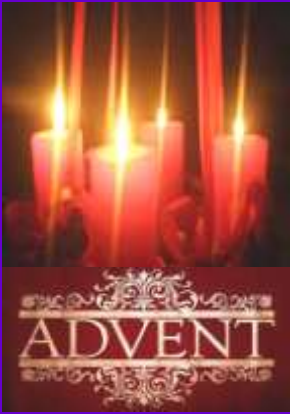


St. AUGUSTINE'S CHURCH LIMERICK

4th Sunday of Advent
18th December 2016

Pastoral Office: 061 415374, 061 415126
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Is there a Santa Claus?

This exchange between the little girl Virginia and the editor of the New York newspaper The Sun in 1897 remains one of the classic pieces of writing on the spirit of Christmas for both adults and children alike. Would that we all could enter into the spirit contained therein. best wishes and thanks to all our friends here in St Augustine's.
Fr Iggy O'Donovan.

Dear Editor—

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon
115 West Ninety Fifth Street

Virginia, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the scepticism of a sceptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.

We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding. No Santa Claus! Thank God! He lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

- "Is There a Santa Claus?" reprinted from the September 21, 1897, number of The New York Sun.

St. Augustine's Christmas Services

**Christmas Eve
Masses**
Saturday 24th Dec
8.30am, & 10.15am
Family Mass 5.00pm
Vigil Mass 8.00pm

**Christmas Day
Sunday 25th Dec**
Masses
9.00am, & 11.15am
No evening Mass

**St. Stephen's Day
Monday 26th Dec**
Mass at 10.15am

Confessions
Mon 19th Dec- Sat
24th
10.00am-4.00pm

Fairtrade Christmas Greetings



Thank you for
supporting
Fairtrade!

Share the Spirit of
Christmas
with Fairtrade

From
Limerick Fairtrade
City Committee

Carol Service

This Sunday 18th
December at 8pm
St Mary's Cathedral,

Sing carols in St. Mary's
Cathedral which will be lit
up by candlelight on
Sunday 18th December

All proceeds are in aid of
St. Vincent De Paul.
Phone: +353 61 310293



Christmas Eve Family Mass at 5pm

As the numbers attending
our Family Mass
on Christmas Eve are
increasing we are making
an appeal for volunteers to
show people to their seats
and also
Eucharistic Ministers.
You can give your name
and number to any of the
community or contact
Charlotte 415374 in the
Pastoral Office.

Thank You.

Simon Community

The Mid West Simon Community reaches out to people who are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or experiencing housing difficulties in Limerick. Please support their annual €2 Christmas Appeal. To make your donation please TEXT : KEYS to 50300 to donate €2. Thank you Charles Irwin (Mid West Simon)

100% of text cost goes to Midwest Simon across most network providers. Some providers apply VAT which means that a minimum of €1.63 will go to Midwest Simon. Service Provider: LIKECHARITY. Helpline: 01 4433890.

Notice: Sale of Mass Bouquets


It has come to our attention that there are 'prayer bouquets' available for purchase in several retail outlets throughout Limerick city and county. These bouquets are sold under various categories, sympathy, exam, open, etc. The cards have been stamped with one individual's name, undertaking to pray for your specific intention.

We would encourage you to be mindful that these are not mass cards as no mass is being offered for your intention. We would also like to make it very clear that the sale of these cards has no association whatever with the Diocese of Limerick.



*Wishing you all a happy, peaceful
and safe Christmas and New Year!
On behalf of the Augustinian Community.*

Prayer at the Crib



'The Word was Made Flesh' - John
As I come before this crib
Draw me into this circle of adoration
Help me to take on the wonder of the shepherds
Lead me to 'the wonder child' within me
Bless my heart with memories of childhood cribs
Hold me open to the miracle of divinity in the straw.
Take me into the surrender in Faith
Give me eyes to see Immanuel, the God
Who is with us in swaddling clothes.
Nurture me with the love of Mary and Joseph
Minister to my pain and my doubt through
the humility of the shepherds.
Help me to hear the song of peace in my heart.
Bring me to a place of healing, into a still centre
into a prayer that is deeper than words.
Amen