

30 DECEMBER 2018

Sunday Message

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

THE WORD

Year C • Season Colour: White • Psalter Week 1

Today's episode from the Gospel is usually called 'The Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple', and brings to an end the Infancy Narrative of Luke.

It is the only story we have which concerns the childhood of Jesus. It is a very human story, the worst nightmare of every parent of a child who has begun to use their freedom to move about independently. In the case of this boy it is pointing towards his own future which his parents only discern dimly.

It might be better if we read this incident in the light of Luke's artistic skill as a writer. The first two chapters set out the main themes which the evangelist will later develop. One of these motifs is that even the most devout and faithful person can misunderstand who Jesus is and what he means.

We also find details in this scene which anticipate the resurrection: for example three days; Luke's connecting being lost with being dead, and being found with coming back to life; Jesus question, "Why are you looking for me?" corresponds to the angel's question to the women about looking for the living among the dead. Perhaps the most poignant feature here is that just at the moment when his distraught parents (as Luke refers to them) find Jesus, he has entered the stage which every adolescent has to undergo, that of separating from them in order to establish his own identity and to fulfil his calling in life. That is why he is "busy with my Father's affairs" (rather than being "in my Father's house"). Once more, the fact of Jesus being a true human being comes to the fore: he has to grow up like all of us (hopefully) in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and other people. ■

LEARN

Passover was one of the three pilgrimage feasts when faithful Jews were expected to travel to Jerusalem if possible for the feast.

Pilgrims would travel in groups (caravans) for safety and companionship.

The presentation of Jesus as a boy of twelve possibly indicates his readiness to accept adult religious responsibilities.

SAY

Jesus, Mary and Joseph!



REFLECT

Any parent will be able to identify with the powerful emotions which Luke ascribes to Mary and Joseph in this narrative. We have the loss of a child and the desperate search for him over three days. Then there is the relief at finding him safe and sound; this is followed by bewilderment, first of all at his apparent indifference to the anxiety he has caused them and then the perplexing reference to "my Father's affairs". Not even the fact that he appears to be instructing the recognised teachers of the Law seems to help them understand what is going on. The attitude, characteristic of many adolescents – What are you getting so excited about? – will no doubt be all too familiar to parents of teenagers.

It is easy, and perhaps dangerous, to idealise the Holy Family by imagining a completely peaceful and idyllic life in Nazareth. For all we know it may well have been. But the further we remove Mary and Joseph from our own human experience, the less we can identify with them; and the doctrine of the Incarnation, that Jesus is truly divine and truly human, becomes less and less meaningful. ■

DO

Consider a child who is twelve years old. How could he or she help you to understand better our belief in Jesus as a true human being?



SWINFORD MEELICK MIDFIELD
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30th Dec 2018-6th Jan 2019

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

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|---------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Saturday 29th | 6.30pm | Swinford: Bea & Willie Mellett & Mary Mellett & dec'd Mellett & Roddy Families & Mary Hopkins John & Winnie Sherdian & son Padraig, Cloonlumey |
| Sunday 30th | 12 noon | Swinford: Michael O'Boyle, Osmond Place/ Lisheenabrone Maureen Mullarkey, Brabazon Heights |
| Monday 31st | 10.00am | Swinford: Tom Maughan, Kilkelly Road Michael Heneghan, The Orchard |
| Tuesday 1st | 11.00am | Swinford: Michael & Jimmy Reddington. Lisanumera |
| Wednesday 2nd | 10.00am | Swinford: Bridget & Thomas Durkan & daughter Mary & son Michael & daughter-in-law Nora |
| Thursday 3rd | 10.00am | Swinford: Maureen Murray, Laughtadurkin/The Orchard Luke & Mai Higgins, Lisbrogan |
| Friday 4th | 10.00am | Swinford: Kathleen Lavin, Market Street |
| Saturday 5th | 10.00am | Swinford: Billy Kilgallon, Lisheenabrone (1 st anniv) |
| Saturday 5th | 11.00am | Swinford: Mary Howley, The Woodlands/Charlestown (MM) |

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

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|--------------------------------|----------------|---|
| Saturday 5th | 6.30pm | Swinford: P.J & Kitty Moore, Carracanada John & Winifred Sherdian & son Padraic, Cloonlumney |
| Sunday 6th | 12 noon | Swinford: Martin 'Gussie' Moran, Brabazon Heights Mary & Bill McNicohlas, Lisheenabrone |

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|-------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Sunday 30th | 9.00am | Meelick: Thomas Mulroy, Laughtadurkin Edward & Mai Horkan, Ballintample |
| Sunday 6th | 9.00am | Meelick: Margaret Gallagher, Oldcastle (1 st anniv) |

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|-------------------------------|----------------|--|
| Sunday 30th | 10.30am | Midfield: The Kennedy, Jordan & McDonagh Families, Brackloon & Kinaffe John & Kate Morley, Midfield & John & Margaret O'Brien & their son Michael, Ballymote |
| Sunday 6th | 10.30am | Midfield: Joe McNamera, his parents & his brother John & dec'd Family & Paddy & Mary O'Brien, Brackloon Michael Lavin & dec'd Family, Carnacul |

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:

Swinford Church: Sundays: 2pm-6pm & Thursdays 10.30am-8pm

Midfield Church: Mondays 11am-12noon

Meelick Church: Mondays 7pm-9pm

Every passing year brings its own blessings and changes in our parish community and 2018 has been no exception. At the end of August, we witnessed the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families, days that were very special for the Church in our country. His pilgrimage to the shrine of Our Lady at Knock meant that many from our parish community had the opportunity to see the Pope and to pray with him in that special place, a very great blessing for us in 2018.

The past year has brought changes also. Being elected Administrator of the diocese of Achonry on February 12th has meant trying to balance serving the parish community in Swinford with the work of running the diocese until a new bishop is appointed by the Pope. This entails being absent from the parish more than I would wish to work in the Diocesan Office in Ballaghaderreen and to attend meetings in the diocese and of the Bishops' Conference in Maynooth. I am deeply grateful to all in the parish community for your continuing support and in particular for your patience, understanding and co-operation since February. I am also very thankful for your prayers. I greatly appreciate the help and support of Canon Michael Joyce and of the priests from our neighbouring parishes.

Despite change, our mission goes on and many, many people give of their time and talents in different ways in service of the parish community. I am very thankful to people who have volunteered for and committed themselves for a period of time to different ministries in our three churches, especially Readers and Special Ministers of Holy Communion. A special thank you to all involved in the Music Ministry who add so much to our celebrations in our churches. Thank you also to our collectors and to those who count the money from the collections each week for the time they give to their work.

A special word of thanks to our sacristans for their dedication to and care for all our churches, ensuring that everything is in order each time we gather to pray together. Thanks also to those who give their time to decorating

our churches for special occasions and those who assist with cleaning and maintenance-your help is really appreciated. Thanks is due also to our Altar Servers for their assistance at Mass and to their teachers for training them and drawing up the rotas.

I am very grateful to the members of the Parish Pastoral Council for their commitment to meetings over the past year and for their advice and good counsel in so many areas of parish life. Their practical help in organising events for the parish throughout 2018 is also very much appreciated. A special thank you to the members of the Pastoral Council who retired this year after serving for four years and to the new members who agreed to take their places. Thanks also to the members of the Parish Finance Council for their input and assistance with a very important aspect of parish life. I am also deeply grateful to all who do so much work in the day-to-day running of the parish, often quietly and behind the scenes and to all who support the life of the parish in any way, not least by your prayers. To all, mile buíochas.

Please pray for Nora Golden (nee Brennan), Ardhoome, Meelick. May she rest in the peace of Christ.

Please note: On Tuesday, January 1st, New Year's Day and the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God, morning Mass in Swinford Church will be at 11a.m. January 1st is also World Day of Peace.

Christmas Collection: Thank you to all who contributed to the Christmas Collection which goes towards paying the monthly salary of the parish priest. Your generosity is very much appreciated.

Christmas Lights: There is a display of Christmas lights at the home of Vincent and Madeleine O'Brien in Meelick. Visitors are welcome.

*A very Happy new Year to
all and every blessing in
2019*