

Our Lady & St Joseph's Parish Bulletin

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FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT
NOVEMBER 30TH 2003



TODAY'S MUSIC: *Opening hymn no 92, Hark a herald voice is calling, Offertory no 600, All that I am, Recessional No 112, Oh come, oh come, Emmanuel.*

ADVENT is a special time of prayer. As we get ready for Christmas we also need to take advantage of the opportunities for careful spiritual preparation. The children of St Cuthbert's School are involved in a family Advent Mass at 10.0 on Sunday December 14th. There's a Penitential Service for the whole parish at 7.0 on Wednesday the 17th, and on Sunday 21st at 3.30 a candlelit Advent Carol Service at St Gabriel's Convent Chapel on Victoria Place at 3.30. We will remind you of these things in future Newsletters!

The SVP **CHRISTMAS CAPERS** are in the Rectory on Friday December 12th. You remember that this always enjoyable parish event is arranged to make a bit of money to buy Christmas parcels for those in the parish who live on their own. Gifts of cakes, bottles, etc will all be gratefully received.

The **JOURNEY IN FAITH** series of discussions has got off the ground. It's meant for those outside the Church who sincerely wish to know more about what the Church teaches. The meetings are very informal and parishioners are invited to let their non-Catholic friends and relations about them.

THE FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CLASSES START TODAY IN THE RECTORY AFTER THE 10.0 MASS. COULD PARENTS ALSO BE THERE FOR THIS FIRST MEETING WHICH WILL LAST ABOUT THREE QUARTERS OF AN HOUR.

MASS INTENTIONS		
Sat	6.00 Alston	The Parish
Sun	10.00	Anne Poland
	4.30	Louise Jamieson
Mon	12.10	William, Jeannie & Ray Allan
Tue	8.00	Success in Exams
	10.00 St C's Ct	Tom Styles
	12.10	Nancy Latimer
Wed	9.15 St Gabs	Holy Souls
	12.10	Requiem -- Kathleen Poland
Thu	8.00	Ann Marie Ross
	9.15 Sch	Holy Souls
	12.10	Requiem -- Alice McGeever
Fri	8.00	Holy Souls
	12.10	Frank Burns
Sat	12.10	Mina Gracey
	6.00 Alston	The Parish
Sun	10.00	Mary Frazer
	3.30	HOLY HOUR
	4.30	Special Intention (EER)

Please pray for Mildred Weild, Eva Oliver and Ellen Farish who are sick, for Errol Michael Wales (father of a parishioner), Kathleen Poland (Margery St - Reception 6.15 Tuesday, Requiem 12.10 Wednesday) and Alice McGeever (Gilsland Rd - Reception 6.15 Wednesday, Requiem 12.10 Thursday) who all died recently.



Heroes of the Heart

by Donal O'Leary

Printed in his local paper, the Ripon News

I love athletics. I even have many trophies from a past millennium. To the click of my Mom's rosary beads, as she prayed by the finishing tape, I won the All-Ireland 50+ veteran 100 metres sprint in Dublin in 1993! The World Athletics Championships begin soon. Grace and power will be the order of the day. Records will be broken and new champions will be crowned. The sporting world will hold its breath.

Yet I sometimes wonder about it all. Are we rewarding and adoring the most deserving people? What about the unsung heroes and heroines whose hidden service of our local community is so vital? Are we applauding only the physically spectacular, ignoring those unknown and devoted stars' who nourish the differently-abled among us?

What I mean is this. In the Sports Pages over the next few weeks, we will read about the fastest, but not about the most patient; about the highest, but not about the most humble; about the strongest, but not about the most vulnerable; about the fittest, but not about the wisest; about the most competitive, but not about the most compassionate; about the glory, but not about the cross.

During the last Olympic Games, Fr CoIm Kilcoyne writes, a nurse was speaking about the excitement of the competition. She painted pictures of the triumph of the winners as they stood on the podium, wearing their medals, the roar of the crowd in their ears. Then she shifted the scene to the children's hospital where she worked.

She talked about the sick child she cared for. He had serious bone trouble in his legs, and could not walk. For months this nurse had worked patiently with him, trying to get the power back into the frail little legs. She was also whispering courage into his anxious heart.

One day she had him balanced, yet again, on his familiar support-frame. Maybe this would be the moment she dreamed of - the moment he would move on his own. She had prayed with him, she loved him, she now willed him into taking a step. And suddenly, he did - he took ONE STEP. Just then, distracted by the noise on the TV, the nurse looked up from his flushed, excited little face to see an Olympic champion on the victory stage, pumping the air in triumph as he stood on the victory stand - before a full stadium and a watching world.

However, there was nobody around to witness the boy's victory, except his nurse. Yet his one small step had been as great as the giant stride of the record-breaking athlete. But no cameras, no medals. Just a small boy who had taken one faltering step, and then fallen into the arms of his nurse - a nurse who would not trade that moment for all the gold in all the Olympic medals ever minted.