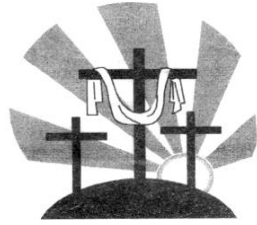


REST IN PEACE



Your prayers are requested this weekend for the souls of John Dowling and Marie Carroll, whose month minds occur and for Samuel Clarke, James and Nora O'Doherty, William, James, Sarah and Martina O'Gorman at time of anniversary.

MAY THEIR SOULS AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

CHURCH COLLECTIONS

The amounts collected last weekend are:

DATE	GREEN BASKET	WHITE BASKET
25 TH DECEMBER	€1345	€1040
26 TH DECEMBER	€505	€230

The green basket is the collection for the support of the priests of the Diocese.

The white basket is the collection for Share, which meets the needs both of poorer parishes and of central agencies of the Diocese.

We thank you for your contributions to the Church collections and for your continuing support of all the collections.

Mary's retirement

We wish Mary O'Neill, our devoted secretary for the last 22 years every blessing in good health and happiness now that she has retired. We will miss her presence greatly and we thank her for all she has done for us with kindness, good humour and dedicated service all these years.

Office hours this week

The office will be open on reduced hours from 10.30 to 11.30am until further notice.

WEEKLY BULLETIN



St. Mary's, Star of the Sea, Sandymount

Parish Office 6683894 / 6683316 – Monday to Friday 9.30 – 12.30
Fr. John McDonagh, Tel: 6684265 – Fr. Cormac McIlraith, Tel: 6686845
www.stmarysstaroftheseasandymount.com

Sunday 2nd January 2022

Epiphany and New Year

As we enter 2022, we extend best wishes to all our parishioners. Understandably after another year of preoccupation with pandemic, our first thoughts are for a hopeful return to what we once knew as 'normal' life, when we could meet and socialise freely without thought of the dangers presented by the corona virus. At parish level we are grateful for the spirit in which parishioners have accommodated to all that has been asked of them to protect public health. We are grateful to those parishioners, along with members of the Pastoral Council, who have continued to exercise leadership and responsibility among us.

As we hear this week of daily figures of over 20,000 becoming infected, we encourage you to continue taking strict precautions. While we're glad that people may attend church liturgies, we very much appreciate the decision of many parishioners to take advantage of the webcam services to keep in touch. To those who continue to attend, we greatly appreciate that they do so with precaution to insure use of the hand sanitizer, the wearing of a mask and the maintenance of social distance. Should anyone develop symptoms of the virus, we ask that they respect the requirement to isolate themselves. Should one of the priests test positive or become a contact of a person testing positive, the schedule of Masses will change without much warning. Thankfully it hasn't arisen as yet but the current transmission rate is such as to see many testing positive in coming days and we have to assume that from day to day our arrangements are necessarily tentative.

It was good to see family members coming home this Christmas, many of whom couldn't do so last year or indeed since the pandemic began in March 2020. We pray that their stay has been pleasant in spite of restrictions and that they travel home safely without further complications of infection or necessary isolation. Their coming represented a taste of return to normal life even if so many careful steps were called for in meeting with them.

Epiphany

Thursday next is the lovely Feast of the Epiphany. Perhaps it isn't celebrated as heartily in Ireland as it should be. At a popular level it tends to be seen as 'Nollaig na mBan', or Women's Christmas, reflecting a time when the social reality was that women carried most of the burden in meeting the expectations of Christmas, from shopping to the heavy toll of work in the kitchen. Perhaps they still do but one perceives a more balanced sharing of the chores in most households these days which is for the best. Nollaig na mBan acknowledges the achievement of Christmas celebration and invites a rest day for the hard working.

But there is much more to January 6th than that. One might see it as a day of celebration of St Matthew's perception of the birth of Christ, as told in his Gospel, whereas the imagery of Christmas Day tends to be dominated by St Luke's view of that great event. His was the story of poor shepherds, of birth in a stable among the animals. In Luke's case, writing to a Gentile community, he was anxious to portray the compassionate touch of Christ for people who were marginalised, living on the edge, poor like shepherds, the homeless and the sinner. His concern was to bring us into relationship with a compassionately loving Lord. Matthew, on the other hand, wrote for a Jewish audience, anxious to convince his readers and listeners that Jesus was the New Moses, the fulfilment of the Messiah of which the prophets spoke. For him the story of the flight of Mary, Joseph and the child into Egypt to avoid the despotic and jealous Herod, was important. It readied the reader for his message of Jesus as the New Moses, when like Moses, Jesus was seen to come out of Egypt. The copy of a painting by Giovanni Battista Paggi, which hangs in our church, captures that moment of return of the Christ child from Egypt and is very much in keeping with the message of Matthew's Epiphany Gospel.

At another level, Epiphany is the great international celebration of Christ's birth when the wise men from the East are seen to travel to find the Christ-child. They meet many obstacles along the road, not least in the deception of Herod, until they find the child at a house in Bethlehem and, there, they worship him. The letter of St Paul to the Ephesians from which we read today shares what Epiphany means: 'it means that pagans now share the same inheritance, that they are parts of the same body, and that the same promise has been made to them in Christ Jesus'. Just as Pentecost was the international flowering of the fruits of Christ's resurrection and follows in its celebration upon Lent and Easter, so too does Epiphany invite this international celebration of Christ at the end of the journey through Advent and Christmas. Christ has come for all humanity. Epiphany Day holds great significance in the Eastern Churches while in the West, especially among the faithful in Spain there are some lovely Epiphany traditions that we might learn from. It always seems a shame that many households have taken away their Christmas trees and decorations before we reach this high point of the Nativity season. Golfers speak of the importance of the 'follow through'. Well, Epiphany and Pentecost might be seen as the follow through feast days of Christmas and Easter respectively. They bring the message home to us in global dimension. Epiphany is a Greek rooted word that means 'manifestation': our God has been manifested to us all in the Word made flesh, Jesus.

Mass for the Feast of the Epiphany

As you know Pope Francis, early in the pandemic, lifted the obligation for Catholics to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. However, should you wish to join us on the webcam or in the church, the Feast of the Epiphany will be celebrated in Star of the Sea on, Thursday next at 7.30 am. 10.00 am and 6pm.

First Friday

Friday next is the First Friday and Mass will be offered for all whose names are on the November list of the dead.

Celebrations of the Sacraments in 2022

As long as we are dealing with a pandemic, any dates we set for parish celebrations are necessarily tentative in as much as we remain subject to restrictions at any time. However, it is also important to set target dates, with alternative arrangements in mind, should need arise. We intend to celebrate sacraments with children and parents in **Star of the Sea School** on the following dates:

Confirmation:	Thurs 10 th March at 11am
First Reconciliation	Thurs 3 rd March
First Communion	Sat 7 th May (time to be decided)

and with children and parents in **Scoil Mhuire** on the following dates:

Confirmation:	Wed 16 th March 11am
First Reconciliation	Thurs 24 th March 7pm
First Communion	Sat 14 th May 10am (Wedding at 1PM)

It is a matter of concern that we have not been able to provide the necessary preparation classes for children attending non-Catholic schools since March 2020. While we had hoped to begin classes in December and again in this January, the current rate of transmission of the virus is too serious to undertake doing so as yet. Children in the two Catholic Schools continue to follow the 'Grow in Love' school religion programme and we are grateful to all their teachers who are teaching the programme to them. We will continue to try and meet the preparation needs of children attending non-Catholic schools, who wish to prepare for the sacraments.

We rely on parents to do their best to pray with their children at home and to link with us via webcam at the Mass each weekend., whether they attend Catholic or non-Catholic schools.

Synod Pathway: There will be a further training day this month, on zoom, for all parish animators towards the work of the Synod. Because of the current transmission rate of the virus, the programme intended originally for Jan-March will now be held Feb-April.

