

These memories make us all the more conscious of the precious gift received from those who passed on the faith to us. At the same time, they remind us of our duty to share this same experience with our children and our grandchildren. It does not matter how the nativity scene is arranged: it can always be the same or it can change from year to year. What matters is that it speaks to our lives. Wherever it is, and whatever form it takes, the Christmas crèche speaks to us of the love of God, the God who became a child in order to make us know how close he is to every man, woman and child, regardless of their condition.

Dear brothers and sisters, the Christmas crèche is part of the precious yet demanding process of passing on the faith. Beginning in childhood, and at every stage of our lives, it teaches us to contemplate Jesus, to experience God's love for us, to feel and believe that God is with us and that we are with him, his children, brothers and sisters all, thanks to that Child who is the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin Mary. And to realise that in that knowledge we find true happiness. Like Saint Francis, may we open our hearts to this simple grace, so that from our wonderment a humble prayer may arise: a prayer of thanksgiving to God, who wished to share with us his all, and thus never to leave us alone. (FRANCISCUS - *Given in Greccio, at the Shrine of the Nativity, on 1 December in the year 2019, the seventh of my Pontificate.*)

Fr. Michael Carey Adm

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Sunday of Christmas/Feast of the Epiphany



The Crib – Observing the Star

“Behold, the Lord, the Mighty One, has come”

Newsletter Sunday 5th January

“Life was made manifest” (1 Jn 1:2). In these words, the Apostle John sums up the mystery of the Incarnation. The crèche allows us to see and touch this unique and unparalleled event that changed the course of history, so that time would thereafter be reckoned either before or after the birth of Christ.

God's ways are astonishing, for it seems impossible that he should forsake his glory to become a man like us. To our astonishment, we see God acting exactly as we do: he sleeps, takes milk from his mother, cries and plays like every other child! As always, God baffles us. He is unpredictable, constantly doing what we least expect. The nativity scene shows God as he came into our world, but it also makes us reflect on how our life is part of God's own life. It invites us to become his disciples if we want to attain ultimate meaning in life.

As the feast of Epiphany approaches, we place the statues of the Three Kings in the Christmas crèche. Observing the star, those wise men from the East set out for Bethlehem, in order to find Jesus and to offer him their gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. These costly gifts have an allegorical meaning: gold honours Jesus' kingship, incense his divinity, myrrh his sacred humanity that was to experience death and burial.

As we contemplate this aspect of the nativity scene, we are called to reflect on the responsibility of every Christian to spread the Gospel. Each of us is called to bear glad tidings to all, testifying by our practical works of mercy to the joy of knowing Jesus and his love.

The Magi teach us that people can come to Christ by a very long route. Men of wealth, sages from afar, a thirst for the infinite, they set out on the long and perilous journey that would lead them to Bethlehem (cf. Mt 2:1-12). Great joy comes over them in the presence of the Infant King. They are not scandalised by the poor surroundings, but immediately fall to their knees to worship him. Kneeling before him, they understand that the God who with sovereign wisdom guides the course of the stars also guides the course of history, casting down the mighty and raising up the lowly. Upon their return home, they would certainly have told others of this amazing encounter with the Messiah, thus initiating the spread of the Gospel among the nations.

Standing before the Christmas crèche, we are reminded of the time when we were children, eagerly waiting to set it up.

Mass Intentions this Sunday

Sat 6.30pm Dennis Madden(An)
 Peter O'Neill (1st An)
Sun 8.30am Mary McQuillan(An)
Sun 11.15am Maria Doyle & Bridie Hoare(An)
Sun 6.30pm



Mass intentions for Next Week

Mon 8.00am Richard Wilson	
Mon 10.00am Dermot Clarke	
Tues 8.00am Seamus Higgins	<u>Next Sunday</u>
Tues 10.00am Margaret Ryan	
Wed 8.00am Nicholas Garrigan	Sat 6.30pm Frank Marron
Wed 10.00am Michael & Peggy Hiney	Patrick, Annie & Eileen O'Rourke
Thurs 8.00am Dorothy Clifton	Flan Clune (MM)
Thurs 10.00am Jimmy Biggins	
Fri 8.00am Peter & Catherine O'Gorman & Elizabeth Flynn & Des Burrowes	Sun 8.30 am Kathleen O'Connor
Fri 10.00am Peggy Garrigan	Sun 11.15am Lilian O'Reilly

Church of the Visitation Drynam The Visitation of the BVM

Mass Times for Drynam: Sun, 10.00am, 11.00am (Irish Mass)
 Thank you to all parishioners for your support over the past year.
 Wishing you a very happy and peaceful 2020 from all on the Drynam Pastoral Team. Our next meeting will be on 14th January.



Feast of the Epiphany

This feast day is a Holy Day of Obligation. Mass times are as follows:
St. Colmille's: Sun 5th Jan (Vigil) at 6.30pm. Mon 6th Jan 8.00am & 10.00am
Our Lady of the Visitation – Drynam Monday 6th Jan 9.20am



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 New Year

On behalf of myself, Fr. John C, 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 peaceful and happy New Year

Confirmation Mass

Next weekend the boys and girls and their families will be present at the 6.30pm Saturday Vigil Mass, for their second Mass as part of their Parish based preparation programme for the Sacrament of Confirmation. We hope to rekindle and remind the young people and their families of the experience of being at a Mass where we hope that they will feel at home in the Church, to feel that they belong and are welcome. We look forward to seeing them and praying with them.

Prayer at the start of the year.

Lord, I sometimes wonder where I am going and what is the meaning of my life?
I wonder especially what the New Year holds for me.

Will it bring sorrow, success or failure, life or death?

But then I remember that you came on earth: and that you still travel the road of
life with me.

And so I say to my soul:

Go out into the darkness, and put your hand in the hand of Christ your Brother;
That will be better than a light, and safer than a known path.

New Year's Resolutions

New Year's resolutions are too often made simply as fodder for jokes with the assumption that they won't last. Our celebration of the Christmas Mystery, however, asks of us a response that is more than a half-hearted resolution. We cannot afford to take lightly our encounter with this mystery and its power to make a real difference to how we live.

After their marvellous encounter with the newborn Saviour lying in a manger, the shepherds returned to the ordinariness of their lives. Yet they were not the same. These scruffy shepherds had become messengers of the in-breaking of God's salvation. When we come to the end of this year's celebration of the Christmas mystery, we will return to the ordinariness of our lives. How will we have been changed? What message will we proclaim to others during the rest of the year? *(Source: Living Liturgy)*

Planned Giving

New planned Giving/Family Offering Envelopes are now ready for collection from the Sacristy

Christmas Dues Envelopes

If you did not receive a 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. A sincere 'THANK YOU' to all who have returned their Christmas Dues envelopes

The Three Wise Men

One legend says that the wise men were of three different ages. Caspar was a very young man, Balthazar was in his middle age, and Melchior was an old man.

When they arrived at Bethlehem, the three of them betook themselves to the cave of the Saviour's birth, and they went in one at a time. When Melchior, the old man, went into the cave, there was no one there but a very old man his own age with whom he was quickly at home. They spoke together of memory and gratitude.

The middle-aged Balthazar encountered a middle-aged teacher when he went into the cave, and they talked passionately of leadership and responsibility.

When young Caspar entered, he met a young prophet and they spoke words of reform and promise.

When they had all gone outside after going in one by one, the three of them took their gifts and went in together. And when they went in together there was nobody there but a twelve-day-old infant. Later on they understood. The Saviour speaks to every stage of life. The old hear the call to integrity and wisdom. The middle-aged hear the call to generativity and responsibility. And the young hear the call to identity and intimacy.

(Source: A World of Stories by William J Bausch)



Second Sunday after Christmas

Who has Jesus been for me along the way? Who is Jesus to me now? If I were challenged to put words on my faith in Jesus, what would I say? Take one of these phrases from today's Gospel and spend time in prayer: (a) In the beginning was the Word: and the Word was with God and the Word was God. (b) The Word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we saw his glory, the glory that is his as the only Son of the Father, full of grace and truth. (c) No one has ever seen God; it is the only Son, who is nearest to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Prayer - God of light and life, we see your face in the face of Jesus, the word made flesh. Help us to embrace your gift, that we may be your children in name and in fact.

The Epiphany of the Lord

In our deepest being, each of us is a mystery: Where do I come from? Where am I going? Why am I here? How should I live? The risk in our present culture is to sleepwalk through life, to be satisfied with a merely material existence. But the human "project" is much greater. Each of us is really on a pilgrimage, or better on a quest – a quest to become my true self, in image and likeness of God. My truest self is

found by being open to God, in whom we live and move and have our being. By following that star, by listening to our conscience and our inner selves, we come home to God.

Prayer - You are the mystery at the heart all that exists: draw us to yourself, O Lord, that knowing you we find our true selves, and finding our true selves, we may come to know you. *(Source: St. Paul's Missal)*