



Stable of Bethlehem

Space of tenderness, home of hospitality
To an anxious couple, in search of shelter
To a new-born child, fragile and vulnerable
To poor shepherds, on the margins of town and society
To searching Magi, believing in the promise of the star.

As we rejoice in God-with-us
May we become Bethlehem spaces,
Open to receive and embrace
The fragile, the vulnerable, the displaced
In ourselves,
In one another
In our world.

Christmas
Stillness of God, whisper of love
Breath of God, quiet mystery
Light of God, holy wisdom
Shadow of God, birth of mercy.

May God be with us in tenderness and love this Christmas
'For unto us a child is born, Unto us a Son is given.'
Isaiah 9:6

With Christmas and New Year blessings

Brian Flanahan *Joanne Lanigan* *Willie*
Parish Team

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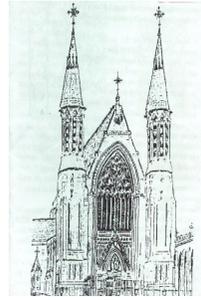
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Oblate Parish of Mary Immaculate Newsletter

Fourth Sunday of Advent

24th December 2017



Focusing on the Historical Mary in Advent

Why focus on the historical Mary in Advent? Firstly, Mary's life and history brings her nearer to us. Mary was a Jewish woman living in a peasant village like billions of people today. Though her culture was quite different from ours, it was not unlike that of women in thousands of villages as they exist today in Asia, Africa and Latin America. Her daily life and labour were hard. With Joseph, she raised Jesus in oppressive circumstances, struggling to pay the taxes by which the rich became richer at the expense of the poor. As with the vast majority of people in world history, most of Mary's difficult life went unrecorded.

Secondly, Mary's holiness lies in continuous, faithful listening to God's word. Today we recognize more and more that holiness consists mainly in persevering fidelity in the midst of everyday life. This is what the "historical Mary" exemplifies. As events unfolded around her, often to her surprise, she had to figure out continually what God was asking of her. She looked for the word of God in people and events, listened to that word, pondered it and then acted on it. She doubtless repeated again and again what she said to Gabriel, "Be it done to me according to your word." Day by day she lived a "pilgrimage of faith," to use the words of Vatican II. She found energy in her trust in the God of Israel and in her solidarity with the growing community of Christians who experienced the promise of life in the death and resurrection of her son.

The historical Mary experienced poverty, oppression, violence and the execution of her son. Her faith is deeply rooted in that context. She recognizes her own "lowly estate." She is not among the world's powerful. She is simply God's "maidservant." But she believes that nothing is impossible for God.

Extract from *The Historical Mary* by Robert P. Malone

Thank you for your very generous response to the
Simon Community Winter Wollies
Parish Initiative for Advent
and the **St Vincent de Paul** Christmas Appeal: €2,430



Christmas Day Collection for the Homeless

As you may be aware, three charities have come together to launch a national campaign to tackle the homeless crisis. "The Refund Project" has been set up on behalf of Simon Community, Peter McVerry Trust and Focus Ireland. To support the campaign to help 8,500 people that find themselves homeless, 3,000 of whom are children, the collection taken up at the 9pm "mid-night" mass on 24th December will go to this project.

Warm the heart of your older neighbour

The winter months can be a difficult time for many people who are vulnerable, alone and isolated. It can be a very frightening experience to be without warmth, food or essential items such as medication. Look out for the older people in the community who may live alone, have no family or may be at risk of suffering from fuel poverty, illness or loneliness.

Child Safety at Christmas

Christmas is an exciting and magical time for children - holidays, family gatherings and Santa bringing presents. Research shows children suffer more unintentional injuries at this festive time, so remember the key message where child safety is concerned: Watch your child at all times as children do not understand danger.

Epiphany Gifts

If you received a gift that you do not want or need you can re-gift your gift by bringing unwanted presents to your church on 6th January and they will be passed on to *Crosscare*, the social care agency of the Archdiocese, who will redistribute them to homeless people in the city.



A BIG thank you to all our volunteers who give so generously of their time serving in various ministries, groups and committees throughout the year in the parish. We also include our faithful team of newsletter distributors and all who help in any way.

Thank you!

Mass & Confession Times

Saturday: Vigil 7pm
Sunday: 8am, 11am, 7pm

Holy Days: Vigil 7pm,
7am, 10am, 7pm
When Holy Day falls on a
Saturday, Mass times are
Vigil, 11am and 7pm

Weekdays (Mon-Fri)
7am, 10am, 7pm

Saturdays: 11am
Bank Holidays: 11am

Confessions: Saturday
10.30 am-11.00am
6.30 pm-7.00 pm



Baptisms take place
on the third Sunday of
every month at 3pm.
Contact the Parish Office
Tel. 4534408 ext. 203

Lotto Results:
on 11/12/2017
14, 15, 18

Family Offering
03/12/2017 € 612.86
10/12/2017 €358.60

*Thank you for your
support*

Spelling out the meaning of Christmas

C stands for *Christ*. If we leave him out of Christmas it is like celebrating a wedding without a groom

H stands for the *hope* he gives us – hope for a life without end.

R stands for the *revolution* he began: turning hate to love, war to peace, and everyone into everyone's neighbour.

I stands for *Israel*, the land where he was born. But it also stands for *me*, For Christ could be born a thousand times in Bethlehem, but it would all be in vain unless he is born in me.

S stands for the *salvation* he brought: those who lived in darkness saw a great light.

T stands for *thanks* – to the Father for the gift of his Son. The best way to say thanks is to make room for him in our hearts.

M stands for *Mary* who brought him to birth. She will help to bring him to birth in us also.

A stands for the *angels* who at his birth sang: 'Glory to God in the Highest, and peace to his people on earth'
It was the sweetest music ever heard on earth.

S stands for the *star* that led the wise men to Bethlehem. Now Christ is the Star we follow. His light will guide us through the night Until the sun of eternal day dawns upon us.

KIDZ KORNER

Help the Shepherds find the path to Jesus

