

Middleton Parish Newsletter
7th January 2024 – The Baptism of the Lord

Clergy in the Parish:

Priests: Rt. Rev. Msgr. Jim Killeen, P.P., V.G. 021-4631750
V. Rev. John Ryan, P.E., C.C. 086-2697503
Rev. Mark Hehir, C.C. 021-4621670
Rt. Rev. Msgr. Eamon Goold, P.E. 021-4633659

Deacon: Rev. Edward Mulhare.

Priest on Duty: 087-246 8234 (For emergencies and also arranging wedding bookings)

Parish Office: The Parish Office is open Monday to Thursday 10.30am to 1pm and Friday 10.30am to Noon. Parish website is middletonparish.ie and you can gain access to the webcam for Masses by logging on to the website.

Parish e-mail is middletonparishoffice@gmail.com

Sunday Masses: Holy Rosary – Vigil 6.10pm; Sunday morning 8am, 10am and Noon. Ballintotis – 10.30am.

Weekday Masses for this week: Monday to Friday 8am and 10am. Saturday 10am.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament: Monday to Friday 9am to 10pm

Closing Time of the Church: Holy Rosary is closed at 5pm.

Anniversaries: Donie Mahony, Mick Mulcahy, Anne McCarthy, Dr. Julian Williams, Rose McCarthy, Tom Dunne, Kitty Egan, Tom O'Brien, Maura Daly.

The Pope's Intentions for January 2024: *For the Gift of Diversity in the Church:* We pray that the Holy Spirit may help us to recognise the gift of different charisms within the Christian community and to discover the richness of different traditions and rituals in the Catholic Church.

The Liturgical Year:

In the Liturgical Year, the Church celebrates the whole mystery of Christ from the Incarnation to the day of Pentecost and the expectation of Christ's second coming. The summit of the Liturgical Year is the Easter Triduum. The presence of the Risen Lord and his saving work permeates the entire Liturgical Year: the year begins with Advent, then the Christmas Season. The Baptism of the Lord marks the end of the Christmas Season and Ordinary Time begins on Monday after the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. This year the readings for Sunday are from Cycle B and the weekday day readings are Cycle 2. Lent begins on Ash Wednesday (14th February this year) and brings us through to Holy Week and the Easter Triduum. The Easter Season runs from Easter Sunday (March 31st) through to Pentecost and then Ordinary Time begins again through to the week beginning with the Feast of Christ the King.

Feast Days: Saturday, January 13th, *St. Hilary*, c.315-67. He was elected bishop of Poitiers and distinguished himself by his stand against heresy. In exile (356-359) by order of Emperor Constantius, he used his time to write. His major works include a study of the Trinity.

Today, the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, celebrates the anointing of Jesus with the Spirit and his power. He is proclaimed Messiah. He then goes about his ministry doing good, working the signs that make him known as the Servant of God. He is the one who brings good news to the poor and tells of salvation. Through our Baptism each one of us becomes a child of God, linked to Christ, a dwelling place of the Spirit and a member of the Body of Christ, the People of God, the Church.

The Sacrament of Baptism: Baptism is the first sacrament received by Christians. Without it, reception of the others is not allowed (apart from matrimony, where dispensation is given for a non-Christian to marry a Catholic). In Ireland, most Catholics were baptised as infants.

When an adult is baptized, he or she receives the sacrament of baptism, the sacrament of confirmation and the sacrament of the Eucharist in the same Mass. A lot of parishes have experienced this at the Easter Vigil.

When it comes to the baptism of an infant, the child is usually presented for baptism by his or her parents. In some cases it could be a single parent or a guardian. There are a number of questions that can arise around baptisms. The names that are entered in the baptismal register are the child's Christian names and the surname on their birth cert. The names of the parents on the birth cert are entered in the baptismal register. In relation to godparents – how many can there be, can there be two godmothers, or two godfathers, or a non-Catholic, or an older sibling of the infant being baptised among others. The answers are: there has to be at least one, there are usually two and there is space in the baptismal registers for two; if there is one, they should be a practising Catholic; if there are two there should be one godmother and one godfather and at least one if not both should be practising Catholics. If it is a sibling they should be confirmed and it is recommended they should be practising and over 16.

In the sacrament, the parents take on the responsibility of being the first and most important teachers of their child in the practice of the faith and promise to live that role. It is fundamental to the development of the faith of the child. Within the baptismal rite there are a number of prayers and blessings that highlight this. The godparents promise to help the parents in that role – the role of godparent is not just a 'there at birthdays and Christmas and at big occasions and gift bearing'. Their role is to share their faith with their godchild. That is why they renew their own baptismal promises along with the parents stating what their Christian belief is and that they are willing to share that faith with the child they are standing with and for in the ceremony.

Included in the section leading up to the renewal of baptismal vows is the following directed at the parents and the godparents: *If your faith makes you ready to accept this responsibility, renew now the vows of your own baptism. Reject sin, profess your faith in Christ Jesus. This is the faith of the Church. this is the faith in which this child is about to be baptised.*" The last question posed to them before the child is actually baptised is *"Is it your will that (name of child) should be baptised in the faith of the Church, which we have all professed with you?"*

The declarations of faith made in the celebration of the sacrament are not just words to be said on the day but should be meant and lived by parents and godparents in order to be witnesses to that faith for the child they bring forward for baptism. It is more than just a day out for the family and a reunion for some but the sacrament that links us as children of God and brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ.

Quote for the Week: *"The chief service I owe you, O God, is that every thought and word of mine should speak of you."* - St. Hilary of Poitiers

Clarification on Envelopes for Church Collections Midleton Parish (including Ballintotis)

The envelope collection system to collect donations for Midleton Parish (including Ballintotis) commences on the first weekend of 2024.

The collection system is completely voluntary. If parishioners decide to use the new collection system, the parish will be able to claim tax back from the government for donations at no cost to the parishioners, provided you donate a total €250 or more over the year. This works out at €5 week more or less. The higher the amount in a year the more tax we can claim back.

Envelopes are supplied in a large rectangular box. When the large box is opened, it contains two separate smaller boxes with the envelopes. One of the smaller boxes contains envelopes for the first half of the year and the second box contains the envelopes for the second half of the year. Two different envelopes are provided for each Sunday of the calendar year.

The two different envelope types in each box which can be distinguished by the colour of the envelope and the text on the front of the envelope. The first envelope is for PARISH OFFERINGS, traditionally collected in the church door collection and used to run the parish needs such as maintenance of churches and other parish property, supplies for Masses and other parish essentials.

On most Sundays the second envelope is for the parish development fund, which will go mainly to specific projects such as running our new parish centre, new lighting and alarm system in the church as well as providing various courses for people. This corresponds to our second collection inside the church. On some Sundays the second collection will go to Diocesan special collections, or to general diocesan purposes. The purpose of each collection will be printed on the envelope, as well as the date. These collections were traditionally collected in the basket offering at the middle of the mass and are used to help finance diocesan activities such as retired priests, funding seminarians.

Parishioners can decide to continue to contribute in the traditional manner to collection boxes and baskets and not partake in the new system if they wish to do so. However, the parish will not benefit from a government contribution from donations contributed using the old system.

If a parishioner decides to use the new system, they must ensure to complete the card that has the number of their envelopes with the first contribution(s) and add it to one of the envelopes with their first contribution. Any amount can be contributed in one or both envelopes as a parishioner wishes to do so.

Collection of the envelopes with contributions can be accommodated in the box inside the door of the church or in the basket as it is passed around before the offertory at the Mass. It is not essential that envelopes are used at every Mass. If a parishioner misses a week or two, at the next contribution the envelopes with correct date on which the contribution is made should be used to help keep good records for the government tax claim at the end of the year. Unused dated envelopes can be disposed of. Care should be taken that a few missed contributions don't bring the total to less than €250 over the year.

Midleton parish and the Diocese of Cloyne are extremely grateful for the support which our parishioners give to enable the parish to function effectively. The new collection system is not asking parishioners to contribute any more than previously donated to the parish. The introduction of the new system to collect parishioner contributions is essentially a method to help the parish and the diocese gain extra income using current tax legislation and is already used in many other parishes.