

2nd Sunday of Advent



Mass Times

Monday-Friday

7.30am, 8.30am,
10.15am, & 4pm

SATURDAY

8.30am, 10.15am

Mass for the Sick

3.00pm

SUNDAY

9.00am, 11.15am

& 7.30pm

CONFESSIONS

MONDAY & FRIDAY

10.45am-12 Noon

3.00pm-4.00pm

SATURDAY

10.45am-12noon

2.30pm-4pm



St. Augustine's Church

Child Safeguarding
Representatives.

Fr. Flor O'Callaghan O.S.A.

Fr. John Lyng O.S.A.

Ms Geraldine van Dam

Mr. Robert Ryan

Ms Charlotte Gleeson

Mr. John Doyle



St. Augustine's Church Limerick

2nd Sunday of Advent 10th December 2023

website: www.augustinianslimerick.com

email: info@augustinianslimerick.com

Santa and the Highwayman

The blank page and the feast of St Nicholas of Myra, Dec. 6, edge me towards this story of a grave.

It's a few four-irons from Mount Juliet Golf Club on one side and a couple of dozen pucks of the sliothar from the statue of Ollie Walsh on the other. (The same Ollie was with Vincent Godfrey of Limerick and Cúchulainn, address unknown, the earliest of the Cooley Mountains Poc Fada champions. Pat Hartigan later earned one of his Hall of Fame distinctions in the same discipline).

The grave? It's in the now defunct town of Newtown Jerpoint beside the great Cistercian Abbey. It contains the mortal remains of St Nicholas who comes back to flaiithiúlach life as Santa Claus soon after his feast-day every year. This is not daft. Some **sane people believe it. Others don't. This is the story: In the Middle Ages Nicholas was revered in his home place in Turkey and his tomb was a place of pilgrimage. That was a time when saints' relics criss-crossed Europe and beyond like Ryanair when French Air Controllers are not on strike, or like Santa later this month. Italian sailor-pilgrims nicked a large part of Nicholas's remains which they took to their home port of Bari. There too the relics drew devotion. They were seen by the de Frainet knights, landowners of Thomastown, when trudging home from a Crusade. Norman power in Bari let those knights getting their hands on a bit of Nicholas. They brought their booty to the south of France but as Norman fortune there faltered they sailed for Waterford and brought Nicholas up the Barrow and then the Nore and planted him in Newtown Jerpoint under the fine, medieval grave-stone pictured here. Now pilgrims flocked to Newtown soon had at least 14 wine taverns—pilgrimage was thirsty work.**



Those Norman knights were kin to the Ormonde Butlers.

(The first Chief Butler (Bottler) of Ireland was appointed by Henry II in **1177. With this title came "the honour of serving the first cup of wine at royal coronations, and a family right to a levy on all wine imported to the island." No wonder there were fourteen wine bars in Jerpoint and no wonder the Butlers grew rich.**)

So, Nicholas rests at the church of his name outside Thomastown under that carved and now cracked gravestone. The tall figure of the Saint dominates the carving, and **flanking him are the heads of the two crusader knights who brought him there. That's our story.**

It is good to note that the spirit of enterprise did not die out of the de Frainet line. It flourished again in their descendent highwayman, name de-frenchified, Freney the Robber, the Irish Robin Hood. Ill-luck in business turned him to the profession of highway-manning. **His cultural legacy to posterity is in the fine phrases "Stand and deliver" and "I'll blow your brains out." Thackeray wrote of him in *The Luck of Barry Lyndon*(1844). A one-eyed man, he rode a fast mare. He must have spurred her past the grave of Nicholas many a time as he rushed to or from one schemozzle or another in his territory, the southern parts of Kilkenny and Wexford. Many of his associates went to the gallows but Freney went respectable and somehow managed to obtain a royal pardon. He died in his bed in New Ross in 1788 in premises on Quay Street now trading as *The Cracked Teapot*. He was buried in Inistioge a few miles from where Santa lies under cracked granite. Finally, my **groundbreaking research doesn't tell me why they dress Santa in the Cork colours. I never could understand that.****

J.L.



Advent Eucharistic Healing & Reconciliation Service:

Thursday 14th December at
Our Lady of Lourdes Church
7-8pm.

Hosted by Pastoral Area 2:
St Josephs/St Saviour's/
Our Lady of Lourdes



Focus Ireland Concert of Hope

St. Mary's Cathedral Limerick

Monday 11th December

7.30pm

Tickets €20 on Eventbrite

More details on the notice board
at the back of the church



Carol Service

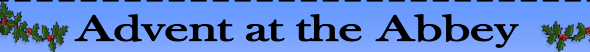
Mary Immaculate College annual carol service takes place Tuesday Dec 12th 2023 @ 6.00. p.m. in Saint Joseph's Church, O'Connell Avenue, Limerick. All welcome. Tea, Coffee and finger food will be available afterwards. Folks should aim to be seated by 5.50p.m. if possible. Do come and join us. Happy Christmas/ Nollaig Shona Daoibh

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

As Christmas approaches, we could ask ourselves: how can we prepare to celebrate the birthday of our Saviour? The proclamation of John the Baptist points to the preparation that really counts: conversion of heart and life. The deeper meaning of metanoia is a change of vision, a radically new outlook, in the light of the Gospel. God is our compassionate father, our Abba, who desires nothing less than our hearts, our whole selves. We are accepted and loved by him, while we are still sinners (Romans 5:8). Receiving his forgiving love means a revolution in values, beliefs and direction in life.

Prayer : Loving God, as we your children prepare to celebrate the birth of Jesus our Saviour, help us to prepare our hearts too. May the coming birth of the Son of David encourage us to true repentance and genuine conversion of heart. Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen

Source: [www.tarsus.ie/Sunday readings](http://www.tarsus.ie/Sunday_readings)




Advent at the Abbey A Season of Opportunities

The Glenstal Advent Talks continue this Sunday 10th at 4.30pm in the Abbey Library. Fr. John O'Callaghan will urge us to *'Prepare the Way for the Lord!'* The talks will be followed by refreshments and the opportunity to attend sung Evening Prayer in the Abbey Church at 6pm. The talks are available afterwards from the website as recordings. **Donation €20**
Bookings- Email events@glenstal.com Call 061 621005



Thank You



A big thank you to all who supported our Morning for Peace last Saturday. Despite the cold our volunteers did a great job distributing the candles. Thanks also to those who participated in the service and our organiser Geraldine van Dam.

Grow Mental Health

Grow Mental Health- Friendly Community based groups for anyone experiencing mental health issue through 12 Step Program of connection, hope, identity by empowering people to nurture their positive well-being by supporting personal growth through education, peer support and self-teaching. Based in 33 Henry Street and Croom, several meetings including new meeting on Monday 11-1pm. Contact Michael 086-6063182/Celia 0861526966/www.grow.ie