

# PARISH OF BANAGHER

**4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent – 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

## Mass Times

### Mass Times for Christmas Week:

Tuesday: St Mary's Church, Altinure: 11.00am  
Wednesday: St Peter & St Paul's Church, Foreglen: 11.00am  
Thursday: St Mary's Church, Altinure: 11.00am  
Friday: Grotto Chapel, Fincairn: 11.00am

### Weekend Mass Times for next weekend: 30<sup>th</sup> & 31<sup>st</sup> December

St Joseph's Church, Fincairn: Vigil 7.00pm; 9.15am  
St Mary's Church, Altinure: 10.30am

### Weekend Mass times in Neighbouring Parishes:

St Patrick's Church, Dungiven: Vigil 6.00pm; Sunday 9.00am & 11.30am  
St Matthew's Church, Drumsum: Sunday 10.15am  
Immaculate Conception, Gortnahey: Vigil 4.30pm  
St Joseph's Church, Craigbane: Sunday 10.00am  
St Patrick's Church, Claudy: Vigil 6.30pm; Sunday 11.30am

**Please Note No Weekday Mass Monday 1<sup>st</sup> January - Friday 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024**

### Solemnity of the Epiphany – Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January

St Joseph's Church, Fincairn: 11.00am

**A Month's Mind Mass** for the happy repose of the soul of Dolores McCormick RIP will be celebrated on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.

**A First Anniversary Mass** for the happy repose of the soul of Brendan Kelly RIP will be celebrated on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> December at 7pm in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.

**A First Anniversary Mass** for the happy repose of the soul of Eileen Murphy RIP will be celebrated on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> January at 7pm in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn.

**Banagher Parish Pilgrimage to Fatima 2024: 17-24 May** is now fully subscribed. Full payment is due by 11<sup>th</sup> March 2024. If not already submitted, please send a copy of your passport.

**Prayer for Vocations** That Mary's "Yes" to the Lord will be an inspiration to all those called to serve the Church as priests of the Diocese of Derry.

The NET December edition is now available at Church Porches and online at derrydiocese.org.

The Priests of the Parish would like to take this opportunity to wish all parishioners a Happy and Holy Christmas and a Peaceful New Year.

May the Christmas Season bring many Blessings to you, your families and our Parish.

**Ballinsacreen Parish Live Crib** featuring real animals and people at St Eugene's Church Moneyneena on Saturday 30 December. Following the 10.00 am Mass, at which Bishop McKeown will be chief celebrant, the Live Crib will be operational all day until candlelit Mass at 6.00 pm. Refreshments served throughout the day. Everyone is welcome to come and discover the true meaning of Christmas.

## OFFERTORY COLLECTION

16<sup>th</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> December 2023

St Joseph's Church, Fincairn: £1200 St Mary's Church, Altinure: £630

Please consider online contributions and Gift Aid. Online Contributions to:

**Parish of Banagher Sort Code: 950306 A/c 51052659**

### Retired Priests Collection: £1345

Please note that the above figures do not include donations made online directly to the parish bank account. This total figure will be published at the beginning of each month.

**125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Pioneer Association** Pioneers around the world are invited to attend Mass next Wednesday 27 December and to prayerfully mark the 125th anniversary of the foundation of the Association in 1898. Mass and prayers will be live-streamed on that day at 10am (Irish time) around the world via [www.pioneerassociation.org](http://www.pioneerassociation.org).

**Prayer by Telephone** The Sisters of Mercy "Bethany" 34 Point Road, Dundalk welcome any person who may wish to request prayer, especially during these difficult times. All requests are confidential. 9am - 9pm. Telephone: 042 9331602 ROI or 00353 42 931602 NI

**Mary's Meals – Double the Love** Mary's Meals is keeping the promise of a daily school meal to over 2.4 million children in 18 countries. Our Double the Love Campaign has launched, and all donations made to Mary's Meals until 22nd January 2024 will be doubled by a group of generous supporters, up to £1million. Amongst the many challenges we see in today's world, from conflict to the cost-of-living crisis, your little acts of love can go further thanks to Double the Love, bringing hope to desperately hungry children and their families. Please pray that we can reach even more children around the world with our life-changing school meals this Christmas. Find out more and browse our Christmas gift cards at [marysmeals.org.uk](http://marysmeals.org.uk) or freephone 0800 698 1212.

**Christmas Concert:** Join a host of wonderful, gifted singers and musicians for a lunchtime Concert on Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup> December at 1.00pm in St Eugene's Cathedral. Joy to the World - Concert celebrating the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. Singing by Anne Marie Hickey, Lauren & Bethany Doherty, Roisin Rice, St Eugene's Cathedral Folk Group and Sally Mae Comey. Accompanied by Charlotte Logue & Aidan Watkins. Everyone is welcome to come and enjoy this special time of the year.

**Trócaire School Volunteers:** Are you a retired teacher or someone who has experience presenting to groups of schoolchildren? Trócaire is looking for volunteers to support its School Talks Programme for Lent 2024 in parishes of the Derry Diocese. If you think you have the right skills and experience and will have a few free hours during Lent then we would love to hear from you. For more information call Casey Schell on 028 90 808 033 or email [casey.schell@trocaire.org](mailto:casey.schell@trocaire.org)

\*\*\*\* NO BULLETIN NEXT WEEKEND \*\*\*\*

**ACCORD Derry Marriage Preparation Courses** January 2024 to March 2024 - January 19th/20th 2024; February 23rd/24th 2024 & March 22nd/23rd 2024. Venue: Everglades Hotel, Prehen Road Derry. Please note that these courses are NOT Virtual and are in person.

January	St Joseph's Church, Fincairn		St Mary's Church, Altinure
	7.00pm	9.15am	10.30am
Readers	Pauline McGrellis	Liam Campbell	Noeleen McGlinchey
Eucharistic Ministers	Joanne Donaghy	Breige O'Neill	Margaret O'Kane
Flowers	Pauline McGrellis		Maeve McLaughlin
Cleaning	Bernie Lynch, Kathleen Lynch & Carol Anne McGinty		Marie Conway
Counters	Ann Hasson, Marian & Anthony O'Neill Patricia McCloskey		Philomena Conway, Sean Conway Karen Feeney
Collectors	Dermot Lynch Sean Roe McCloskey	Anthony O'Neill Patrick McGrellis	Martin Smyth, Eamon Feeney Patrick Conway

**Foyle Hospice Christmas Tree Recycling Scheme** is now open. The scheme helps Foyle Hospice secure much needed funds whilst offering people the opportunity to have their tree disposed of in an environmentally friendly way, for a suggested donation of £10. Shredded trees are then used in our gardens throughout the year. Trees can be registered for collection through the website - foylehospice.com - or by calling Foyle Hospice fundraising office on 02871 359888. Registration closes on 7th January 2024.

**Feast Days this Coming Week:**

**Tuesday 26<sup>th</sup>: St Stephen the first Martyr** was one of the deacons appointed by the Apostles to organize the distribution of food to the poor. He performed many miracles and confounded the Jews in disputation. They fabricated false charges against him. At his trial he preached the risen Christ to them, so they stoned him to death. He prayed for his persecutors as he was dying. One of them, Saul of Tarsus, who was looking after the cloaks of the stone-throwers, was later converted and became the great missionary St Paul.

**Wednesday 27<sup>th</sup>: St John the Evangelist** James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were nicknamed by Jesus "the sons of thunder." John is involved in many of the central events of Jesus' life, including the Transfiguration, the Crucifixion, and the discovery of the Resurrection. He is "the disciple whom Jesus loved" and the one to whom he confided the care of his mother Mary. He is mentioned in the Acts of the Apostles; later he was exiled to the island of Patmos. He is said to have died at Ephesus. He wrote a Gospel, three Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

**Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> December: The Holy Innocents, Martyrs** The Holy Innocents are the children who were slaughtered at the orders of King Herod, in the hope that by killing every boy born in Bethlehem at the same time as Jesus, he would succeed in killing the new-born King of the Jews. Each of those baby boys had done nothing bad, he had done nothing good. He was born, and then he died, and that was all there was to him. So passive are these babies that some people find it hard to understand how they can share the title of "martyr" with people like St Stephen (the day before yesterday), who insisted on preaching the truth until his hearers stoned him for it, or St Thomas Becket (tomorrow), who insisted on living the truth until his king had him killed because of it. These children did not insist on anything except their mothers' milk; and unlike Stephen and Thomas, there was no voluntary act of theirs that we can see as making the difference between being martyred and not being martyred. So in our rational human terms these children are a puzzle, and that is one reason why God has inspired the Church to celebrate this very feast – to show us how inadequate our seemingly rational, worldly-wise thoughts are. As he reminds us again and again throughout salvation history, his thoughts are not our thoughts. Babies may not rank high on the scale as far as our human

calculus is concerned; but then neither do sparrows, and yet God has told us that God sees and counts every one of those. The Holy Innocents can stand, therefore, for the "unimportant" and "unnecessary" pawns, child and adult alike, that permeate the whole of human history, the ones who can be sacrificed for some greater cause because they "don't really matter"; the eggs that were broken to make an omelette... or even broken to make nothing at all. There are plenty of them, one way or another. The feast of the Holy Innocents reminds us that in God's eyes (that is, according to the true value of things), no-one is unimportant, no-one is unnecessary, no-one "doesn't really matter." However meaningless their lives and deaths may seem to us, they shine glorious in heaven. Honouring them effectively honours also the martyrdom of the people these children could have become, and their children's children as well; and at the same time we can remember the contemporary and continuing massacre of those who die before birth for the convenience of those who have them killed.

**Update from Universal Synod** – In October 2021, Pope Francis launched a Synod on the theme of synodality. The Irish Catholic Bishops sent a report to the Synod Office in Rome in August 2022. This became part of a Continental Stage in Prague (February 2023), and a working document was published based on the themes worldwide (June 2023). This document was the official working document for the first session of a universal assembly known as the Synod of Bishops which took place from 4th– 29th October. A second session is scheduled for October 2024, where further decisions will be taken following a year long process of reflection, further research, and prayer. A full report from the assembly is available online at [www.synod.ie/bishopsreport](http://www.synod.ie/bishopsreport).

**Safeguarding Notice:** If you have any concerns with regard to Safeguarding children or adults in need of protection within the Church please contact Marie Gormley, the Diocesan Designated Liaison Person (DLP) at 07596 500 793 or at the Safeguarding Office, Diocesan Pastoral Centre, 164 Bishop Street, Derry, BT48 6UJ or PSNI (Police Service of Northern Ireland) 101 or Social Services: Duty Social Worker, Gateway Services, Western HSC Trust, 71314090

**Privacy Notice:** The Diocese of Derry complies with GDPR regulations. A privacy notice is available on the Parish Website or by contacting the Parish Office. Live stream and recordings of Mass and Services in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn and St Mary's Church, Altinure are available online. Parishioners should note that the first three rows of seats are visible online in St Joseph's Church, Fincairn and the first six rows of seats in St Mary's Church, Altinure. Please also note that the outside areas and the interiors of St Joseph's Church, Fincairn and St Mary's Church, Altinure and covered by CCTV.

**COMMUNITY NEWS**

**St Mary's GAC, Banagher:** Lotto numbers for 18/12/2023 were 8, 16, 23, 28. No winners. Next week's Jackpot is £2900.

**PARISH CLERGY**  
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**CONTACT US**  
 To arrange a Baptism, Wedding or Anniversary Mass, please call Fr Micheál or the secretaries on  
 028 7778 1223 or email [banagherparish@derrydiocese.org](mailto:banagherparish@derrydiocese.org).  
**Parish Office** closed until Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.  
**Mass is Live on the Webcam at [www.banagherparish.com](http://www.banagherparish.com)**

**SVP Confidential Helpline: 07593954973**