

Parish of Dunboe, Macosquin, Aghadowey Newsletter

First Sunday of Advent

Sunday, 28 November 2021

Be prepared ...

Have you ever heard the story of the ant and the grasshopper? It tells the tale of a grasshopper who has spent the summer singing and so is not prepared when winter comes, whereas the ant has been working hard all summer and has stored up enough food for winter. Like many of Aesop's Fables, it has a stark moral lesson, in this case about the virtue of hard work and being prepared for the future.

Of course, Advent is about looking forward to Christmas and our celebration of the birth of Jesus. It is a special time of preparation to welcome him anew into our lives. But today's readings remind us that Advent is also about looking ahead to another time, the second and final coming of Jesus at the end of time. 'Advent' comes from the Latin word *adventus*, meaning 'coming'.

The problem, of course, is that we have no idea when this will happen. Unlike the ant and the grasshopper, we have no way of knowing when the seasons will change. We don't even know when the sun will set on our own individual lives. All we can do is to be prepared and to 'stay awake' - to live now in such a way that when we meet Jesus, we will be ready. This readiness is less a practical skill than a condition, or a way of life. Look at how St. Paul describes it; he talks about increasing our love for one another, and continually making progress in living the life that God wants. That is how we store up treasures here on earth to make sure we are ready for the heavenly things to come.

Triona Doherty

Advent week 1 : We wait with HOPE

Advent is a season to watch, prepare and pray. The liturgy invites us to watch the drama of the birth of the Saviour made present in the celebration of the Church. In the midst of our busy lives, the Spirit calls us to prayer, to be still and to rest in God's presence.

Blessing of the Advent Wreath

May our Advent be a time of preparation. Help us reflect on the power of light to dispel darkness in our world and in our lives. Touch our hearts with the warmth of your love. May the increasing light of these candles brighten our minds and hearts to be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope and untiring in love, so that we are ready again to receive in true peace, Jesus, the Light of the World, our Lord and Saviour. Amen.

St John's Saint Vincent De Paul will be conducting their Christmas Annual Appeal collection on **Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th December.**

Ways to donate.

- Church Collections,
- Envelopes are available at the back of the Church for donations we would encourage you to gift aid.
- On line website svp.ie/stjohncoleraineannualappeal,
- **QR Code.**



The funds raised will be spent in this community helping those who are most in need throughout the Winter and beyond.

We rely entirely on the support of you, the generous parishioners of St John's Parish.

Thank you in advance for your continued support

Novena To The Divine Child

("and the word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us" John 1:4): The Carmelite Retreat Centre, Termonbacca, Derry is hosting this Novena from 8th – 16th December. The Novena Mass and prayers will be at 7:30pm each evening. This will be live-streamed via Facebook each evening. Novena prayer leaflets containing the public prayers after Mass and the private prayers to be said at home are available on the Termonbacca Facebook page or by emailing termonbaccaderry@gmail.com or, for those living close, by simply calling up to Termonbacca and collecting them.

Trócaire Gifts of Love: Trócaire Gifts of Love help some of the poorest people in the world to work their way out of poverty. There are 21 gifts to choose from starting at £5.00 for the Gift of Soap for families in war-torn South Sudan. All the gifts are real items, sourced in-country which go to families in need of our support. For more information go to <https://www.trocaire.org/gifts>.

Service of Light: The 'North West Bereaved by Suicide' Support Group is holding its Annual Service of Light on Sunday 5 December at 5.30pm in the Foyle Search & Rescue HQ, Prehen, Derry. All are welcome to attend.

Medjugorje Irish Centre Pilgrimages April - October 2022: 7 nights apartment B&B and return transfer from Dubrovnik or Split from €315 per person sharing. Guaranteed airport transfer price for any flight. For more information telephone 00353 1443 4510 or email reservations@med-irishcentre.com.

THE MYSTERY UNFOLDS

Advent Oasis morning offered by Thornhill Ministries. Saturday 11 December 11.00am – 12.00noon. Led by Fr Paschal, each gentle hour helps us touch into the mystery of life and God-with-Us. To register and for zoom link contact 07736832458 email thornhillministries@derrydiocese.org

PRIORY INSTITUTE

Lectio Divina reflections on the Advent and Christmas Gospels: The Priory Institute is delighted to offer a Free of Charge online retreat (which is a repeat of the popular Advent Retreat ran in 2018). Visit website prioryinstitute.com or click on this link <https://bit.ly/3DWrTkx> to register/find out more.

9 DAY ROSARY NOVENA FOR IRELAND

We are inviting you to join in a 9 Day Rosary Novena beginning Tuesday 30 November and ending on Wednesday 8 December. People all over Ireland will pray the Rosary together each evening at 9.00pm. On the final evening at 9.00pm on Radio Maria the Primate of All Ireland Archbishop Eamon Martin will lead the final Rosary live.

ADVENT: THE MEANING

Lord, our God,

help us to prepare

for the coming of Christ your Son.

May he find us waiting, eager in joyful prayer.

(From the Liturgy of the Hours, Morning Prayer, Monday of the First Week of Advent.)

The tone of Advent is described in the short prayer above taken from the Liturgy of the Hours of the second day of Advent. Prepare . . . wait . . . eagerly . . . joyfully . . . the coming of Christ!

1st Sunday of Advent, year C.

The word 'Advent' means 'coming', 'arriving'. During the Advent season, we tend to focus on Jesus' first coming, at his birth in the land of Israel some two thousand years ago. However, the readings for this Sunday also point us toward Jesus' Second Coming and the fullness of God's kingdom that this will herald. These readings prompt us to reflect on what is the goal of Christian hope: eternal life with God through Jesus Christ.

Between the two comings of Jesus, St Paul calls on us to try to increase our love and holiness, so that we 'may be blameless in the sight of God when Jesus comes with all his saints'.

With the First Sunday of Advent, we begin a new Church Year, Year C, the year of Luke's Gospel. The Advent wreath is present in the Sanctuary of our churches. Formed in a circle, an ancient symbol of God who has neither beginning nor end, the wreath proclaims life in the midst of the seeming death of winter. Its candles proclaim that Christ, whose Second Coming we Christians await with hope, is the light that no darkness can overcome. With each week of Advent we light one more candle and the darkness retreats a bit further.

This is to help the Church recall just what and who it is for which we wait during this season of Advent: the kingdom of God in its fullness and the coming of the One who will banish all darkness for ever.

'May the increasing light of these candles brighten our minds and hearts to be steadfast in faith, joyful in hope and untiring in hope, so that we are ready again to receive in true peace, Jesus, the Light of the World.' (*Book of Blessing Prayers*).