

loving. Jesus describes his Father's love as like a mother's love. This is the love God has for us all and truly believing in such a love empowers us to love others, even our enemies.

Father Martin concludes by reminding us that:

"Jesus preached the message of today's gospel because he believed it could be lived. He did not intend it only as a piece of moral teaching to be admired; he presented it as a way of life to be lived".

When writing about compassion, the Jesuit writer Father Donal Neary makes a very interesting point:

"A compassionate heart reaches out to many; the Gospel today reaches beyond our own circle to reach many others. This will be the constant call of Jesus. When he wants to say what His father is like he says 'Be compassionate like him.' Compassion is when we can walk in another's shoes, and try to see, hear and feel the world of another, particularly in bad times. It flows from mercy, which is the biggest quality in Jesus".

The word compassion also features in our psalm today where our response is: *"The Lord is compassion and love."* That God is *"slow to anger and rich in mercy"*. We are told that he *"crowns us with love and compassion"* and that *"as father has compassion on his sons, the Lord has pity on those who fear him"*. The language of this psalm points to the warm embrace and infinite mercy of God. They are words of encouragement, hope and affirmation. It reminds me of the story of the Prodigal Son where the father has immense compassion for his son who has returned home after a life of debauchery. This scene is memorably captured in Rembrandt's painting "The Return of the Prodigal Son" which is now part of the collection in The Hermitage in Saint Petersburg. The painting is the subject of a book by Henri Nouwen whom I mentioned earlier. He writes that the challenge for all of us is to become like the compassionate father in the story.

Perhaps our calling in the week ahead is to reflect on the word "compassion" and consider how we can be compassionate to others in the different circumstances of our lives. As the pandemic recedes and we return to a more normal way of life, we too can be people of compassion and mercy offering support and comfort to those in need. Perhaps we can be a bit more attentive to friends, neighbours and family who are finding it more difficult to adjust after almost two years of lockdowns. It's a good time to help them to experience God's compassion as we all try our best to navigate the post COVID world.

Gerard Reilly – Permanent Deacon in Malahide and Portmarnock parishes

PARISH OF LARKHILL/WHITEHALL/SANTRY



NEWSLETTER



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The Thatch Road, Dublin 9. Tel (01) 837 5274 Website: www.whitehall.dublindioocese.ie.

*"Be compassionate as your Father
is compassionate"*

20th February 2022

Our Gospel today includes some of the best remembered teachings of Jesus, which go right to the core of the Christian message. Jesus proposes the generosity of God as a model for our own generosity and says that generous people will be rewarded. Jesus says, *"a full measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap."*

Father Kieran O'Mahony says that this teaching of Jesus has had great appeal, even beyond the Christian faith or the churches. Nevertheless, it can be disconcerting. In the midst of the teaching that we know and love, there is also teaching which is disturbing and deeply challenging. Thomas Merton, who was a Trappist monk and one of the most influential spiritual writers of the 20th century, said the following about the violence that people inflict on each other:

"The beginning of the fight against hatred, the basic Christian answer to



hatred, is not the commandment to love, but what must necessarily come before in order to make the commandment bearable and comprehensible. It is a prior commandment to believe. The root of Christian love is not the will to love, but the faith that one is loved".

When commenting on this reading, the Spiritual writer Henri Nouwen says that the phrase *"be compassionate as your Father is compassionate"* is perhaps the most radical statement that Jesus ever made. He says that Jesus is inviting us to *"become like God and to show the same compassion to others as he is showing to me."*

We must become like the heavenly Father and see the world through his eyes, Nouwen writes.

The scripture scholar Father Martin Hogan explains that in speaking of God's compassion for all, Jesus is referring to the love that a mother has for her child, a love that is fiercely protective and lavishly

SYNOD

*Be compassionate as your Father
is compassionate' (Luke 6:36)*



As Synodal gatherings begin in parishes, this line from today's Gospel reminds us that the quality of our attention to one another will be crucial in the Synodal pathway. Careful listening helps us to understand the other person, to stand in their shoes. When we really listen, we listen to understand in an

open, loving and compassionate way.

Holy Spirit, as we gather together in your name. Guide our listening that we may receive others with respect, for we are to love our neighbour as ourselves.

Synodal Resources are available at: www.dublindiocese.ie

Synod -What is a Synod?-It is a **council of a church**, usually convened to decide an issue of doctrine, administration or application. The word synod comes from the Greek meaning "assembly" or "meeting" and is analogous with the Latin word concilium meaning "council". Regarding the upcoming Synod in Rome in 2023 every parish in the entire Catholic Church throughout the world is invited to participate so that-

"By walking together, and together reflecting on the journey made, the Church will be able to learn from what it will experience which processes can help it to live communion, to achieve participation, to open itself to mission."

The Synod Prayer

We stand before You, Holy Spirit, as we gather together in Your name.
With You alone to guide us, make Yourself at home in our hearts;
Teach us the way we must go and how we are to pursue it.
We are weak and sinful; do not let us promote disorder.
Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path
nor partiality influence our actions.
Let us find in You our unity so that we may journey together to eternal life
and not stray from the way of truth and what is right.
All this we ask of You, who are at work in every place and time,
in the communion of the Father and the Son,
forever and ever. Amen.

Recently Deceased:

You are asked to remember in your Prayers –
Ann Rundle, Declan McAleavey,
Dean McCann, Sean Connolly,
Hughie Hooper, Dolores Keenan

*May they enjoy perfect peace
and reconciliation in the presence of God.*



Please Note

**St. Vincent de Paul Church
Gate Collection will take place
this weekend,
19th/20th February.
Please be as generous as you
can.**



Please Support your Parish Lotto

Last weeks' results :

1st Jackpot 11 20 26 28 2nd Jackpot 1 2 20 30

No Jackpot winners.

The winners of the €25 prizes were as follows:

J. Hardiman: T. Madden: M. Gormley: K. Heffernan:

K. Freil: J. O'Hanlon: S. & M. Earley.

Next weeks' Prizes are as follows; 1st Jackpot €15,000 2nd Jackpot €1,600

Plus seven Consolation Prizes of €25.

Envelopes available at the church doors and in the Parish Centre.

Entries must be received by 9.45a.m on Tuesday morning. Results will be published at the Church doors and in the Parish Newsletter.



Anniversary Frame -If your loved one has an anniversary coming up please consider giving their name to the Sacristan or place in one of the safes. It will then be put in the Anniversary Frame, placed on the Altar and prayed for at all Sunday Masses.

Mass Intentions for the coming week

Church of the Holy Child

- Sat 19th Feb 7.00p.m.** Elizabeth Keegan – Month's Mind
Marian Cantwell – Recently Deceased.
Kitty & Paurie Murphy – Anniversaries
Rose Doyle, John Wisley – Anniversaries
- Sun 20th Feb 10.30a.m.** Gerry Higgins – Anniversary
Mary Waldron, Catherine Higgins – Anniversaries
Niall McCann – Anniversary
Elizabeth & Patrick McGrath, Patrick William McGrath
James Crampton
- 12.30p.m.** Craig Boylan – Month's Mind
Rita Tyrrell – 1st Anniversary
James Domican, P.C. Kurian – Anniversaries
- Mon 21st Feb 9.15a.m.** Mary O'Toole – Anniversary
- Tues 22nd Feb 9.15a.m.** Catherine Ormsby – Anniversary
- Wed 23rd, Thurs 24th & Fri 25th Feb 9.15a.m.** Available for Intention
- Sat 26th Feb 7.00p.m.** Bernadette Nugent – Month's Mind
Brian Clarke – Anniversary
- Sun 27th Feb 10.30a.m.** Fr. Patrick Byrne – Month's Mind
Joan Duffy – 1st Anniversary
- 12.30p.m.** Pauline Hayden – 1st Anniversary
Robert Power – Anniversary
- Chapel of Blessed Margaret Ball**
- Sun 20th Feb 10.00a.m.** Charles Barnwell – Anniversary & deceased members of the Barnwell Family – R.I.P.
Marriana Besagni – Anniversary
- Wed 23rd Feb 10.00a.m.** Peggy Madden – 1st Anniv., Patrick Madden – Remembrance
- Sun 27th Feb 10.00a.m.** Available for Intention