St. Augustine's Church Limerick
12th January 2025
The Baptism of theLord

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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

Snow Trouble

The snow that fell on O'Connell Street last week led me to the following.
In 1049 Bernard de Menthon who shared our Augustinian name founded a monastery/ hostel high in the Italian/Swiss Alps. As monastery it catered for the religious inclination of the monks while as hostel it served the disparate, sometimes desperate, travellers through the route soon to be known as the St Bernard Pass. Pilgrims, fugitives, traders and soldiers were welcome there.

After a few hundred years the loneliness of the monks on the mountain struck some well-connected dog-owning passerby and dogs were despatched to the monastery with instruction to be monks' best friends. You know where this is going—the canine monastery-dwellers were soon known as St Bernards.
Now if a little snow can come to the semi-tropical paradise that is Limerick a lot of it can come to the highest mountain-pass in Europe. It does and it did. So much so that travellers getting lost in it was a frequent occurrence. This was thought an inevitable, perhaps acceptable, risk of travel at the time. That was until a monk at prayer, or in distraction there from, was struck by the serendipity of affable dogs with a keen sense of smell being near where people often got lost in the snow.
It wasn't long before the dogs accompanied travellers through the most difficult parts of the pass, guided them to the hostel and rescued the stranded, the desperate and the buried. That was even before Roy Keane took an interest in Guide Dogs.

It seems the St Bernards, canine version, were a big help in getting Napoleon's 40,000 soldiers through the Alps without loss of life. I'm not saying whether that's a good or bad thing.
There are many stories—some may even be true—of "*these incredible dogs digging out buried travellers and lying close to them to provide warmth while another dog ran to the monastery to summon the monks. The most famous St. Bernard dog was Barry, yes,* — still before Roy Keane's time - *who lived at the monastery from 1800 – 12. Barry saved the lives of over 40 people and was so beloved and revered as a symbol of Switzerland that they stuffed him and put him on display in the Bern Natural History Museum.*"
Neither history nor legend can confirm that Barry was consulted about this plan for his afterlife.
And which of us has not from childhood mentally stored the iconic picture of the St Bernard, little barrel of brandy suspended under his/her ample jowls, reaching the snow-bound victim just in time. The drop of Hennessy was believed to have great power of resuscitation. Modern medics dispute this. But we can believe that, at worst, after the well-intentioned infusion, the recipient froze to a slightly happier death.

Unfavourable comparison between Augustinians who established a hostel high in the snowy Alps a thousand years ago and those in Limerick who like their comforts now is not welcome! Of course men are getting softer.
And, sadly, the once so-robust St Bernards have gone soft as well: "*The dogs are kept and kennelled in Col Du Grand St. Bernard in summer and Martigny the rest of the year. Visitors to the museum (fee 8 euro) can visit the dogs. Dedicated dog lovers can walk with the dogs twice a day for a rather steep fee of 48 euro p/person*". (apassportaffair.com)
Imagine! St Bernards taking a holiday when the weather gets cold. The world has gone to the dogs.

J.L.

Thought for the Day

The great scenes in the Bible, precisely because of their greatness and indeed uniqueness, can be difficult to access personally. For the Baptism of Jesus, there are at least two potential approaches. Firstly, we could go back in our minds to a life-changing turning point in our own lives, so that we can speak of before and after. Secondly, we could also turn to our own experience when we felt deeply the affirmation of our identity and worth as "the beloved" of someone. In the case of Jesus, these are combined: his identity and life are one, something we would like to be able say about ourselves too.

Prayer Abba, Father, let us hear again today your words of affirmation to Jesus and in Jesus to us all. As your beloved sons and daughters, draw us more closely into your own life of love. Amen.

Source: www.tarsus.ie Sunday readings

Christian Unity Week 18th -25th January

At least once a year, Christians are reminded of Jesus' prayer for his disciples that "they may be one so that the world may believe" (see John 17.21). Hearts are touched and Christians come together to pray for their unity. Congregations and parishes all over the world arrange special ecumenical celebrations and prayer services. The event that touches off this special experience is the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity.

At the heart of our reflections for this year's Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is the question posed by Jesus to Martha: 'Do you believe this?' (John 11:26). This same question resonated throughout the deliberations of the first Ecumenical Council, meeting in Nicaea in 325, which gathered Christian communities from around the world to strengthen their relationships as the Church of Jesus Christ.

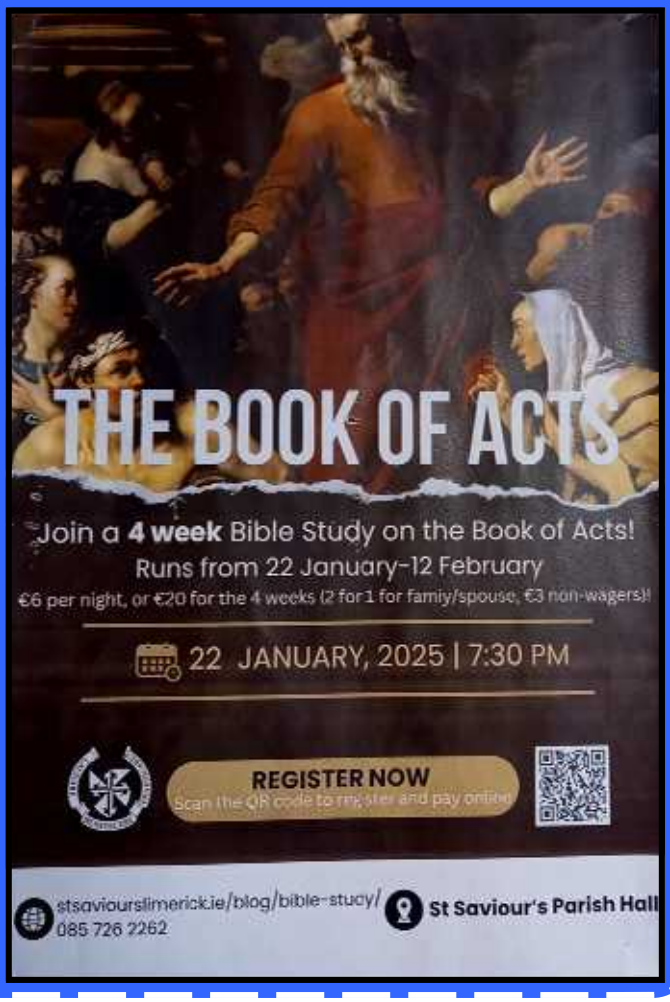
This year the ecumenical celebration has been prepared by the community of Bose , an ecumenical monastery of brothers and sisters in northern Italy.

Source: www.catholicbishops.ie resources from the 2024 general meeting of the Irish catholic bishops' conference

January Prayer Intention

We are invited to join with people around the world in praying for Pope Francis intention this month.

For the right to education
Let us pray for migrants, refugees and those affected by war, that their right to an education, which is necessary to build up a better world, might always be respected.

Seeds of Hope

Returning Biodiversity to our Parishes
A Laudato Si' Conference for the Dioceses of Kerry, Killaloe, Limerick, Cashel and Emly.
Join us for a day to equip yourself and your parish community to walk more gently on the earth, with dynamic speakers, practical workshops and a marketplace of support.
Saturday, 25th January 2025
From 10am to 4pm Springfort Hall
Mallow, Co. Cork
To register please email:
maria.murphy@trocaire.org