



The Parish of St. Patrick and St. Brigid Celbridge and Straffan

What's On?

Mass for Deceased Parishioners - 7.30pm Thurs. 23rd Nov.

Family Mass - in St. Brigid's at 6pm Sat. 25th Nov.

Shared Spirit - will sing at the Vigil Mass for Advent at 6.30pm Sat. 2nd December

On Sun. Dec. 3rd after the switching on of the Lights and a visit by Santa, Rev. Stephen Neill and Fr. Joe McDonald will bless the new **Street Crib** located outside Fr Jonathan's house.

Advent Retreat Day - 10am - 4pm in Salesian College, Saturday 9th December

A Concert of Christmas Favourites - Saturday, 9th December @ 8pm. Tickets €20 (plus booking fee) from www.eventbrite.ie

Carol Service - Tuesday 19th December 7.30pm our annual eve of readings, carols and prayer in preparation for Christmas

Advent Reconciliation - Service Thurs. Dec. 21st at 7.30pm. Includes Confession

PLEASE REMEMBER

PLANNED GIVING

The Planned Giving Envelopes for 2024 are being ordered and will be circulated to all households before Christmas. We appreciate your continued support for this collection as it is the only collection that pays for the upkeep of our parish.

If you did not have a box this year and would like to support your parish, please phone 01 628 8827 giving your Name, Address and phone number or Email: celbridgeparishoffice@gmail.com.

You may also contribute by standing order. Forms are available from the Sacristy.

NOVEMBER LIST OF THE DEAD

It is not too late to leave in list of loved ones to be added to our Altar List of the Dead and prayed for at our November Masses. Donations received in these envelopes will be totalled and divided between the four priests in the parish. A total will be published at the end of November. Many thanks for your generosity.

NEW PROGRAMMES FOR FIRST HOLY COMMUNION AND CONFIRMATION IN OUR PARISH!



I am presently writing to parents to introduce two new programmes for sacramental preparation in our parish, CLOSER TO JESUS, for First Holy Communion, and FLAMEBEARERS, for Confirmation. Please keep these initiatives in your prayers.

THE SACRISTY TEAM IN ST. BRIGID'S

We are blessed in this team but we could do with a little bit more help. If we had two more people it would mean each person doing one week per month. (Tuesday, Thursday and Sunday mornings and Saturday eve).

Please contact one of the sacristans or Fr Joe.

CHRISTIAN MEDITATION GROUP

Did you know we have such a group in our parish? What's more it's been there for years. Unfortunately I only got to attend it a couple of times before covid. I am very much looking forward to returning to it. This is an exciting and wonderful group to have in our parish.

It meets at 7.30pm on the second and last Wednesday of the month in the Salesian Oratory and on zoom every week. New members are always welcome and no previous experience of meditation is necessary.

Contact Lucy on 087 239 4734 for further information or just drop in.

RUMBLINGS FROM THE BUNKER

The Deep Winter of Disbelief

Recently on a long flight I watched *Dr Zhivago*. It's a long film but my goodness how rewarding. Julie Christie, Omar Sharif and all that snow....and what about the music? Not just Lara's Theme, though this blows me away, but the entire score. I was grateful that my fellow passengers seemed engrossed in their own little world and hopefully remained unaware of the impact my trip into 1917 Russia was having on me. My heart soared and crashed as the music and evolving story sped me through the surrounding blizzard, and more importantly the changing seasons of the hearts of Lara and Yuri. I failed to stifle a few gasps of wonder but I think my tears were unnoticed.

Over the past few days I have been thinking again of the impact of both the snow and the music in this, Pasternak's classic. Inevitably, I guess my thoughts drifted towards the Church and indeed perhaps more precisely to consider faith. I wonder is it too much to say that there is a great crisis of faith? I would like to pose it as a question. Whilst my primary interest is the Irish context, and indeed to be even more precise, the context of the twenty six counties as I believe faith, or the faith in the North, given the ravages of sectarianism and imperialism, and indeed the present political indolence, is in a different place to faith south of the border. My basic contention is that in Western Europe and indeed all over the English speaking world, perhaps the term the first world is useful, there is a great abandonment of faith. Certainly there is a mass exodus from organized or institutional religion. The reasons for this are indeed complicated.

It can be argued that the present dying within the Church is self inflicted. This has some merit. However to suggest it as the only reason, is simplistic and, in truth, a tad lazy. In any decent treatment of this decline one would have to at least acknowledge sociological factors, the relationship between religious practice and economic prosperity, and indeed take cognizance of the well mapped undulations of Church history. Fascinating a topic though it is, I do not wish to pursue it here other than to proclaim in my view the undeniable truth that faith, as it is in the developed world, is in crisis. Certainly in Ireland today the person of deep and vibrant faith is in there with the curlew and the Kerry slug, as in, they are now recognized as an endangered species.

I believe we have entered a deep winter of disbelief. Whilst I feel we are in it, I believe we have a long way to go before the thaw, the thaw of rebirth, renewal and the new shoots of faith that will come in the spring. I believe it will get darker and colder. I believe, as in any severe winter, there will be much loss. This severe and deep winter of disbelief will see a further decline of religious practice. Some of the casualties of this 'big faith freeze' will include closure of churches, less Catholic schools and hospitals, less frequent celebration of the Eucharist. This winter of disbelief will shut seminaries and mean the native Irish priest could wear a 'save the sagart' badge!

In the face of all this we can pretend it's not going to happen. We can say we have survived worse winters. It'll not be as bad as they say. If we do this, as sure as night follows day, this winter will come. We will be taken by surprise. We will be wrong footed. Panic. Shortages. Sickness. Death.

There is another way though. It involves reading the signs of the times. In this scenario we prepare. We baton down the hatches. We put on the right gear. We stockpile. We plan. What might this prudent approach to the ensuing deep winter of disbelief mean for us as a Faith Community?

For a start, Unity. Seek to heal the divisions in the Church. Stop the fragmentation and labeling of each other, liberal, conservative and so on. Consolidation and solidarity with all the groups that we have allowed to hemorrhage from the Church, the gay community, the abused, the former religious, the ex priest, those in second unions. In the depths of this winter we might see the beauty of true ecumenism. In the dark harsh cold that is deepening we might at last return to Jesus of Nazareth. Might we emerge into the springtime sun as more steeped in prayer? Perhaps the real grace of this deep winter will be genuine reform and renewal.

'The summer days are ending in the valley, And soon the time will come when we must be apart. But like the rose that comes back with the spring time, You will return to me when spring time comes around'.
(The White Rose of Athens, Nana Mouskouri).

Fraternally, JoeMcD 19.11.23