

Parish of Hannahstown - St Joseph's & St Peter's Second Sunday of Christmas – 3rd January 2021

On Wednesday we will celebrate the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. Have you ever wondered what the word ‘epiphany’ actually means? The word comes from the Greek *epiphainen*, which means to ‘shine upon’ or ‘make known’. So on Wednesday we celebrate the first occasion that Christ made himself known, in this surprising way, when the light of God shone into our world.

An epiphany is often described as an ‘Aha’ moment. I wonder if the wise men were taken aback at the ordinary scene they encountered when they arrived at the home of Mary and Joseph. After all, they were looking for a king. What they found was simply ‘the child with his mother Mary’. What an unexpected way for God to be revealed. Yet the wise men had enough insight to recognise they were in the presence of something very special. They had followed the light of the star, and found the Light of the World. They were so awed that they knelt to praise Jesus, offering lavish treasures as well as their love and adoration.

Imagine the light they carried with them after that encounter, as they made the journey home. Throughout the Gospels, Jesus makes himself known to people in the most unexpected of ways. Perhaps we have got used to encountering God only at set times or in set places – at Church on a Sunday or in the sacraments. The events of this past year have taught us to expect the unexpected, and the Church had to get very creative with its mission to carry the Light of Christ into the world. Our God is the God of epiphanies.

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PRAYER INTENTIONS: We extend our sympathies to the families of those who died recently and those whose month's mind and anniversary occur at this time.

MONTH'S MIND: Eileen Murray (Glenmeen Close) RIP

ANNIVERSARIES: Ita Barker (1st Anniversary), Margaret Cooley, Lily Harvey, Mairead Owens, Deirdre Sinclair RIP

MASS TIMES: **St Joseph's Church** – Monday, Wednesday & Friday @ 9.15am. Vigil Mass Saturday @ 6pm. Sunday @ 11.30am.
St Peter's Church – Tuesday @ 9.15am & Sunday @ 10am.

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Wednesday 6 January – Mass in St. Joseph's Church @ 9.15am and in St. Peter's Church, The Rock @ 7pm.

All the Masses from St. Joseph's Church, Hannahstown and St. Peter's Church, The Rock, will be streamed on the webcam. **These can be viewed on-line:**

St. Joseph's Church - www.churchmedia.tv/camera/st-josephs-church

St. Peter's Church - www.churchmedia.tv/camera/st-peters-church-2

EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION IN THE PARISH – Eucharistic Adoration takes place in St Peter's Church, The Rock every Friday from 4pm to 9pm.

PREPARING FOR MARRIAGE - CATHOLIC ENGAGED ENCOUNTER.

A 'Zoom' online Marriage Preparation course is planned for 27-28 March 2021. This 2-day course is a positive way of preparing for Marriage where you will discover how you can enrich your future relationship. Information/Booking: marriageencounter.ie or 028276 38512.

Bishop Noel Treanor - New Year's Message 2021

Each year, Pope Francis publishes a Peace Message drawing attention to the project of reconciliation and justice at the heart of Catholic Social Teaching. In his 2021 Message entitled “A Culture of Care as a Path to Peace”, Pope Francis encourages us all to re-calibrate our ‘compass of social principles’.^[1] Realigning our values to the values of the Gospel draws us closer to Christ and his people. Recognising the dignity of the human person and caring for the other is the beating heart of all Catholic Social Teaching.

2020 has been an extremely difficult year as we have faced together the Covid-19 crisis. This global pandemic has revealed how interconnected we and the entire human family are. The virus has indiscriminately affected persons across all territorial borders and all sectors of society. This health crisis has also aggravated already existent inequalities, poverty, migration, and economic adversity. Many have experienced hardship and suffering. We especially remember all those who have lost family members or loved ones.

The experience of the past year has made it clear, sometimes painfully, that the decisions and actions of individuals affect the lives of everyone. It is not possible to fully anticipate the legacy of this global pandemic upon society at large and upon families and individuals, businesses and charitable agencies closer to home.

On behalf of the local Church, I pay tribute to all the medical personnel, doctors and nurses, pharmacists, chaplains and all frontline workers who have sacrificed much to alleviate suffering and to save lives. While we are still in the midst of a global pandemic and need to remain ever vigilant to the contagious threat of the virus, the seedlings of hope are emerging with the roll out of vaccination programmes.

The resilience of the human spirit, grounded in our ability to adapt and respond to the changing circumstances of our time and supported by those who love us, provides the foundations to move forward with hope and a greater sense of security.

The year ahead 2021 in Northern Ireland will also be marked by tremendous uncertainty as we withdraw from the European Union and as we reflect upon the Centenary foundations of the Partition of Ireland. This context generates discussion and reflection on identity and identities, on cultural heritage and on the foundations and societal structures of Northern Ireland. We are all aware that the combination of such circumstances creates uncertainty. Fuelled by fear, this uncertainty can also amplify fault lines and create tension across communities.

For these reasons, more than ever, a culture of care as a pathway to peace is necessary. All of us, political leaders, educators, citizens and faith leaders should make a concerted effort to build upon the legacy of peace, achieved through sacrifice and constructive dialogue. The path of peace and reconciliation will require new acts of courage and prophetic witness to help us navigate the residual undercurrent of fear that continues to influence our society.

I extend my heartfelt blessing to all across the Diocese of Down and Connor and beyond and I pray that the coming year may build upon and nurture the foundations of peace and reconciliation.

+Noel Treanor

Bishop of Down and Connor