

REPENT! – YES! YOU!

(MATT 3:1-12)

John the Baptist is a major figure in the Gospel tradition: he appears at the beginning of the four accounts of Jesus' ministry.

Matthew presents him today in the light of the biblical prophet Elijah, who was a thorn in the side of the Israelite king Ahab, an uncompromising preacher of a somewhat fundamentalist interpretation of the covenant Law. Here John is the one who prepares the people for the coming of Jesus, the one mightier than he is. John's message is urgent and clear: the day when God's power and presence will be revealed is near and time is short. He warns those who are smug and complacent in their being members of the people of Israel, children of Abraham: this is not sufficient – they must repent, literally change the way they think, adopt a new mentality. John's baptism by water is a sign of willingness to change: the baptism of the one coming after him is more powerful, and his baptism will be a cleansing one, involving the Holy Spirit and fire. Fire and wind are symbols associated with the biblical Day of the Lord, which involves judgment. As the people were baptised, they confessed their sins: this refers also to God's readiness to forgive. ■



REFLECT

It is a great temptation (and mistake) to read the Gospel narratives as simply historical accounts of Jesus' ministry and the events and people associated with it. They are addressed to us today as the Word of God which is alive and active. John the Baptist's message, uncomfortable as it is, is meant for us today and directly. Abraham is the most significant figure in the Hebrew Bible; to be a child of Abraham means to be a member of the chosen people, to have a share in the covenant relationship with the Lord. John the Baptist tells those who come to him from Jerusalem that this will be of no avail, that something more is required, and they must change the way they understand their religion. So it is with us: we may think that because we belong to a certain school of thought

then we are acceptable to God. We may imagine that because we follow a certain way of life suggested by a spiritual leader, then we are all sorted. Matthew is telling us through John the Baptist that we are wrong, and that we can be just as smug and complacent as the Pharisees are depicted as being. What matters in the end is the kind of person we are and how close is our relationship to God. The practices of religion are no substitute for a life of faith, and can even be a trap for us, if we are not careful. That is why we need to repent, to examine ourselves and to change anything which prevents us from allowing Jesus fully into our lives. The people who came to John the Baptist were willing to change, and in that they are an example which we would do well to follow. ■

LEARN

Metanoia is the New Testament word for conversion, and is usually translated as repentance.

Metanoia means literally to change the way we think.

'Conversion' means to turn round, to re-orientate one's life: both terms have the sense of profound and radical change.

DO

Make the Sign of the Cross with holy water and renew your baptismal commitment.



SAY

Have mercy on me, God, in your kindness: in your compassion blot out my offence.

(Psalm 51:1)

PARISH OF DROMORE

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Second 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

Mon, Wed & Thurs: Liturgy of the word 9.30am

Tues & Fri : Mass 9.30am

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

Weekday Mass times: All Saints

Thurs: NO MASS

Ballela Anniversaries

8: None

Sun 15: Patrick & Sarah Burns

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 8: James Murray

Alice & William Cappa

Fri 13: Thomas & Elizabeth Mulligan

Sun 15: None

Offertory Promise Collection £1417.04

Readers – Dromore

Sun 15: Eibhlin Scott

Family Advent craft evenings

We invite families to join us in **Ballela School at 6.00 pm** on the Sundays of Advent for prayer, reflection and crafts in preparation for Christmas. Activities for all the family as we make mangers – you will need boxes and lots of card-board wrappings from your on-line deliveries!!!

SVP Christmas church door collection

Will take place on **Sun 8th Dec** in both churches.

St. Colman's P.S Dromore

Is holding an open afternoon for prospective P1 parents and children on **Thursday 19th December** from 1.30pm – 2.30pm. You are very welcome to come along to see the school and meet staff.

St Colman's School Christmas Carol service

Will take place on **Wed 18th Dec** at 7pm in St Colman's Church.

Christmas Tree Festival

13-15 Dec at Dromore Methodist Church, viewing times: Fri 2pm-8pm, Sat 10am – 6.30pm, Sun 2pm – 4pm. Craft fair sat 10-12.30. Adm: Adults £5 kids £2. Festive refreshments & crafts for children.

Sunday 8th Dec 2019

Parish Draw Winners Week 37

£100	Frankie Gibson	084
£50	Dominic Downey	155
£30	Anne Marie Eadie	284
£20	Louis Carr	179

Ballela G.A.C AGM

Will take place on **Mon 16th Dec 7.30pm** in Ballela School.

Christmas Coffee Morning Ballela Community Group are having their Christmas Coffee Morning today **Sun 8th Dec** after 9.45 am Mass until 12 noon in Ballela School. There will be delicious homemade scones, buns and treats for everyone and there will be a chance for the kids to visit Santa in his Grotto and receive a present. We also will have Christmas Craft's for children to take part in and Holly wreaths for sale. Admission is £2.50 per person.

The Giving Tree

This Christmas St Vincent de Paul ask for your support with a Christmas Present Appeal by donating new, unwrapped toys and gifts for children and adults who might not otherwise receive a Christmas present. The gifts will then be wrapped and distributed to those in need. How to take part? Take a tag from the tree in St Colman's Church, buy the gift and return it in a bag with the tag attached. Please return the gifts no later than **Sun 15th December**. Leave in the box at the back of St Colman's Church. Thank You SVP.

SVP Christmas cards are on sale at the back of the church suggested donation £2.50 per pack.

Tea and Chat

In St Colman's hall on **Sun 15th Dec** after mass.

Christmas Whist

Will be held on **Sun 15th Dec** in St Colman's hall at 8.30pm. Ladies to supply pastry: Siobhan McArdle & Margaret Downey

Do This in Memory

Will take place in both churches on **Sun 15th Dec**.

Penitential service

Penitential service on **Fri 20th Dec 6-7pm** St Colman's.

Confession's – Sat 14th & Sat 21st 10-11am in St Colman's.

Do you need financial or practical assistance or even a friendly chat?

The St. Vincent De Paul Society is here to help. You can contact us through our helpline number: 07738838187