



St. Mary's R. C. Church

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Newsletter

Fifth Sunday of the Year

February 4th 2024

My dear parishioners at St. Mary's and St. Paul's,

I hope this finds you and your families all well as we move into February and we glimpse the lengthening of the evening light and the promise that Spring is drawing closer, with its abundant new life, when all again feels possible.

In recent weeks I have mentioned to you that Bishop Toal would like every parish to take part in a pastoral renewal project and by way of preparation the diocesan office sends this message:

'Wellspring' – *This is a word we hope you will become familiar with.* It is the title of our new diocesan renewal project which launches next week, on the Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes. It is taken from the medieval *'Our Lady's Well'*, which gives its name to the town and diocese of Motherwell. The image of water and Our Lady is familiar to us from Lourdes, where Our Lady caused a spring of water to gush forth for St. Bernadette to wash and drink. In fact, over the years millions of pilgrims, young and old, have travelled to Lourdes to be spiritually refreshed and thankfully this continues to the present day.

Water is a symbol of the Lord's healing, forgiveness and life-giving power. Perhaps more importantly, *'Wellspring'* invites us to think about our own baptism, that sacred moment when water was poured over our head and we were baptized into the life of the Blessed Trinity, the Mystery of Divine Love, and united to Christ, body and soul, in life and in death, in a bond that is steadfast; we also became a living member of the church, deeply united with all who belong to Christ, the living and the departed. This means our task in life is not to be in competition with others but rather to be in *communion* with them and indeed with the whole of creation. The waters of our baptism remain forever *a Wellspring of grace*. It's a beautiful image! This Wellspring lives within us, seeking to refresh and renew with the mystery of Christ and his gospel. We pray that through *Wellspring* our diocese will experience a new and abundant spring of living water.

The launch of Wellspring coincides with the beginning of Lent and I invite you to look forward to those special weeks by taking home the letter from SCIAF, containing your *WEE BOX*, which helps bring about a *Big Change* for some of the poorest people in our world. I invite you to see the wee box as *sacred* and to find a special place for it in your home. In doing so we are inviting some of the poorest people in our world into our home and into our lives and we too take a step into their lives. It's about *communion* and *solidarity*!

This years project focuses on the women and girls of Rwanda, who often have very difficult lives through gender-based violence; they are also less likely to receive an education, get a job, and earn money to meet their basic needs. *They are waiting on us. Let's not disappoint them!*

Father O'Brien

I offer here the times of the Liturgy for the coming week:

Monday February 5th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40am Confessions at 6.30-7.50pm; Novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help at 7pm

Tuesday February 6th: Requiem Mass for Mrs. Edwina Ward at 10am

Wednesday February 7th: Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40am

Thursday February 8th Mass at St. Mary's at 10am

Rosary at 9.40am

The next coffee morning will be Sunday 18th February, after the 9am Mass and 10.30am Mass. Please come around to the hall and enjoy some tea/coffee/juice toast and home-baking. A small selection of Fairtrade food and crafts will be on sale, including Fairtrade Easter Eggs; these are the only eggs to come with a booklet telling the Easter story.

CREDO, the parish faith-sharing group meets this Tuesday in the parish meeting room at 1 o'clock; new members are always welcome and some tea and biscuits are shared together at the end of the meeting.

St. Mary and St. Paul's Walking Group meets on Tuesday mornings at 11am outside the Museum at the bottom of Muir Street; new participants are always welcome and after the walk, which lasts for one hour, some gather in the coffee shop at the Museum.

Recently Deceased: Edwina Ward, William Higgins, Theresa Henderson-Forsyth, John Fegan, Paul O'Keane, Mary McGowan, Margaret Semple, Eileen Haggarty, Alex Belmas-Carroll, Alfredo Guerra Marraro, John Connor, Frances Howden, Rose Herraghty, Patricia Stewart, Martin Francis Cullen

Special Remembrance: Laraine Fox, Dan Daly, Diane Daly, Alex and Agnes Grant, Jean McAvoy, David McManus, Marian and Robert Gallacher and all our deceased relatives and friends and the benefactors of St. Mary's and St. Paul's.

A Prayer for the Success of 'Project Wellspring'

*Grant us O merciful God
that our offering may find
acceptance with you
and that through it
the **Wellspring** of all blessing may be laid open before us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen*