

2023 has been another blessed year in Saint Eugene's Parish. We are truly blessed with so many people who give their time so generously and to have our retired priests living among us who serve their parish so faithfully. As we begin 2024, we ask God's blessing and thank Him for the gift of 2023.

"May the Lord bless you and keep you.

May the Lord let his face shine on you and be gracious to you.

May the Lord uncover his face to you and bring you peace."

(Book of Numbers 6: 24-26)

A short reflection on today's Gospel Luke 2:22-40

Today's Gospel witnesses the rewards of a steadfast faith and lives lived in willing service to God. It tells the story of the upright Simeon and Anna who patiently await the birth of the promised child who would be the 'light to enlighten the pagans, and the glory of God's people Israel.'

Now Simeon had been promised by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death until he had set eyes on the Christ of the Lord. He had been prompted by that same Holy Spirit to come to the Temple that day, and when he laid eyes on the child, Jesus, who was being presented by his parents in accordance with Jewish law, he took him into his arms, blessed God and exclaimed: 'Now, Master, you can let your servant go in peace, just as you promised, because my eyes have seen the salvation which you have prepared for all the nations to see.' The waiting was over. The Son of God was in the world, never to leave. Simeon can rest in peace and Anna can proclaim the Good News to all who listen. God's infinite love for us has borne beautiful fruit in the shape of a tiny vulnerable child, a child who will one day willingly sacrifice his life for our salvation.

Jesus, may we always be aware of your presence in our lives, within us and around us, closer to us than our own breath, loving us and willing us never to despair, never to lose faith, willing us to be as steadfast and as upright in our lives as the good Simeon and Anna of today's Gospel.

National Year of Prayer for Vocations to the Diocesan Priesthood – Lord, bless our diocesan seminarians and those discerning their vocation with the faith, hope, and trust of Abraham, Sarah, Mary, and Joseph, and with the Spirit of wisdom that filled the boy Jesus.

Sunday 31st (New Year's Eve) There will be exposition of the Blessed Sacrament immediately after the 7.00pm Mass concluding with Rosary and Benediction at 11.45pm to welcome in the New Year.

Monday 1st January Mass at 12 noon.

Normal weekday Mass times will resume on Tuesday 2nd January – 8.00am, 10.00am & 7.30pm

Sympathy

We offer our sympathy to the family and friends of:

Rhona McCay

Paul McShane

Ann Burns

Edward Devine

Jean McCafferty

Paul Keenan

May they rest in peace

Anniversaries

Please pray for the repose of the souls of:

Rose McCauley

Jim Sharkey

May they rest in peace

Baptisms

We welcome as members of God's family:

Sofia Bridget MacFarland

Collection

Last week's collection: £4,452

Parish Development: £1,025

Thank you for your generosity

Thank you

Thank you

Fr Farren acknowledges with thanks the following donations for:

SVdP: £100, £10, £40, £500

Mary's Meals: £100

Trócaire: £20, £500

Children in Crossfire: £50

Cathedral Funds: £10, £20

Hungry Children: £10

The Matt Talbot Mass will be celebrated here in St Eugene's Cathedral on Tuesday 2nd January at 7.30pm. The Matt Talbot Prayer Society was created to pray for people who are suffering from any form of addiction, to pray for those recovering from addiction, and to pray for all those affected by addiction, especially family members.

To join the Matt Talbot Prayer Society, you are invited to enrol the name of the person to be prayed for and the addiction we are praying that they will be freed from. Those enrolled will be prayed for specifically every day by members of the Matt Talbot Prayer Society. Mass will also be offered for those enrolled on the first Monday of every month here in St Eugene's Cathedral at 7.30pm. To enrol someone in the Matt Talbot Prayer Society please email vita@matttalbotprayersociety.com or private message St Eugene's Cathedral Facebook page or phone St Eugene's Cathedral at 028 71262894/71365712.

Feast of the Epiphany, Saturday 6th January 2024 is a Holyday of Obligation. Mass times for the Feast of the Epiphany are as follows:

Friday: Vigil Masses at 6.15pm and 7.30pm

Saturday: Masses at 7.00am, 9.30am, 11.00am and 12.30pm

There will be a collection for Parish Missionaries Overseas at all Masses on the Feast of the Epiphany. If you wish to nominate a priest or nun who has family connections in the Parish for financial support, please email their name and contact details to cathedral@derrydiocese.org

Today, on this Feast of the Holy Family we pray for foster carers, and that more people will consider fostering as an option, to generously opening their hearts and their homes to provide care, support and love to children in need. Foster carers are ordinary people who make an extraordinary difference to the lives of those children and young people who, for a variety of reasons, are unable to live with their birth families. There are many challenges and reasons leading to children and young people requiring foster care: sometimes material poverty and hardship; sometimes parental struggles due to relationship difficulties or addictions.

Unfortunately, there are times when there are no available spaces for foster care placements. The HSC NI Foster Team is urgently seeking more people to think seriously about fostering. On this Feast of the Holy Family, do you think you can make that extraordinary difference to a child's life? If you think you can help or if you have any questions at all in relation to fostering, please contact the Team: Tel 0800 0720 137 or email info@fostering.hscni.net

First Saturday Rosary, Saturday the 6th of January at 1.00pm in Market square, Letterkenny.

Pre-School or Primary One places for September 2024. There are three excellent Catholic Schools in the Parish, which take both boys and girls. The three schools are St Anne's Primary School (Tel no 71 263046) St Eugene's Primary School (Tel no 71 261601) and Rosemount Primary School (Tel no 71 265605). Nursery class places are available in St Eugene's and Rosemount Primary Schools. If your child is starting pre-school or primary school in September 2024, you can apply online for their place at www.eani.org.uk/parents/admissions. The closing date for applications is 12 noon on Friday 26th January 2024.

Foyle Hospice Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme is now open. The scheme helps Foyle Hospice secure much needed funds whilst offering people the opportunity to have their tree disposed of in an environmentally friendly way, for a suggested donation of £10. Shredded trees are then used in our gardens throughout the year. Trees can be registered for collection through the website - foylehospice.com - or by calling Foyle Hospice fundraising office on 02871 359888. Registration closes on 7th January 2024.

St Eugene's Cathedral is monitored by CCTV cameras and by two live streaming cameras. Live streaming can be viewed online at www.churchservices.tv, www.watchmcnmedia or the parish website. The Diocese of Derry Privacy Notice is displayed on the parish website and Cathedral notice board, or you may obtain a copy from the Parish Office.

Safeguarding Notice: If you have any concerns regarding the Safeguarding of children or adults in need of protection within the Church please contact Marie Gormley, the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP) at 07596500793 or at mariegormley@derrydiocese.org or contact the Safeguarding Office, Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry, BT48 6UJ or PSNI (Police Service of Northern) 101 or Social Services: Gateway Services, Western HSC Trust, 71314090 and ask for the Duty Social Worker.

Priests: Fr Paul Farren, Fr Shaun Doherty