



Monday, 1st February: Feast of St. Brigid.

St. Brigid's Icon (on display in St. Mary's Parish Church).

This icon in honour of St. Brigid shows some of the details from the legends



about her. She was born in Faughart, near Dundalk, Co. Louth. She received the veil from St. Mel under the oak tree, which gives Kildare its name, (Cill Dara), the Church of the Oak. Her halo is of leaves. She wears the veil, symbol of her consecrated life. The snowdrops at her feet remind us that her Feast Day is February 1.

As “Mary of the Gael” she is wearing blue, the colour associated with Our Lady. In her left hand she carries the staff, denoting her office as Abbess. And in her right hand she carries a little church representing the church she founded in Kildare. She died on Feb. 1, 525.



Tuesday, 2nd February: Feast of the Presentation of the Lord.

February 2nd is also Candlemas Day and World Day for Consecrated Life.

Candlemas Day, the Christian festival of lights marks the midpoint of winter, halfway between the shortest day and the spring equinox.

Candlemas is the traditional Christian festival which commemorates the ritual purification of Mary forty days after the birth of her son Jesus. On this day, Christians remember the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. Forty days after his birth, a Jewish boy was taken to the temple in Jerusalem to be presented to God by his parents.

Candlemas Day is traditionally the day on which all candles to be used in church during the year were blessed. Blessed candles were also taken home for use there.

On World Day for Consecrated Life last year, Pope Francis said: ‘Like Simeon and Anna in the Temple, religious must have hope. The secret, he said, is “never to alienate oneself from the Lord, who is the source of hope”.

Wednesday, 3rd February: Feast of St. Blaise.

Bishop of Sebaste in Armenia, is believed to have been martyred in the early 4th century. Very little is known about him. Tradition states that he was a physician before becoming a priest. Since the 8th century he has been venerated as the patron of those who suffer from diseases of the throat. He is said to have healed a boy who was choking. The blessing of St. Blaise is a sign of God's protection for us and for the sick. St. Blaise, pray for us.

Thursday, 11th February: Our Lady of Lourdes.

On February 11th, 1858, Our Lady first appeared to the fourteen year old Bernadette Soubirous. Later Bernadette was to learn that the mysterious lady was the Blessed Virgin Mary and to hear from her lips: 'I am the Immaculate Conception' which had been declared an official teaching of the Church in 1850. Our Lady appeared to Bernadette 18 times during 1858. The last apparition took place on 6th July 1858.

In 1992, Pope John Paul II named the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes: World Day of the Sick. This year, World Day of the Sick has special significance for the whole world.

Firstly, it reminds us to pray for those who are sick and especially the millions of people who are suffering with COVID-19.

Secondly, we give thanks for everyone who works in healthcare and frontline services who are risking their lives to look after others.

Thirdly, we reflect on human suffering and its place in our lives as followers of Jesus who suffered so much. 'Ours were the sufferings he bore. Ours the sorrows he carried.'

In his message for World Day of the Sick 2021, Pope Francis says that when another person is suffering, Jesus "asks us to stop and listen, to establish a direct and personal relationship with others, to feel empathy and compassion, and to let their suffering become our own as we seek to serve them."

Religious Goods.

Glencairn Cards: A selection of Mass Cards, Mass Bouquets and Get Well Cards, produced at St. Mary's Abbey, Glencairn are on sale in the Parish Office. Medals, 10 and other small religious goods i.e. candles. prayer cards and statues of St Joseph are also on sale in the Parish Office..

Mother and Baby Homes.

At this time, we are reminded of the powerful words of Pope Francis in the Phoenix Park on his visit to Ireland in 2018. He said: “We ask forgiveness for the children who were taken away from their mothers and for all those times when many single mothers were told that to seek their children who had been separated from them – and the same was told to their daughters and sons who were looking for their mothers – that this was a mortal sin.

This is not a mortal sin but the Fourth Commandment! We ask forgiveness. May the Lord, sustain and increase this state of shame and repentance and give us the strength to commit ourselves so that these things never happen again and justice may be done. Amen.”

With Pope Francis who wrote this prayer in his 2020 letter entitled *We are Brothers and Sisters*, we pray: “Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel, discovering Christ in each human being, recognising him crucified in the sufferings of the abandoned and forgotten of our world, and risen in each brother or sister who makes a new start”

Put to Death for their Catholic Faith in 2020.

20 Catholic missionaries were killed across the world in 2020. Six lay people, two seminarians, three religious women, one male religious and eight priests. In 2019, 29 died, with 40 in 2018 and 23 in 2017. That makes 112 over 4 years. There were probably more. These men and women died among the people they served, witnessing to their faith, hope and love. When we think of the martyrs of the Church, we automatically think of men and women over the centuries who died for the faith. It is equally true of our own time.

Broadcast Masses during the Present Lockdown 9.30am Mass: Monday to Friday. 11am and 7.30pm Vigil Masses on Saturdays. 11am Mass only on Sundays.	The church is open each day, Monday to Friday from 10am until 3.30pm and Saturdays and Sundays from 11.30am until 3.30pm. You are welcome to drop in to say a prayer. It is vital to sanitise your hands as you enter and leave.
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All Masses broadcast on 98.5fm.

Parish Website: We draw your attention to our parish website at www.dungarvanparish.ie.

2021 - Year of St. Joseph. (Part 2)



In his letter of December 8th, 2020 (With a Father's Heart), Pope Francis says that **'Each of us can discover in Joseph – the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and guide in times of trouble.** St. Joseph reminds us that those who appear hidden or in the shadows can play an incomparable role in the history of salvation. A word of recognition and of gratitude is due to them all.' With these words, Pope Francis gives us the reason for his letter and for the Year of St. Joseph – that we recognise and say thanks to St. Joseph who is the patron of all who go about quietly doing good, not for notice but for sure support to those who need it. A role which he filled so admirably in the life of the Holy Family. We can turn to him for support and guidance.

Pope Francis' devotion to St. Joseph was already clear when he chose the Feast of St. Joseph, March 19th, 2013 as the day for the Mass to mark the beginning of his papacy. In his homily on that day, **Pope Francis referred to Joseph as a "strong and courageous man, a working man, yet in his heart we see great tenderness, which is not the virtue of the weak, but rather a sign of strength of spirit and a capacity for concern, for compassion, for genuine openness to others, for love."**

On May 1st, 2013, Pope Francis added the name of St. Joseph to three of the Eucharistic Prayers prayed at Mass. Pope John XXIII had already added the name of St. Joseph to the Roman Canon on November 13th 1962, the only Eucharistic Prayer prayed before Vatican II. (1962-1965) So that St. Joseph is now mentioned in each of the four Eucharistic Prayers.

Prayer to St. Joseph.

**Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer, spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary,
to you God entrusted his only Son; in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.**

**Blessed Joseph, to us too, show yourself a Father, and guide us in the
path of life. Obtain for us, grace, mercy and courage, and defend us
from every evil. Amen.**

(From Pope Francis's Letter on St. Joseph: With a Father's Heart, Dec. 8th, 2020)