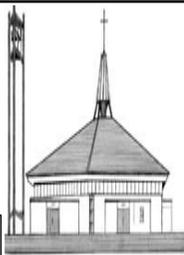


Aughavas & Cloone Parishes

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22nd March 2020



4TH SUNDAY OF LENT

Pray for the happy repose of the souls of Sean Cooke, Drumlegga, Cloone whose funeral took place in Cloone on Tuesday last and Benny Kelly, Coventry, England (brother of John Kelly, Cornagher, Cloone) who died recently.



Baptism: *Shea James Clancy, Drumloughan was welcomed into the Christian Community in Cloone on Sunday last.*

Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for Lent 2020

We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor 5:20)

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

This year the Lord grants us, once again, a favourable time to prepare to celebrate with renewed hearts the great mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the cornerstone of our personal and communal Christian life. We must continually return to this mystery in mind and heart, for it will continue to grow within us in the measure that we are open to its spiritual power and respond with freedom and generosity.

1. The paschal mystery as the basis of conversion:

Christian joy flows from listening to, and accepting, the Good News of the death and resurrection of Jesus. This *kerygma* sums up the mystery of a love “so real, so true, so concrete, that it invites us to a relationship of openness and fruitful dialogue” (*Christus Vivit*, 117). Whoever believes this message rejects the lie that our life is ours to do with as we will. Rather, life is born of the love of God our Father, from his desire to grant us life in abundance (cf. *Jn* 10:10). If we listen instead to the tempting voice of the “father of lies” (*Jn* 8:44), we risk sinking into the abyss of absurdity, and experiencing hell here on earth, as all too many tragic events in the personal and collective human experience sadly bear witness.

In this Lent of 2020, I would like to share with every Christian what I wrote to young people in the Apostolic Exhortation *Christus Vivit*: “Keep your eyes fixed on the outstretched arms of Christ crucified, let yourself be saved over and over again. And when you go to confess your sins, believe firmly in his mercy which frees you of your guilt. Contemplate his blood poured out with such great love, and let yourself be cleansed by it. In this way, you can be reborn ever anew” (No. 123). Jesus’ Pasch is not a past event; rather, through the power of the Holy Spirit it is ever present, enabling us to see and touch with faith the flesh of Christ in those who suffer.

2. The urgency of conversion:

It is good to contemplate more deeply the paschal mystery through which God’s mercy has been bestowed upon us. Indeed, the experience of mercy is only possible in a “face to face” relationship with the crucified and risen Lord “who loved me and gave himself for me” (Gal 2:20), in a heartfelt dialogue between friends. That is why prayer is so important in Lent. Even more than a duty, prayer is an expression of our need to respond to God’s love which always precedes and sustains us. Christians pray in the knowledge that, although unworthy, we are still loved. Prayer can take any number of different forms, but what truly matters in God’s eyes is that it penetrates deep within us and chips away at our hardness of heart, in order to convert us ever more fully to God and to his will. In this favourable season, then, may we allow ourselves to be led like Israel into the desert (cf. *Hos* 2:14), so that we can at last hear our Spouse’s voice and allow it to resound ever more deeply within us. The more fully we are engaged with his word, the more we will experience the mercy he freely gives us. May we not let this time of grace pass in vain, in the foolish illusion that we can control the times and means of our conversion to him.

3. God’s passionate will to dialogue with his children:

The fact that the Lord once again offers us a favourable time for our conversion should never be taken for granted. This new opportunity ought to awaken in us a sense of gratitude and stir us from our sloth. Despite the sometimes tragic presence of evil in our lives, and in the life of the Church and the world, this opportunity to change our course expresses God’s unwavering will not to interrupt his dialogue of salvation with us. In the crucified Jesus, who knew no sin, yet for our sake was made to be sin (cf. *2 Cor* 5:21), this saving will led the Father to burden his Son with the weight of our sins, thus, in the expression of Pope Benedict XVI, “turning of God against himself” (*Deus Caritas Est*, 12). For God also loves his enemies (cf. *Mt* 5:43-48). The dialogue that God wishes to establish with each of us through the paschal mystery of his Son has nothing to do with empty chatter, like that attributed to the ancient inhabitants of Athens, who “spent their time in nothing except telling or hearing something new” (*Acts* 17: 21). Such chatter, determined by an empty and superficial curiosity, characterizes worldliness in every age; in our own day, it can also result in improper use of the media.

Pope Francis

The remainder of the Message from His Holiness Pope Francis will be published in next Sunday’s Newsletter.

Weddings: Some couples whose marriages were due to take place very shortly have had to cancel their plans. They hope to marry in church later in the summer or in the autumn. They are finding that the only available dates for hotels are Sundays. Due to these extraordinary circumstances and for reasons of pastoral care we are lifting our exclusion of Sunday weddings to accommodate couples who find themselves in this situation.

Aughavas GAA announcement: In these dangerous and changed times, Aughavas GAA wish to announce that we are here to help anyone in need of supplies or just to talk on the phone. Please take care, stay safe and follow all instructions given. Here are some contact details: Terry Williams 086 2072550: Kieran McCabe, 087 7485227: Marion McCabe, 087 6736843: Noel Shortt, 087 2208119: Diane Charles, 086 0871550: Gerry Gallogly, 087 6860261: Keith Conefrey, 087 6806885. Do call anytime.