

Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year B • Season Colour: Purple • Psalter week 4



THE CALL OF MARY

This Sunday is Christmas Eve and finally! (we may be forgiven for thinking) our scripture readings present us with the events leading up to the birth of Jesus.

In today's Gospel we hear the familiar story from Luke's Gospel of the Annunciation of the birth of Jesus to Mary. If we look more closely at the text, we find that in the background is the figure of David, the ideal king of Israel and the promise which God made to him that someone belonging to his line would always occupy his throne. It may be of some comfort to us to remember that David was not a pious, innocent individual but someone guilty of serious crime and sin: adultery and murder are only two examples from a long and eventful career. But we find in the bible that God works through real people who have real human failings.

The occasion for this promise was that David was considering building a temple to house the Ark of the Covenant, a portable chest associated with the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness on their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land. It was said to contain the stone tablets with the Ten Commandments and Aaron's rod. Luke tells us in the wider story of Jesus' birth that both Joseph and Mary are of the house of David, and Jesus is called *Son of David* during his ministry. So God's promise is to be fulfilled, but it depends on the free co-operation of Mary. Luke presents Mary as the model disciple, one who listens to God's word, considers it carefully, and then acts upon it. The evangelist tells us that Mary is a virgin, which assures us that Jesus is the son of *God*, conceived through the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way, Jesus is truly divine and truly human. ■

REFLECT

Advent is the season in which Mary finds her true place in the Church's liturgical life: this is where she belongs. Her unique position among the People of God rests within the mystery which we contemplate during Advent and Christmastide. But if she is to be a model for us as disciples of Jesus, how is this possible, since she was involved in such a special way in God's plan? She is our model because she takes God's word seriously and makes it part of her life, her guiding principle.

One of the titles of Mary which we find in the Litany of Loreto is *Ark of the Covenant*. Before the Temple was built in Jerusalem, this wooden chest was the symbol of God's presence among the people of Israel. It could be moved from shrine to shrine and symbolized the presence of God amongst the whole people: it showed that the divine presence was not limited or confined to any particular place, no matter how sacred. By associating Mary with the Ark of the Covenant, the liturgy is presenting her as the bearer of God's new presence among human beings in the person of Jesus, whose birth we celebrate tomorrow. ■

LEARN

The Ark of the Covenant was a mobile chest which could be carried on poles from one shrine to another. It symbolized the Lord's presence among the people of Israel.

It was said to contain the Ten Commandments, which symbolized the Covenant between God and Israel: it was also thought to contain the rod of Aaron from the Exodus journey.

The Ark was eventually installed in the Holy of Holies when Solomon, David's son, built the Temple.

It was lost when the Temple was destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD. we must not begrudge God's generosity.

DO

Set up your Christmas crib (if you have not done so already) without the figure of Jesus and consider the scene. Put yourself in the place of Mary or Joseph. Remember that they are real human beings. How do you see them as models for your Christian life?



SAY

I am at your disposal, Lord: tell me what you want me to do.

PARISH OF DROMORE

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Fourth Sunday of Advent

Sunday Mass Times

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

Weekday Mass Times: St Colman's

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

Tues & Thu 10am Mass

Sat: 10-11am: Exposition of The Blessed sacrament

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 24: None

Sun 24 : (Christmas Eve, Mass) Oliver McAleenan

Sun 31: John McCormac (Months Mind)

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 24: Frank McAnearney

Sun 24: (Christmas Eve, Mass) Oliver McAleenan

Sun 31: Dominic McClure

Offertory Promise Collection £1073.50

Readers - Dromore

Sun 31: Colin Skillen

Recently Deceased

Mary Elizabeth (Marilyn) Keenan, Magherabeg Rd, Dromore.

Mary Caulfield, Church St, Dromore

Mass during the week

Mass will be celebrated on Tues & Thur at 10am in St Colman's Dromore.

Christmas Mass Times

Christmas eve

St Colman's, Dromore – 7pm

All Saints, Ballela – 9pm

Christmas Day

All Saints, Ballela – 9.45am

St Colman's, Dromore – 11am

New Parish Priest

A word of welcome to Fr Des loughran who will be taking up post as Parish Priest of Dromore & Ballela in March 2018. We wish him all the best.

Sunday 24th December 2017

Parish Draw Winners Week 35

£100	Anne McEvoy	421
£50	Anna Downey	016
£30	Grania Shillington	057
£20	Brenda Gribbin	017

Ballela GAC Lotto

Lotto Numbers: 7 9 13 21

£10 winner: Mabel Seller: Rory McPolin

Next week's jackpot £1370

Club A.G.M. will take place on Mon 8th Jan 2018 in The Anglers Rest.

Weight watchers Class

Will resume on Monday 8th Jan 2018 at 6pm in St Colman's hall, Dromore, tea/Coffee available and everyone is welcome. Please contact Gearldine: 07776109903.

The Abbey Christian Brothers' Grammar School, Newry

Open day is on Sat 13th Jan from 10am – 12noon.

Admission to St Mary's Primary School

Dechomet

Children who are aged four on or before 1st July 2018 are eligible to apply for a Year One place. We also welcome Reception pupils - children whose fourth birthday occurs between 2nd July 2018 and 31st May 2019 may join Reception Class on or after their fourth birthday. Last date for return of applications is Wednesday 10th January 2018.

www.stmaryspsdechomet.com

Annaclone, Ballela & Dromore Lourdes

Committee

Thanks to everyone who supported our Lourdes Christmas hamper, Winner was Brian Doyle Newcastle.

Prayer for the Day

Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father". So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.