



## Second Sunday in Ordinary Time



"Behold!  
The Lamb  
of God  
who takes  
away  
the sin  
of the  
world!"

John 1:29

**18<sup>th</sup> January 2026**

**"Here I am Lord, I come to do your will"**

**WEEKDAY MASSES: Wednesday & Thursday 10am, Friday 7.30pm**

**WEEKEND MASSES Saturday Vigil: 7pm, Sunday: 10am**

**SACRAMENT OF THE SICK administered at Wednesday Morning mass**

**DECEASED: Sean Carey, Ballymena (brother of Marie McMullan)**

**ANNIVERSARIES: Mary Sharpe, Lizzie Moore, Mary Catherine Fyfe, Larry & Mary Murphy, Pat & Cathy Riley, Noel Kehoe, Keith King, Mary Quinn, John Murray, Katie Delargy, Mary Mitchel, Brigid Magowan.**

### Thought for today .....

**John 'Saw Jesus Coming Towards Him' – Jesus is always coming towards us, too. Why? Because he loves us. He never imposes Himself. He doesn't burst through the door and force us to accept Him or even acknowledge him. But he does remain close, hoping that we will catch a glimpse of His love and, in that instant recognize that He is everything our hearts long for. What will happen if we open the door of our life, of our heart, to Christ?**

**He will call us to abandon the tight confines of our egotism, greed, lust, envy and selfishness. He will open undreamed-of horizons and give a rich, new dimension to our poor, fleeting days on this earth.**

## Thomas O'Loughlin

1. Every day we hear of further research into global warming and of new symptoms of the ecological crisis of the planet. This often provokes a cry that religion has little to offer on this problem or that it is a matter that little interests the churches. It is as well to acknowledge this criticism in that there has been a tradition of exploitation of the planet in the industry-driven west - the slash and burn mentality - that has taken Gen 1:28 ('fill the earth and subdue it') literally. Equally, many traditions of Christianity have been so centred on the spiritual life of the human being that they have neglected the creation, the environment, and even our bodily material natures.

There are plenty of examples of dualist spiritualities that saw humans as souls trapped and held down by matter. And, there are indeed many forms of Evangelical Christianity that sees the message of Jesus so restrictedly in terms of the salvation of individuals or the rescuing of an elect prior to an apocalyptic crunch that they think care for the planet is a waste of time. This produced a certain kind of mechanistic providence: if God wants us to survive, we'll survive!

2. However, a healthy theology of the incarnation and a healthy ecology should go hand in hand. If God is the creator of all that is, seen and unseen, and has entered the creation as a creature, the man Jesus of Nazareth, then his love for the creation can know no bounds and should set the standard for our properly ordered interaction with all creatures: visible and invisible, rational or non-rational, animate or inanimate. But the challenge is to have both a healthy *christology* and a healthy *ecology*, and have the two interfacing one another.

3. In the second reading and gospel today - and it is worth pointing out that such occasional overlaps are accidental we have a theology of incarnation which presents the holiness of God entering the creation and then being contagious, spreading out to all nations, out to the very ends of the earth. We tend to think of the earth as just there, raw earth, and then there are distinct special holy places and holy people. But to those who believe in Jesus as the Son of God who comes from the Father and upon whom the Spirit remains, such limited notions of holiness are now inadequate.

Jesus challenges us to have a whole new way of looking at the world: holiness is now contagious, and everywhere can be a sacred place and everyone can be a saint. We have encountered the Christ, and this challenges us to transform all our relationships. Everyone who is in Christ is a holy person and can spread holiness, everywhere can be a place where we can encounter the presence of God.

4. We must respect each other and the environment as a gift from God and react appropriately to its God-given nature. We cannot see it as just something that we can selfishly hijack as if it were just there. We tend to live in dualist universes: there is the sacred and the secular; the spiritual and the material; the holy and the unholy; the pure and the impure; the saints and the sinners. The love and holiness of God that became part of the creation in Jesus overcame all these dualisms and division. Holiness is contagious, goodness is diffusive, and care for the planet, care for the poor and oppressed, and care for self cannot be separated.

John the Baptist had the task of bearing witness to the incarnate Son among humanity; we have the task of bearing witness to its implications for how we treat the environment.