

Sunday 12th December 2021

Parish Newsletter

Advent Prayer Service: Our Advent prayer service continues on Monday here in the Cathedral after the 5.45pm Mass.

Reflection: "John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, 'Are you the Coming One, or do we look for another?'" The Gospels are wonderfully honest about the human reality we all share. Whether it's Peter's lack of faith, the doubts of Thomas, who wouldn't believe unless he could put a finger into the wounds of Jesus, or the fears of John that he had made a mistake in pointing to Jesus as the Messiah, there is a deep and profound awareness running through the Gospels that God's love for us is greater than our doubts, our questions or our lack of faith. How comforting that must be for all of us.

The answer Jesus sent back to John is also perfect. He doesn't complain about being questioned or doubted. He doesn't express anger or disappointment. Instead, he answers simply and truthfully, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Luke 7:19, 22) We have so much to learn from this great and colourful man of the Gospels. It is not an accident that we meet him twice during Advent. Just as John was chosen to recognise Jesus as the Messiah, we too, this Christmas morning, can pray that we will recognise the child in the crib as God coming among us out of a love beyond all telling.



Redemptoris Mater Seminary

Christmas Carols Celebration

Thursday 16th December 2021

At 7 pm

***Venue: Our Lady of Lourdes Church,
Childers Road, Limerick.***

Free Admission



TROCAIRE
Working for a Just World

Gifts of Love Christmas Appeal

When you buy a Trócaire Gift of Love, your money goes to the developing world .

Gifts will be available to purchase in the Cathedral over this weekend the 11th/12th December, and will also be available to purchase in the Cathedral shop in the lead up to Christmas.

Gifts can be ordered online at <https://trocaire.org/gifts> or by calling **1850 408408**.

Trócaire envelopes are available at the back of the Cathedral .



Weekly Envelope Boxes

The new boxes of Weekly envelopes for 2022 are now available for collection from the Sacristy. If you would like to contribute through the weekly envelope system please call to Kieran at the Sacristy or ring Parish Office 061 414624.



Split the Pot

Congratulations to **Sean Dean** the winner of last weekend's draw (5th Dec).

Draw envelopes are available at the back of the church.

Parish History - St John's Cathedral Limerick Part 20The Legacy and Voice

As we draw this series of articles to a close there are so many aspects of the glorious building that we have left undiscovered, incomplete, or unfinished. There are aspects that I really want to explore more deeply including the stories behind, and an in-depth exploration, of the meanings behind each of the stained glass windows.

I want to understand why the companies chosen to supply each of the elements of the building were picked. I would also like to understand and map the graves of those men buried inside the walls of the cathedral. I firmly believe that there are memories of the physical building of the cathedral passed down through the lore of families and that there are undiscovered documents and accounts that will either add to, discount, or illuminate some of what I have written. If you are in possession of any of this material I would deeply love to engage with it.

Since 1861 St John's has been "present" for the people of Limerick literally from the beginning to the end of their lives. It has seen many joyful occasions, many tragic and sombre days. It has been there for great shows of devotion and watched generations of great people live their lives in the shadow of the tower. The diocese has had ten bishops in its lifetime, nine of those were consecrated within its walls and to date eight of them were interred after Requiem Mass in the building. There have been over one hundred priests who have served the Parish and thousands of Parishioners who have worshipped there. In my lifetime I have seen floods, fires all manner of difficulties with the building. But in its time the cathedral has been ever-present in the lives of those with a connection to its presence. Being from St John's identifies you, we get to share our parish church with the whole diocese but deep down we are proud that when the bell tolls that it is the good people of our parish that hear it.

Before we finish it would be remiss of me not to explore one final element of our great building. Above the great entrance door as you come in through the porch is the organ loft. Accessed by a stone spiral staircase and with panoramic views of the building and its features it houses the organ. This instrument is what gives a voice to the cathedral. Originally installed after being donated by Lord Dunraven, it replaced the original organ that had been transferred from the old penal church and which served the new cathedral for a short number of years. Organs by their construction operate by blowing air through pipes of different gauges, sizes, and apertures each one creating a unique and tuned musical note. There are 2288 pipes in the cathedral organ and the size of those units vary from 16 feet to 1 and a half inches in height. Traditionally the air was compressed by someone physically operating the bellows while the organ was being played and St. John's organ was no different though through many overhauls and refits the action of the bellows was completely electrified. There are two huge bellows units attached to the instrument so large that they required 26 sheepskin coverings to finish and they are weighted by weights of nearly a half-ton to provide the air compression needed. These bellows provide the necessary air to the organ through 7-inch and 4-inch air hoses. The Organ in St John's has a very unusual feature in that it has three manuals (keyboards) incorporated into two with the capacity to switch one of the manuals to a different "voice" with the flick of a switch. This is the only organ in Ireland that has this feature.

The total weight of the instrument is 15 tons and it was constructed by the premier organ manufacturer in the world at the time of manufacture, William Hill and Sons of Spilsby, Lincolnshire England.

It features wooden panels of seasoned pine and measures 30 feet high and 25 feet wide and it is widely regarded as one of the best in the country.

Lastly, it has been my pleasure to share my love of the parish church of my original home and to indulge my passion for this part of the history of our ancient and learned city (Urbs Antiqua Fuit). To those who have journeyed with me through this history over the past 20 weeks, I thank you and to Dr. Matthew Potter of Limerick Museum and Tom Donovan of The Old Limerick Journal who indulged me by answering queries I am deeply indebted. This project has whetted my appetite to revisit many of the great characters and events that I have discovered along the way..

George Lee drombanna@gmail.com



Cathedral House, Cathedral Place, Limerick. Tel: 061-414624
admin@stjohnscathedrallimerick.com / web www.stjohnscathedrallimerick.com