

'Someone is coming who will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire'

A feeling of expectancy had grown among the people, who were beginning to think that John might be the Christ, so John declared before them all, 'I baptise you with water, but someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire. Now when all the people had been baptised and while Jesus after his own baptism was at prayer, heaven opened and the Holy Spirit descended on him in bodily shape, like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.'



A new beginning!

We must learn to live each day, each hour, yes, each minute as a new beginning, as a unique opportunity to make everything new. Imagine that we could live each moment as a moment pregnant with new life. Imagine that we could live each day as a day full of promises. Imagine that we could walk through the new year always listening to a voice saying to us:
“I have a gift for you and can't wait for you to see it! Imagine!”

— Henri Nouwen

Sunday, 9th January 2022: Baptism of the Lord

Someone more powerful than John

John is waist deep in the Jordan waters, making quite an impact on the people who are choosing the wilderness over the sacred ground of the Temple. They are responding to the preaching of the wild looking man there who has a more authentic message than their priests and scribes. This popularity could get inside a man's head and do all sorts of queer things to his ego, but John is very clear that he's only the 'minor match'—the curtain raiser for the main event. 'Someone is coming, someone who is more powerful than I am, and I am not fit to undo the strap of his sandals; he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit and fire.'

'More powerful,' he says. As they hear that message cause an echo over the water, what kind of power are the people expecting? They have been long dreaming of a messiah who'd help them overthrow the Romans. A political Christ? Would the One John was pointing out, come with a show of macho and muscle, high on testosterone? Would He be the kind who'd lead a charge and march with brute force to overthrow the political establishment? If their hope was for strength, they'd soon be disappointed. Very disappointed. Maybe even embarrassed.

Because when He comes to John, He opts to be dunked along with everyone else. The 'more powerful one' doesn't need this, surely. Nothing remotely powerful in this act of self-subordination and humiliation—as he feels the weight of John's hand force his head beneath the current. In his baptism Jesus is choosing the power of humble solidarity with the poor and the weak—and with sinners, though he is without sin. Power in powerlessness—quite the paradox! Jesus opts for a total immersion into the stuff of humanity—all the joys and pains that the human condition has to offer. 'Someone is coming', John says, 'someone powerful, much more powerful than I.' Powerful in love, compassion, mercy.

Monday, 10th January.
8.00am: Special Intention
10.00am: Patrick and Margaret Phelan (A)

Tuesday, 11th January.
8.00am: Michael J. McGowan (Birthday Remembrance)
10.00am: Maggie McCarthy (A)

Wednesday, 12th January.
8.00am: Special Intention
10.00am: Eileen McNally and her son Rene (A)

Thursday, 13th January. St Hilary.
8.00am: Michael Powell and deceased family members (A)
10.00am: Paul Ganley (1st A)
7.30pm Curry: No Intention.

Friday, 14th January.
8.00am: Bernard Smith & Edward Ward. (A).
10.00am: John Mimmagh and deceased family members (A)

Saturday, 15th January. St Ita.
8.00am: Michael Joe McCabe (A)
10.00am: Michael Colreavy (A)

Sunday, 16th January. 2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time
7.30pm (Vigil): Kathleen Fitzgerald (A)
8.00am: Michael Walsh (A)
10.00am: Bernadette Twaddle (Month's Mind)
11.30am: *Shared:* Michael, Mary and Tommy Connaughton (A).
Frank Devine (A). Kathleen Quinn (A).
1.00pm: Christopher Dann, his mother Lena and brother Jackie (A)
6.00pm: Michael Kane (A)

OFFERTORY COLLECTION: We thank each one of you most sincerely for your continued generous contributions to our weekly collections. The amount received in the Offertory Collection for last weekend was €5,565.00.

CHRISTMAS DUES in support of the priests of the parish are now due and may be handed in at any time.

REST IN PEACE: Your prayers are requested for the happy repose of the souls of: Ciaran Mc Donnell, Longford, whose funeral took place during the week; For Eileen Donnelly, St Brendan's, Dublin Road. Her funeral Mass will be celebrated in St Patrick's Church, Drumshanbo on Monday at 11am followed by burial in the local cemetery. May they rest in peace.

WEDDING : Congratulations to Shauna Nolan and Keith McGuire and to Alisha Philips and Martin Horan, who were recently married in the Cathedral.

PARISH STATISTICS FOR 2021: Baptisms: 110. Marriages: 18.

First Communions: 169. Confirmations: 154. Deaths: 82.

MASS IN ST. ANNE'S CHURCH, CURRY: Mass will be celebrated in St. Anne's Church, Curry on Thursday evening at 7.30pm.

BAPTISM: With joy, we welcomed Tomás Kane into the Christian Community last weekend.

INSTALLATION OF ARCHBISHOP FRANCIS DUFFY: On Sunday 9th January, Archbishop Francis Duffy will be installed at Archbishop of Tuam. We pray that the Holy Spirit will guide, bless and direct him as he takes on greater responsibilities, and let him be assured of our continued support through our prayers and Masses offered here in St Mel's Cathedral. May God continue to bless the work that He has begun in Archbishop Francis. The link to watch the ceremony online is www.tuamparish.com and select webcam.

CATHEDRAL CIRCLE: the next draw for the Cathedral Circle will take place on Monday 10th January at 6.30pm. €650 in prize money every week. Tickets available in many of the local shops in Longford or by annual subscription.

PARISH CALENDARS are available at the doors of the Cathedral and from the Presbytery.

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY: Cemetery Sunday Mass is 2th June at 1pm.

SAMARITANS are available on freecall 116123, 24 hours if you would like to talk about something that is bothering you.