

Christmas Message 2021

Two thousand Christmases have come and gone since the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem. There, in the midst of danger, uncertainty and among strangers, the infant Jesus, son of God and son of Mary, took his first breath. We are familiar with the story, the main characters, the events leading up to this birth and the events that followed it. Depending on our experience in life, we each can have our own personal reaction to this coming of God among us, as one of us.

This year we face into Christmas with uncertainty about the future. We can look back on a second year when so many people continued to carefully provide services, when our front line workers continued to look out for others, especially those who were isolated and in need of assistance.

In writing of Mary and all that happened to her in the lead up to Bethlehem, Saint Luke tells us that Mary, “treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Lk 2: 19). It is an image of Mary in the midst of all the excitement and the danger, calmly recognising that something special was happening to her and to her son.

We often reflect on what we treasure: spouse, partner, children, parents, grandparents, grandchildren and those who are very close to us, they are our treasures because their lives impact on our hearts. Since March 2020, with so much curtailment and threats to livelihoods, many have reflected on what they treasure, what is important to them.

Sadly, sometimes our treasure is gone: bereavement can leave us feeling empty and at a loss. We all know the difficult circumstances in which illness and death and bereavement have taken place in recent times. People have risen to the occasion and continue to stand by the roadside and on the streets in silent solidarity with the bereaved.

The absence of another treasure, family members who are away, can leave our Christmas celebration a little sad. Technology can help us to keep in touch, and that is important.

Inevitably, as we look at the crib, we think about Jesus in Bethlehem and wonder what this tells us about God and about being human? It has to do with the treasure that God is to us, the treasure that we are to God and the treasure that we can be to each other. I hope the message of Christmas, that God loves each one of us, will bring us peace and joy and help us treasure what is important.

As we give thanks for the baby in Bethlehem, God’s gift to us, and the treasure each person is, I wish you and your family and friends every blessing and happiness this Christmas and a peaceful 2022.

+ **Francis Duffy**
Administrator



Kiltoghert Parish

"A Saviour is born"



Christmas 2021

ST. MARY'S CHURCH

CHRISTMAS EVE Friday : 8.00 pm :

10.00pm:

CHRISTMAS DAY Saturday 9.00 am: Mary Josephine & Danny
Lannon & deceased members of the Lannon family

10.30am:

12.00: Margaret Kelly & deceased members
of the Kelly family.

Sunday 26th

9.00am:

10.30am:

12.00: John & Mary Ellen Gilbane &
their son Sean

Monday 27th

8.00 pm: Teresa Mollohan (1st) Anniv
Padre Pio Prayers

Tuesday 28th 10.00am:

Wednesday 29th 10.00am:

Thursday 30th 10.00 am: Bernadette McNamee (Anniv)

New Years Eve 31st: 8pm

Sat 1st 10.00 am:

8.00 pm:

Sun 2nd: 9.00am

10.30am

12.00 Martin Cleary (Anniv)

Mon 3rd 8.00 pm: Martin Flanagan & deceased members
of the Flanagan family

Tue 4th 10.00 am:

Wed 5th 10.00am:

The Epiphany

Thurs 6th 12 noon: Brendan McMahon (Anniv)

8.00pm: Rose Prior (Anniv)

Fri 7th 8.00pm Bridie & Jack O'Connor (Anniv)

Sat 8th 10.00am: Francis Beirne (Anniv)

8.00pm: Bernadette Burke (Anniv)

PARISH NOTICES

BAPTISM: We welcome into the Christian Community Oliver Flynn,
who was baptised recently in St. Joseph's Church, Leitrim.

WEDDING: Congratulations to Niamh McCabe & Mark Hannon who
were married in Jamestown recently.

GOWEL: Friday 31st @ 7pm: Charlie & Adian McNabola (Anniv)

JANUARY 2022

GOWEL: Friday 7th @7pm: Pat & Delia Doherty (Anniv)

LEITRIM: Tuesday 28th @ 8pm: Gerry Guckian & deceased members
of the Guckian family (Anniv)

JANUARY 2022

LEITRIM: Tuesday 4th Jan @ 8pm: Mary Swift (Anniv)

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'Christmas is only a time for children'! Maybe we all need to allow the wide-eyed gaze of the child, as he or she looks with awe and wonder at the Christ-child, lying on a bed of straw in the manger, to stop us from becoming somewhat cynical about this special celebratory event in our lives each year. For most children, Christmas continues to be magical. Their sense of joy reaches fever-pitch, not only in excited anticipation of the arrival of Santa Claus but in their innocent wonderment and natural curiosity which feeds their child's imagination. They have no problem believing that God has come among us as an innocent child in the most humble circumstances. We can all learn so much from children if we allow them lead us into their world of innocence and wonder. Maybe it is only through following their star that we can begin to recover some of the wonder and joy that was that first Bethlehem, when the future history of our world was changed for all time.

As we celebrate once more the great feast of Christmas, we are invited to open our eyes and our hearts anew to the blessings God has bestowed upon us and the joy that he offers to us. For all the blessings that children bring to our lives, be they our own children, our grandchildren, our nieces, nephews, whomever. They all carry the imprint of the image of the baby at Bethlehem, and they continue to teach us so much about the true meaning of Christmas.

On behalf of Fr. Mark, Fr. Seamus and myself, I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you, our parishioners, a very happy and safe Christmas. Sadly, our Christmas celebrations are once again overshadowed by Covid and our great hope that we could return to 'normal' in our 4 churches has not come to pass. We are deeply grateful to the many people in our parish who continue to minister in a variety of areas, always ensuring that our churches are 'safe places' for all who come to pray and worship. Let us look forward with confidence and hope to a happier New Year in all our lives.

Fr. Frank Garvey P.P.