

The tide will turn when people see what faith has to offer, what direction, meaning and hope it offers. Nothing can stop an idea that has reached its time. The history of the Church shows that the lowest times produced the greatest saints and reformers. The Holy Spirit will inspire people.

Prayer:

Send forth your Spirit, O Lord and renew the face of the earth.

Enkindle within us the fire of your love.

(Fr. Silvester O’Flynn OFM Cap: Set the World on Fire. The Irish Catholic, January 6, 2022. p.12.)

Put to Death for their Catholic Faith in 2021.

22 Catholic missionaries were killed across the world in 2021. Six lay people, two female religious, one male religious and thirteen priests. In 2020, 20 died, in 2019, 29 died, with 40 in 2018 and 23 in 2017. That makes 134 over 5 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.

**Daily 4pm Prayer for Vocations to the:
Priesthood, Diaconate and Religious Life.**

You might say the Our Father, Hail Mary, or Glory Be or use one of your own prayers. You can also use the following prayer.

Prayer for discerning their vocation

<p>God, I know you love me and are calling me to choose life. But sometimes, I am overwhelmed by the thoughts of my future. Help me to listen to your call, in all the ways you speak to me: through prayer and the scriptures, through the Church and the circumstances of my life, through those who love and care for me, and through my own hopes and desires.</p>	<p>Guide me to search openly and learn about life’s choices, so that I may respond generously to your call, and choose the vocation and career that will enable me to love wholeheartedly, and serve others with the special gifts you have given me. God, today, I thank you for your love and for all things, Amen.</p>
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St. Mary’s Parish Dungarvan

February 2022



Feast of St. Brigid.

Tuesday, 1st Feb. is the Feast of St. Brigid, one of the Patron Saints of Ireland. She is known as Mary of the Gael. She died on 1st Feb, 525. A copy of an icon of St. Brigid is on display at the top of St. Mary’s Parish Church.

St. Brigid’s Cross.

A St. Brigid’s Cross would be hung in a house, or perhaps in a stable, to ensure the protection of the saint over the people of the house and the livestock.

But where did the St. Brigid’s Cross come from? When Brigid was with a dying chieftain, she picked some rushes off the floor and began to weave a cross. When asked what she was doing, she explained the story of Jesus to him and the significance of the cross. She told him that there was no need to be afraid of death because Jesus loves us so much. After much explanation, the pagan chieftain was baptised and became a member of the Christian community.

Each year, newly woven crosses are blessed with holy water with the words: ‘May the Father, Son, Holy Spirit and St. Brigid bless this cross and all who look upon it.’



Cill Aodáin by Antoine Ó Raifteirí (Anthony Raftery 1779-1835)

Anois teacht an earraigh
beidh an lá ag dul chun síneadh,
Is tar éis na Féile Bríde
ardóidh mé mo sheol.

Ó chuir mé im’ cheann é
ní stopfaidh mé choíche
Go seasfaidh mé síos
i lár Chontae Mhaigh Eo.

I gClár Chlainne Mhuiris
A bheas mé an chéad oíche,
Is i mballa taobh thíos de
A thosós mé ag ól.

Go Coillte Mách rachad
Go ndéanfadh cuairt mhíosa ann
I bhfogas dhá mhíle
Do Bheal an Atha Mhóir



Now with the coming of the Spring
the day will be lengthening,
and after St. Bridget's Day
I will raise my sail.

Since I put it into my head
I will never stay put
until I will stand down
in the centre of County Mayo.

In Claremorris
I will be the first night,
and in Balla below it
I will begin to drink.

To Kiltimagh I will go
And I would make
a month's visit there
two miles close to Aghamore.

Wednesday, 2nd February—

The Presentation of the Lord or Candlemas

Candlemas is the name given to the day after the Feast of St. Brigid. This feast recalls Mary and Joseph bringing the infant Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate the child to God in keeping with Jewish tradition. There they meet an old man called Simeon who refers to the child as ‘the light of the nations’. He also looks ahead to Jesus’ adult life and foretells his death. (Luke 2:22-40).

In this passage from the story, Simeon predicts that a sword would pierce Mary’s heart: “As the child’s father and mother were wondering at the things that are being said about him, Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, ‘Look he is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel, destined to be a sign that is opposed - and a sword will pierce your soul too-so that the secret thoughts of many may be laid bare”. This feast finishes the story of the Nativity but, with Simeon’s words, we are pointed towards the Easter event. *(Material for this Newsletter from Catholic Schools Week 2012)*

Thursday, February 3rd 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.

Friday, 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.

St. Gobnait (11 February)

St. Gobnait is one of the most Beloved saints in West Cork, but only traditions concerning her life survive. The main part of her life was spent in Ballyvourney, Co. Cork, where there has always been a deep devotion to her, and which is a place of pilgrimage on this day and the Pentecost. Her gifts of Caring for and curing the sick have been a significant part of her cult through the centuries. Happily, her memorial day coincides with the World Day for the Sick. (From Liturgical Calendar p.179)

Go mbeagnaigh Dia dhuit,
A Ghobnait Naomhtha
Go mbeannaighe Muire dhuit,
Is bheannaighim féin dhuit,
Is chughat - sa a thánag ag
Gearán mo scéil leat,
Is a d’iarraidh mo leighis
Ar son Dé ort.

May God bless you
Holy Saint Gobnait,
And may Mary bless you,
And I bless you myself
For it is to you that I come,
To plead my case with you,
To request my healing,
From you on God’s part.

The beehive is the symbol of St. Gobnait because when a pagan chief was attempting a cattle raid, she took up one of the beehives of the convent and directed it at the raiders. The Thieves fled and the cattle were saved.

Faith in Europe -Winter of Recession. The Tide is Out – The Tide will Turn.

Here in secularised Europe, the Church is experiencing a winter of recession. But it is important to remember that in other parts of the world the Church is flourishing.

When COVID-19 is eradicated how many will return to Mass? There are very few priests under the normal age for retirement and only a tiny number of seminarians to fill the gaps.

The tide is still going out. When will it turn and flow in again? Will it turn? I believe it will. **The ebbing tide has produced a world of addictions, anxiety, boredom, suicides, living in the virtual or fictional world more than the real world.**