

# Nenagh Parish News

7 January 2024

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Fr Pat Gilbert  
Fr Rexon Chullickal  
Fr Lorcan Kenny

**Mass Times**  
**St Mary of the Rosary**  
**Weekend Masses:**  
Liturgy of the Word with  
Holy Communion | Saturday 10am  
Saturday Vigil Mass | 6.15pm  
Sunday 8am | 12 noon | 6pm  
**Weekday Masses**  
8am | 11am  
**Adoration** | Weekdays 5-7pm  
**Confessions** | Sat after Liturgy  
**Parish Radio:** 106.2FM  
**St John the Baptist, Tyone**  
Saturday | 7.30pm  
Sunday | 10.30am  
Polish Mass | Last Sunday Each Month | 1pm

## St Mary of The Rosary Church

From Monday next, 8 January, builders will be on site in St Mary's carrying out investigations and remedial works on the roof, gutters and external walls to the Church. The work is expected to last for 2-3 weeks (subject to findings). All the necessary Health & Safety precautions will be in place for the period.

The Church will remain open during this time but please be aware of the work taking place and be extra careful when on the grounds and inside the buildings.  
Regards and thanks,

Nenagh Parish Finance Committee

## Feast of the Baptism of the Lord - A Reflection

Today, we reach the end of the Christmas season, and come to the third great manifestation ('epiphany') of God in the person of Jesus. The first epiphany was at the birth of the child Jesus in a stable at Bethlehem, when he was visited and adored by shepherds, representing the poor and marginalized people of Israel. The second epiphany was when the wise men (magi) came from 'the East' to worship the baby Jesus, the new-born King. They represent all peoples and nations, who are invited to be numbered among God's own people. Today, we celebrate the third great epiphany, the occasion of the baptism of Jesus by John, when He is revealed as God's beloved Son.

The baptism of Jesus marks a major transition moment in his life. He is leaving behind the hidden years in Nazareth and entering the public arena for the first time. Hence, the focus of our liturgy shifts from the baby in the manger to the adult Jesus about to embark on his messianic mission. His first public act is to join with a group of his fellow Jews, listening to the preaching of his cousin, John, and accepting to be baptized by him in the Jordan river. At this time and in this place, Jesus is affirmed in his identity as God's beloved Son: 'No sooner had he come up out of the water than he saw the heavens torn apart and the Spirit, like a dove, descending on him. And a voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you"' (Mk 1:11).

This affirmation of Jesus by his heavenly Father, his Abba, must have been a powerfully liberating experience for Jesus, preparing him for the mission on which he was about to embark – a mission that would take him from the foothills of Capernaum to the hill of Calvary. It was an experience of the Spirit empowering him to launch God's reign of justice and peace in our broken world, to gather around him a community of followers, and communicate God's gracious love by his personality, his teaching and his healing. It was this experience, too, that surely prepared him for another 'baptism' he would have to undergo (cf. Lk 12:50), the baptism of his suffering and death, by which his mission would be completed. Jesus would not be the great military leader who will liberate his people from Roman domination that many of his contemporaries expected. Instead, he would be a suffering servant, a gentle and peaceful leader, identifying himself fully with the poor and oppressed of the land, and bringing healing and liberation not only to his people but to the world.

Recalling the baptism of Jesus and what it meant for him reminds us of our baptism and what it means for us. First, it reminds us of who we are, and to whom we belong. We are Abba's beloved children. He delights in us. He is saying to each one of us, as he said to Jesus: 'You are my beloved child. My favour rests on you'. This is our deepest and original identity. It is a given, not something we have to earn or prove to anyone. God is Love. He created us in love and cannot but love us. But we have to become aware, acknowledge, and claim our belovedness. According to the Franciscan author, Richard Rohr 'the primary task of religion is to reconnect us with our original identity'. Sadly, too often, the way we understand and live our Christian faith does not help us to do this. The American poet, Raymond C. Carver, reminds each of us that the most important thing I need in life is 'to call myself beloved/to feel myself beloved on the earth'. That means taking our baptism seriously and accepting what it signifies.

Secondly our baptism reminds us of our missionary calling as children of God. In acknowledging our inalienable dignity as God's children, we are called to appreciate the Divine Presence in others by honoring them, loving them and serving them in all humility. We are challenged to live as children of God in thought, word and action, and to share our faith with others. Our baptism involves much more than simply 'saving our souls' and 'leading sinless lives'. It summons us to be the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It commits us to continue the mission of Jesus, becoming God's co-creators in building up on earth his Kingdom of compassion, justice and love.

Michael McCabe (SMA)

## This Week We Offer A Special Prayer For ...renewal

Gracious God,  
we come before you seeking renewal in the new year.  
Renew our minds, our hearts, and our spirits.  
May we be transformed by the power of your Holy Spirit,  
leaving behind the old and embracing the new that you have in store  
for us.  
**Amen**

### Profile: St Hilary of Poitiers (13 January)

On January 13, Catholics celebrate St. Hilary of Poitiers, a fourth-century philosopher whose studies made him a champion of Orthodox Trinitarian theology during one of the most difficult periods of Church history. He protected the Church and its members by brilliantly defending the sacred humanity of Jesus while also defeating Arianism which denied Christ's placement within the Trinity. St. Hilary was a gentle and courteous man, devoted to writing some of the greatest theology on the Trinity, and was like his Master in being labeled a "disturber of the peace." In a very troubled period in the Church, his holiness was lived out in both scholarship and controversy.

Little is known about St. Hilary's life before he became a bishop. Fittingly, what historians do know about him derives mostly from personal details contained within his extensive theological works. Those remarks indicate that Hilary was born to a pagan family in present-day France, most likely around 310 – three years before the Roman Empire declared its official toleration of Christianity.

Hilary himself grew up apparently without any significant Christian influence, but received an otherwise comprehensive education in the Latin and Greek classics. Not unusual for his era, he rigorously studied both Greek philosophy and the Bible. Like many other early Church Fathers, he came to accept the truth of the Bible by recognizing its compatibility with philosophy and the sciences.

This was a gradual process for him, however, and it was not until 345 – by which time he was already married, and had a daughter– that Hilary committed himself to full membership in the Catholic Church by receiving baptism with the rest of his family. His rise within the Church, however, was not gradual at all: around 353, the people of Poitiers called for him to be made their bishop.

By its nature, the position involved tremendous responsibility, as well as significant personal sacrifice. While the early church permitted some married men to become bishops, they were traditionally required to practice celibacy within marriage, and many adopted a radically simplified lifestyle akin to monasticism. There are indications that Hilary followed this ascetic path, once ordained.

Moreover, Hilary's election as the Bishop of Poitiers coincided with the second wave of the Church's first great doctrinal controversy, in which he would play a significant role. Although the Council of Nicaea in 325 had confirmed the Church's rejection of Arianism – which claimed Jesus was only human, not divine – powerful forces within both the Church and the empire clung to the heresy.

Only a few years after his assumption of episcopal rank, Hilary found himself virtually alone in defending Jesus' deity before a hostile crowd of bishops in the southern French region of Gaul. The bishops appealed to Emperor Constantius II, who favored a modified version of Arianism and declared Hilary's exile from Gaul.

Constantius II did not likely suspect that by banishing Hilary to Phrygia he would inspire the bishop to mount an even greater defense of orthodox theology. There, he wrote his most important work, "On the Trinity," showing the Bible's consistent witness to the central mystery of Christian faith.

Remarkably, this staunchly Orthodox bishop also showed great charity toward those he believed were honestly mistaken. He worked closely with groups of clergy and faithful whose formulations of dogma he perceived to be merely imperfect or imprecise, but not intentionally heretical, to support what was correct in their understanding and lead them into full adherence with tradition.

Hilary even traveled to Constantinople during his exile, to explain to the city's bishops why their emperor was not orthodox. After the death of Constantius II in 361, Hilary was able to return to his diocese at Poitiers. Once exiled for opposing Arianism in Gaul, he lived to see it squarely

### Those We Remember | Mon 8 - Sun 14 January

#### St Mary of the Rosary

Mon Jan 8th 11am	Gerri Toohey (A)
Tues Jan 9th 8am	Ned & Bridie Moore (As)
Fri Jan 12th 11am	Sr. Eileen O'Driscoll (A)
Sat Jan 13th 6.15pm	Oliver Quigley (MM) Teddy Morgan (MM) Kevin McDermott (MM) Mary Haugh (1st A) John Kinehan (1st A)
Sun Jan 14th 8am	John Tierney (A) Martin (Murty) Hogan (A) and recently deceased sister Kathleen Haverty JK Cleary (A)
Sun Jan 14th 12 noon	Patrick (Pat) Hogan (1st A) Breda Dooley (nee Morrissey) (A) Jamie Boyle (A) Mrs Lena Hassett (A) Meabh, Jim & Noel O'Donoghue (As) Kathleen O'Brien (A)
Sun Jan 14th 6pm	Monica Creagh (A) <b>St John the Baptist</b>
Sat Jan 13th 7.30pm	Tara McKay (A) Eileen O'Gara (A)
Sun 14th 10.30am	Jimmy & Cissie Fitzgerald (As)

### Our Faithful Departed over the Christmas Period

Teddy Morgan  
Oliver Quigley  
Winnie Sheahan  
John Guest  
Michael Hogan  
Matthew (Matty) Mulqueen  
Louise (Louie) Lee  
Linda Ryan  
Mary Everitt  
Vitor Manuel De Jesus Correia  
Leelamma George

**May They Rest In Peace. Amen.**

### Readers | 13-14 January 2024

6.15pm	Mary McGrath
7.30pm	Patricia Finn
8am	Paul O'Dwyer
10.30am	Patricia Fitzgerald
12noon	Eilish Carter
6pm	Delsey Pauly

Readers: Missal Page 708

### NOTICE BOARD

**Weekly Collection** €4,020

Thank you as always for your ongoing generosity.  
**Parish Office Opening Hours** Mon-Fri | 9am-5pm

### Medjugorje Afternoon Prayer

Day Care Centre

Monday 8 January @ 4pm

All Welcome!

condemned in the local church after his return.

Although deeply committed to the leadership of his own diocese, Hilary took steps late in his life to support orthodox teaching in other regions. Most significantly, he denounced Auxentius, the Arian bishop of Milan. Subsequent opposition to Auxentius led to his succession by St. Ambrose of Milan, who, in turn, greatly influenced the conversion of St. Augustine.

St. Hilary died at Poitiers in 367, after having passed on his teachings and way of life to a number of students, including St. Martin of Tours.

Long regarded and celebrated as a saint within the Church, St. Hilary was also declared a Doctor of the Church in 1851.