

LENT— a time to reflect

Have you ever looked in the mirror? I'm quite sure you have, often! What purpose does it serve?

Perhaps you like to admire yourself, to look at the wonderful cheekbones, the beautifully turned up nose and those amazing eyelashes framing the lustrous deep eyes. But enough about me! More often, we look in the mirror in order to see what is wrong and then to try and put it right. Perhaps the tie is crooked, there's lipstick on your dentures or the hair gel hasn't set in the right

shape. If we didn't check ourselves in the mirror, we wouldn't have a notion how to correct what was amiss. In fact, we probably wouldn't even know that there was problem at all.

Reflection is a good word to describe what we should always be doing with our spiritual life and it is something on which we focus during the six weeks of Lent.

First we look at ourselves. There is no mirror to show us exactly what we are like spiritually, but in prayerful thought, and in comparison to the model set by Jesus, we can see where things are not quite as they should be. The sort of things we should be looking for are apathy, bitterness, selfishness or discontent. Perhaps your regular attendance at worship has become less regular. Look back 10 years and see how you have changed to be more, or less, like Christ. What happened to precipitate that change? Does worship no longer give you that "good feeling" that you used to have? Do you feel that your church no longer has room for you, or you for it? Perhaps your focus of attention has changed. Work, leisure or family circumstances may have gradually eroded the strength of your focus on God. It can happen so easily to anyone. Clergy are encouraged to frequently step back and reflect on their ordination and what it is that they are supposed to be doing, because their life can quickly become drowned in unnecessary things, to the cost of genuine ministry. Thus we all must reflect, examine ourselves and acknowledge that all is not as it should be.

Second, we take action to put things right. When we look in the mirror, we will immediately be drawn, almost automatically, to make adjustments. You might reach for a comb, or rearrange your jewellery or brush down your jacket. Spiritu-

ally, when we recognise that something is wrong, we begin by admitting that we cannot fix it on our own. Any attempt to cover up our spiritual blemishes will be worthless. Admitting the fault, we turn to Christ for forgiveness, the opportunity to start again. Then we listen prayerfully to his prompting of the Spirit for instructions on how to put things right. It might be costly. It might involve restoration of friendship with a neighbour, a renewed discipline of regular worship, or a whole reordering of your lifestyle! Only the proud and arrogant will look in the mirror and not find something to change.

Finally, when you've looked in the mirror and made the necessary adjustments, you can walk out the front door with confidence. Likewise, when we have reflected spiritually and taken action, we can step out confidently in Christ, with frequent reflection to make sure things haven't slipped.

Please do use the period of Lent as a time of reflection. Reflect at home by reading and prayer; reflect weekly at one or more of our times of worship, including the Tuesday Communion. Take part in the Church 21 project (see inside) and help your church reflect on what it should be doing in the years ahead. Don't just look at yourself in the mirror and groan! Make this Lent the time when you change and readjust so that Christ will be all the more reflected in you.

With every blessing,



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The Magazine for Mullavilly Parish

DATE	FLOWERS	CRECHE	SCRIPTURE	NOTES
March 5th	Carol Thompson	Jacqui Moore Pauline King	Helen McClenaghan	11am Holy Communion
March 12th	Mandy Wright			11am Family service
March 19th	Sally-Ann Black	Julie Magowan Joanne Milligan	Rebecca Milne	11am Holy Communion
March 26th	Georgie Wright		Thelma McCrory	Mothering Sunday 7pm Holy Communion
April 2nd	Heather Harper	Amanda Stewart Beverley Stewart	Carolyn Mayes	11am Holy Communion

From the Register

FUNERALS

5th February: Olive Strain. (formerly of Mullahead)

Baptism Anniversaries

(Cards will be presented at the family Service on 12th)

1st: Holly Topley. 2nd: Emma McDonald; Grace Marion. 3rd: Louis Russell; Chelsea Johnston, Rebecca Foster. 4th: Ryan Neill

Dates for March

Wed 1st 7:30pm Ash Wednesday Service
 Tues 7th 10:30am Holy Communion
 8:00pm Select Vestry
 Tues 14th 10:30am Holy Communion
 8:00pm Church21 Seminar
 Thurs 16th 12:30pm Ramblin' Rose Stew lunch
 Sun 19th 8pm Youth Praise in Cathedral
 Tues 21st 10:30am Holy Communion
 8pm Mothers' Union
 Mon 27th by train to Dublin
 Tues 28th 10:30am Holy Communion
 8pm Church 21 Seminar

Summer Outing

Advance notice of a proposed coach trip to North Donegal on Thursday June 8th. The trip will include a visit to the Doagh Famine Village. We should be able to manage a full coach following the popularity of last year's trip.

The over 55's are heading for Dublin by train on March 27th. This will include the Open Top Bus Tour and other activities as desired. If you have a TravelPass, then the train journey is free. For further details, contact Alan Neill (38840663)



A new book for young children at Holy Communion is available in the Church porch. "I can join in the Holy Communion Service" is an illustrated version of the communion service with lots of explanation. If its not offered to you when you come into church, please ask for it. If anyone would like their own copy, they are available by mail order from the Good Book Shop.(9024 4825)

Mullavilly Parish is a participant in Church 21

A programme of Parish Development for the Church of Ireland.

Churches everywhere are becoming increasingly aware of the rapid changes taking place in the world and of the implications of these for the way we do church. Church 21 is intended to help ordinary parishes, of all shapes and sizes, to work through change, to discern God's priorities and to take steps towards implementing these.

Three key concepts lie behind Church 21:

Envisioning - because we need to have a clear sense of the kind of church God is calling us to be

Motivating - because we want others to catch the vision and get involved, and

Resourcing - because we can only be enriched as we share God's gifts with one another.

35 parishes from across the Church of Ireland have been accepted to take part in this project of reflection. It will be launched in September with a weekend conference to which we will send four participants. The Select Vestry has nominated Jean McClelland, Julie Magowan, Kerrie Shortt and the rector to represent us.

Before that happens, however, we need to spend time as a parish looking at our present strengths and needs. A series of 6 seminars will take place in the Parish Centre on the following Tuesdays (8pm—9:30pm) dealing with the following subjects:

<i>Mar 7th</i>	<i>A Welcoming Church: how do we make sure that people know they are welcome</i>
<i>Mar 21st</i>	<i>A Caring Church: how can we help parishioners?</i>
<i>Apr 4th</i>	<i>A Worshipping Church: a look at the content of our worship and preaching</i>
<i>May 2nd</i>	<i>A Serving Church: What influence have we in the community</i>
<i>May 16th</i>	<i>A Communicating Church: Is this magazine effective? How do we get our message out?</i>
<i>May 30th</i>	<i>A Ministering Church: How effective is Mullavilly in doing what it is supposed to do?</i>

In order for these seminars to be effective, we need to have as wide a range of parishioners as possible. You won't be asked to speak out, but something might well encourage you to express an opinion or challenge you to think again. We might ask "How does the rector organise his visiting?" "Is the Family Service effective?", "What are we doing to combat racism?", "Why does it all cost so much?"

Details of the seminars can be found on www.church21.info and will also be available on each evening.

Next September, following the conference, the Church of Ireland will encourage us to identify projects and provide us with help and advice to move forward and to constantly review our growth.

"Church 21" is an exciting development and it is a privilege for us to be able to participate. Do please come and join in!

During the six weeks of Lent, Holy Communion will be celebrated each Tuesday morning at 10:30am. This is a quiet devotional service and everyone who wishes is welcome to attend. It is followed by tea or coffee at appx 11am. If you need transport, we have willing volunteers to provide it—just ring the rectory or Leslie Stewart (38841700).

Some reading for Lent:

I have recently read a very challenging and inspirational book which I hope will prove to be useful to you over Lent. The book "The Purpose Driven Life" deals with five aspects of Christian living. Conveniently, it does so in 40 chapters (one a day during Lent excluding Sundays). The five purposes of life, the author states, are to please God, to be part of God's family, to be like Christ, to serve God, and to be involved in Mission. He describes the book as a 40-day spiritual journey that will enable you to discover the answer to life's most important question: "What on earth am I here for?" It would be my intention to use these five purposes as the basis for our Holy Week addresses this year. The book is available from the Faith Mission Book Shop in Thomas Street, by mail order from the Good Book Shop in Church House, Belfast (9024 4825) or from Amazon.co.uk and other bookstores.

"The Purpose Driven Life"
Author Rick Warren
Pub Zondervan 2002

RAMBLIN' ROSE St PATRICK'S LUNCH. Instead of the usual coffee morning on the 3rd Thursday, the March Ramblin' Rose will be at lunch-time and include an Irish Stew lunch. Lunch will be served from 12-30 until whenever so if you can tie it in with your lunch hour, you'd be very welcome. Come and celebrate a day early in traditional style.

Sponsored Slim-In: A number of people have committed themselves to losing a few pounds during the next two months, including Margaret Neill, Georgina Stewart and the rector. You can encourage them with your donations towards overseas projects or by joining with them. Brian will be weighing in after the Ash Wednesday Service on March 1st and weighing out on Easter Day (in time for more chocolate). The others will weigh-in on St Patrick's Day at the Ramblin' Rose and weigh out again at the end of April

Portadown College African Exchange: Rebecca Paterson and Jonathan Harper extend a big THANK-YOU to all who have helped with their fund-raising for their exciting trip to Kenya in the summer. The trip involves an exchange with a boarding college in Kikuya and visits to other schools and projects in the area. The coffee morning last month was extremely well supported and donations amounting to over £700 were received. No doubt we'll hear more about their experiences when they return.

The Archbishop has announced that the new Dean of our Cathedral in Armagh will be Patrick Rooke, currently rector of Agherton, Portstewart, and formerly rector of Ballymore, Tandragee. We welcome Patrick back into Armagh diocese and assure him and his family of our prayers during their move. The installation will be on April 27th at 8pm.



CONFIRMATION CLASS 2006 (Natalie is out of shot!)