



MAJOR REWARD

(MAT 10:37-42)

In today's Gospel there are two sets of sayings. The first is addressed specifically to Christian disciples who have already made a commitment to Jesus and his Gospel. The second is intended for those to whom the message is preached.

The first set is made up of three distinct but related sayings about preferring members of one's own family to Jesus, about taking up the cross and losing or saving one's life. There is a starkness about the sayings of not preferring family members to Jesus. The preference is considered from the perspective of two generations – children towards parents and parents towards children.

It was one of the facts of life of the early Christian community that people had to make stark choices in order to follow the path of the Gospel. Loyalty towards family members, for example, might have persuaded Jewish believers to stay within the confines of their family's loyalty to the law, while Gentiles who embraced the Gospel were exposing their families to the accusation they were following a "deadly superstition", as the Roman historian Tacitus put it.

This is closely related to the saying about bearing the cross and following in the footsteps of Jesus. We commonly use the expression 'taking up the cross' to mean enduring patiently the sufferings of everyday life. Matthew's community would have understood it in a much more radical sense. The cross was a punishment destined for slaves and revolutionaries. It was a painful but, above all, shameful death. To take up the cross and follow Jesus was to be ready to face the same shameful death as he did.

The final saying in this set, about finding or losing one's life, is a statement of the paradox of the Gospel. It runs contrary to the accepted wisdom of everyday life, yet the story of the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus are the living proof of its truth.

The final set of sayings is directed at the recipients of the preaching of the missionaries sent by Jesus. To welcome them is to welcome not just a poor wandering preacher but also the one who sent him. It was the accepted political wisdom of the time that official messengers or heralds were received with all the respect that would be given to those who sent them. The preachers of the Gospel are messengers for the kingdom of heaven who speak in the name of Jesus and his Father ("the one who sent me"). To welcome a prophet or a holy person is to share in their reward. Just as the heavenly Father will not allow a sparrow to drop to the earth without noticing it (last Sunday's Gospel), so also acts of kindness and hospitality such as a drink of cold water will not pass unnoticed by the heavenly Father. ■

REFLECT

Today's Mass highlights the theme of reward. In the first reading, the woman of Shunem and her husband who made a place in their home for the prophet Elijah is an example of someone who, without asking for it, receives a reward for her gracious hospitality. Jesus includes in the reward for spreading the Gospel all who assist it in any way – from those who give hospitality to those who simply offer a glass of water on a hot day. In his Gospel, Matthew returns frequently to the theme of reward. If we follow Jesus faithfully, if we do our best to follow him, then our reward will be great in heaven. ■



SAY

"Lord, never allow anyone or anything to come between me and putting you first. Amen."

DO

During the coming week, consider the ways you may have shared in the reward of the Gospel.

PRAY

Pray for a deepening of that faith in Christ about which St Paul writes in the letter to the Romans (today's second reading).

LEARN

No good deed goes unnoticed by our God.

Following the way of Jesus comes at a cost but also with a great reward.

PARISH OF DROMORE

Rev Feidhlimidh Magennis Tel: 07702665123

Parish website: www.stcolmans.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/stcolmans

St Vincent de Paul Helpline: 07738838187

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

Parochial House Dromore - Tel: 02892-692218

Parish email address: office@stcolmans.org

Diocesan Safeguarding Officer: Patricia Carville 07789 917741

Thirteenth Sunday in ordinary Time

28th June 2020

Sunday Mass Times

St Colman's Dromore

Sunday, 11.00 am

Mass will continue to be broadcast live on our Facebook page (www.facebook.com/stcolmans)

The churches will remain closed to the public on Sunday 28th June but will reopen on 29th June which is the Feast of Ss Peter and Paul

All Saints, Ballela

Sunday, 9.45 am

Weekday masses

Mon, Tues and Fri: 9.30 am (St Colman's)

Thursday: 7.00 pm (All Saints)

Saturday: 10.00 am (St Colman's)

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 28 June – Evelyn McAleenan

Sun 5 June - None

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 28 June – None

Sun 5 June - None

St Joseph's Young Priests Society

Annual pilgrimage to Knock will be streamed live on the Knock website - www.knockshrine.ie - on **Sunday 28th June from 2.30pm**. The ceremonies will include the Rosary, Mass and Benediction. Please tune in to pray for vocations to the priesthood and religious life.

Update on the closure of our churches

The NI Executive has announced the opening of churches for public worship from Monday 29 June. In the planning of reopening, we are seeking volunteers to assist with a range of initiatives that will need to be implemented:

- Ushers to assist people entering the churches and ensuring that social distancing is maintained
- Cleaners to assist with the increased need to clean the churches before and after each celebration

If you are willing to assist, please contact the parish office.

Moving towards the reopening of churches

Masses will recommence from Monday 29th June. In response to the revision of the restrictions announced previously, the parish has conducted a risk assessment to consider the opening of our churches for worship. The following guidelines have been agreed:

- For the time being, parishioners are asked to share responsibility for maintaining a social distance of **2 metres**
- As the churches are indoor spaces, there will be a limit on the numbers permitted to attend any mass.
- The Sunday Obligation continues to be suspended and you are invited to attend on another day of the week: **two additional masses** have been added.
- Parishioners are asked to follow **guidance on notices** and from ushers regarding seating, directions of travel and use of facilities. An explanatory video is posted on our Facebook page.
- Parishioners are asked to use the **hand sanitisers** on entry to the churches.
- Parishioners are encouraged to wear **face masks** in the churches.
- Bulletins and missalettes cannot be reused so please bring your copies home.

The above arrangements will apply to all celebrations (masses, baptisms, funerals, etc).

Baptisms

Baptisms will also recommence with some restrictions. Only one baby (or set of twins) will be baptised in a ceremony, with a restricted number of family members present and observing social distance rules. Baptism will be held on a Sunday and to book contact the parish office.

First Friday visits will be conducted by phone call during the coming week.

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Donating to the parish

The current health crisis is having a serious impact on donations to many charities. The Diocese has set up an online donation facility on the diocesan website (www.dromorediocese.com) where you can donate to this parish or to clergy support, once or on a monthly basis.

Parishioners who choose to use their weekly envelopes as normal, should retain their envelopes and, once Government policy allows, the parish will arrange to safely collect them. We have begun to distribute boxes of new envelopes that have not been picked up: if you wish to receive your box, please leave a message on the parish office phone.

Decoding the stories we tell ourselves about COVID-19 **by Dr. Jessie Rogers**

We are meaning-making creatures. We have a strong urge to find a narrative - a story - that will make sense of the Coronavirus crisis that has engulfed the whole world. As Christians, we are looking for a God-sized story, but the tendency is always there to construct a story that shrinks God down to the size of our own hopes and fears. Such stories remake God in our own image so that God's agenda perfectly matches our own. In these scenarios, most tellingly, God ends up disliking the same people that we dislike!

There are a lot of stories on offer at the moment. Some of them are conspiracy theories which invite us to channel our fear into aggressive or impotent rage. Many entrench divisions between 'them' and 'us', however we draw those lines. The most common stories to reach for in a time of fear and powerlessness are scapegoating stories that blame individuals or groups whom we label, probably subconsciously, as 'dispensable'. If we can put the blame on 'them' and then somehow exclude them, the problem - we tell ourselves - will go away.

You may have heard that the new Coronavirus was deliberately manufactured or that it is part of a global plot to undermine human rights and religious freedom. It is sometimes called the Chinese virus. Common to all these kinds of stories is that they make us afraid, they invite us to circle the wagons, and they close off our hearts.

It can be hard to navigate the different narratives out there and to assess them wisely. Jesus gave us one good barometer for judging what we see - by looking at the fruits (Matthew 7:15-20). Here are some fruits which are not the result of the Spirit of God at work in the world and in our hearts: an anger that paralyses us or makes us hate others; a selfish concern for 'me and mine' that lets the rest of the world 'go to hell'; a despair that kills off hope; a complacency that leaves us with our heads in the sand; a numbness that makes us stop caring.

You can add to that list anything that closes us off and diminishes our compassion. Conversely, the fruit of any God-inspired narrative will produce greater love for God and for others. It will open up our hearts and inspire a costly but joyful solidarity. It will make us more Christ-like. I am reminded of the slogan often repeated by Dr Mike Ryan of World Health Organisation: "No one is safe until everyone is safe". If we take that to heart, we will treat everyone as our neighbour and place the most vulnerable at the centre of our concern. That is Christian discipleship!

Our explanations and meaning-making stories are always going to fall short of capturing all that God is doing in, through, and despite this calamity. Still, our story-making urge is planted in us by God, so we need to keep weaving those stories.

When they are the product of human pride, our stories will shrink God down to a little deity that fights our battles for us, or a cartoon character that rewards and punishes according to our own simplistic calculations. But when they are God-inspired, they will call us to journey along the path where God's Spirit beckons.

That is why it is so important to bring into prayer the Coronavirus stories we hear and tell ourselves. As followers of Jesus, we need to submit them to the Gospel story that we hear in the Scriptures and celebrate in the Liturgy.

When we bring before God the stories that have taken hold of our imagination, the divine light will illuminate their contours so that we can begin to discern what is of God and what is not.




















May the Lord grant us wisdom and deliver us from being seduced by the wrong stories.

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St Colman's Dromore – social distancing at 2 metres

Baptismal Font <= Sacristy	Sanctuary		Our Lady's Altar
			
			
			
			
			
			
Store	Foyer		Porch

2 individuals per pew **OR** **1 household per pew**

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