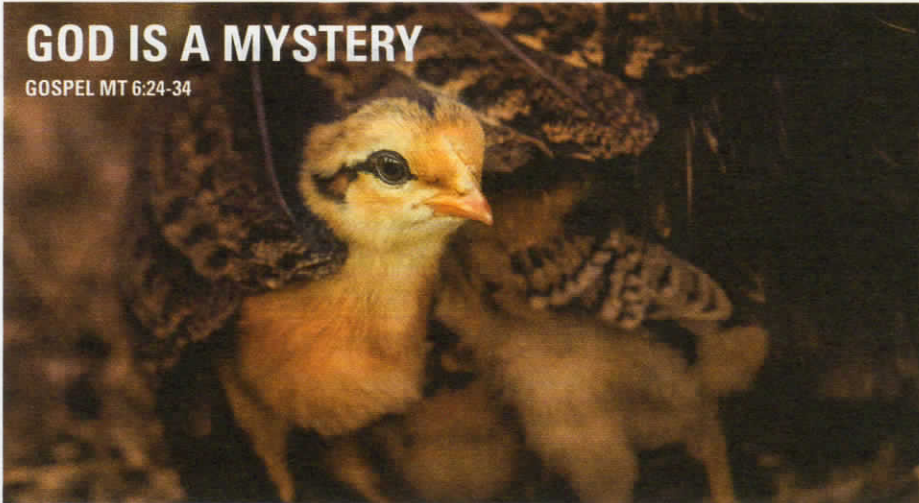


## GOD IS A MYSTERY

GOSPEL MT 6:24-34



It is not often that the bible presents the Lord through a feminine image. Jesus at one point likens himself to a mother hen gathering her chicks under her wings.

In today's reading from Isaiah, the prophet tries to reassure the people in exile that the Lord has not forgotten them – or rather that the Lord simply cannot forget them. They are as close to the Lord as a new-born baby is to her or his mother. That profound bond which only a mother can understand is what links the Lord to the people.

This use of feminine imagery should not surprise us. On the very opening of the bible, in the first account of Creation, we read that God made human beings in the divine image and likeness. And just in case anyone misses the point, the most conservative writer in that part of the scriptures rams the message home by underlining the message: in the image of God God created them; male and female God created them. So if women are as much the image and likeness of God, it should surprise us that such presentations of God in feminine ways occur so seldom, rather than that they occur at all.

Today we are offered a vision of God as caring and nurturing. It might be useful to remember that any attempt to talk about God is done by analogy: we have to express ourselves in terms which make sense to us, but God is a mystery, far beyond our understanding. We must grapple with this mystery, but always keep in mind that God cannot be pigeon-holed: no matter how well we construct a system of belief, the Lord does not have to conform to our ideas. The book of Job is the classic warning that there is more to God than is dreamed of in our philosophies. We have tended in the past to identify the caring professions such as nursing with women: we are hopefully less likely now to restrict women to those walks of life as was customary in the past. But the bible is not simply using this sort of imagery because it is useful: it is saying that there is a feminine aspect to God which women mirror and express. One way in which we could understand this might be to consider how we talk about the Holy Spirit, whom we usually speak of as He. The correct pronoun for the Spirit in the New Testament should be It. But it is not considered good form to refer to a person (even a baby) in this neuter way. It would be just as accurate to think about the Holy Spirit as She: in that way we might appreciate better the teaching of Genesis and not see the depicting of God in feminine terms as so unusual. ■

### SAY

Don't worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself.

### LEARN

Our first reading comes from the second major section of the Book of Isaiah (Chapters 40-55): this was composed during the Exile in Babylon (587-539 BCE).

This section is known as the Book of Consolation, as it encourages hope in a people who have been devastated by the destruction of their homeland and who have been forcibly deported.

The writer encourages them to hope and look for a new Exodus: what God did once, God can do again.

God's action in the second Exodus will be nothing short of a new act of Creation, done out of God's motherly love for Israel.

### DO

Look at the people as you walk along the street. Each of them is created in God's image and likeness. Is there anyone of whom you find that difficult to believe? Why might that be?



## REFLECT

Our ideas about God are often influenced by what we hear, especially by what we were told when we were young and impressionable. Much preaching and catechetics stressed the justice of God and left the audience in a state of fear and apprehension at the thought of judgment and hell. While

that sort of presentation may have an immediate effect, it seldom lasts. Only a relationship of love can bring us to a state of quiet trust which will help us live our lives with a sense of deep peace, no matter what storms are raging around us. The Lord may be presented as a warrior: but anyone who has experience

of a mother's determination when the good of her child is at stake will know that proper anger and a fighting spirit are not exclusively a male preserve. Perhaps if we thought of the Lord's anger in this way, even when directed at the Lord's own people, we might gain a different perspective and insight. ■

# PARISH OF DROMORE

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## ***Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time***

## ***Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> February 2017***

### **Sunday Mass Times**

**St Colman's Dromore**                      **All Saints Ballela**  
Sunday 11.00am                              Sunday 9.45am

### **Weekday Mass Times: St Colman's**

**Mon, Wed & Fri 9.30am:** Liturgy of the Word with Eucharist

**Mass:** Tues & Thur 9.30am

**Sat: 10-11am:** Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

**Ash Wednesday** Dromore 9.30am - Liturgy of the word with Eucharist, distribution of ashes  
Dromore – 6pm - Mass, distribution of ashes  
Ballela – 7.30pm - Liturgy of the word with Eucharist, distribution of ashes.

### **Ballela Anniversaries**

**Sun 26:** Willie, Sarah & Sean Laverty  
Robert, Margaret Ann, James P &  
Robert Laverty Jnr

**Sun 5:** Patrick, Mary Rose, Willie, Mary &  
Patrick Doyle Jnr, Dechomet  
Mary Magee  
Arthur & Ailie Burns

### **Dromore Anniversaries**

**Sun 26:** William, Margaret & Sean Gribben  
Deceased members of The Cull Family

**Sun 5:** Mary Verhoeven  
Sarah Bernadette Bradley  
Arthur & Joy Brooker  
Mary McKeown  
Annie Josephine McCrory

**Offertory Promise Collection** £884.16

### **Readers - Dromore**

**Sun 5:** Aileen Gracey

### **Dromore, Annaclone and Ballela Lourdes**

**Committee** Anyone wishing to travel as sick or pilgrim, contact any committee member, Pilgrim fare is £595 .If there are any nurses who are new to the Parish and would be willing to give up their time to go to work in Lourdes contact Frances Kattourah on 07894166791.

Winners in the Annual Lourdes Fundraising Draw were as follows: William Mc Polin - £200, Joe Cosgrave jnr - £100 & Gail Greenan - £50.

We would like to thank everyone for their continued support. Next meeting Mon 13<sup>th</sup> March

### **Parish Draw Winners Week 42**

£100	Walter Stokesbury	497
£50	Gerry McDonald	138
£30	Gerry Mallon	476
£20	Danny McCrory	190

### **Ballela GAC Lotto**

Lotto Numbers: 10 12 18 22

£10 Winner's :Philip Bingham & Conor Rush

Sellers Draw: Gary McMullan

Next week's Jackpot: £5000

All membership & Registration to be returned by 8pm Tues evening at Club House.

### **Ballela Community Group**

The Knitting and sewing class will begin on Thur 2<sup>nd</sup> March from 7-8pm in Ballela School. Cost is £15 for 8 weeks. Please bring all materials with you.

Next meeting **Mon 27<sup>th</sup> Feb** at 7.30pm

### **Women's World Day of Prayer**

Will be held in St. Colman's church at 8pm on Friday 3 March. This is an interdenominational service and we would encourage the Ladies in our Parish to attend.

**Tea & Chat** St Colmans Hall Dromore after 11am Mass on Sun 26<sup>th</sup> Feb.

### **St Colman's Hall – Refurbishment**

**Hall Refurb Appeal - £334.50 of £5,000 raised**

Full details of our recent grant award are in the leaflet at the back of the church, our website and facebook page. If you use social media, please share our post with your family members who would have used the hall growing up, and invite them to support us. Anyone can donate through [www.everyclick.com/stcolmans](http://www.everyclick.com/stcolmans), but we have only 4 weeks to raise these vital funds.

Our SVP colleagues have kindly offered to withdraw their collection for these 4 weeks and are asking that your SVP donations are instead offered to this appeal. For more info, call Patrick Rooney 07545-430578 or email the parish office

### **Do This In Memory (Week 6)**

Do This In Memory will be held on Sun 26<sup>th</sup> Feb in both Churches.

### **Recently Baptised**

Rory Thomas Wilson

**Sick Visits** Fr McConville will visit the sick of the parish during the week.