

***“Learn how to place the tenderness that is in your hearts at the service of the sick.”***

Last week, we began the Novena to Our Lady of Lourdes in preparation for the Feast day which is also World Day of the Sick next Wednesday February 11<sup>th</sup>.

Pope Francis reminds us:

*“Like Saint Bernadette, we stand beneath the watchful gaze of Mary. Let us ask Mary Immaculate for the grace always to relate to the sick as persons who certainly need assistance, at times even for the simplest of things, but who have a gift of their own to share with others.”*

Pope Benedict once said that the thin veil that separates heaven and earth is a little more transparent in Lourdes. Let us pray that we may remember that our lives are not just about us. They are part of God's providential plan, part of a story that stretches infinitely beyond what we can immediately grasp...for people of faith, there are no coincidences, only aspects of God's providence that we have not yet fully understood.

We are all familiar with the story of St Bernadette in Lourdes but perhaps a little less so with dozen or so years she later spent in Nevers where she worked in the infirmary as a member of the Daughters of Charity of Nevers. In the convent garden in Nevers, there is a statue of Our Lady of the Waters where St Bernadette would often go to pray. She said: *“It is she who reminds me most of the lady I saw.”* Let us prayer to Our Lady of Lourdes and to Saint Bernadette this weekend for all who are sick both in mind and in body that they may experience the healing grace of God's love.

Our Diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes will take place from September 3<sup>rd</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> this year. You might consider going especially if you have not done so in recent years and would like to return.

Speaking in Lourdes, Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said the following:

*“Bernadette was humble and uneducated, yet she understood the call of Mary even if she did not understand some of the words that Mary used. It was the rich and the powerful who placed obstacles on the path of Bernadette. There is a sense in which the affluence and commercialism that surround Lourdes weakens the authenticity of its message. It is here in the quiet and prayerfulness of the Sanctuary and especially of this Grotto that we come in touch with the true message of Lourdes and that message touches and changes our hearts.”*

The writer Thomas Merton said: *“Not all are called to be hermits, but all need enough silence and solitude*

*in their lives to enable the deep inner voice of our true self to be heard at least occasionally.”* I think that being part of a pilgrimage to Lourdes can provide us with such an opportunity. One of the good things about a pilgrimage is that it gives us some time out to step out of our daily lives and try to gain some fresh perspectives on the challenges that we face and to try to learn a bit more about ourselves.

I would encourage you to consider visiting Lourdes this year and you may know of sick or elderly family, friends or neighbours who might benefit from going on the pilgrimage. You can contact the Lourdes office at 01-808 7555 or email [info@lourdes.dublindiocese.ie](mailto:info@lourdes.dublindiocese.ie) for enquiries about sick pilgrims travelling.

**Deacon Gerard**

## WEEKEND MASS INTENTIONS

**Saturday 7th February 6.30p.m.**

Carmel Linnane(A) Arthur Morris (A)  
Walter & Gertrude McGuire (A)  
Terry & Mary Sadlier (A)  
Colette Manning (2<sup>nd</sup> A)  
Eugene Furlong (A) Gretta Timmons (2<sup>nd</sup> A)

**Sunday, 8th February 10.30a.m.**

Marie Power (A) Tina McLoughlin (A)  
Imelda Power O'Connor (A)

**Sunday 12 Noon**

Harry O'Broin (A) Christopher Blair (A)  
Rachel Costello (R.D) Bernadette Keane  
Samantha Hickey Lloyd (1<sup>st</sup> A)  
Mary Mara (A) Teresa Cleary (RD)

## COLLECTIONS

**Sunday, 1st February**

Common Fund € 1,355  
Share €875  
Sincere thanks for your support



## CALLING ALL MUSICIANS

The Folk Group would welcome Guitar and keyboard musicians to join. The Folk Group lead the liturgy at Sunday Family Mass. New members would be welcome. Contact Tom @ 087 687 8157

## CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS 2026

We send a gentle reminder to Parents of children attending St. Marnock's and St. Helen's Junior and Senior Schools, who are receiving the Sacrament of First Holy Communion and Confirmation in April and May, to complete the registration of their children for the Sacraments of their child on the Parish Website. The form is located on the front page of the Website at [www.portmarnockparish.ie](http://www.portmarnockparish.ie)

## ST VINCENT DE PAUL

Monthly Church Gate Collection will take place after all masses next weekend 14 & 15 February. Sincere thanks for your continued support and generosity.



*Are you interested  
in volunteering  
with Irish Guide  
Dogs?*

The Portmarnock-Malahide branch of IGDB will hold its AGM on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> February, at the Sands Hotel, Portmarnock. All are welcome to attend. Tea and coffee will be served. The meeting will start at 7.30 pm and will finish by 9 pm. Committee members will outline the branch's work over the past year and set out plans for 2026. New volunteers are both welcome and needed; there is no minimum time commitment. If you can give even a few hours to support fundraising or other branch activities throughout the year, we would be delighted to have you on board. To contact the local branch, please email:

[Portmarnockmalahide@guidedogs.ie](mailto:Portmarnockmalahide@guidedogs.ie)

For additional information on the work of the Irish Guide Dogs, for visually impaired people and children with Autism please visit our website: <https://www.guidedogs.ie>

## CONGRATULATIONS ST. MARNOCK'S

### NFL FLAG TEAM

Congratulations to St. Marnock's school's NFL Flag Team representing Ireland in the U13 World Championships in San Francisco! Well done to each and every one of you.....Matthew Carr, Evelyn Carter, Max Clarke, Rhys Foran, Max Gayler, Emmet Guyot, Robyn Harrell, Oscar Lawrence, Dylan Leavy and Beth Spicer and also to coaches...Mr Barnes, Mr. Spellacy, Mr. Cooper and Ms. Dillon who supported the team on their exciting, once in a lifetime adventure! You've been fantastic ambassadors for Ireland, you've done your school and country proud!

**Deacon Gerard's article is available on our  
Website**