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Image of the day - new altar at The Carrag Centre

News Reports



'We Saw His Star in the East' theme for Week of Prayer for Christian Unity 2022

The theme of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity (WPCU) for 2022 is 'We Saw His Star in the East'.

WPCU is traditionally celebrated between January 18 and January 25 – the the octave of St. Peter and St. Paul.

The story of the Magi visiting the Holy Family in Bethlehem is a very familiar one.

The Magi have sometimes been seen as a symbol of the world's diversity – different religions and cultures – that

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come to pay homage to the Christ-child. The story might therefore represent the unity of all created that God desires.

The materials for WPCU 2022 has been prepared by the churches of the Middle East, the history of which was, and still is, characterised by conflict and strife, tainted with blood and darkened by injustice and oppression. The Christians of the Middle East offer these resources conscious that the world shares many of the travails and much of the difficulties that it experiences, and yearns for a light to lead the way to the Saviour who is the light that overcomes darkness.

Resources – including daily reflections and an example order of service – are available for download. There will be no printed resources for 2022.

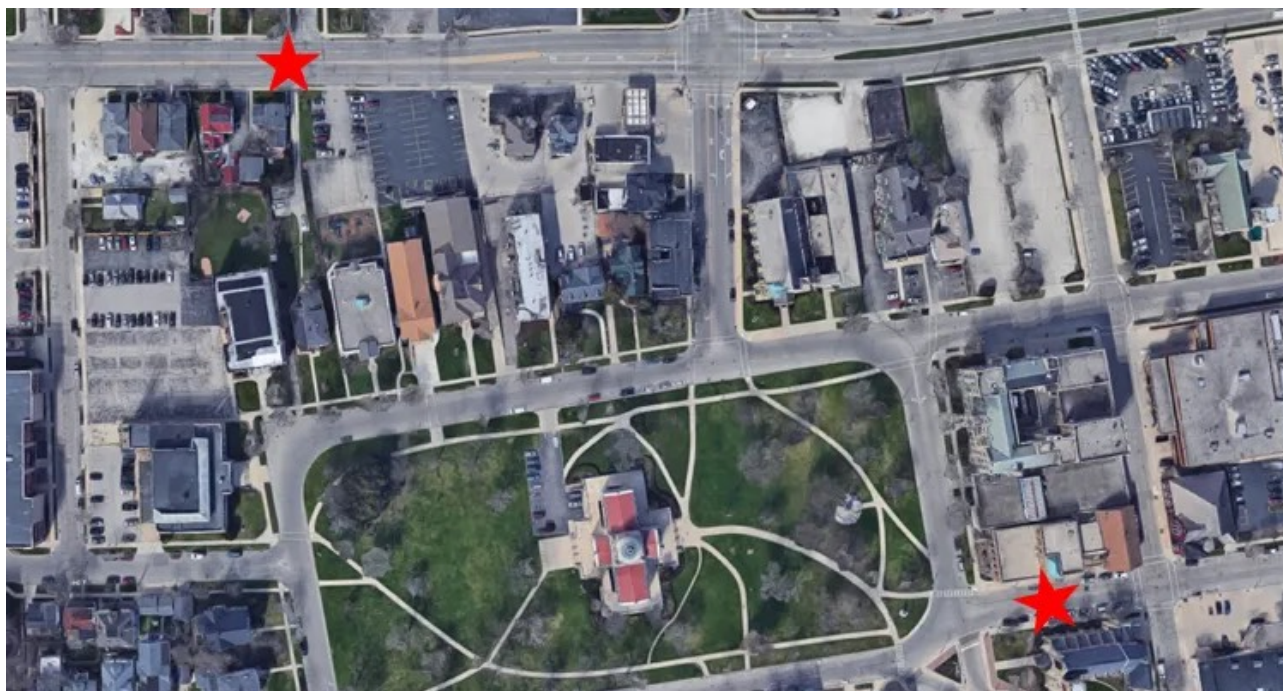
Find more information about WCPU on the Churches Together in Britain & Ireland website. And follow updates on Twitter using the hashtag #wpcu2022

Violence in the Neighborhoods in Wisconsin

A little more than two blocks down Main Street from St. Matthias Episcopal Church of Waukesha, Wisconsin, a speeding SUV crashed into a crowd of people on Sunday evening, November 21, killing five and injuring dozens more, Kirk Petersen writes in The Living Church.

Waukesha is about an hour's drive northwest of Kenosha, where on Friday, November 19, Kyle Rittenhouse was

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Google Maps photo in Kenosha shows St. Matthews, lower right, and the closest shooting location.

acquitted of all charges for shooting three men, two of them fatally, in August 2020. St. Matthew's Episcopal Church is about a quarter-mile from the closest shooting site, if you walk diagonally through Library Park.

Two churches with similar names, in two towns with Algonquin names, where momentous events occurred two days apart, both in the Diocese of Milwaukee.

Both churches are "faithful communities keeping their doors open, and their ministry, in the face of profound challenges," said the Rt. Rev. Jeffrey Lee, who is serving a two-year term as Milwaukee's bishop provisional while the three Wisconsin dioceses discern whether they should merge.

In Waukesha, St. Matthias Rector David Simmons wrote to his congregation: "As far as I know, none of our community

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have been directly affected in the events yesterday. The church was used to shelter in place for a couple of hours.” Simmons, who is the ecumenical officer for the diocese, was busy preparing for an interfaith vigil to be held in a park Monday afternoon, and could not be reached for comment.

In Kenosha, St. Matthews is between rectors, and Lee said “The evening that the verdict was delivered, they were scheduled to have a final meeting between the vestry and their next rector, and we contacted them and wondered if that was a wise thing” because of the possibility of protests over the verdict. The vestry was having none of it — “This is important work that God’s given us to do, we don’t think there’s any reason not to meet,” Lee said he was told. The city, and indeed the country, remained calm after the verdict.

Lee said he was proud of the way both congregations were responding to a difficult situation, with “doors open, candles lit, and prayers offered – a place of refuge.”

Pope Francis' Message to young people this Advent Season: 'Don't lose hope'

Pope Francis told young adults and teens participating in a Christmas songwriting contest to hold onto the hope, beauty, and love present in the season which celebrates Christ's birth.

"I am happy to meet you, now at the doors of Advent, the period which every year introduces us to Christmas and its Mystery," the pope said Nov. 22.



The Church is the family of God's children. A family in which we rejoice with those who are rejoicing, and weep with those who grieve or feel knocked down by life. A family in which we care for everyone, for God our Father has made all of us his children in Baptism.

- Pope Francis

Address of Pope Francis in Croke Park 25 August 2018

'I am happy to meet you, now at the doors of Advent, the period which every year introduces us to Christmas and its Mystery.'

"This year too its lights will be subdued due to the consequences of the pandemic, which still weighs on our time," he noted. "All the more reason we are called to examine ourselves and not to lose hope."

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"The feast of the Birth of Christ does not clash with the trial we are experiencing, because it is the feast of compassion, of tenderness par excellence. Its beauty is humble and full of human warmth," Francis told the contestants and its organizers.

He added: "I like to repeat the words of Saint Paul VI: 'This world in which we live needs beauty in order not to fall into despair.' What kind of beauty? Not the false one made up of appearance and earthly wealth, which is empty and generates emptiness. No."

"But that [beauty] of a God who became flesh, that of faces, of stories; that of the creatures who form our common home and who - as St. Francis teaches us - participate in the praise of the Most High," he said.

Pope Francis addressed participants of the Christmas song competition and others involved in its organization, including its creators, the Pontifical Gravissimum Educationis Foundation and the non-profit Missioni Don Bosco, in a hall of the Vatican's Apostolic Palace.

The Pontifical Gravissimum Educationis Foundation was founded by Pope Francis in 2015. The foundation's website says the Christmas Concert wants to enrich the repertoire of Christmas songs and carols known all over the world "through the creativity of young people, inviting them to produce new songs inspired by Christmas and its values: life, love, peace, light."

The contest, which was open to young people ages 16-35, is divided into the categories of lyrics, music, and

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interpretation. The three best songs, as chosen by a jury, will be performed at the 29th edition of the Christmas Concert in the Vatican, a benefit for Scholas Occurrentes and Missioni Don Bosco.

The Dec. 16 concert will have a live audience after last year's show was taped without spectators due to coronavirus restrictions.

The concert, which features international music artists, will air on Italian TV on Christmas Eve.

Pope Francis said "the beauty of Christmas shines through in the sharing of small gestures of concrete love. It is not alienating, is not superficial, is not evasive; on the contrary, it widens the heart, opens it to give freely - you artists know - opens it to the gift of self, and can also generate cultural, social and educational dynamics."

Welby apologizes for Bishop Bell criticism

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby issued a personal statement on November 17 apologizing for his 2018 refusal to exonerate prominent mid-20th-century bishop George Bell, who had been accused of sexual abuse of a child. Welby also resurrected plans for a statue of Bell at Canterbury Cathedral.

"What I say today that is new and should have been said sooner is this: I do not consider there to be a 'significant cloud' over Bishop George Bell's name," Welby stated.

“Previously I refused to retract that statement and I was wrong to do so. I took that view because of the importance we rightly place on listening to those who come forward with allegations of abuse, and the duty of care we owe to them. But we also owe a duty of care to those who are accused. I apologize for the hurt that my refusal to retract that statement has caused to Bishop Bell’s surviving relatives, colleagues and longstanding supporters.”

In 1995, a woman alleged that Bell, who died in 1958, had abused her when she was a girl. In 2013, shortly after becoming archbishop, the woman wrote to Welby, who launched an investigation which resulted in a lengthy apology by the Rt. Rev. Martin Warner, Bell’s successor as Bishop of Chichester, as well as a £16,800 settlement with the complainant.

Bell, an ethicist and ecumenist famous for his close friendship with Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his controversial condemnation of Allied bombing of German cities in World War II, was viewed by many at the time as one of the most significant Anglican leaders of the twentieth century. His supporters strongly criticized the Church of England’s investigation into the allegations, and pushed for an independent review.

Prominent lawyer Lord Carlile’s 2017 review found that there had been many errors in Bell’s case, and that those responsible had “failed to follow a process that was fair and equitable to both sides.” At a December 2017 press conference announcing his findings, Carlile said that the bishop had been “hung out to dry.”



Bishop George Bell

Warner and the Rt. Rev. Peter Hancock, who was then the Church of England's lead safeguarding officer, both apologized for the mistakes made by the reviewers, with Warner stating, "The good deeds that Bishop George Bell did were recognized internationally. They will stand the test of time. In every other respect, we have all been diminished by the case that Lord Carlile has reviewed."

Welby, however, refused to back down, stating that "a significant cloud" remained over Bell's name. He reiterated the claim in 2018, when police decided not to pursue a second allegation against Bell, which was judged a year later by church officials to also be unfounded.

Welby's recent statement also praised Bell as "one of the most courageous, distinguished Anglican bishops of the past century, committed to the peace and hope of Jesus Christ in a time of conflict and war." It also announced that a

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statue of him would be erected on west front of Canterbury Cathedral, alongside other significant figures in English church history. Bell had served as Dean of Canterbury from 1924-1929.

Work on the statue, which had been commissioned by the Friends of Canterbury Cathedral in 2015, was stalled due to uncertainty about Bell's legacy, but cathedral officials noted earlier this year that it would be completed. Installation will wait until extensive restoration work on the cathedral's west end is completed, probably in 3-4 years.

People and places

A first in Tuam Cathedral - first ordination to the Permanent Diaconate

The Rite of Ordination of three permanent deacons for service in the Archdiocese of Tuam was celebrated on Sunday last. Archbishop Michael Neary said in his homily, "This is the first ordination to the Permanent Diaconate in our Archdiocese and, in that sense, it indicates a new beginning. It is also the first ordination ceremony to be held in our beautifully refurbished Cathedral. We thank God for this great day, this historic and joyful occasion for the Archdiocese.

In the Cathedral of the Assumption, Tuam, the new Permanent Deacons were ordained Cathal Galligan from the parish of Corofin; Julian Drapiewski from the parish of

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Athenry, and James McLoughlin from the parish of Carnacon

Archbishop Michael Neary's views on the diaconate from today's CNI Perspective. See later in this issue.

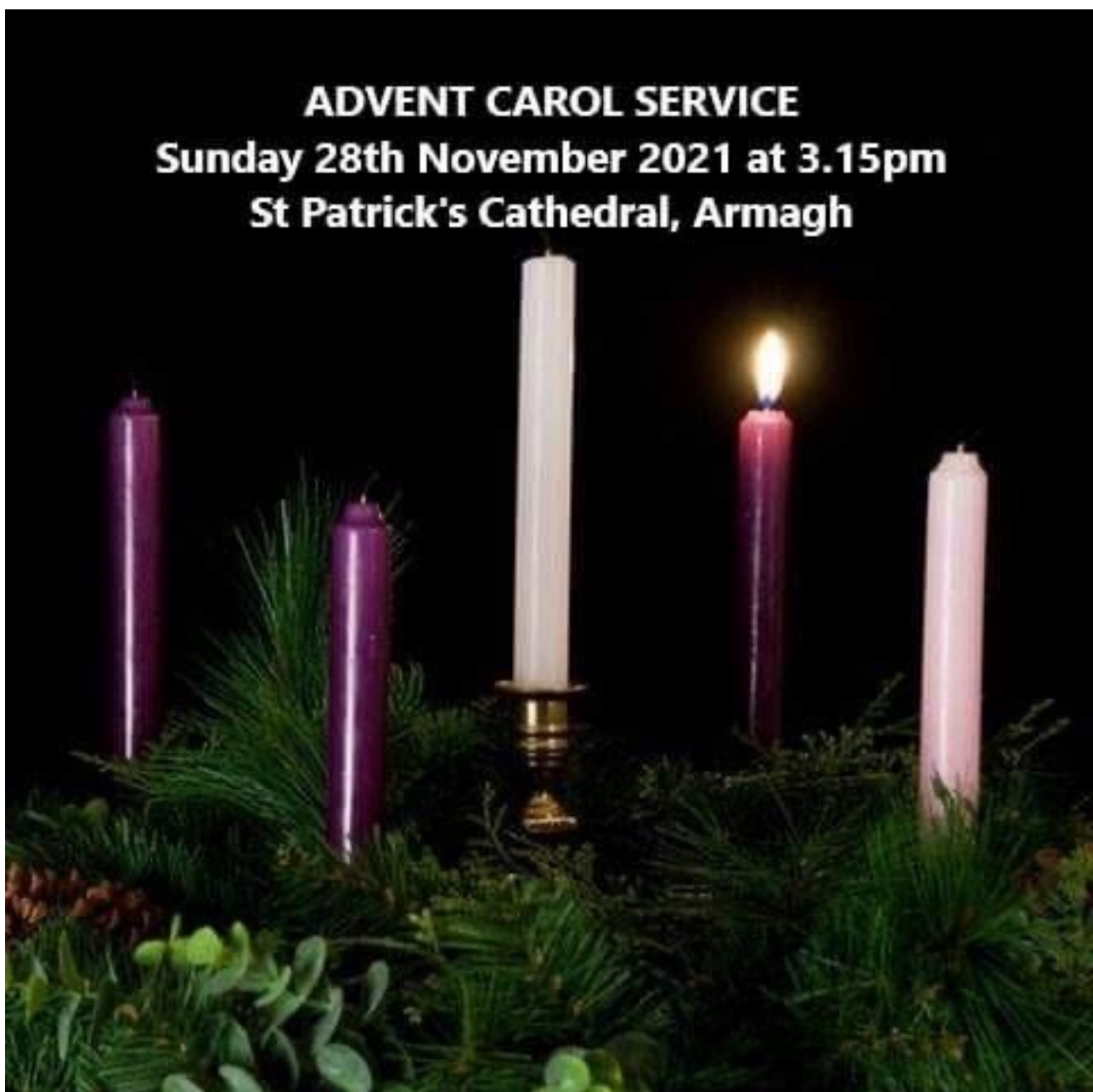
Thirty years service recognised by Cairncastle and Craigy Hill



On Sunday morning the Rev Philip Benson and parishioners of Kilwaughter made a presentation to their diocesan reader William Patton to mark the 30th Anniversary of his licensing.

Book of poems launched in celebration of Kilmoody bicentenary

Canon Raymond Fox, a former rector of the United Parish of Killinchy, Kilmoody, and Tullynakill, has published a book of poems to celebrate the bicentenary of St Mary's Church, Kilmoody. Proceeds from the sale of



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***Yearning* will go to The Rowan Sexual Assault Referral Centre.**

The volume of poems was officially launched by The Rt Revd Andrew Forster, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, at an event in Holywood Parish Church. Canon Raymond was a curate in Holywood from 1971–75 where the (very) young Andrew Forster was a parishioner.



Bishop Andrew paid tribute to Raymond, thanking him for his friendship and his ‘long and distinguished ministry’. Commenting on the new publication, he said:

“Poetry is about seeing the world twice, about taking a longer, deeper view of the world. Irish poets tend to take the everyday and show the meaning and depth that it is invested with. Raymond’s ‘Yearning’ does exactly the same, but we shouldn’t be surprised for Raymond has always encouraged us to look deeper and think harder with a raw honesty that increases our faith.”

The current rector of Kilmoody, Revd Dr Stanley Gamble, hosted the evening. He said:

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“We are very grateful to Canon Raymond Fox for producing this collection of poems as part of our efforts to mark the bicentenary of St. Mary’s Church, Kilmood. During his time as Rector, parishioners got to know an enthusiastic and energetic rector who was caring and compassionate. Throughout his rich and varied ministry in other parishes of the Church of Ireland, Canon Fox has shown himself to be a wise and insightful reflective practitioner. This comes out strongly in this collection of poems where Canon Fox helps us in our quest to understand the love of God in all its fulness and what it means to be human in light of this.”

Donation

Claire Galloway, Service Manager at The Rowan expressed her thanks for the financial support: “On behalf of The Rowan, we would sincerely express our gratitude and thanks to Cannon Raymond Fox for the kind donation. This donation will help our professional and highly trained team who provide a range of specialist support and services to people across Northern Ireland who have been raped, sexually assaulted or abused, in the past or recently.

“It is vital that we help to increase the knowledge regarding sexual violence throughout our communities, to help highlight where those in need can get practical and emotional support in a confidential setting, 24 hours a day and 365 days a year. If only one person within each community shared our service, we can continue to help many more people.”

The Bishop of Down and Dromore, The Rt Revd David McClay, also commended the book and thanked Claire and the staff at The Rowan for their vital work.

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Christine and Barbara Foster performed several moving songs and choruses during the evening which ended with food and refreshments.

Yearning, Poems in Search of Meaning, is published by Nendrum Press and costs £10. It may be purchased directly from Canon Fox or through St Mary's Kilmoody.

Canon Fox: (+44 7511 752160 or

email canonfox@btinternet.com

St. Mary's, Kilmoody: (028) 97541249 or

email killinchy@down.anglican.org.

Perspective

The Diaconate by Archbishop Michael Neary

'Diákonía,' meaning service

One cannot disassociate the diaconate from its original Greek word Diákonía, meaning service. Central to the mission and ministry of Jesus is a text (Mark 10:45) which captures the concept of the diaconate, and in which he reminds his disciples that he came to give his life for others. You will recall that on that occasion James and John and the other disciples were more concerned about places of honour but Jesus emphasised that the Son of Man came "not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." In the original Greek, the word does not imply being served or "deaconed to" but rather "to deacon to" – to do the serving. The deacon is not the one who

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receives the service of others, but the deacon is the one who offers service. This is the essence of the diaconal ministry. It is of the essence of the diaconate that the deacon will have a definite and deliberate outreach to those who are poor and on the margins. This outreach, as you know, is one of the pillars of the Synodal Pathway upon which the Holy Father has now, in a very deliberate way, set the Church. This is a very exciting time for the Church, and a very challenging time to be ordained to the diaconal ministry.

The ministry of charity

The ministry of charity involves the deacon witnessing to the Gospel through a life of grace and thereby witnessing through service to the poor, to the aged, to the sick and infirm, to prisoners, to the marginalised, to youth, to young adults, to groups like Saint Vincent de Paul, the Legion of Mary, to young people who may be interested in exploring their faith, and to other groups who may be endeavouring to find their feet in matters of faith and spirituality.

The ministry of the Word

In the Ministry of the Word, these new deacons will proclaim the Gospel and carry out the vitally important ministry of preaching. They will accompany and assist through catechesis, religious instruction and prayer those who are preparing for the sacraments, and they will gather and encourage and help to form those who are called to exercise parish-based ministries of all kinds, not least among which are those who are members of Baptism Teams and those who dedicate themselves to supporting and consoling those who are bereaved. In all of these

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cases, in everything you do, the Word of God in the scriptures will be a valuable and an indispensable resource. Remember what Saint Paul wrote to Timothy: “All scripture is inspired by God and useful for refuting error, for guiding people’s lives and teaching them to be upright. This is how someone who is dedicated to God becomes fully equipped and ready for any good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16-17)

Liturgical ministry

In the liturgical sphere, James, Cathal and Julian, you will have the privilege of conferring Baptism, you will assist at the altar during Mass, you will witness and bless sacramental marriages, you will bring Holy Communion to the sick, you will preside at funeral liturgies and carry out the Rite of Christian Burial. You will have the honour of serving parishioners by presiding at other non-Eucharistic liturgies and leading the Christian community in prayer in all kinds of different circumstances – some very joyful, others under the veil of sadness.

You will identify and call forth the God-given gifts in others so that they may also put their gifts at the service of the liturgical assembly as Altar Servers, stewards, ushers, members of choirs, readers of the Word, and ministers of Holy Communion.

Pope Francis on the Diaconate

When addressing deacons in the United States some years ago, Pope Francis stated that, “it belongs to the baptismal mission of every Christian in accordance with his or her state of life to take an active part in society by virtue of their

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baptismal calling. Yet every deacon has a special witness to give. The sacramental grace of ordination to the diaconate is meant to strengthen the deacon, to make his efforts fruitful even as his secular occupation helps him enter into the temporal sphere in a way that is perhaps not appropriate for other members of the clergy.”

Deacon as intermediary

Historically the deacon serves as the eyes and ears of the Bishop and as the Bishop’s heart and hands. The deacon is a “go-between”, a bridge linking the secular and the Church. Deacons are intended as intermediaries informing the community of the Bishop’s pastoral priorities and in turn conveying what the community has to say to the Bishop. Again, this is a vital and healthy feature of the synodal model of the Church.

A gift for the Church, not a diminution of the laity

The ministry of the deacon, understood and exercised properly, does not detract and should never detract from the vital role of the empowered laity. Indeed, it should and does enrich it. A vibrant diaconate will enhance, expand and empower the ministry of the laity, the religious and of the priesthood since the diaconate is a God-given grace for and gift to the Church. And in the case of the three permanent deacons ordained today, you bring an additional blessing to your new ministry. As married men, as husbands and fathers, you bring an experience and expertise to the ordained ministry that is already totally supportive of and fully committed to the vocation of the laity, of the priesthood, and of the consecrated way of life too.

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Christ the King

In the Gospel the Church chooses for the feast of Christ the King today, we are permitted to listen to a conversation between Pilate and Jesus. Pilate is trying to understand why the Jews have handed Jesus over to him to be tried. There's an allegation that Jesus is claiming to be a king and thereby undermining the authority of the Roman Emperor. So, the conversation centres around Jesus' kingship. It is very interesting to discover what constitutes kingship in Jesus' mind. He says, "Yes, I am a king. I was born for this; I came into the world for this: to bear witness to the truth; and all who are on the side of truth listen to my voice." The claim of Jesus distinguishes his rule from various forms of power and prestige, of domination and economic exploitation so common in our world.

Julian, James and Cathal, as you begin your new, privileged and challenging service of God's people, seek always "to bear witness to the truth" in everything you do and say. In that way, those whom you serve will hear and respond to the Lord's voice through you. "May God who has begun this good work in you bring it to fulfilment."

Poem for today

A Prayer on Going Into My House by William Butler Yeats

God grant a blessing on this tower and cottage
And on my heirs, if all remain unspoiled,
No table or chair or stool not simple enough

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For shepherd lads in Galilee; and grant
That I myself for portions of the year
May handle nothing and set eyes on nothing
But what the great and passionate have used
Throughout so many varying centuries
We take it for the norm; yet should I dream
Sinbad the sailor's brought a painted chest,
Or image, from beyond the Loadstone Mountain,
That dream is a norm; and should some limb of the Devil
Destroy the view by cutting down an ash
That shades the road, or setting up a cottage
Planned in a government office, shorten his life,
Manacle his soul upon the Red Sea bottom.

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