

The *Franciscan Sources* describe in detail what then took place in Greccio. Fifteen days before Christmas, Francis asked a local man named John to help him realise his desire “to bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethlehem, to see as much as possible with my own bodily eyes the discomfort of his infant needs, how he lay in a manger, and how, with an ox and an ass standing by, he was laid upon a bed of hay”. At this, his faithful friend went immediately to prepare all that the Saint had asked. On 25 December, friars came to Greccio from various parts, together with people from the farmsteads in the area, who brought flowers and torches to light up that holy night. When Francis arrived, he found a manger full of hay, an ox and a donkey. All those present experienced a new and indescribable joy in the presence of the Christmas scene. The priest then solemnly celebrated the Eucharist over the manger, showing the bond between the Incarnation of the Son of God and the Eucharist. At Greccio there were no statues; the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present.

This is how our tradition began: with everyone gathered in joy around the cave, with no distance between the original event and those sharing in its mystery.

Children of God

Nicodemus was perplexed: ‘How can this man be born when he is old? Surely, he cannot enter a second time into his mother’s womb to be born!’ (Jn 3:4)

In baptism we are born again; we die with Christ and we rise with him as a new creation. Think of the love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God for that is what we are! (1 Jn 3:1)

In baptism we are anointed with the Spirit and cry ‘Abba’ ‘Father’. We are heirs of God, co-heirs with Christ, and share in God’s divine life.

This week think of the love the Father has lavished on us by calling us children of God. (Source: Walk with Me – Advent 2019)

Fr Michael Carey

Mass Intentions this Sunday

Sat 6.30pm Philip Markey(An)

Sun 8.30am Des Becton (An)

Sun 11.15am Joe & Margaret Prendergast(An)



At our Masses this Sunday we also remember: Peter McDermott, Stephen Noonan

Mass intentions for Next Week

Mon 8.00am Denis Kavanagh

Mon 10.00am Fiona Burke

Tues 8.00am Peggy Dillon

Tues 10.00am Christopher & Carmel Morgan

Wed 8.00am John & Kathleen O’Connor

Wed 10.00am Br. Killian Keaney

Thurs 8.00am John Cantwell

Thurs 10.00am Special Intention

Fri 8.00am Thomas Corbett

Fri 10.00am Special intention

Next Sunday

Sat 6.30pm Vera Barker

Sun 8.30am Paddy & Vera Barker

Sun 11.15am Mary & Joseph Gerrard

& deceased family members

Church of the Visitation Drynam The Visitation of the BVM

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

We had our Drynam Pastoral Team meeting on Tuesday including discussion on sacramental preparation for children and setting plans for erection of the Crib etc for Christmas. Next meeting 14th January.



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)

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



3rd Sunday of Advent

The CRIB

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say rejoice”

Newsletter Sunday 15th 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



Third Sunday / Advent

The enchanting image of the Christmas crèche, so dear to the Christian people, never ceases to arouse amazement and wonder. The depiction of Jesus’ birth is itself a simple and joyful proclamation of the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God. The nativity scene is like a living Gospel rising up from the pages of sacred Scripture. As we contemplate the Christmas story, we are invited to set out on a spiritual journey, drawn by the humility of the God who became man in order to encounter every man and woman. We come to realise that so great is his love for us that he became one of us, so that we in turn might become one with him.

With this Letter, I wish to encourage the beautiful family tradition of preparing the nativity scene in the days before Christmas, but also the custom of setting it up in the workplace, in schools, hospitals, prisons and town squares. Great imagination and creativity is always shown in employing the most diverse materials to create small masterpieces of beauty. As children, we learn from our parents and grandparents to carry on this joyful tradition, which encapsulates a wealth of popular piety. It is my hope that this custom will never be lost and that, wherever it has fallen into disuse, it can be rediscovered and revived.

The origin of the Christmas crèche is found above all in certain details of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, as related in the Gospels. The evangelist Luke says simply that Mary “gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn” (2:7). Coming into this world, the Son of God was laid in the place where animals feed. Hay became the first bed of the One who would reveal himself as “the bread come down from heaven” (Jn 6:41). Saint Augustine, with other Church Fathers, was impressed by this symbolism: “Laid in a manger, he became our food”. Indeed, the nativity scene evokes a number of the mysteries of Jesus’ life and brings them close to our own daily lives.

But let us go back to the origins of the Christmas crèche so familiar to us. We need to imagine ourselves in the little Italian town of Greccio, near Rieti. Saint Francis stopped there, most likely on his way back from Rome where on 29 November 1223 he had received the confirmation of his Rule from Pope Honorius III. Francis had earlier visited the Holy Land, and the caves in Greccio reminded him of the countryside of Bethlehem. It may also be that the “Poor Man of Assisi” had been struck by the mosaics in the Roman Basilica of Saint Mary Major depicting the birth of Jesus, close to the place where, according to an ancient tradition, the wooden panels of the manger are preserved.

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*



Do This in Memory

I welcome the boys and girls and their families to the 6.30pm Saturday Vigil Mass as part of their Parish based preparation programme for the Sacrament of First Eucharist. I would also like to thank the parents who are part of the organising committee who met during the week to prepare these Masses.

Christmas Cards –

The Christmas cards are now ready for distribution – **ONLY 10 MORE DAYS!** I need your help to have these cards dropped onto people's letterboxes. If you can take a road or an estate it would be greatly appreciated. Thank You!



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.

Bambinelli Sunday: The beautiful Advent Tradition, Bambinelli Sunday, was instituted by Saint Pope John Paul II during his Papacy. The tradition follows that on the Third Sunday of Advent (Gaudete Sunday) children and adults bring their Baby Jesus figures from their homes to St Peters Square where they are blessed by the Pope. after which the children will take back to homes to be placed under their Christmas trees. Pope Francis has continued the tradition, blessing the statuettes which children bring before him in the Square. Parishes around the world now join in the celebration, encouraging young children to make the connection between the Nativity set at home and the local church where they worship each weekend.



Today Gaudete Sunday and all children and families are invited to bring the Baby Jesus figure from their homes to be blessed. Families can make their own 'Bambinelli' if they wish. "It helps children and young people to prepare for Jesus."

A suggestion is, following the blessing, take your 'Bambinelli' home, wrap it and open it as a family on Christmas morning where the youngest member of the family would place it in the crib. A gift of the presence of Christ in your home this Christmas.

RECENTLY DECEASED

Please remember in your prayers those who have died recently:

Donal Phelan Mount Drinan Walk
Flan Clune Pine Grove Park



CHRISTMAS CONFESSIONS

Monday December 16th in St. Colmcille's Swords there is a Communal Service of Penance with visiting Priests. This will take place at 7.30pm

Confessions

Communal Service of Penance (with visiting Priests)

Monday Dec 16th St. Colmcille's Swords 7.30 pm.

Saturday Dec 21st St. Cronan's Brackenstown 10.00 am.
Mass followed by Confession

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

Reconciliation Liturgy

Sunday Dec 22nd Drynam 10.00am Mass with reconciliation
service

The O Antiphons

An antiphon is a sentence from Scripture and its purpose is to highlight one aspect of the Psalm; Reading or indeed the Mass – e.g Opening antiphon; Communion antiphon. The O antiphons during Advent also known as **The great O's** are the Magnificat antiphons used at Evening Prayer of the last seven days of Advent in Western Christian traditions. They are also used as the alleluia verses on the same days in the Mass. They are referred to as the "O Antiphons" because the title of each one begins with "O". Each antiphon is a name of Christ, one of his attributes mentioned in Scripture. They are:

December 17: **O Sapientia** (O Wisdom); December 18: **O Adonai** (O Lord); December 19: **O Radix Jesse** (O Root of Jesse); December 20: **O Clavis David** (O Key of David); December 21: **O Oriens** (O Dayspring); December 22: **O Rex Gentium** (O King of the nations); December 23: **O Emmanuel** (O With us is God);

Advent Weekly Gifts

Gift 3 – God's love placed in your heart

This week in Advent we focus on hearts: glad hearts, sad hearts, hard hearts, broken hearts, longing hearts. In the Scriptures much is written about hearts because the heart represents the person's deepest identity. Our hearts reveal who we most truly are because they hold what we most deeply desire. What's in your heart can give many answers to that question, and it's a good question to ponder during this week of Advent. But God has an answer for that question, too. "I will put my law within them, and write it on their hearts", says the Lord. So in addition to whatever else might be in your heart, you can also be sure that the law of the Lord is written in permanent ink on your heart. That law is love.