

THE WORD

Year B • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 4



PREPARING THE WAY

(LK 1:57-66. 80)

Elizabeth holding baby John the Baptist

Elizabeth's joy shines through these images from Luke's Gospel. After receiving her tender visit from Mary, she herself pregnant with Jesus, Elizabeth shares in the joy of her neighbours and relations in giving birth to a son called John.

John's father, Zechariah, is a priest in the temple and as is customary in these situations, the son would usually follow in his father's footsteps, taking his father's name and preparing himself for life as a priest. However, something interesting happens. The child is not given his father's name and this leaves the neighbours and friends gathered at the circumcision ceremony with something to talk about. "What will this child turn out to be?" they wonder.

So it is clear that the path set out for John the Baptist will not follow the traditional cultural norm. He will turn his back on the temple worship of Jerusalem for it has been corrupted by King Herod, and once he has grown in wisdom and 'his spirit matures', he will live in the wilderness.

This great feast celebrates John's arrival in order to prepare the way for the Lord. The river Jordan as a symbolic place of liberation and exodus becomes John's place of ministry in baptising and freeing people of their sin and showing them a life in Christ. Yes, John indeed becomes a temple priest, but he points towards a new temple – a temple where people come to know the love and mercy of God. ■

REFLECT

One of the beautiful images preceding today's Gospel story is when the infant Christ and the infant John first meet, and John dances for joy in Elizabeth's womb. It's a moment of grace with both infants destined for an arduous path in the years ahead. Taking a difficult path in life requires determination and a vast quantity of courage. You can picture the scene with John the Baptist as he ventures into the wilderness with humility and simplicity, in order that the world may come to know Jesus and share in his love and mercy. Some say he may have lived with monks near the Jordan but others state that he relied on the generosity of others for his food and accommodation. Whatever way we want to imagine it, his ministerial journey was not easy but in pointing to Jesus, he shows the world love.

Let us take a look at the decisions we must make to profess our faith in Christ. Those of us with young children preparing for the sacraments are almost acting counter-culturally in ensuring they understand the significance of baptism, communion and confirmation in their lives. We go to Mass on a Sunday but for some this is becoming less enticing, with dwindling numbers attending and liturgies struggling to provide adequate music and preaching. Prayer is becoming privatised and less about the community.

Today's feast explicitly points to the difficulties and obstacles that are constantly present to believers. We take courage from John the Baptist in his indomitable spirit and unwavering hope. We acknowledge that we too have to make decisions concerning our faith. Sometimes those decisions take courage and determination. ■

SAY

"One Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."
(Ephesians 4)

DO

Reflect today on your own baptism and how it has impacted on your life.

LEARN

"Holy Baptism is the basis of the whole Christian life, the gateway to life in the Spirit and the door which gives access to the other sacraments."

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1213)

PARISH OF DROMORE

Very Rev Des Loughran: 07855741888
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Nativity of St John the Baptist

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

Tues & Thur : Mass – 9.30am

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

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 24: Evelyn McAleenan
Johnny Doyle (Months Mins)

Sun: None

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 24: Armelle Devonport
Agnes & James Gribbin
Joy & Arthur Brooker
Cis & Mervyn McGuigan
Nance Stokesberry

Sun 1: None

Offertory Promise Collection £788.71

Readers - Dromore

Sun 1: Katie Rice

Fr. Conor McConville

Fr. Conor will return to celebrate Mass in Ballela and Dromore today and we would like all Parishioners to join us after Mass in Dromore for refreshments in St. Colmans hall.

World Meeting Of Families 2018

Our Parish will be joining other parishes in the area for a joint pilgrimage to Phoenix Park on Sun 26th Aug. Attendance at this event will require tickets and registration. Full details are on the forms at the back of the Church. There is an application form for transport £20 per person and information about the booking process in order to obtain tickets for the event. Parishioners have to obtain tickets themselves online or book through the parish office. Today is the last day for registration.

NI Blood Transfusion Service

Next blood donation session will be held in Cathedral Church Hall, Dromore on Wed 27th June 2pm-4pm & 5.15pm-8pm.

Sunday 24th June 2018

Parish Draw Winners Week 11

£100	Joseph Cull	126
£50	Hugh Pat O'Hare	099
£30	Joseph Cosgrave	325
£20	Dominic McCusker	380

Ballela GAC Lotto

Lotto Fri 15th June: 12 13 20 24

No £10 winners, seller: kevin Close

Mon 25th Seniors hurlers away to Portaferry

Tractor Run will take place on Sun 24th June.

There will be a plaque for every tractor and a few spot prizes. Registration at noon. Run to start at 2pm sharp. Hot food BBQ along with tea, coffee and sandwiches, tuck shop and mini games. All Tractors welcome.

Ballela Community Group

Pilates Class has ended for the summer. If you wish to join the class it will resume on Tues 11th Sept at 7pm in Ballela School. Registration details will be given at the end of August.

Next meeting Mon 25 June at 7pm.

Treasure Hunt Sun 22nd July more details next week.

St Vincent de Paul

Can we help you? Do you know of any lonely individuals or anyone in financial difficulties within the local parish, who could benefit from a friendly visit or assistance?

Helpline number: 07738838187

Newry Cathedral Tour

Will take place on Wed 27th June at 2pm, tour will last approx. 90 mins. Please meet at the main door, you will hear the story of the building of the Cathedral, 1825-1829 and of the later extensions. There is no charge for the tour.

Children's Liturgy gets Messy! Will take place on Tuesday mornings in Ballela School 10am -11.30am followed by tea and chat. Join us on Tues 10th, 17th & 24th July and 14th, 21st & 28th Aug. A chance for children, parents and grandparents to get together with craft, activities and lots of fun based on stories from the Bible. If you wish you can help with activities or make tea. Contact Jill/Michael on 40671401.

Newry Cathedral Mass time change

From Sun 1st July there will be no 5.30pm mass in Newry Cathedral over the summer months.