



In today's Gospel, we learn that John the Baptist has been thrown into prison. He has heard about Jesus' activities and wonders if Jesus is the one who is to come.

Matthew presents Jesus as offering evidence that he is the Messiah (the Christ) through his works of power in healing. These show God's power breaking through into human life, where that life is impaired or endangered, and this is the coming of the Kingdom. Not everyone will accept the evidence of their own eyes and Jesus will be rejected by many members of the religious establishment and of his own family, and he pronounces a blessing on those who do not lose faith.

John is in prison probably because he was attracting key figures in the service of Herod Antipas, the ruler of Judea, such as soldiers and tax officials: Herod would perceive him as becoming a rival focus of influence and hence a threat to his authority and rule. Some people would see the Messiah as a political/military figure who would provide precisely such leadership: Matthew shows that Jesus as the Christ would not conform to such worldly expectations, hence the list of healings which he gives as signs that the Kingdom of God had arrived.

However important John the Baptist may have been, his era is now over, and the least in the Kingdom is greater than he is. He is, in a sense, the last of the prophets, one who remains steadfast to his beliefs and the ultimate witness, and it is for that reason that the church honours him as a saint in the Christian tradition for his part in the Gospel story of Jesus. ■

REFLECT

There seem to have been differing ideas as to what kind of person the Messiah would be. Today's Gospel presents Jesus as revealing the presence of the Kingdom of God through healing and the proclaiming of the Good News. This is the mission which he will entrust to the disciples later in the narrative.

The miracle stories in the Gospel illustrate the Kingdom breaking into human life. The mission to proclaim God's love and concern for human beings did not end with the immediate disciples of Jesus but has been given to his disciples down through the ages. We, the members of the church, are called upon to be missionary disciples wherever we find ourselves. It is perhaps easy to see the church as a fortress under siege: but the picture of the Kingdom is rather one of going on the offensive, of attacking those situations where people are suffering, whether it be sickness, injustice or prejudice, anywhere that human life is less than it should be. Maybe we should think of being redeemed or saved in a wider context than individual, personal sin: the Bible thinks in terms of being a member of a group, the people of Israel or one of the disciples of Jesus. Being a disciple of Jesus brings responsibilities towards our brothers and sisters. ■

SAY

The least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than John the Baptist.

(see Matt 11:11)

DO

Consider celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation as part of your preparation for the Feast of Our Lord's Nativity.



LEARN

Christ is a Greek term meaning anointed.

Messiah is a Hebrew term meaning anointed.

In popular thought, the Messiah would be a military hero who would liberate the people of Israel from Roman rule.



Stained glass in Catholic church in Dublin showing John the Baptist

PARISH OF DROMORE

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Third 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: 7.00pm

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 15: Patrick & Sarah Burns

Sun 22: Harry O'Hare

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 15: None

Sun 22: Frank McAnearney

John Aherne

Offertory Promise Collection £1228.00

Readers – Dromore

Sun 22: Colin Skillen

Christmas Mass times

Christmas Eve

St Colman's – 7pm, Carol service starts 6.40pm

All Saints – 9pm

Christmas day

All Saints – 9.45am

St Colman's – 11am

Recently Baptised

Dylan Mark Hickland

Isaiah Francis Joel Adams

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.

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.

Sunday 15th Dec 2019

Parish Draw Winners Week 38

£100	Bill O'Loughlin	079
£50	Laura Rainey	263
£30	Frank Doyle	393
£20	Brendan McGuigan	007

Ballela G.A.C. Lotto

Sun 1st Dec: 5 9 10 17

No £10 winners Seller: Anglers Rest

Sun 8th Dec : 1 6 8 23

£10 winners: Jess Cochrane & Paul Hutchinson

Seller: Anglers Rest Jackpot £2000

Ballela G.A.C AGM

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

Ballela Community Group

We would like to thank everyone who supported our Christmas Coffee morning on Sunday. A big Thank You to our Holly wreath sellers and our wooden crafts stall with amazing gifts, we would also like to thank everyone who helped out on the day especially Santa and his helper who called in to give the kids presents. We wish everyone a Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

The Giving Tree

Please return all gifts no later than **Sun 15th December**. Leave in the box at the back of St Colman's Church. Thank You SVP.

Do This in Memory

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

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

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.

Decorating St Colman's Church for Christmas

We Need your help. Please come along on **Thurs 19th** at 6.30pm.

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