

Ardmore Parish Newsletter

First Sunday of Lent - 21 February 2021

Wilderness

On this first Sunday of Lent, we are invited to embrace the wilderness. The past year has given us experience of wilderness as our world battled a pandemic. Many people were afraid, isolated, alone and uncertain of what the future would bring. Humanity was adrift in what seemed like a desert moment. However, wilderness can bring opportunity. It can be a time for deep reflection, where we take stock of what is most important to us, a chance to let go of things that are really not important and focus on where we are being called to be. During the past year, what opportunity did this wilderness offer you?

Lent is also a time where people give up something, focus on weight loss or getting fit, take on a course, try to better themselves in some way. And these can be good things, but Lent is so much more than that. It is a retreat time, a time to make room for something deeper. It is a spring-cleaning sort of time, an opportunity to ask, 'what needs clearing out in my life so that I can make more room for God?' 'What changes am I being called to embrace?' Without change we cannot grow, and things fast become stale in our lives. God is always urging us on because God knows just what possibilities there are for each of us. Lent offers us the opportunity to make space for something new, to let go of that which is keeping us from living life to the full.

The Gospel today is short, Jesus is sent into the wilderness, into the desert, and we too are invited into a desert time. Deserts are interesting places which can allow us to reflect, give ourselves space. It is true that we might encounter our demons there, but we should not be afraid because as the Gospel tells us clearly today, this is a Spirit-led desert. God is with us. Let us try to embrace this wilderness. How we make use of this time determines what will be.

'You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful. What you'll discover will be yourself.' (Alan Alda)

Jane Mellett

Western Health & Social Care Trust FREE Mental Health Courses

The WHSCT Recovery College is running free courses on mental health and emotional wellbeing. Courses start in March, and at the moment we are planning to deliver them via Zoom, but if Covid-19 restrictions allow later in the term we intend to run face to face workshops as usual in Derry, Enniskillen, Omagh and Strabane. We would encourage people to register even if they do not have computer access. Some shortened courses are already available free to watch online on the Recovery College page on the Trust website www.westerntrust.hscni.net/service/recovery-services/recovery-college and the Western Trust's YouTube channel. To enrol telephone 82252079 or 82833291 or email: recoverycollege@westerntrust.hscni.net or download an enrolment form at <https://westerntrust.hscni.net/service/recovery-services/recover-college/>

Preparing for Marriage?

Catholic Engaged Encounter: A 'Zoom' online Marriage Preparation Course is planned for 27 – 28 March 2021. This two-day course is a positive way of preparing for Marriage where you will discover how to enrich your future relationship. For information and booking telephone 0287638512 or log on to marriageencounter.ie

You are invited to attend
The St. Patrick's College Maynooth
Annual Trócaire Lecture.

“Caring for the Human Family and our Common Home”

Cardinal Luis Antonio Gokim Tagle will deliver the keynote address

The event will be delivered online this year.

Tuesday 9th March 2021 @ 6.30pm GMT

Registration for this free online event is required. Please register at

https://trocaire-org.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_bLnu0_aLSYSONMPEi3AYpg

For enquiries about this event please contact colm.hogan@trocaire.org

Tarsus Scripture School

At the start of Lent, I'm writing on behalf of the Tarsus Scripture School to let you know about our Lent/Easter Programme 2021. This time, we are offering reflections on the readings for Holy Week and the Easter Triduum. At least in Ireland, it looks as if we will be not be celebrating together in church — all the more reason, therefore, to explore more personally the Word of God. The programme offers one webinar and one meditation. The meditation — after Easter — will be an opportunity to “take in” what we have celebrated over Holy Week and Easter.

TSS for Lent and Easter 2021

Easter: Weaving the Tapestry of Death and New Life

9 pre-recorded lectures; 1 webinar; 1 meditation (€30)

- "Behold my servant": the Servant of the Lord in Isaiah (Jessie Rogers)
- "And when I am lifted up, I will draw all people to myself": Easter in John (Sean Goan)
- "Dying and raised to new life in Christ": Salvation in Romans. (Kieran J. O'Mahony)

For registration and further details, please go to: www.tarsuscriptureschool.ie.

Enclosed in the email is a poster which you may like to send to friends or to display.

Wishing you every blessing for Lent 2021,

Kieran O'Mahony, Jessie Rogers, Sean Goan

Diocesan Daily Lenten Prayer

Loving Father, To prepare for His mission of proclaiming Your kingdom to the world

Your Son Jesus was guided by Your Holy Spirit to the quiet of the desert.

In these Lenten days, I pray that I will be guided by that same Spirit, to a place of renewal in my heart and mind, so that I will seek opportunities for daily personal prayer, personal sacrifices and acts of kindness.

With Your help, may I too be truly prepared to share in the story of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus Your Son, our Lord. **Amen.**