

## Whose Side is God on?

The Book of Jonah features in the readings today. It's one of the shortest books in the Bible - about two pages long - yet it's one of the best known. Everybody remembers the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale and living in its belly for three days and three nights. But the heart of the book is about Nineveh, the capital of the Assyrian empire. The Assyrians were the most violent and feared people of the ancient world. The Jewish people hated them with a passion because they had destroyed their northern kingdom, Israel, and almost captured Jerusalem. Jonah is afraid that the Lord's command that he preach against them will be just the excuse God needs to show mercy to them. His attempt to avoid this commission leads to his being swallowed by the whale. Jonah's fears are well-founded. When he finally agrees to preach to the Ninevites, they repent and God forgives them. Jonah is furious. The book ends with God justifying his actions to Jonah. His argument is that he cannot destroy Nineveh, turning his back on such a huge number of people 'who cannot tell their right hand from their left', not to mention all their animals. That final touch, 'the animals', highlights the essential message: that God loves all that he has created with an everlasting love.

The Book of Jonah is a fable written by a Jew to tell us that we should never believe that God hates our enemies as we do. This was a lesson constantly underlined by Abraham Lincoln during the American Civil War. On one occasion when the Union troops were suffering a series of defeats at the hands of the Confederates, a friend of his tried to console him by saying, 'I hope the Lord is on our side'. Lincoln replied, 'I don't share your hope'. The friend expressed his astonishment. Lincoln explained, 'I am not at all concerned about that, for we know that the Lord is always on the side of the right. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I, and the nation, should be on the Lord's side.'

So the real question is not, 'Whose side is God on?' since he is not on any side. The real question is, 'Whose side are we on?'. The side of conflict or the side of peace? The side of vengeance or the side of mercy? The side of self-interest or the side of God?

# Laragh Parish Newsletter



Website: [www.laraghparish.com](http://www.laraghparish.com)

Email: [laraghnewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:laraghnewsletter@gmail.com)

Kilmore Website: [www.kilmorediocese.ie](http://www.kilmorediocese.ie)

### Clergy & Pastoral Care

Fr Brian Flynn	049 4330142	Mobile	086 0422996
Fr Liam Kelly	049 5553035	Mobile	087 9877739
Fr Yusuf Bamai	049 5553218	Mobile	089 9645065
Fr John Cooney	049 5552163	Mobile	086 8755695

### Emergency Numbers

Cavan Gardai	049 4368800	Doc-on-Call	1850 777911
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**24<sup>th</sup> January 2021 – Third Sunday in Ordinary Time**

### Prayer to St. Joseph

God, our heavenly Father,  
grant us the fortitude of Christ your son  
to face the Covid-19 crisis  
with trust, patience and compassion.  
Give us the grace of the Holy Spirit  
to free us from fear  
and look forward together to the future  
with healing and hope.  
Through the intercession of St. Joseph,  
the guardian of Jesus, and Mary,  
the mother of Jesus and mother of the Church,  
may we be guided through this time of peril.  
Preserve us in peace; protect the vulnerable;  
keep safe our health care workers  
and all who serve society,  
at home and abroad.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen

## GENERAL NOTICES

### Mass Intentions

Since early last year, Fr Brian has been offering Masses for all those who have had anniversaries booked. He will continue to say these privately until we can return to the churches as a congregation. The following Masses are booked and will be offered in the coming week:

Monica & Ben Smith, Tullyinchin A/V  
PJ Duffy, Clifferna A/V  
John King, Tunnyconnolly A/V

*Anyone wishing to book a Mass can do so in the normal way.*

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#### Your prayers are requested for the souls of the late:

- **Paddy Fitzpatrick, Donnybrook, Dublin and late of Tullyinchin Lower**, whose funeral took place on Saturday. Sympathy is extended to his wife and family circle.
- **Pamela O' Donovan, Athy**, whose funeral took place on Wednesday in Athy. We extend our sympathy to her sister Mrs Mona O' Reilly and family, Stradone.
- **Eugene Gaffney, Mountnugent**, whose funeral took place yesterday in St. Brigid's Church, Mountnugent. We extend our sympathy to his daughter Eileen and family, Corgreagh.
- **Tom Salmon, London**, whose funeral will take place in London. Sympathy is extended to Gerard and the Sexton family, Greaghagibney.

**And all those who have died recently**

**May they Rest in Peace**

1. **St. Patrick's Church, Carrickallen - Crib Donations:** A very special thank you to all those who contributed to the collection box in the crib. €180 has been forwarded to Trocaire.
2. **Broadcast Masses:** We hope to begin broadcasting Masses from Laragh Church in the coming weeks. You will be able to access the Mass on [churchtv.ie](http://churchtv.ie). Further details will be made available shortly.
3. **St. Brigid's Day – Candlemas – St Blaise:** Anyone wishing to have St. Brigid's Day Crosses or Candles blessed can leave them in front of the altar by next Sunday evening. More details on the blessing next week.
4. **Catholic Schools Week:** A Diocesan Mass for all Post-Primary Students, Staff, Parents/Guardians to mark Catholic Schools Week will be celebrated in the Cathedral of SS. Patrick and Felim, Cavan, at 11am on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The celebrant will be Bishop Martin Hayes. The Mass can be viewed by logging on to: [www.churchservices.tv/cavancathedral](http://www.churchservices.tv/cavancathedral)
5. **Cold Spell:** Met Eireann are forecasting a cold week ahead with snow and icy conditions. Please take care on the roads and look in for your elderly neighbours.
6. **Week of Prayer for Christian Unity:** takes place from 18<sup>th</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> January. The theme that was chosen, "Abide in my love and you shall bear much fruit", is based on John 15:1-17.
7. **Covid 19 Pandemic:** Thankfully the numbers have started to reduce, but sadly we are seeing more people dying from the virus. Please continue to act responsibly to minimise the risk of contracting the disease or infecting others. If you feel unwell in any way or if you have been in touch with a positive case, please isolate in your own home.
8. **Laragh United GFC Lotto Results:** No jackpot winner. Winning numbers 6, 7, 15, 29. €30 winners Teresa McGuigan, Online, Denis Sherry, Knockateggart, Eugene Markey, Canningstown, Stephanie Smith, Carriga, Lee & Natasha Reilly, Drumcrow. Next week's draw €8,800. Many thanks for your continued support.
9. **ALONE:** Manage a national support line and additional supports for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to COVID-19 (Coronavirus). Professional staff available to answer queries and give advice and reassurance. The support line is open seven days a week, 8am - 8pm by calling 0818 222 024.
10. **Useful Telephone Numbers:**  
**ALONE** (Support for Elderly): 0818 222024  
**AWARE** (Support for anxious/depressed): 1800 80 48 48  
**TEARMANN** (Domestic Abuse): 085 8102433  
**PIETA** (Mental Health) 1800 247 247  
**SAMARITANS** (Someone to Talk to) 116 123