Parish, which take both boys and girls. The three schools are St Anne's Primary School (Tel no 71 263046) St Eugene's Primary School (Tel no 71 261601) and Rosemount Primary School (Tel no 71 265605). Nursery class places are available in St Eugene's and Rosemount Primary Schools. If your child is starting pre-school or primary school in September 2025, you can apply online for their place at [www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions](http://www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions). The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> January 2025.

**Accord Derry - Marriage Preparation Workshops 2025.** The following dates available: January 24<sup>th</sup>/25<sup>th</sup> February 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> March 28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> April 11<sup>th</sup>/12<sup>th</sup> May 30<sup>th</sup>/31<sup>st</sup> and June 20<sup>th</sup>/21<sup>st</sup>. All courses are now online for booking at [www.accordni.com](http://www.accordni.com). Please note that all these courses are in person and not virtual.

**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](http://www.churchservices.tv), [www.watchmcnmedia](http://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](mailto:mariegormley@derrydiocese.org) or contact the Safeguarding Office, Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry, BT48 6UJ or PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) 101 or Social Services: Gateway Services, Western HSC Trust, 71314090 and ask for the Duty Social Worker.