

RONCALLI RANT 16

HOPE IS A DECISION

The opening lines in this week's poem, The Darkling Thrush, by Thomas Hardy are amongst my favourite and indeed are from one of the most influential poets on my life. As he writes these memorable lines Hardy is an old man. His pessimism is tangible. The poem is dark and grey. It exudes death and darkness. Yet there is Hope. It is New Years Eve 1899. The note of Hope is signalled in an old thrush. Hardy, in the cold and dark of the winter's night, on hearing the song of the thrush remarks:

'Some blessed Hope whereof he knew and I was unaware'.

From our earliest days we have learned of faith, hope and charity and yet I think of the three of them the most neglected is hope. We spend a lot of time on our faith relationship with God and as much again on how we should live out a life of charity. Somehow we are a bit more casual about hope. Yes it's not so much that we neglect this important virtue but perhaps that we undervalue it. We say things like, 'sure all we can do is hope' or even worse, 'we can live in hope, die in despair'. I think when we speak of hope it tends to be a bit vague. Hope for many of us is a bit hit and miss. When we speak of hope it seems to sit comfortably with talk of Lady Luck and Destiny. Hope for some seems to be connected with our stars, our horoscope. It is interesting how many are drawn to psychic chat lines or even a trip to Mystic Meg's caravan to have our palm or even tea cups read.

Perhaps I could put it another way. A Christian without hope makes no sense. A follower of Jesus who lives without hope does not understand what happened in the Christ event. Rather than an optional extra the great Christian virtue of hope should underpin our everyday life. Is our hope misty, fluffy, fudge? Or is our hope built on rock?

Life without hope means we are like a cork tossed about on the sea. However if we have the hope that is rooted in Jesus, the hope that is built on the Gospel, the hope that enables us to move from Good Friday to Easter Sunday then life is beautiful. This does not mean life is without pain or sadness but rather that the sadness and the pain do not have the final say.

Perhaps a major step for all of us might be to recognise the great virtue that hope is. For us to acknowledge that we may not have a great appreciation or understanding of this beautiful virtue. As followers of Jesus it is not good enough that we do not live a life steeped in hope. Did Jesus suffer and die for us so that we might live in darkness? Of course not. If we are serious about being followers of Jesus we are called to live in hope and to be witnesses to that hope.

Fraternally JoeMcD

ENROLMENT FOR SEPTEMBER 2020 will take place in the following Celbridge schools

Scoil Naomh Bríd, Scoil na Mainistreach,

Scoil Mochua and St. Patrick's N.S.

on Wednesday 5th. and Thursday 6th. February from 9.30am – 12.30pm.

Please bring the following documentation with you: Child's Birth Certificate,

Current Utility Bill/s (for other acceptable proofs of address see Enrolment Policy on school websites).

Please check school websites for further information

PIZZA AND POETRY

The Darkling Thrush

By Thomas Hardy

I leant upon a coppice gate

When Frost was spectre-grey,

And Winter's dregs made desolate

The weakening eye of day.

The tangled bine-stems scored the sky

Like strings of broken lyres,

And all mankind that haunted night

Had sought their household fires.

The land's sharp features seemed to be

The Century's corpse outleant,

His crypt the cloudy canopy,

The wind his death-lament.

The ancient pulse of germ and birth

Was shrunken hard and dry,

And every spirit upon earth

Seemed fervourless as I.

At once a voice arose among

The bleak twigs overhead

In a full-hearted evensong

Of joy illimited;

An aged thrush, frail, gaunt, and small,

In blast-beruffled plume,

Had chosen thus to fling his soul

Upon the growing gloom.

So little cause for carolings

Of such ecstatic sound

Was written on terrestrial things

Afar or nigh around,

That I could think there trembled through

His happy good-night air

Some blessed Hope, whereof he knew

And I was unaware.

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Weekend Mass Intentions

St. Patrick's Church

Sat: 6.30pm: Kevin O' Sullivan, Tony Preston

Sun 8.30am: Margaret & Patrick Brady

9.30am: Special intention, Kathleen Lynam

11am: Bridie, Jack, & Paddy Smyth

12.30pm: Marie Cleary (m.m.), Tom & Sheila Doolin (1st anniv),
Michael & Elizabeth Rogan

7pm: Sean Smyth

Weekday Mass Intentions St. Patrick's Church

Mon 13th 10am: Eileen Ferguson, Mass for all the deceased named on the list for the stars on the Christmas tree

Tues 14th 10am: Noeline Bashford, Ellen Coyle

Wed 15th 10am: Sean Cunningham, special intention

Thur 16th 10am: William Bermingham, Tony Preston, Brendan Brady

Fri 17th 10am: Anne Sweeney (1st anniv), Brendan Lyons

Sat 18th 10am: Seamie O' Sullivan

Planned Giving-amount was €1925.78. Thanks to all who contributed through the standing orders and the Planned Giving.

Thanks also to the collectors and counters.

New Baptism Procedures:

"A family, a new baby, congratulations, but there's more. Baptism is a gift that lets you know who you are, a spiritual being already loved by God, invited into His family" ...

Due to a reduction in personnel in the parish, we have reduced the number of Baptisms and changed the procedure. Also, to make the sacrament more meaningful to the families involved, there will be a maximum of three babies baptised at each ceremony. Due to these changes there will be a considerable waiting time for Baptism. These changes will begin on 1st January 2020. All queries should be made through the Parish Office.

- (1) The baptism form is now on the parish website, as are the dates for the Preparation meetings and Welcoming. www.celstra.ie
- (2) Parents should complete and print the form.
- (3) Parents should bring the completed form to the Preparation meeting of their earliest convenience listed with the form. These will take place in the Sacristy at 7pm on the dates listed.
- (4) At the Preparation meeting, the dates for the Welcoming and Baptism can be agreed.

Celbridge and Straffan Mother's Prayer Group

The next meeting of the parish mother's prayer group takes place on **Tuesday 14th January** at 8pm in St Brigid's Church, Straffan. Mothers of all ages are very welcome. We will pray for our children, the children of the parish and children world-wide.

We hope to see you there!

Weekend Mass Intentions St. Brigid's Church

Sat 6pm: Bill Norris,

Sun 11am: Vera & Tommy Tiernan, Chris Kelly, Special intention

St. Brigid's Church

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will take place on Friday morning after the 9.15am Mass.

A big thank you to all the people who contributed to the Carol Service collection in St. Brigid's of €391.57

LEGION OF MARY

When the Regina Coeli hostel, located in Dublin's northside, opened to receive homeless women in October 1930, one of the first to seek admission was an unmarried mother and her child.

So began what was then a revolutionary means of helping women, who had no other support, to bring up their children themselves.

Three years earlier, the Morning Star had opened to receive homeless men. Earlier yet, in 1922 the Santa Maria hostel opened at number 76 Harcourt Street as a refuge for prostitutes. It continued until the 1970's. Both the Regina Coeli and the Morning Star remain open to this day and are full nightly. The hostels are staffed by voluntary workers. The person who gave the hostels life was Frank Duff, known worldwide as the founder of the Legion of Mary.

Please Support our Weekly Parish Lotto

The profit of the Lotto goes to developing our Parish. The prize fund is now at €3550

The lotto envelopes can be placed in the safe at the back of the Church in St. Patricks & St. Brigid's & the collection bags at the Masses.

You pick four numbers between 1 - 30.

One line just €2, 3 lines €5.

This week numbers were:

1st draw: 3,17,22,27 2nd draw: 20, 28,29, 11

3 consolation prize winners: Rachel Molloy, Pat Molloy, Trish Bermingham,

Consolation draw winners for week of 30th December

Carmel O' Brien, Christy Wallace, Rosemarie Healy

Prizes can be collected in the Sacristy during weekend Mass times. Prizes have to be collected within 30 days of the draw.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL
THE PARISHIONERS**

