

Parish of Blaris

Sunday 22 January 2023
The Third Sunday in Ordinary Time

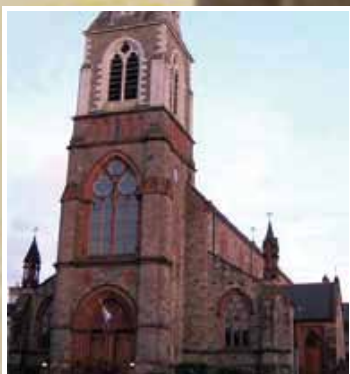
ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH
Masses Monday – Friday 10.00am
Saturday Vigil: 6.30pm
Sunday: 10.00am & 12 noon

LIVE WEBSTREAMING OF ALL MASSES

Please note many parishes in the Diocese have webcams installed which provide live coverage of various Masses taking place daily throughout the Diocese. These can be accessed by visiting www.downandconnor.org Links to Parish Webcams. Live Church webcam links: CHURCH SERVICES. TV & MCN MEDIA CHURCH WEBCAMS

“Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus withdrew to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum. This was to fulfil what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah.”

Matthew 4: 12-13



Fr. Dermot McCaughan, PP: 028 9266 2341
Fr. Eamon Magorrian, CC: 028 9266 2348
Fr. Eddie McGee, Assistant Priest

Parish Office Opening Hours:
Monday-Friday 10.30am-4.00pm.
Closed 1.00pm-2.00pm.

Parish Office: 028 9266 0206 Fax: 028 9266 5690
Email: stpatricksparish@hotmail.com
Pastoral Centre: 028 9260 7110
www.parishofblaris.org

INTRODUCTORY RITES

Congregation stands

**Entrance Hymn or
Entrance Antiphon**

Cf. Ps 95:1. 6

All: O sing a new song to the Lord;
sing to the Lord, all the earth.
In his presence are majesty and splendour,
strength and honour in his holy place.

GREETING

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Priest: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

All: And with your spirit.

PENITENTIAL ACT

Priest: Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

Priest: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All: For we have sinned against you.

Priest: Have mercy on us, O Lord.

All: For we have sinned against you.

Priest: Show us, O Lord, your mercy.

All: And grant us your salvation.

Priest: May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

All: Amen

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy.
Christ, have mercy.
Lord, have mercy.

GLORIA

All: Glory to God in the highest,
and on earth peace to people of good will.

We praise you, we bless you,
we adore you, we glorify you,
we give you thanks for your great glory,
Lord God, heavenly King,
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us;
you take away the sins of the world,
receive our prayer;
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One, you alone are the Lord,
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father.
Amen.

THE COLLECT

Priest: Let us pray.

Pause for silent prayer

Priest: Almighty ever-living God,
direct our actions according to your good pleasure,
that in the name of your beloved Son
we may abound in good works.

Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

All: Amen.

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

Congregation Sits

FIRST READING

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

8:23 – 9:3

In days past the Lord humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in days to come he will confer glory on the Way of the Sea on the far side of Jordan, province of the nations.

The people that walked in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who live in a land of deep shadow
a light has shone.
You have made their gladness greater,
you have made their joy increase;
they rejoice in your presence
as men rejoice at harvest time,
as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils.

For the yoke that was weighing on him,
the bar across his shoulders,
the rod of his oppressor,
these you break as on the day of Midian.

All: The word of the Lord
Thanks be to God.

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Ps 26:1. 4. 13-14. R v.1

(R) The Lord is my light and my help.

- The Lord is my light and my help;
whom shall I fear?
The Lord is the stronghold of my life;
before whom shall I shrink? **(R)**
- There is one thing I ask of the Lord,
for this I long,
to live in the house of the Lord,
all the days of my life,
to savour the sweetness of the Lord,
to behold his temple. **(R)**
- I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness
in the land of the living.
Hope in him, hold firm and take heart.
Hope in the Lord! **(R)**

SECOND READING

A reading from the first letter of St Paul to the Corinthians

1:10-13. 17

I appeal to you, brothers, for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, to make up the differences between you, and instead of disagreeing among yourselves, to be united again in your belief and practice. From what Chloe's people have been telling me, my dear brothers, it is clear that there are serious differences among you. What I mean are all these slogans that you have, like: 'I am for Paul,' 'I am for Apollos,' 'I am for Cephas,' 'I am for Christ.' Has Christ been parcelled out?

Was it Paul that was crucified for you? Were you baptised in the name of Paul?

For Christ did not send me to baptise, but to preach the Good News, and not to preach that in the terms of philosophy in which the crucifixion of Christ cannot be expressed.

All: The word of the Lord.
Thanks be to God.

Congregation stands

ACCLAMATION **Mt 4:23**

All: Alleluia, alleluia!
Jesus proclaimed the Good News of the kingdom,
and cured all kinds of sickness among the people.
Alleluia!

GOSPEL

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: And with your spirit.

Priest: A reading from the holy
Gospel according to Matthew 4:12-23

All: Glory to you, O Lord.

Hearing that John had been arrested Jesus went back to Galilee, and leaving Nazareth he went and settled in Capernaum, a lakeside town on the borders of Zebulun and Naphtali. In this way the prophecy of Isaiah was to be fulfilled:

Land of Zebulun! Land of Naphtali!
Way of the sea on the far side of Jordan,
Galilee of the nations!
The people that lived in darkness
has seen a great light;
on those who dwell in the land and shadow of
death a light has dawned.

From that moment Jesus began his preaching with the message, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand.'

As he was walking by the Sea of Galilee he saw two brothers, Simon, who was called Peter, and his brother Andrew; they were making a cast in the lake with their net, for they were fishermen. And he said to them, 'Follow me and I will make you fishers of men.' And they left their nets at once and followed him.

Going on from there he saw another pair of brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John; they were in their boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. At once, leaving the boat and their father, they followed him.

He went round the whole of Galilee teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom and curing all kinds of diseases and sickness among the people.

All: The Gospel of the Lord.
Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

Congregation sits

HOMILY

Congregation stands

THE CREED

All: I believe in one God,
the Father almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all things visible and invisible.

**I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the Only Begotten Son of God,
born of the Father before all ages.
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the
Father; through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,**

(bow your head up to the words 'and became man')

**and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin
Mary, and became man.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
he suffered death and was buried,
and rose again on the third day
in accordance with the Scriptures.
He ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory
to judge the living and the dead
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of
life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is adored and
glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.**

**I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic
Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness
of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of
the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

Congregation sits

THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Procession

*The gifts of bread and wine which will become the Lord's body
and blood are brought to the altar.*

The celebrant raises the host on the paten saying:

Priest: Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the bread we offer you:
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,
it will become for us the bread of life.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

*The celebrant pours wine and a little water into the
chalice, saying quietly:*

Priest: By the mystery of this water and wine
may we come to share in the divinity of Christ
who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

*The celebrant then raises the chalice above the
altar and says:*

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,
for through your goodness we have received
the wine we offer you:
fruit of the vine and work of human hands,
it will become our spiritual drink.

All: Blessed be God for ever.

Bowing, the celebrant says quietly:

Priest: With humble spirit and contrite heart
may we be accepted by you, O Lord,
and may our sacrifice in your sight this day
be pleasing to you, Lord God.

Then the celebrant washes his hands, saying quietly:

Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity
and cleanse me from my sin.

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and
yours may be acceptable to God,
the almighty Father.

All: **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your
hands for the praise and glory of his name,
for our good and the good of all his holy Church.**

PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

Priest: Accept our offerings, O Lord, we pray,
and in sanctifying them
grant that they may profit us for salvation.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

Congregation stands

EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER III

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: Lift up your hearts.

All: **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Priest: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

All: **It is right and just.**

PREFACE (VI of Ordinary Time)

Priest: It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,
always and everywhere to give you thanks,
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God.

For in you we live and move and have our being,
and while in this body we not only experience the
daily effects of your care,
but even now possess the pledge of life eternal.

For, having received the first fruits of the Spirit,
through whom you raised up Jesus from the dead,
we hope for an everlasting share in the
Paschal Mystery.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you,
as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

ACCLAMATION

All: **Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.
Hosanna in the highest.
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.
Hosanna in the highest.**

Congregation kneels

Priest: You are indeed Holy, O Lord,
and all you have created
rightly gives you praise,
for through your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
by the power and working of the Holy Spirit,
you give life to all things and make them holy,
and you never cease to gather a people to yourself,
so that from the rising of the sun to its setting
a pure sacrifice may be offered to your name.

Therefore, O Lord, we humbly implore you:
by the same Spirit graciously make holy
these gifts we have brought to you for consecration,
that they may become the Body and + Blood
of your Son our Lord Jesus Christ,
at whose command we celebrate these mysteries.

For on the night he was betrayed
he himself took bread,
and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing,
broke the bread and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,
FOR THIS IS MY BODY
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended,
he took the chalice
and, giving you thanks, he said the blessing,
and gave the chalice to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD,
THE BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,
WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR
MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

Priest: The mystery of faith.

All: **We proclaim your Death, O Lord,
and profess your Resurrection
until you come again.**

Priest: Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate
the memorial of the saving Passion of your Son,
his wondrous Resurrection and Ascension into
heaven, and as we look forward to his second
coming, we offer you in thanksgiving this holy and
living sacrifice.

Look, we pray, upon the oblation of your Church
and, recognising the sacrificial Victim by whose
death you willed to reconcile us to yourself, grant
that we, who are nourished by the Body and Blood
of your Son and filled with his Holy Spirit, may
become one body, one spirit in Christ.

May he make of us an eternal offering to you,
so that we may obtain an inheritance with your
elect, especially with the most Blessed Virgin Mary,
Mother of God, with blessed Joseph, her spouse,
with your blessed Apostles and glorious
Martyrs with Saint Patrick and with all the Saints,
on whose constant intercession in your presence we
rely for unailing help.

May this Sacrifice of our reconciliation, we pray,
O Lord, advance the peace and salvation of all the
world. Be pleased to confirm in faith and charity
your pilgrim Church on earth, with your servant
Francis our Pope and N. our Bishop, the Order of
Bishops, all the clergy, and the entire people you
have gained for your own.

Listen graciously to the prayers of this family,
whom you have summoned before you:
in your compassion, O merciful Father,
gather to yourself all your children
scattered throughout the world.
To our departed brothers and sisters
and to all who were pleasing to you

at their passing from this life,
give kind admittance to your kingdom.
There we hope to enjoy for ever the fullness of your
glory through Christ our Lord, through whom you
bestow on the world all that is good.

Priest: Through him, and with him, and in him,
O God, almighty Father,
in the unity of the Holy Spirit,
all glory and honour is yours,
for ever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

Congregation stands

THE COMMUNION RITE

Priest: At the Saviour's command
and formed by divine teaching,
we dare to say:

All: **Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.**

Priest: Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil,
graciously grant peace in our days,
that, by the help of your mercy,
we may be always free from sin
and safe from all distress,
as we await the blessed hope
and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

All: **For the kingdom, the power and the glory
are yours now and for ever.**

Priest: Lord Jesus Christ,
who said to your Apostles:
Peace I leave you, my peace I give you,
look not on our sins,
but on the faith of your Church,
and graciously grant her peace and unity
in accordance with your will.
Who live and reign for ever and ever.

All: **Amen.**

Priest: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord
Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.

All: **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
have mercy on us.
Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world,
grant us peace.**

Congregation kneels

The celebrant says quietly:

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God,
who, by the will of the Father
and the work of the Holy Spirit,
through your Death gave life to the world,
free me by this, your most holy Body and Blood,

from all my sins and from every evil;
keep me always faithful to your commandments,
and never let me be parted from you.

INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

Priest: Behold the Lamb of God,
behold him who takes away the sins of the world.
Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

All: **Lord, I am not worthy
that you should enter under my roof,
but only say the word
and my soul shall be healed.**

Priest: May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.

Priest: May the Blood of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.

COMMUNION ANTIPHON Cf. Ps 33:6

All: **Look towards the Lord and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.**

Purifying the chalice the celebrant says quietly:

What has passed our lips as food, O Lord,
may we possess in purity of heart,
that what has been given to us in time
may be our healing for eternity.

PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

Congregation kneels

Priest: Let us pray.
Grant, we pray, almighty God,
that, receiving the grace
by which you bring us to new life,
we may always glory in your gift.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

THE CONCLUDING RITES

Priest: The Lord be with you.

All: **And with your spirit.**

Priest: May God bless you with every heavenly blessing,
make you always holy and pure in his sight,
pour out in abundance upon you the riches of his
glory, and teach you with the words of truth;
may he instruct you in the Gospel of salvation,
and ever endow you with fraternal charity.
Through Christ our Lord.

All: **Amen**

Priest: And may the blessing of almighty God,
the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit,
come down on you and remain with you for ever.

All: **Amen**

*Then the celebrant, with hands joined and facing the
people, says:*

Priest: Go and announce the Gospel of the Lord

All: **Thanks be to God.**

THIS WEEK'S CALENDAR

Tuesday 24 January - St Francis de Sales
Wednesday 25 January - The Conversion of St Paul
Thursday 26 January - St Timothy & Titus
Friday 27 January - St Angela Merici
Saturday 28 January - St Thomas of Aquinas

We pray for our dead:

RECENTLY DECEASED: Maureen Watters

MONTH'S MIND: Gerald McAlister: Sheila McKitterick

FIRST ANNIVERSARY: May McCorry

ANNIVERSARIES: Brian Magennis: Pat Hanna: James McGuigan: James (Jimmy) Dumigan: Rosaleen & Arthur Quigley: Mary & Dominic Brady: Gerry Robinson: Sr Mairead Walsh: Mary Watters: Olive Vayro: James McVey: Mary Dennison: Catherine & John Watters: Margaret Agnew: Veronica Belshaw: Mary Carton: Joseph, Mary & Alfie Osbourne: Doreen Toman: Catherine McGurgan: Daniel, Margaret McKernan: James Stephenson (Jnr): Tommy Patterson: James & Mary Ann Stephenson: Raymond Tennyson: John Mayes: Kevin Corken: Marie Nugent. May they rest in peace.



ANNUAL CHRISTMAS MISSIONARY APPEAL

Thank you for your generous response to our Christmas Missionary appeal. Donations are still very welcome – **appeal will close Sunday 29 January 2023**. All funds received will be forwarded directly on your behalf to the Medical Missionaries of Mary and Dominican Sisters working with Aids victims, orphans and disadvantaged children. Thank you.

FOSTER CARE SERVICES AND SUPPORT: There are children in crisis today in our local communities – children of all ages and all abilities. Can you spare an hour a day, an overnight or a weekend or more to make a difference in a child's life. If you can, then contact the Regional Fostering Team at www.adoptionandfostercare.hscni.net or on 0800 0720 137...remember, every child is just one caring adult away from



SCRIPTURE GROUP weekly meetings will resume on Tuesday 24th January at 7.30pm in Pastoral Centre
ALL WELCOME

ST.PATRICK'S PASTORAL CENTRE

Abba Sensations
Saturday 25th February 2003.
Doors open 8pm/Show 9pm. BYO. Ticket £15.

NI CANCER PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES SUNDAY 28 MAY – FRI 2 JUNE 2023.

The party will consist of patients, ex patients, relatives, & friends accompanied by medical staff. Price £799 (price reduction for Cancer patients) includes return flights from Belfast International Airport, full board, accommodation & tour guide. Tel 078746 88388 or email mail@nicancerpilgrimage.org.uk

OFFERTORY PROMISE - ENVELOPES

Anyone requiring envelopes for the first time, please leave your name, address & postcode and telephone number in the Parish Office. We would appreciate being informed of any changes in names, addresses or tax status within the past year so that our parish records can be updated.

We would encourage more parishioners to make a monthly offering to the Church by means of a Standing Order to: St Patrick's Catholic Church, Sort Code 95 036, Account No. 62737035. It is a simple method to set up – please speak in confidence to Maria in the Parish Office on 028 92 660206 or email lisburn@downandconnor.org Donations large or small are greatly appreciated.

The Offertory Promise envelopes, standing orders and Gift Aid are the main sources of income in the parish. We thank all those who contribute regularly and generously to the needs of the parish.

DROMANTINE RETREAT & CONFERENCE CENTRE: WORKSHOPS 2023

NODDING OFF: How to sleep deeper and better for longer: Saturday, 18 February (9.30am - 4.30pm) 2023. £40
DIFFICULT PEOPLE: How to bring out the best of people at their worst: Saturday, 11 March (9.30am - 4.30pm) 2023. £40. Workshop Facilitator: Father Hugh Lagan SMA Fr Lagan is a priest with the Society of African Missions and a chartered clinical psychologist. TEL: 028) 3082 1964 EMAIL: admin@dromantineconference.com

LIVING CHURCH – FAITH DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE, Saturday 28 January 2023 in the Crowne Plaza, Shaw's Bridge, Belfast. For more information or to book on line go to www.livingchurchevents.com. Or to request an application form, contact Claire at the Living Church Office, 02890690920.

4 CORNERS FESTIVAL 2023 - DREAMS...VISIONS FOR BELFAST: 29TH JANUARY – 5TH FEBRUARY 2023

In 2023 it will be 60 years since Rev Dr Martin Luther King's astonishing 'I Have A Dream' speech in Washington DC when he articulated a vision for a better, more just, America. 2023 will also see us in Northern Ireland celebrate 25 years since the referendum when 71% of us in the north endorsed the Good Friday Agreement and dreamed of a better future for us all. 4 Corners Festival 2023 will be an opportunity for us to listen to our dreams. From Church leaders, to women in leadership, to young loyalists, to the homeless, to artists we will hear the dreams and visions for a better Belfast. The 4 Corners Festival seeks to inspire people from across the city to transform it for the peace and wellbeing of all. It consists of innovative events designed to entice people out of their own 'corners' of the city and into new places where they will encounter new perspectives, new ideas, and new friends. We celebrate our city through music, prayer, storytelling, discussion, and more. Come and join us between January 29th and February 5th, somewhere across Belfast's four corners. View highlights and daily events: <https://4cornersfestival.com/>

GOD KNOWS:

When you are tired and discouraged from fruitless efforts...God knows how hard you have tried.
When you have cried so long and your heart is in anguish...God has counted your tears.
If you feel that your life is on hold and time has passed you by...God is waiting with you.
When you're lonely and your friends are too busy even for a phone call...God is by your side.
When you think you have tried everything and don't know where to turn...God has a solution.
When nothing makes sense and you are confused or frustrated...God has the answer.
If suddenly your outlook is brighter and you find traces of hope...God has whispered to you.
When things are going well and you have much to be thankful for...God has blessed you.
When something joyful happens and you are filled with awe – God has smiled upon you.
When you have a purpose to fulfil and a dream to follow...God has opened your eyes and called you by name.
Remember that wherever you are and whatever you are facing...God knows. *Kelly D Caron*



VACANCY DOWN AND CONNOR DIOCESAN TRUST 'PARISH SAFEGUARD-ING SUPPORT OFFICER'

Safeguarding Office, 120 Cliftonville Road, Belfast, working as part of the Diocesan Safeguarding Team, to ensure that the Diocesan Trust fulfils its statutory duties with regards to the Safeguarding of Children and Adults. Hours of work 21 over 3 days per week, where a blend of working within the Safeguarding Office and Parish on-site visits will be a requirement. Salary range £17,000 to £18,500 gross pa commensurate upon experience. For full details about the vacancy and the application form: <http://www.downandconnor.org> clicking on the tab: job vacancies and on the Community NI website. Closing date 26 January 2023 at 12 noon.

Gospel Commentary

The first and lasts readings at every Sunday Mass are designed to echo each other, making a theme for the day. It is not always equally successful, but today they are a perfect match.


In the first reading the scene is this: in 732 or 734 B.C. an Assyrian king, Tiglath-pileser III, captured great numbers and Galileans and brought them into exile and slavery. "King Tiglath-pileser of Assyria came and...carried the people captive to Assyria" (2 Kings 15:29). Nevertheless the prophet Isaiah is addressing a message of hope to them: "The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death light has dawned." Many centuries later Jesus of Nazareth would go to live in that very part of the country where the people had been taken into slavery. Because of the geographical coincidence the words of the ancient prophet came spontaneously to mind. To the people of his own time Jesus too would be a light of hope in dark times. God appeared now to be fulfilling the prophecy made long ago by Isaiah.

Jesus is the bearer of light: "I am the light of the world," he said (John 8:12; 9:5). Without light, a way is not a way in practice: you can't follow it. He is also the bearer of joy: "You have multiplied the nation," said Isaiah (first reading). "You have increased its joy; the people rejoice before you as with joy at the harvest." Isaiah spoke these words in a time of utter depression for the people. Perhaps this is the test of real joy: whether it can cut through thick atmospheres of gloom.

When we say today that something is all "light and joy", we don't usually mean it as praise; we usually want to say that it is superficial. We have lost the capacity to have a straight relationship to light and joy: these seem unreal to us. We are more at home in darkness and gloom: they seem more real, more the inside story. Wherever we see something that is healthy we want to dig under it and expose its unsightly roots. Have you ever noticed a great hatred of life in people who have lost their inner direction? It is sometimes to be seen even in the cleverest people... Many seem to have lost the capacity to take anything at face value. But we all know people whose faces are not a mask, whose thoughts and emotions are full of light and truth, who know real joy in their lives. Most of them lead ordinary unspectacular lives, but they should be our heroes.

A division in a family is a pain that never goes away. It casts a dark shadow over every family event – every wedding, every birthday, every Christmas... The same is true of divisions in the Church, because we are God's family. We need light, and we need joy. We need them as urgently as we need food and air.

49 Bridge Street
Lisburn
92 676 733



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Hillsborough - Lisburn

5 Ballynahinch st
Hillsborough
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