

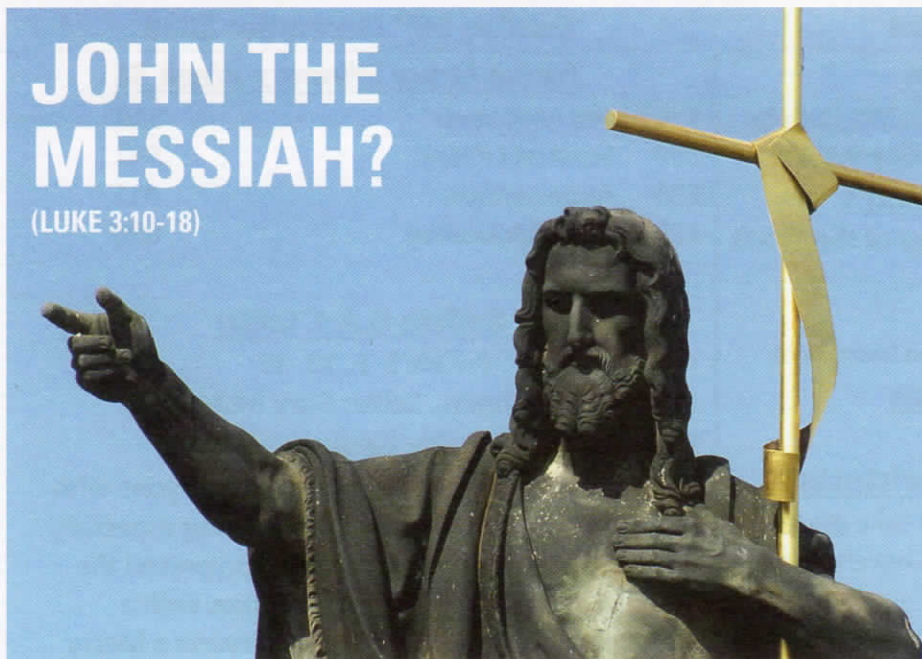
Sunday Message

THE WORD

Year C • Season Colour: Rose / Purple • Psalter Week 3

JOHN THE MESSIAH?

(LUKE 3:10-18)



Statue of St John the Baptist with golden cross, Charles Bridge, Prague, Czech Republic

Our Gospel passage today centres on John the Baptist and considers two questions.

The first is this: What does baptism mean for those people who have responded positively to his preaching? For Luke, this centres on the use of possessions. A major theme in Luke's Gospel is the care for the poor which features strongly in the preaching of the prophets. To be converted to God means to give up selfish attitudes and behaviour and to consider the needs of those less fortunate. It means resisting the temptation to use a position of authority and power, such as that enjoyed by tax officials and soldiers, to enrich oneself at the expense of those in a vulnerable situation.

The second question is: Who is the Messiah? It is clear from this passage and elsewhere that some people thought that John the Baptist fulfilled this role, and later Christian missionaries encountered disciples of John in Ephesus. John here declares himself not to be the Messiah and looks forward to the coming of the Stronger One, who will bring judgment and salvation. It is John's mission to prepare a people for the Lord, and once Jesus has arrived on the scene and been baptised himself, John's ministry is over. ■

LEARN

Tax-collectors did not receive a salary: they were expected to charge commission on the money they gathered for the Roman authorities.

The Herod who appears in the story of John the Baptist is Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great who ruled when Jesus was born.

Luke is particularly concerned with the plight of poor and vulnerable people.

The third Sunday of Advent is known as Laetare Sunday: *Laetare* (Rejoice!) is the opening Latin word of the entrance antiphon – we are halfway through Advent!

DO

Look through your cupboards: is there any spare clothing or food you could give to the St Vincent de Paul Society or some such organisation for people in need?



SAY

Rejoice in the Lord always.

REFLECT

The Gospel tradition tells us that John the Baptist was imprisoned and then executed by Herod Antipas. Most people are familiar with the rather dramatic and colourful account of his fate as a result of Herod's rash promise to his step-daughter Salome. Even John's being imprisoned for denouncing Herod's legally incestuous marriage to Herodias seems a somewhat extreme reaction to an irritating fundamentalist preacher.

However, our Gospel passage today gives us a clue that Herod may well have regarded John as a real and present

danger to his own power and position. John was a person who was gaining influence, not just over the ordinary religious-minded citizens but also over those officials on whom Herod's rule depended, the tax-collectors and soldiers. Herod was also a puppet ruler who depended on the favour of the Roman authorities, so any threat to Roman rule had to be dealt with immediately and severely. If John the Baptist was becoming someone with sway over the likes of soldiers, then he would be an alternative centre of power in the land. It is therefore possible that this was the reason for his imprisonment and subsequent execution. We remember that

Jesus was executed on a political charge as 'King of the Jews', not 'Son of God'.

On a more positive note, we can see in the tax-collectors and soldiers the universal offer of salvation: we will encounter these groups later in the ministry of Jesus, where associating with the despised tax-collectors will get Jesus into trouble. The Gentile centurion will beg Jesus to heal his servant, and it will be a Roman centurion who will declare the crucified Jesus righteous. As we move through Advent, we can see how God offers the Good News to everyone, irrespective of race, religion or occupation. ■

PARISH OF DROMORE

Rev Feidhlimidh Magennis Tel: 07702665123
Parochial House Dromore Tel: 02892-692218

Rev Dr Frank Rice, Permanent Deacon
Mobile: 07746-842977

Parish website: www.stcolmans.org
St Vincent de Paul Helpline: 07738838187

Parish email address: office@stcolmans.org
Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Patricia Carville 07789 917741

Third Sunday of Advent

Sunday 16th December 2018

Sunday Mass Times

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

Weekday Mass Times: St Colman's

Mon, Wed, & Thurs- 9.30am: Liturgy of the Word with Eucharist

Tues & Fri : Mass – 9.30am

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

Weekday Mass times: All Saints

Thursday – 7.00pm

Penitential Service For Christmas

A Christmas Penitential service will take place on Tuesday 18th Dec in St Colmans Church from 6pm – 7pm.

St Therese's Banbridge - Wed 19th Dec 7.30pm

Dechomet - Sat 22nd 5.30 – 5.50 pm

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 16: Patrick & Sarah Burns

Sun 23: None

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 16: Frank McAnearney
Marilyn Keenan

Sun 23: John Aherne

Offertory Promise Collection £1062.97

Readers - Dromore

Sun 23: Grainne Killiner

Christmas Mass Times

Christmas Eve

St Colmans – 7pm

All Saints – 9pm

Christmas day

All Saints – 9.45am

St Colmans – 11am

Do This In Memory

"Week 4" will take place today, Sun 16th Dec in both churches.

Parish Draw Winners Week 36

£100	Jim McKeever	518
£50	Seamus Lavery	551
£30	Anne Lennon	411
£20	Mary McGreevy	090

Ballela G.A.C Lotto

Fri 14: 5 6 12 16

No £10 winners. Seller: Gary McMullan

Ballela Community Group

The committee would like to thank everyone who attended the Christmas Coffee Morning especially those who sold Holly wreaths and organised the children's crafts it was a great success with a magnificent turn out. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Medjugorje Irish Centre Pilgrimages April – Oct 2019

7 nights B&B and Airport Shuttle service from Dubrovnik or Split for €279 per person sharing. Book any flight-any time and we provide guaranteed airport shuttle service. Call us for further info and book the dates that suit you, Tel. 014434510 or email reservations@med-irishcentre.com.
website: www.med-irishcentre.com

Christmas Whist

Christmas Whist will take place on Sun 16th Dec in St Colmans Hall, Dromore at 8.30pm. Ladies to supply pastry: Helen Downey and Bronagh Brady.

Tea & Chat

Will take place in St Colmans hall on Sun 16th Dec after 11am mass. Everyone welcome.

Crib Service

There will be a Crib Service held in All Saints Church, Ballela on **Sun 23rd Dec at 6.30pm** for all the Family, with carols and candles around the crib and small craft activity with the children.

Decorating St Colmans Church for Christmas

We need your help. Please come along on Thursday 20th Dec at 6.30pm and help decorate and clean the church.