

Background on Today's Gospel Reading

Today's Gospel continues our reading from Mark and describes what some believe was likely to have been a typical day in Jesus' ministry. Jesus and the disciples that chose to follow him in last week's Gospel arrive at Capernaum, a small village on the Sea of Galilee. Jesus teaches in the synagogue on the Sabbath. Mark reports that the people respond to Jesus' teaching with astonishment, noting Jesus' authority and contrasting it with the scribes'. Early in Mark's Gospel we already find evidence of the tension that will manifest itself fully in Jerusalem.

After Jesus' preaching, an even more astonishing thing happens. A man possessed with an unclean spirit calls out to Jesus. As we see in this example and throughout Mark's Gospel, the spirits and demons seem to know Jesus and are often fearful of him. In fact, they seem to understand Jesus' identity better than his disciples. As we will read again and again in Mark's Gospel, Jesus orders the spirit to be quiet and drives the unclean spirit out of the man. Jesus' ability to heal those possessed by demons is an indication of his power over evil.

In the prescientific age of Jesus' time, all illnesses were understood to be manifestations of evil and sinfulness. Our modern understanding of illness is very different. Possession by unclean spirits may have been a way to describe what we might call mental illness today. It may have even been a way of describing certain kinds of physical conditions. There is evidence that there were many kinds of exorcists and healers in first-century Palestine. Jesus appears to be like these healers, but he heals with unique authority and connects his healing activities with the words of his preaching.

We are missing the point that Mark is trying to make in this Gospel, however, if we try to explain away the healing work of Jesus. The crowds see in Jesus' cure of the possessed man further affirmation of his authority. Jesus' power to heal gives greater credence to his teaching. Jesus impresses the crowds through his words, which are manifested with power in his deeds. Mark's Gospel tells us that because of the authority with which he healed, Jesus' fame spread throughout all of Galilee.

Kilkenny Gospel Choir

The annual St. Brigid's Day service will be live via webcam from St. Patrick's Parish Church on Monday, 1st February at 7.30pm. Click on stpatricksparishkilkenny.com. This year without a congregation the service will pray the protection of St. Brigid on all of us.

Address: St John's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Kilkenny. **Email:** stjohns@ossory.ie

Website: stjohnskilkenny.com

Office: 056 772 1072; **Secretary:** Áine Butler; **Office Hours:** Mon-Fri 9.30 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.

Newsletter Deadline: Thursdays 12.00 noon **SVP Help Line:** 086 895 1239

Fr Dan Carroll: 087 907 7769; Fr Brian Griffin: 087 064 4158; Fr Lorcan Moran: 086 855 0521

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL:

Fergal Brennan; Mary Brennan; Alan Burke; Fr Dan Carroll; Margaret Cleere; Fr Brian Griffin; Fr Lorcan Moran; Iris O'Flynn; Karena Phelan.

SAFEGUARDING:

IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN CONTACT

The Diocesan Designated Liaison Person, Mr Cathal Cullen, 087 100 0232 - dlp@ossory.ie

OUR PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVES ARE:

Mary Weadick; Máirín Bergin; Brenda Whitely; Marian Eardly.

Roman Catholic Diocese and Parishes of Ossory - Registered Charity No. 20015831

PARISH OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST

incorporating | St John's | Dunmore | Johnswell | church areas

MASS TIMES (During Covid-19 Restrictions)

St John's – Sundays & Holy Days: Vigil: 6.00pm; Sun: 8.00am, 11.30am & 7.00pm.

Polish Mass: 2nd Sun. Monthly, 1.00pm; **Weekdays:** 8.00am, 10.30am. (Sat. 10.30am only).

Johnswell - Sunday 10.00am

Dunmore - Sunday 11.00am

4th Sunday of Ordinary Time - 31st January 2021

Genuine Authority

We probably wouldn't have to think too hard to come with examples of people who seem to fit the above description. Puffed up with a sense of their own importance, they are anxious to be seen as the expert on everything, in spite of limited knowledge or experience. We tend to criticise politicians and other public figures if we feel they are blind to the struggles of ordinary people. They don't know what it's like, to example, to live on a minimum wage, to care for a family member with a disability, or to be at risk of homelessness. On the other hand, it is refreshing when those in power have either faced some of these issues themselves or have made the effort to do some research and really listen to people. We can tell when someone is speaking with genuine authority, care and compassion.

In today's gospel, those who listen to Jesus' teaching in the synagogue know there is something different and exciting about him. His teaching is in sharp contrast to the scribes they are used to hearing, and makes a deep impression on them. The difference, as stated twice in this passage, is his authority and it leaves his audience 'astonished'. He does not use his position the way we might use our 'little brief authority' to make ourselves look good. Instead he uses his authority to serve, to love, and to bring mercy and freedom.

Masses Celebrated Online Only

Our Sunday, weekday and funeral Masses are broadcast on our webcam at stjohnskilkenny.com and on radio at 106.8fm and we invite you to join in our parish worship. Please note that outside of Mass times our churches will remain open for private prayer.

An Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus,

I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.

I love You above all things,
and I desire to receive You into my soul.

Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.

I embrace You as if You were already there
and unite myself wholly to You.

Never permit me to be separated from You.

Amen.

Bereavements

Recently Deceased:

Thomas (Tom) Walsh, Newtown, Newpark Upper.
Tilly Fox (nee Murphy), Waterford and formerly New Orchard.
Tom Hurley, Cuffesgrange. Michael Delaney, London.
Patrick McDonald, Glendine Heights. Noel Doran, Kilkenny.

Months Mind: Gerard Lannigan.

Anniversaries: Annie Moynihan, JJ & PJ McKenzie, Carol Shaw. May they rest in peace.

**Those we love don't go away,
they walk beside us every day.
Unseen, unheard, but always near;
still loved, still missed and very dear.**

Readers for Next Weekend – Page 134

6.00pm Mary Lynch
8.00am No Mass
10.00am No Mass
11.00am No Mass
11.30am Bobbie Lahart
7.00pm Eileen Kinane

Weekly Envelope Collection

Last week's envelope
collection: €1,107. Thanks to all who
contribute weekly, monthly and
annually, as well as those who pay by
Standing Order. Your support is greatly
appreciated.

Adieu to Bishop Farrell

Bishop Farrell becomes Archbishop of Dublin on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord, 2nd February. With being archbishop of Dublin he will be the Metropolitan Archbishop of our province which includes the dioceses of Kildare and Leighlin and Ferns. He will also be the Primate of Ireland – the Archbishop of Armagh is Primate of All Ireland.

Bishop Farrell, a native of Castletown-Geoghegan, was ordained in June 1980 as a priest for service in the Diocese of Meath. He has a doctorate in theology from the Gregorian University of Rome. His dissertation was on the work of Bernard Haring, whose moral theology emphasised growth in Christian love and fullness of life rather than the cataloguing of sins. He served as Director of Formation in the Irish College, Rome before he returned to Maynooth to lecture in moral theology. He was later appointed President of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth in 1996, retiring in 2007. He then served as Parish Priest of Dunboyne for 11 years until his move to Kilkenny as Bishop of Ossory in January 2018. He was ordained Bishop by Archbishop Diarmuid Martin in St. Mary's Cathedral on 11th March 2018. He was appointed successor to Archbishop Diarmuid Martin on 29th December 2020.

While the Archdiocese of Armagh is the seat of the Primate of All Ireland, Dublin is the seat of the Primate of Ireland, and the appointment has reverberations for the wider Irish Church, particularly south of the border. With 198 rural and urban parishes and a potential flock of over one million Catholics, it is significantly bigger than the country's next three most populous dioceses – Down and Connor, Meath, and Derry – combined. It is also the most secularised; Mass attendance in some urban parishes is reportedly less than two per cent.

“Behold the Lamb of God.”

Could it be that you are being called to be a shepherd for the Lord as a priest, a deacon or in the consecrated life? Speak to your local priest or your Diocesan Vocation's Director.

Mass Intentions for the Coming Week

Saturday: Dick Brennan (6.00pm).
Sunday: Nancy Comerford (11.30am).
Ann O'Connor & Michael, Brigid & Michael Jnr O'Connor (7.00pm).
Monday: Owen Kiely (10.30am).
Tuesday: John & Claire Irwin, Renee & Jarlath Walsh (10.30am).
Wednesday: Ellen Butler (10.30am).
Thursday: Mary Theresa Butler (10.30am).
Friday: Patty Leahy (10.30am).
Saturday: Ben Little (10.30pm).
Patrick Fitzgerald(6.00pm).
Sunday: Geoff Doyle (11.30am).
Kathleen O'Brien (7.00pm).

Daily Broadcast Mass

Please join us each Sunday and weekday on our Webcam Service, stjohnskilkenny.com, or our Parish Radio Service (106.8 FM).

Please note: At the moment the webcam only broadcasts during Mass and services.

**Weekdays: 10.30am.
Saturday: 6.00pm Vigil;
Sunday: 8.00am, 11.30am
and 7.00pm.**

All are welcome!

Towards a Theology of Safeguarding

Every month, for the next nine months beginning this weekend, the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland will place a short video on an aspect of A Theology of Safeguarding on its website. In month ten, October, the Board will host its National Conference, titled Towards a Theology of Safeguarding at which the questions posed by the video contributors will be addressed.

The first presentation, by Fr. Hans Zollner, can be accessed at <https://www.safeguarding.ie/national-conference-2021>. You can find more about the Conference and speakers at <https://www.safeguarding.ie/national-conference-2021>.

Covid-19 Support Line for Older People

ALONE manage a national support line for older people who have concerns relating to the outbreak of Covid-19. The support line is open seven days a week by calling 0818 222 024.

Samaritans - We Are Here for You

Every hour, every day, a Samaritan is waiting to answer your call. Please don't suffer in silence. We are here today, and always, on freephone 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.ie.

A Prayer for Persons Suffering from the Coronavirus

*You shall not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day,
nor the pestilence that roams in darkness,
nor the plague that ravages at noon.*

Ps 91:5-6

Merciful God, hear our fervent prayer for all who suffer from the coronavirus. May those who are infected receive the proper treatment and the comfort of your healing presence.

May their caregivers, families and neighbors be shielded from the onslaught of the virus. Give solace to those who grieve the loss of loved ones.

Protect and guide those who strive to find a cure, that their work may conquer the disease and restore communities to wholeness and health. Help us to rise above fear. We ask all this through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes, and in the name of your Son, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, now and forever. Amen.