

# Laragh Parish Newsletter

Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2020 – Feast of Corpus Christi

## The Love that Moves the Sun and Stars

On July 20<sup>th</sup> 1969 Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin became the first human beings to walk on the surface of the moon. Less well-known is the fact that Aldrin celebrated a communion service before he left the lunar module. He began by saying over the radio, 'This is the LM pilot. I'd like to take this opportunity to ask every person listening in, whoever and wherever they may be, to pause for a moment and contemplate the events of the past few hours and to give thanks in his or her own way'. He had intended to broadcast the whole ceremony but NASA asked him not to do so because it was embroiled in a legal battle with a famous American atheist over an earlier broadcast in which astronauts had read passages from the Bible. In the radio silence that followed his announcement, Buzz Aldrin took the consecrated bread and wine and read from the Gospel of John, 'I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever abides in me will bring forth much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing.' He then consumed the host and drank from the chalice he had brought with him.

Later he described what was going through his head at the time. 'I gave thanks for the intelligence and spirit that had brought two young pilots to the Sea of Tranquillity. It was interesting for me to think: the very first liquid ever poured on the moon, and the very first food eaten there, were the communion elements. And of course, it's interesting to think that some of the first words spoken on the moon were the words of Jesus Christ, who made the earth and the moon - and who, in the immortal words of Dante, is himself the 'Love that moves the sun and other stars.'

The practice of receiving communion in space has been repeated a number of times since. In April 1994, for instance, three astronauts on the Space Shuttle Endeavour had a communion service early one Sunday morning. One of them wrote an account of it later. After receiving, 'as we meditated quietly in the darkened cockpit, a dazzling white light burst through space and into the cabin. Pure radiance from the risen sun streamed through Endeavour's forward windows and bathed us in warmth. What else could this be but a sign - God's gentle affirmation of our union with him...We are designed to be awed in space. If our imperfect species has found such glimmers of delight in our first tentative encounter with the cosmos, then we have truly found a most caring and generous God.'

## GENERAL NOTICES

- 1. Return to Public Celebrations:** As you know, public Masses will recommence on Monday, June 29<sup>th</sup>. It should be noted that people will not be obliged to attend Sunday Mass as long as the crisis lasts. In fact, anyone who has an underlying health condition or who has had recent contact with a Covid patient is actively encouraged not to attend. They can continue to participate via webcam, social media, TV or radio. The Bishops have issued their framework document setting out guidelines for our celebrations. Not all of these should apply to us but we will keep an open mind on the matter as we discover how best to implement them. The obvious ones are physical distancing and hygiene. In the next couple of weeks, we will examine the layout of each Church and decide which seats will have to be closed off and how spacing within seats can be organised. It will probably be necessary to have markers on seats. Families, of course, will be able to sit together but otherwise people should observe physical distancing according to government regulations at that particular time. Before we recommence Masses, we should be able to estimate the number of people that can be safely accommodated in each church. Time will tell whether we've got that right. We wouldn't wish to exclude anyone who arrives for Mass but we would ask you to act responsibly if you are informed or can see that the Church is 'full'. Sanitisers will be available at the entrances to the Churches. Seats will be cleaned after every Mass. Holy water fonts will not be in use. All collections will take place at Church doors. Missalettes/newsletters should be safely disposed of after Mass. Please do not leave them behind you on the seat. More details next week.
- 2. Baptisms:** A few babies have been waiting patiently to be baptised. I have good news for them. Baptisms will recommence from the beginning of July. Their parents can ring me at 086 0422996 to arrange a suitable date.
- 3. Confirmation/First Communion:** Confirmation will take place around the end of August/beginning of September. I will try to have a definite date fairly soon. First Communion will take place in Laragh on 10<sup>th</sup> October and in Cliffrerna on 17<sup>th</sup> October.
- 4. Walk in aid of Cavan General Hospital and Cavan Ambulance:** Mary McDermott is undertaking a 5km Walk to raise funds for the "Front Line" of Cavan General Hospital. To make a donation please contact her on 087 418 4747. Anyone wishing to join her on the walk can do so on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> June at 12noon from Laragh Church. Social distancing measures will apply.
- 5. Laragh United GFC Lotto Results:** No jackpot winner. 1, 20, 21, 25. €30 winners Eamon Sexton, Seamus Duffy, Mark Sheils, Siobhan Murray and Carmel Masterson. Next week's jackpot €16,800. Tickets can be purchased online.

---

### Your Prayers are Requested for the Souls of the late:

- **Peggy McDonnell (nee Sexton), Dublin and late of Greaghagibney**, whose funeral took place on Thursday. We extend our sympathy to Anne, Dermot and Sharon Sexton, Greaghagibney and family.
- **Michael Cusack, Grellagh**, whose funeral took place on Thursday. We extend our sympathy to his brother Patsy, nieces Marion Kelly and Bernadette Brady, Drumcalpin, Carmel McCaffrey, nephew Matthew McCaffrey, Edrans and family circle.