

20 DECEMBER 2020

Sunday Message

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

THE WORD

Year B • Season Colour: Violet • Psalter Week 4



MARY AND THE WORD OF GOD

(LUKE 1:26-38)

Mary is the central figure in Luke's account of the birth of Jesus. Our gospel reading today presents us with the scene of the annunciation of the birth of Jesus by the angel Gabriel, God's messenger.

However, this is not a simple announcement: Mary is not the passive instrument by whom God's purpose is achieved; rather, this depends on Mary's willingness to accept her place in God's plan. Throughout Luke's Gospel account, the evangelist emphasises the importance of God's *word*. It is this word that Mary accepts and to which she commits herself. In this way, she is the model of the disciple, one who listens to God's word, meditates upon it and puts it into practice. We hear this theme restated in different ways often in Luke's narrative.

The annunciation of a birth is a frequent event in the Bible and the last example before this one is that given to Zechariah in the Temple, about the birth of John the Baptist. Such an account indicates the importance of the child to be born and his place in the Lord's plan for Israel. But there is a crucial difference between the annunciation to Mary and all the rest. In every other case, the woman has been unable to bear a child, which to everyone else would be an indication of punishment from God, hence the shame attached to her condition. God intervenes to remove the cause of her barrenness and the child is conceived in the normal way. There is no indication that Mary suffers from any condition which would prevent her having a child – quite the reverse – but Luke's concern is to show that Jesus has no human father and is the Son of God. The virginal conception of Jesus is a far greater miracle than the birth of the heroes of Israel – and of John the Baptist. ■

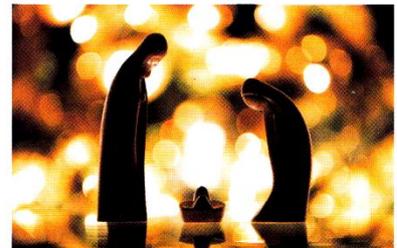
REFLECT

Advent is the season when we think of Mary's place in the story of God's dealings with the human race and of her importance in the life of the Church, the People of God. She is held up as a model for the disciples of Jesus. But even for Luke, her importance lies not so much in her being the physical mother of Jesus, but in her attitude to the word of God, listening, meditating and putting it into practice. It is in this that Mary can be our model.

We may feel that we cannot do much to advance the Kingdom of God, but as long as we try to live up to our Christian calling, then we are doing all that the Lord expects of us. Bringing up a family, living our life in the light of our faith, is what being a disciple of Jesus is all about. One thing we might keep in mind is that Mary and Joseph were real human beings, and it is clear that committing themselves to God's plan was not easy. In that, they can be truly examples that we can follow. ■

DO

Put out the figure of Mary from your crib set: use it during the week to help you reflect on Mary and her positive response to God's word.



LEARN

The mystery of the Incarnation is better described as 'the virginal conception of Jesus', rather than 'the virgin birth'.

Annunciation narratives in the Bible are stereotyped stories, designed to highlight the importance of the child to be born.

The annunciation to Mary is the only story of this type to include a virginal conception.

SAY

Hail Mary, full of grace,
the Lord is with you.

SWINFORD (F12 YH57) MEELICK (F12 AY23) MIDFIELD (F12 AX29)

Fr Dermot Meehan Phone: 094-9251790/Urgent Calls: 087-1338200

PARISH OFFICE- OPENING HOURS: Mon, Thurs, Fri: 9.00am-2.00pm; Phone: 094 - 9253607

Email: swinfordparish@gmail.com

20th – 27th Dec 2020

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Saturday 19th	6.30pm	Swinford: Brian & Kathleen McNulty, their sons Tom & John, Cloongullane Martin & Bridget Muldowney & dec'd Family, Tullinacurra
Sunday 20th	12 noon	Swinford: John Hennigan, Cloonlara Joe & Josie Maloney, Pat McHugh & Paddy Kelly, Sancta Maria
Monday 21st	10.00am	Swinford: Pat (Paddy) Groarke, Cullane (1 st anniv) & his wife Brenda & dec'd Family
Tuesday 22nd	10.00am	Swinford: Rosaleen Groarke, Culmore & dec'd Groarke & Tunney Families Mary Denis (nee Kennedy), Kinaffe
Wednesday 23rd	10.00am	Swinford: Paddy Oliver, Larch Hill/Ballyglass & his parents Charlie & Nora
Thursday 24th	10.00am	Swinford: Annie & James Munnely, P.J, Joan, Eileen & babies Josh & Reuben & dec'd Family, Ballina Nora McHugh, College Road

SOLEMNITY OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST

Thursday 24th	5.00pm	Swinford: Christmas Eve Mass (Ticket only)
Thursday 24th	9.00pm	Swinford: Christmas Eve Mass (Ticket only)
Friday 25th	12.00am	Swinford: Christmas Day Mass (Ticket only)
Saturday 26th	12.00am	Swinford: P.J Ronane, Culmore (MM)

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Saturday 26th	6.30pm	Swinford: Paddy Foley & Ann Jackson, Tullinacurra Frank Carolan, London
Sunday 27th	12 noon	Swinford: No Intention

Sunday 20th	9.00am	Meelick: No Intention
Friday 25th	9.00am	Meelick: Christmas Day Mass (Ticket only)
Sunday 27th	9.00am	Meelick: The McNulty Family Tom Durkain, Ardhoome

Sunday 20th	10.30am	Midfield: Nano Peyton, her son James, Midfield & her cousin Jim Murtagh, Woods Joe & Ann Dunleavy, Johnsfort
Friday 25th	10.30am	Midfield: Christmas Day Mass (Ticket only)
Sunday 27th	10.30am	Midfield: John & Kate Morley, Midfield & John & Margaret O'Brien, their son Michael, Ballymote Dec'd of Kennedy, Jordan & McDonagh Families, Brackloon/Kinaffe

Celebrating Christmas: Perhaps more than any other time of year, each of us has our own traditions around celebrating Christmas, things we do as individuals, as families, as groups of friends every year during the festive season. For many people, going to Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day is one of those traditions. It's always been great to see our churches full for Christmas. This year, however, due to Government restrictions, capacity in our churches is about one-fifth of what it normally would be. As a result, the Parish Pastoral Council made the difficult decision that entry to Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day would be by ticket only. The tickets were allocated on a first come basis during the past week to those who called to collect them. Those who do not have a ticket for a Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day will be most welcome to join in praying a Mass via live-streaming from Swinford Church. Mass will be live-streamed on the church webcam on Christmas Eve at 5.00 p.m. and 9.00 p.m. and on Christmas Day at 12 noon. We may not all be able to gather together as we might like to but we can still be united in prayer as we mark the great wonder of the birth of the Christ Child in Bethlehem.

Christmas Candles will be available from this weekend in each of our churches. If you haven't a ticket for Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day you might like to collect a candle from the church during the week and light it at home with your family while you join in praying one of the Masses online. To ensure that everyone gets a candle, you are kindly asked to take just one candle per household.

Blessing for Children: At the end of 12 noon Mass on Christmas Day there will be a special blessing for children. Families participating online can be part of this blessing at www.churchservices.tv/swinford.

Mass during the 12 Days of Christmas: If you don't have a ticket for Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day, you will be most welcome to attend Mass on one of the other days of the Christmas Season. Mass on St Stephen's Day will be at 12 noon in Swinford Church and there will also be a Vigil Mass at 6.30 p.m. on

December 26th. On Sunday, December 27th, the Feast of the Holy Family, there will be Mass at 9.00 a.m. in Meelick Church, at 10.30 a.m. in Midfield Church and at 12 noon in Swinford Church.

Confessions for Christmas: Visiting priests will be available for confessions in Swinford Church on Sunday, December 20th at 5.00 p.m. To allow for social distancing, confessions will be heard in the Sacristy at the back of the church and in the Prayer Room at the front of the church (please enter through the door from the sanctuary).

Befriending Service in the Swinford area: We will make weekly contact with anyone who is lonely and isolated and would like a weekly chat. All volunteers are fully trained and Garda vetted and all calls are completely confidential. If you would like to avail of this service please contact 094- 937 0653 for more information.

GAA 50/50: The club 50/50 draw was held in Campbells Lounge and Edward Prendergast from Kinaffe won €253. The next draw will be in Gateway Hotel on 22nd December.

Swinford Community Lotto Results for 14th Dec Numbers 3, 6, 26, 27; €70 Voucher winners; Mary Gallagher, C/O Baxter; Cora O'Connell, Scoil Muire & Pdraig; 3 Number Winner; Anne Forkan, Lislackagh; Jackpot now €14,800.

Swinford Golf Club 250 Centenary Draw which was held on Sunday 13th December. Draw No.3. €1000 Mary Horkan, Cloonifaun Swinford €300 Ciari Moore, The Square Swinford €200 Noel Whelehan, Kinnegad, Co. Westmeath