

The incarnation shows us the unprecedented realism of divine love. The action of God, in fact, is not limited to words, indeed we might say, He is not content only to speak, but is immersed in our history and takes on the fatigue and weight of human life.”
 The Pope finished his address by examining the link between the Old and New Testaments. He said “the opening of St. John’s Gospel clearly points to the creation story from the beginning of Genesis. Jesus is the new Adam and in this child, the Son of God contemplated at Christmas, we can recognise the true face, not only of God, but the true face of humanity. Only by opening ourselves to the action of his grace and trying each day to follow him, do we realise the plan of God for us, for each one of us”
Fr. Michael Carey

Mass intentions for Next Week

Mon 10.00am Christmas Mass Bouquets	Sat 10.00am Patrick Barry
Tues 10.00am Christmas Mass Bouquets	Sat 6.30pm Thomas Green Jnr
Wed 10.00 John Breen	Stephen Lucy (MM)
Thurs 10.00am Aileen O’Brien & dec members of O’Brien & Deering Family	Sun 8.30am John & Eily Shiel
Fri 10.00am John Byrne	Sun 11.00am Joseph Ryan (MM)
	Sun 6.30pm Dessie O’Keefe(MM)

Church of the Visitation Drynam The Visitation of the BVM
Mass Times for Drynam: Sun, 10.00am, 11.00am (Irish Mass)& 12 noon ,Mon & Tues 9.20am
 We wish all our parishioners a very Happy Christmas.

A Prayer for Family Life

Dear Lord, with Mary and Joseph, you have lived with a family;
 Teach me always to appreciate the precious gift
 of being part of a family;
 Show me ever new ways to protect and
 comfort those closest to me;
 And let me, each day do something that will say
 ‘I love you’ without speaking the words;
 But remind me also to frequently say those words;
 Let me never part from any member of my family in anger;
 Prompt me always to turn back without delay and to forgive, and be forgiven,
 And let me see your image within each person,
 in my own family, and in my greater family.
 Knowing that in your kingdom we will truly be one family united by your sacrifice
 on the cross. **Amen**



CHRISTMAS TREE: A SIGN AND REMINDER OF DIVINE LIGHT
 "God became man and came among us to dispel the shadows of sin, bringing His divine light to humanity. This highest of lights, symbolised and recalled by the Christmas tree, has not only shown no sign of dimming through the passing of the centuries and the millennia, but rather continues to shine upon us and to illuminate every person who comes into the world, especially in moments of uncertainty and difficulty. Jesus Himself declared, 'I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness but will have the light of life'. ... And, the attempts made through the ages to extinguish the light of God, to replace it with the glare of illusion and deceit, have heralded episodes of tragic violence against mankind. This is because the attempt to cancel the name of God from the pages of history results in distortion, in which even the most beautiful and noble words lose their true meaning".

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The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ
The profound significance of ‘the Word became flesh’

“The incarnation of the Word in a human family, in Nazareth, by its very newness changed the history of the world”. (Amoris Laetitia 65)”



Newsletter Sunday 25th December 2016

In a weekly audience on the 9th January 2013, Pope Benedict shared some thoughts on the ‘Mystery of the Incarnation’. Which he said **“is central to the Christian faith.”** What he had to say is I believe, worth sharing in this Christmas newsletter.

“On that holy night, God becoming flesh, wanting to become a gift for man and woman, gave himself for us; God has made his only-begotten Son a gift for us, taking our humanity to give us his divinity.

At holy Christmas we generally exchange a few gifts with the people closest to us. At times this may be a conventional gesture, but it usually expresses affection; it is a sign of love and esteem. In the Prayer over the Offerings at the Vigil Mass of the Solemnity of Christmas the Church prays: ‘may the oblation of this day’s feast be pleasing to you, O Lord, we pray, that through this most holy exchange we may be found in the likeness of Christ in whom our nature is united to you. Who lives and reigns for ever’.

The idea of giving is therefore at the heart of the liturgy and makes us aware of the original gift of Christmas: on that Holy Night, in taking flesh God wanted to make a gift of himself to men and women, he gave himself for us; God made his Only Son a gift for us, he took on our humanity to give his divinity to us. This is the great gift. In our giving too it does not matter whether or not a gift is expensive; those who cannot manage to give a little of themselves always give too little. Indeed, at times we even seek to substitute money or material things for our hearts and the commitment to giving ourselves.

The mystery of the Incarnation shows that God did not do this: he did not give some ‘thing’ but he gave himself in his Only-Begotten Son. We find here our model for the giving so that our relationships, especially those that are most important, may be guided by giving love freely.”

“The word ‘flesh’” he said, in the Hebrew context, “indicates the person as a whole, the whole man. Thus there is significance in the particular time and place in which Christ became man: he cares for the particular circumstance of everyone’s life.

This is to say that the salvation wrought by God made flesh in Jesus of Nazareth touches man and woman in their concrete reality and in whatever situation they are in.

God took the human condition, to heal us from all that separates us from Him, so that we can call him, in his only-begotten Son, by the name, ‘Abba, Father,’ and be truly children of God.” The Pope went on to say “there is a danger that we have become so accustomed to the fact that ‘the Word became flesh’, that we have forgotten its profound significance.

It is important to recover the amazement before this mystery... God, the true God, Creator of all, has come as a man in our streets, entering the time of man, to communicate his own life.

ADMINISTRATOR'S COLUMN

Antiphon - Today a light will shine upon us, for the Lord is born for us

Happy Christmas

On behalf of myself, Fr. Peter; Fr. Pat, 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

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.



Christmas or Xmas?

Christmas is also sometimes known as Xmas. Some people don't think it's correct to call Christmas 'Xmas' as that takes the 'Christ' (Jesus) out of Christmas. (As Christmas comes from Christ-Mass, the Church service that celebrated the birth of Jesus.)

But that is not quite right! In the Greek language and alphabet, the letter that looks like an X is the Greek letter chi / X (pronounced 'kye' - it rhymes with 'eye') which is the first letter of the Greek word for Christ, Christos.

The early church used the first two letters of Christos in the Greek alphabet 'chi' and 'rho' to create a monogram (symbol) to represent the name of Jesus. The Chi Rho symbol comes from the Greek words for Jesus Christ, IHCOYC XPICTOC, the I and XP being used. This looks like an X with a small p on the top:

So Xmas can also mean Christmas; but it should also be pronounced 'Christmas' rather than 'ex-mas'!



Parish Office

The Office is closed for the Christmas Holidays and will re-open on Tuesday 3rd January

Weekday Mass

During the Christmas Season there will be a daily 10.00am morning Mass. The 8.00am is cancelled/suspended from Monday 26th December until Thursday 5th January inclusive. It will resume on Friday 6th January – the Feast of the Epiphany

Children learn what they live

If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.
If they live with hostility, they learn to fight.
If they live with ridicule, they learn to be shy.
If they live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.
If they live with tolerance, they learn to be patient.
If they live with encouragement, they learn to have confidence.
If they live with praise, they learn to appreciate.
If they live with fairness, they learn what justice is.
If they live with security, they learn to trust.
If they live with approval, they learn to like themselves.
If they live with acceptance and friendship,
They learn to find love and God in the world.

The Nativity of the Lord

The celebration of the anniversary of the Lord's birth seems to have been observed since the fourth century. The popular keeping of the feast has always been marked by joy. Some writers have written of the threefold birth of Christ: eternally in the bosom of the Father; at Bethlehem from the womb of the Virgin Mary and mystically in the soul of each Christian.

Reflection - The stories about the infancy of Jesus found in the gospel accounts of Matthew and Luke contain echoes of the passion story giving the message that even from the beginning of his life the shadow of the cross is never far away. At his birth and at his death Jesus is presented as being received by gentiles but rejected by Jews, welcomed by strangers but turned away by his own. Lord Jesus, born this day at Bethlehem, be born once again in our hearts. Amen.

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

The scriptures and the liturgy give very little emphasis to the private life of Jesus, dominated as they both are with his public ministry. Today's feast is an exception. The details of their family life are lost. The significance enduring.

Reflection - Matthew presents Jesus going into exile like his people did some six centuries earlier. He is a displaced person. The narrative about Herod serves to remind the hearers of Matthew's community that the shadow of the cross stretches right back to Jesus' first moments on earth. But that is good news because it implies that God's saving plan, symbolised by the cross, is close at hand. (Source: St. Paul's Missal)



The Bethany Bereavement Support Group wish our bereaved parishioners the peace of the Holy Season. Next meeting :9th January 2017