

## ST PATRICK'S AND ST BRIGID'S GLENARIFFE



**Fourth Sunday Of Advent 18<sup>th</sup> December 2022**



“Let the Lord enter. He is the King of Glory”

Although the civil regulations may have relaxed the church regulations remain unchanged due to the return of Covid in the community. To help limit the spread of the virus face coverings should be worn during mass. Hands should be sanitized on entry to the church. Please follow the one-way system.

WEEKDAY MASSES No Mass Monday and Tuesday.  
Wednesday & Thursday 10am Friday 7.30pm

WEEKEND MASSES: Saturday Christmas Eve 9pm  
Sunday Christmas Day 10am

ST PATRICK'S PS CHRISTMAS CONCERT Monday in the Church at 7pm

PENITENTIAL RITE Wednesday evening 7.30pm

DECEASED: Josephine McCollam, Cushendall, Damien Carey Ballymena, Liam McKendry, Ballymoney, Sheila McGoran, Cushendun.

ANIVERSARIES: Mary Hartley, Philip Jamison, Rosaleen McMahon  
Charlie Black, Elish McMullan, Mary McAuley, Alex Murray

## Reflection

Joseph is someone about whom we know little. There are few references to him in the gospels apart from the stories about the birth, infancy and childhood of Jesus (see Mt 13:55 and the parallels in Mark and Luke). He is very much a secondary or background figure in the gospel story. Yet, he is a real Advent person because, in a truly humble and remarkable manner, he prepares for the arrival of the Messiah into his life and into the world.

Matthew presents Joseph as having had no part in Mary's pregnancy. When Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant he wondered how this could be since they had not been living together as husband and wife. Initially he was confused and he did not know what to do. However, he did not act rashly. He listened to God's word through the angel's message in a dream and, although it demanded much faith, he did what God asked him. He allowed his life to be influenced and directed by God's will. Therefore, without complaining, Joseph decided to prepare for the birth of Jesus by caring about Mary during her pregnancy.

Thus two aspects of Joseph's character are revealed to us. Firstly, Joseph was obviously a man of deep faith. He trusted God and, discerning God's will, took the great leap of faith into the unknown in a difficult and confusing situation. God moved him in strange ways and he was responsive to this. Secondly, Joseph was selfless. He did not alienate Mary but, instead, accepted her and remained loyal. His selflessness enabled him to act without fear of ridicule and scorn. Doing God's will was all-important for Joseph.

We can learn from these two aspects of Joseph's character. For example, how do we respond to God who often communicates with us in strange ways? Are we able to make the leap of faith when we are unsure about the future? Can we acknowledge and embrace those people and life situations which least suit us? Advent is about cultivating our ability to focus beyond our own concerns and respond to the needs of other people so that Christ can come into our lives through them.

Joseph, in the portrait painted of him in Matthew's Gospel, prepared for the birth of Jesus with gentleness and faithfulness. He cherished and supported Mary and, together, they brought Christ into the world. Joseph's discernment of God's will empowered his confidence. We are challenged to imitate Joseph's example as we live and work with other people.

Joseph was a man of few words but decisive and significant actions. His behaviour made a difference. Unfortunately, some of us speak many words but these words are rendered meaningless by our contradictory behaviour. This can easily occur during the days of Christmas when we gather as families and friends. Therefore, let us learn from the example of Joseph. Let us discern and accept joyfully God's will in our lives. And let us pray to Joseph, asking him to help us to do God's will always.

## John Littleton