

Why I die? It was to answer these questions that God became man. His closeness brings light where there is darkness and shows the way to those dwelling in the shadow of suffering (cf. *Lk 1:79*).

The landscapes that are part of the nativity scene also deserve some mention. Frequently they include the ruins of ancient houses or buildings, which in some instances replace the cave of Bethlehem and become a home for the Holy Family. These ruins appear to be inspired by the thirteenth-century *Golden Legend* of the Dominican Jacobus de Varagine, which relates a pagan belief that the Temple of Peace in Rome would collapse when a Virgin gave birth.

More than anything, the ruins are the visible sign of fallen humanity, of everything that inevitably falls into ruin, decays and disappoints. This scenic setting tells us that Jesus is newness in the midst of an aging world, that he has come to heal and rebuild, to restore the world and our lives to their original splendour.

The Word became Flesh

The unique proclamation of Christian faith is that the Word became flesh – Jesus became truly man while remaining truly God. Proclaiming this mystery of faith is one of the great blessings and gifts of faith: By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God' (1 John 4:2).

Flesh and blood, reason alone, cannot grasp this mystery. Confessing is a grace of revelation – the gift of the Heavenly Father from above.

The Word became flesh to make us partakers in the divine nature – 'For the Son of God became man so that we might become God' (St. Athanasius).

(Source: Walk with Me – Advent 2019)

Fr Michael Carey

Mass Intentions this Sunday

Sat 6.30pm Vera Barker(An)

Sun 8.30am Paddy & Vera Barker (An)

Sun 11.15am Mary & Joseph Gerrard & Deceased family members(An)

Eilish Crilly Fleming (MM)



At our Masses this Sunday we also remember: Fr Séan o'Neill McNally & O'Loughlin Families, Maura Clancy, Roger Grosso

Mass intentions for Next Week

Mon 8.00am Elizabeth Burke

Mon 10.00am Margaret O'Reilly

Tues 8.00am Violet Given

Tues 10.00am Michael Keenan

Tues 6.30pm & 9.00pm Christmas Mass Bouquets

Wed 8.30am, 10.00am & 11.1am Christmas Mass Bouquets

Thurs 10.00am Aileen O'Brien

& O'Brien Deering family

Fri 10.00am Thomas Green Jnr

Sat 10.00 Dermot Clarke

Next Sunday

Sat 6.30pm John Breen

Sun 8.30 am Larry Mooney

Sun 11.15am Sadie & John McCormack

Church of the Visitation Drynam *The Visitation of the BVM*

Mass Times for Drynam: Sun, 10.00am, 11.00am (Irish Mass)

Wishing all our parishioners a very happy Christmas from the Drynam Pastoral Team. Christmas Masses will be at 6:30PM Tuesday Christmas Eve and 10:00AM and 11:00AM (Irish) on Christmas morning.



Fr. Michael Carey-8403378: Fr John Collins 8405948

Parish Secretary: Colette Stokes - Parish Office, Seatown Road-8407277

(Mon to Fri 9.15am-12.30pm & Tues-Thurs 2pm-4pm)

Sacristy: -8400547 (Mon –Sat 9.30am-9.55am and 10.30am to 10.50am)

Website: www.swords-parish.com Email: stcolmcilleschurch@gmail.com

Facebook:

St. Colmcille's Church, Swords & Church of the Visitation, Drynam



4th Sunday of Advent

The CRIB (2)

“Let the earth be opened and bring forth a Saviour”

Newsletter Sunday 22nd December 2019



On 1st December this Year Pope Francis visited Greccio, in Italy where St. Francis built the first crib. In reflection on this visit he wrote concerning the crib and over the next three weeks I will devote the newsletter to the wonderful crib which is such an important fixture in our churches and our homes at Christmas time

With the simplicity of that sign, Saint Francis carried out a great work of evangelisation. His teaching touched the hearts of Christians and continues today to offer a simple yet authentic means of portraying the beauty of our faith. Indeed, the place where this first nativity scene was enacted expresses and evokes these sentiments. Greccio has become a refuge for the soul, a mountain fastness wrapped in silence.

Why does the Christmas crèche arouse such wonder and move us so deeply? First, because it shows God's tender love: the Creator of the universe lowered himself to take up our littleness. The gift of life, in all its mystery, becomes all the more wondrous as we realise that the Son of Mary is the source and sustenance of all life. In Jesus, the Father has given us a brother who comes to seek us out whenever we are confused or lost, a loyal friend ever at our side. He gave us his Son who forgives us and frees us from our sins.

Setting up the Christmas crèche in our homes helps us to relive the history of what took place in Bethlehem. Naturally, the Gospels remain our source for understanding and reflecting on that event. At the same time, its portrayal in the crèche helps us to imagine the scene. It touches our hearts and makes us enter into salvation history as contemporaries of an event that is living and real in a broad gamut of historical and cultural contexts.

In a particular way, from the time of its Franciscan origins, the nativity scene has invited us to “feel” and “touch” the poverty that God's Son took upon himself in the Incarnation. Implicitly, it summons us to follow him along the path of humility, poverty and self-denial that leads from the manger of Bethlehem to the cross. It asks us to meet him and serve him by showing mercy to those of our brothers and sisters in greatest need (cf. *Mt 25:31-46*).

I would like now to reflect on the various elements of the nativity scene in order to appreciate their deeper meaning. First, there is the background of a starry sky wrapped in the darkness and silence of night. We represent this not only out of fidelity to the Gospel accounts, but also for its symbolic value. We can think of all those times in our lives when we have experienced the darkness of night. there to answer our crucial questions about the meaning of life. Who am I? Where do I come from? Why was I born at this time in history? Why do I love? Why do I suffer? even then, God does not abandon us, but is

ADMINISTRATOR'S COLUMN

*How much better our family life would be if we used the words ...
Please. Thank you...and I'm sorry. Pope Francis*



Happy Christmas

On behalf of myself, Fr. John; Canon Pat; Fr. John S, the Parish Sisters; the Parish Staff and the Parish Pastoral Council, I'd like to wish the parishioners of St. Colmcille's, Swords and Our Lady of the Visitation, Drynam a joyful and Happy Christmas. May Christ Jesus dwell with you, keep you from all harm, and make you one in mind and heart, now and forever. Amen

Christmas Dues Envelopes

If you did not receive Christmas Dues envelope and would like to contribute to the Priests of the Parish, please take one from the book rack at the back of the Church

• Confessions

Tuesday Dec 24th St. Colmcille's Swords - Confessions from 10.30am until 12 noon

• Parish Office

The Parish Office will be closed for Christmas holidays from Friday Dec 20th and will re-open on Thursday 2nd January. For urgent business please contact the Sacristan or Fr. Michael

• Church Christmas Decorations

The Christmas tree and Christmas decorations are lovely. A special thank you to the hard work and dedication of the Parish Liturgy Team. Thank you also to the Pastoral Team in Drynam for the beautiful work they do in the Church of Our Lady of the Visitation

• Pavilions Crib

I thank the Management of the Pavilions Shopping Centre for yet again erecting such a beautiful Crib. If you get an opportunity it would be nice if you could say a 'thank you' to the staff at the information desk. I have sent a letter of appreciation and thanks to the Management of the Pavilions Centre

• Flowers

The flower arrangements over the Christmas Season were fantastic and involved hours of work. I sincerely thank the flower ladies: Marie Brophy; Martha Gallagher and Barbara Sweeney

• Christmas Mass Bouquets

Special Christmas Mass Bouquet cards are now available in the Sacristy and Parish Office for both churches. All Masses on Christmas Day and St. Stephens Day will be offered for the intentions of the donors of these cards. They cost €5 per card and would make a 'lovely stocking filler' for your nearest and dearest.

The Parish Bethany Bereavement Support Group wishes all Parishioners a Peaceful and Happy Christmas especially those suffering the pain and sadness of the loss of a loved one.

There will be no support group meeting on 30th December. The next meeting will be on Monday 13th January 2020 at 7.30 pm in the Parochial House. You are very welcome to attend.

The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Christmas Day

Masses

St. Colmcille's - Swords:

Christmas Eve: 6.30pm and 9.00pm

Christmas Day: 8.30am; 10.00am and 11.15am

Church of Our Lady of the Visitation – Drynam

Christmas Eve: 6.30pm

Christmas Day: 10.00am and 11.00am (Irish)

9 Lessons and Carols

St. Columba's (CoI) are holding their Carol Service on Sunday 22nd December at 4.00pm in St. Columba's, Church Road. **All are welcome**

Remembrance

We remember all our friends and loved ones who have died in the past year.

All sharing in common that they died into the arms of our loving God.

We pray especially for those who are grieving and are without consolation at this time. ***May the gentle light of Jesus shine on them and may they know the love and compassion of our Lord in their hearts.***

Advent Weekly Gifts

Gift 4 – Hope that lasts

We can easily become impatient with God and with one another. Living in hope means being willing to live courageously day to day. The signs of change in us will most likely be subtle. Living in hope means that while Jesus has already come, we are still in the process of letting him complete the journey into our hearts. Rediscover, live and be the hope and strength that comes from the celebration of the Christmas story.

May the miracle of Christmas fill your heart with joy

Family Prayer for putting the Infant Jesus into your Crib

God our Father,

you sent Jesus your son,

born of Mary in the stable in Bethlehem.

As we celebrate this great event

and place this figure of the Infant Jesus in our crib,

we ask you to bless our family,

friends and community.

We pray for peace and goodwill among all peoples.

We pray for compassion and care for all who are in need.

We pray that we may be open to your Son being born in our hearts and strengthening the bonds of family and friendship between us.

We ask this through

Christ our Lord.

AMEN

