

Laragh Parish Newsletter

Sunday 11th October 2020 – 28th Sunday in Ordinary Time

The God of Invitations

How do you view your Christian faith? As a burden or as a gift? Many Christians used to see it as a necessary burden, a list of do's and don'ts you signed up to in the hope of getting into heaven. In recent times, the burden seems to have eased a lot. The do's, like going to Mass, praying, confessing sins, have become less important. The don'ts, like telling lies, being unfaithful, getting your own back, no longer seem nearly as bad as they used to. The Church seems to have eased up a little. Now the message is that God is all-forgiving. So we don't worry the way previous generations did. God will find a place for us all at the heavenly banquet.

Is this new model of faith an advance on the old one? Hardly. The old God, for all his faults, was a real tiger, powerful and fearsome; contemplating his existence was enough to keep us in line. The new God is not a tiger at all, more like a dotty, toothless old man dressed up in a tiger costume, inspiring neither fear nor admiration.

Today's Gospel, the parable of the King inviting people to his son's wedding feast, wants to set the record straight. God is not like a tiger; tigers are solitary animals. God is more like a lion, the Lion King, if you will, who invites all of us to be part of his pride/family. This invitation is not a casual 'Would you like to be part of my gang?' request. It is an invitation to discover who we really are, lion cubs made in the image and likeness of the Lion King. There is really no other point to our lives than the discovery of this identity. We may see ourselves as successful farmers, priests, businessmen, teachers, engineers etc. but none of this means anything if it doesn't help us become what we truly are, children of God. Faith in this context can never be a burden but a gift that unlocks the secret of our identity. The commandments in this context can never be seen as obstacles to our happiness. They are the footprints of the Lion King leading us to a place of safety, freedom and joy.

GENERAL NOTICES

- 1. Masses:** In the event that the four Archbishops are not successful in persuading the Government to restore religious services, those who have booked Anniversary Masses during this period should note that their intentions will be honoured at private Masses offered on the appropriate days. (Please do not send in stipends for these Masses.)
- 2. World Mission Sunday:** 18th October: This Sunday is Pope Francis' annual appeal for spiritual and financial support for the life-giving work of overseas missionaries. In 2020 that work is under threat as a result of the cessation of religious services. Fewer envelopes will be handed in and collections will be seriously depleted. Tragically, this will happen just at the moment when Covid-19 has added a new challenge to the difficulties our missionaries are facing. Our appeal is a twofold one. If you can afford it, please increase your Mission Sunday contribution for this year. Second, in this month of the Rosary, please offer a decade or a full Rosary every day for the success of the Missions.
- 3. Bishop's Visit:** If level 3 restrictions remain in place for the next few weeks, Bishop Martin Hayes will obviously not be able to celebrate Mass with us on Sunday, 25th October.
- 4. First Communion:** Congratulations to the following children in Laragh School who celebrated their First Holy Communion on Tuesday evening last: Packie Brady, Michael Clarke, Luke Cusack, Niamh Fox, Chloe Gilsean, Ava Hennessy, Chloe McCabe, Emma Ormiston, Lily Reilly, Harry Robins, Ciara Rudden, Kyra Sexton, Mecheile Tas.
- 5. First Confession:** 11 children in Clifflerna School celebrated their first confession last Tuesday. We hope and pray that they will be able to celebrate their First Holy Communion in the near future.
- 6. Baptism:** The Christian Community welcomes with joy Baby Kacey Michael Brady, Drumanarragh, who was baptised in St. Brigid's Church, Laragh on Sunday last.
- 7. Laragh United GFC Lotto Results:** No jackpot winner. Numbers were 3, 12, 16, 21. €30 Rosemary Donohoe, Tony Mannering, Sally Robins, Noelle Cooney, Alison Rudden. Next week's jackpot €5,800. Tickets can be purchased online.