

not changed. We are still searching for the same things that the generations before us sought: love, belonging, meaning, purpose, peace and hope of eternal life.

This Jubilee Year is an invitation—not just to those who are already in the Church, but to all people—to rediscover hope. For those who have drifted away from faith, it is an invitation to come home, to find rest in God’s love and mercy. For those who are weighed down by the burdens of life it is an invitation to lay those burdens at the feet of Christ. And for those who feel there is no meaning to life, it is an invitation to discover the profound truth that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, and that each of our lives has infinite value.

(From Bishop Niall Coll’s article—The Irish Catholic, November 14, 2024 p.28)

Penance Service.

The Advent Penance Service in preparation for Christmas will be celebrated in St. Mary’s Parish Church on Monday 16th December at 7.30pm.

Advent Leaflets

There are Advent leaflets available around the Church and in the porches. Please take them home and make Advent the special time it is.

In Advent we prepare. At Christmas we Celebrate.

Timmy Waddle—Children’s Book—A beautiful Christmas gift.

This is a beautiful hardback children’s book about a graylag goose written by a Nun in Glencairn Abbey. It is currently on display in the noticeboard in the Church’s main porch and on sale in the Parish Office @ €15. **Glencairn Scripture Calendars are also for sale €8 each.**

Weekend Masses in Our Parishes

Vigil Masses on Saturdays:

6pm: An Rinn
6:15pm: The Friary
7:30pm: St. Mary’s Parish Church
7.30pm: Colligan or Kilbrien on alternate Saturdays

Sunday Masses:

9am: The Friary
10am: St. Mary’s Parish Church
10:30am: Old Parish
11am: The Friary
11.30am: Kilgobinet

St. Mary’s Parish Dungarvan

December 2024



Advent—Love is coming. Are you ready to welcome him?

Advent has been in the church calendar since the fourth century. The term comes from a Latin word which means ‘coming into being’ or ‘about to happen’. It is a four week preparation for the coming of Christ at Christmas, a birth that has already happened, but also a preparation for the second coming of Christ when he will return in glory, an event that is yet to come.

So its focus on *two* kinds of coming and expectation.

One coming has already happened over 2000 years ago when Jesus was born in a manger, when God took on human flesh and became one of us. So we spend time reflecting on a coming that has already happened. There is a significant history, mystery and majesty in this moment of incarnation. Why then at that moment in time? Why the Jews? Why did God become man? Why did he surrender his majesty to become little like one of us? There is much food for thought in these advent days as we wait expectantly for a renewed celebration of his birth.

We can sum up this waiting by the declaration, ‘**Love is Coming**’.

Think of waiting at an airport for the return of a son/daughter/grandchild/close friend; there is an impatient expectation about their imminent arrival. We should have a similar kind of hopeful anticipation about the birth of Jesus—**Love is coming.**

There is also a more sombre advent which speaks of the *final* Advent when he will return as king and judge. There is a call to preparedness, a warning not to become a complacent or to become trapped by the snares and temptations of the world with its commercialism and distractions.

Often in the coming weeks you might be asked by someone, ‘are you ready for Christmas?’ Normally they will be referring to the *material* aspects of Christmas — presents/food/family returning/getting the house ready etc and most of us will probably still be in a state of some unreadiness about much of that.

However the scriptures in these weeks ask the same question but from a spiritual perspective.

Are you Ready?

Love is coming. Are you ready to welcome him?

(Tony Hanna: Homilies for December, The Furrow, November 2024. pp623-624)

The Advent and Christmas Seasons.

Advent begins on Sunday, 1st December 2024 and ends on Tuesday 24th December 2024. Christmas continues until the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, Sunday, 12th January 2025.

In Advent we Prepare. At Christmas we Celebrate.

Ways to Live the Advent and Christmas Seasons

1. **Set up an Advent Wreath in your home.** This can be bought or made. The wreath is generally circular and made of evergreens symbolizing the eternity of God. There are four coloured candles on the wreath (three purple, one pink), each representing one week of Advent, and one white candle for Christmas itself, when the light of Christ is born into the world. Place it in a visible spot where your family often gathers. Light the appropriate number of candles during your prayer times or at mealtimes.
2. **Make or buy an Advent Calendar** to help your family count down the remaining days until Christmas. Every morning or evening, when you mark off the day, say one Hail Mary.
3. **Pick a family activity to do together during each week of Advent** to prepare your hearts for Christmas, such as praying the Hail Mary every night at bedtime, pray the Angelus each day to recall the announcing of the birth of Jesus (The Annunciation) and to recall Mary's role in God's plan to save his people, read a Bible story together, go to Mass on a weekday, go to Eucharistic Adoration, pray a decade of the Rosary.
4. **After Sunday Mass, look for the statues of Mary and St Joseph in your Church.** Say a prayer or light a candle (or both) asking Mary and St Joseph to help everyone in your family to love God and one another better.
5. **Go to Mass on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception. This year it is moved to Monday, 9th December as the 2nd Sunday of Advent falls on 8th December this year.** It is a Holyday, but as it is transferred, the obligation does not transfer. Masses at 11 am and 7.30 pm. From the very first moment of her life, her conception, Mary is free from sin. She is to be the Mother of God.
6. **Celebrate the Sacrament of Penance/Reconciliation by going to confession.** The Advent Penance Service in preparation for Christmas will be celebrated in St. Mary's Parish Church, Dungarvan on Monday, 16th



December at 7.30pm. Other times for confession will also be available.

7. **Draw, buy or download a picture of the Holy Family, and display it in your home.**
8. **Set up a Christmas Crib.** This is a great way to send a message about what is most important for Advent and Christmas in your home. To make the display especially meaningful, wait until Christmas Eve to place the baby Jesus into the crib.
9. **Put a Christmas candle of welcome (battery operated) in your window.** It is a traditional Irish custom for welcoming and guiding the Holy Family safely on their way through your parish community at Christmas.
10. **Collect clothes, toys, or food from your home or elsewhere to donate them to a local charity** so that through the kindness of people those on the margins can have the light of Christ in their lives this Christmas.
11. **Visit family and neighbours over the Christmas holidays** - especially those who live alone. Bring them a gift of some home cooking or a Christmas card that will remind them of the birth of the baby Jesus.

(Adapted from Fr. Sean Corkery, Diocese of Cloyne's: Ways to live the Advent and Christmas Seasons.)

Pope Francis and the Jubilee Year of Hope 2025.

Pope Francis, never a man to shrink from a challenge, declared the 2025 church year as a Jubilee of Hope, precisely because hope is not a luxury or frill—it is essential to life and human flourishing. It is not to be confused with mere optimism or wishful thinking: it is a deep and grounded belief that God is present, even in the darkest moments of our lives.

The Pope knows that in today world, many feel disconnected, lost, and overwhelmed by the pressures of modern life. Anxiety and depression have become all too common, particularly among our young people. The values of a completely secular outlook on life, so promoted by the commercial world, politics and media, seem to promise freedom and self-fulfilment, but in fact often deliver isolation, confusion and unhappiness.

Many are searching for meaning, but the paths they make leave them more empty, more anxious and more alone.

Many loud voices tell us today that faith is outdated, that it has no place in the lives of the modern people. But the truth is, the human heart has