



'Agony in the Garden', a wall-painting from about the year 1500, in the Church of St Mary, Elsinore, Denmark

When he is told that "some Greeks", who have come to Jerusalem for the festival of Passover, want to see him, Jesus tells his disciples that "the hour" for him to be glorified has arrived. The period of his revealing his glory, which began with the first sign at Cana and ended with the final one of the raising of Lazarus, is over, and his passion is about to begin.

One of the features of the Fourth Gospel (John) is that some of the most dramatic scenes which we encounter in the three Synoptic Gospels are missing: these include the Testing of Jesus in the Wilderness (the temptations) and that of the Agony in the Garden (better expressed as the Struggle in Gethsemane). However, we find the components of these episodes scattered in the Johannine account. The scenes mentioned respectively present Jesus struggling with what it means to be the Son of God and to be faithful to his mission. They show Jesus in a very human light: in our Gospel reading today, Jesus realises that his hour, the complex events of his Passion and exaltation on the Cross has arrived and the possibility of praying to be spared it comes to his mind. However, he overcomes this understandable reaction and accepts the Father's will, since this is the purpose of his coming. The voice from heaven then vindicates Jesus' choice. There is a tendency sometimes to play down the human aspect of Jesus, to eliminate any hesitation or struggle on his part: although the Fourth Gospel views the crucifixion as the lifting up of Jesus in glory, this passage reminds us of the enduring dark nature of the cross. ■

DO

Take the crucifix in your hands: reflect on the figure on the cross and on the human nature of Jesus.



LEARN

The Gospel of John does not contain some dramatic scenes which we find in the Synoptic Gospels:

These include the Temptations of Jesus, the Agony in the Garden, and the Trial before the Sanhedrin.

The Agony in the Garden is more accurately understood as the Struggle in Gethsemane of Jesus to remain faithful to the ultimate act of obedience to his mission from the Father.

SAY

**Christ offered up prayer and entreaty, loud and in silent tears.
(Hebrews 5:7)**

REFLECT

It is difficult to keep in balance the two natures of Jesus, the divine and human aspects of his being. The Gospel traditions about his being tested and his final test before the Passion, described by the Synoptics in the Gethsemane scene and hinted at in our gospel reading today from John, suggest that we should not forget or play down Jesus' human nature. The Gospel of John shows Jesus as being well aware of his divine nature and relationship with the Father, but the temptation to take short-cuts to fulfil his destiny as the Messiah or to avoid the supreme test of the Passion altogether is still there, albeit in a much more subtle, but no less real, form.

If it is true, as the letter to the Hebrews tells us, that Jesus "has been put to the test in exactly the same way as ourselves, apart from sin", then we should not be afraid to imagine Jesus as being moved in much the same way as we would be in his shoes: for example, the Fourth Gospel tells us that Jesus is "troubled" when confronted with death. If Jesus is to be our model, then we need to know that he understands our human condition from his own experience and can sympathise with us in our difficulties and fears. ■

PARISH OF DROMORE

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Fifth Sunday of Lent

21st March 2021

Broadcast Masses on Facebook

Sunday Masses are broadcast live on Facebook at 9.45 (Ballela) and 11.00 (Dromore) (www.facebook.com/stcolmans)

Anniversaries will continue to be offered at the Sunday and weekday masses.

Weekday masses will be broadcast on:

Monday, Tuesday and Friday at 9.30 am

Thursday at 7.00 pm

Public mass and exposition; Saturday at 10.00am

Ballela Anniversaries

Sun 21: Jimmy Devlin

Sun 28: Edward & Elizabeth McGrath

Dromore Anniversaries

Sun 21: Philomena Walker

Gerard & Maura Eadie

Geraldine Doyle

Sun 28: Michael Byrne

Mary Mulgrew

Offertory promise collection £215.00

Donating to the Parish

The current situation continues to have a serious impact on donations to many charities. The Diocese has set up an online donation facility on the diocesan website (www.dromorediocese.org) where you can donate to this parish or to clergy support, on a one-off or a monthly basis.

Parishioners who choose to use their weekly envelopes should retain them and return them when public masses resume, or contact the parish office to arrange a secure delivery to the office.

Outdoor Stations of the Cross

A set of Stations has been erected along the boundary fence between the cemetery and St Colman's PS to enable parishioners to pray the Stations at their convenience.

The 2021 Census

The 2021 Census takes place on **21 March 2021**. You need to complete the census forms on this Sunday.

Towards a Cautious Re-opening

On Wednesday, the Northern Bishops announced a cautious return to public worship **from Friday 26th March**, in time for Holy Week and Easter.

- The Bishops emphasise the need for continued caution and a rigorous application of all mitigations and safeguards required to ensure the safest possible return to public worship in our Churches.

- Every person should consider carefully if returning to collective worship is the safe and appropriate step for them, at this time. Families are encouraged to join those celebrating the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus in Churches, from the 'domestic church' of their own living rooms, via live-streaming.

- Bishops, together with other Church leaders, encourage all on Easter Sunday to pray and reflect in a spirit of remembering, solidarity and hope in the context of the current pandemic.

In the Parish of Dromore, we will use the coming week to complete a risk assessment and ensure that facilities are in place for a safe return to public celebrations.

- The Sunday Obligation continues to be suspended and you are invited to attend on another day of the week: two additional masses added.

- Parishioners are asked to follow guidance regarding seating, directions of travel and use of facilities.

- 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.

- Parishioners are asked to **use the hand sanitisers** on entry to the churches.

- Parishioners are strongly encouraged to **wear face masks** in the churches.

- Bulletins and missalettes cannot be reused **so please bring your copies home**.

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Resources and Ideas for Lent

In the same way that decorating for Christmas and Easter helps us to remember what we're celebrating, adding items to our home that remind us of our Lenten journey helps us focus on what Lent is about.

Consider setting up a **prayer space in your home** – perhaps in the kitchen or another prominent place. Consider engaging the children in setting this up as this is a good way to get across what Lent is all about. This will prompt you to think and pray about Lent each day. In the prayer space you could include:

- **A purple cloth or scarf.** Purple is the liturgical colour used by the church during Lent and it reminds us that this is a time of prayer, fasting and doing good deeds for others
- **A candle – real or battery.** This reminds us that Jesus is present with us as we pray during Lent.
- **A bowl or vase containing sand.** This reminds us that Jesus spent 40 days in the desert during his life
- **A Bible or Prayer Book.** This reminds us that during Lent we are trying to get to know Jesus better and we will read about him in the Scriptures. If you don't have a Bible then use the children's religion book instead. They will make the link that this is a special book.
- **A crucifix or cross.** This will help us to focus on the death of Jesus which we will remember during Holy Week at the end of Lent.
- **As Lent progresses you can add palms closer to Palm Sunday.** Remember be creative – use whatever you think will help keep your family focused on Lent this year.

AMORIS LAETITIA FAMILY YEAR

19 March 2021 – 26 June 2022



Amoris Laetitia Family
Year 2021 - 2022

On Friday 19 March 2021, the Feast of Saint Joseph, the Church will celebrate five years since the publication of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia* (The Joy of Love) on the beauty and joy of love in the family. On the same day, Pope Francis will launch the **Amoris Laetitia Family Year**, which will conclude on 26 June 2022, on the occasion of the Tenth World Meeting of Families in Rome.

Speaking about the Amoris Laetitia Family Year, Pope Francis referred to it as a special year to grow in family love and an opportunity for a renewed and creative pastoral drive to place the family at the centre of both Church and society. Pope Francis also shared his hope that every family may feel in its own home the living presence of the Holy Family of Nazareth, that it may fill our small domestic communities with sincere and generous love, a source of joy even in trials and difficulties".