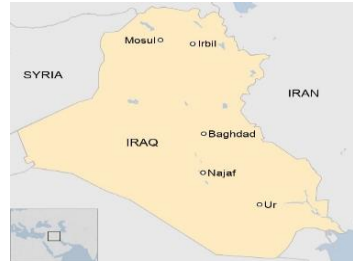


Clonskeagh Parish Newsletter

Let us remember those who are sick
and housebound in our Parish
today!



POPE'S FRANCIS RECENT VISIT TO IRAQ



It is wonderful and indeed inspirational, that Pope Francis went to Iraq last week. Clearly it was dangerous. His personal security at risk. Yet, he said that he felt *"duty bound"* to make the *"emblematic"* journey (years in the making). There was, he said *"no time to lose to bring the message of peace and hope to Iraq"*. Iraq so central to Christianity (from the first century) had waited too long. Its persecuted minority Christians needed to be emboldened, to remain.

The Pope prayed at St Joseph's Cathedral, in **Bagdad** a city wracked by war and division. He visited the ancient city of **Ur**, deemed the birthplace of the Prophet Abraham, revered in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, seeking to bring about interfaith dialogue and reconciliation across Shia, Sunni, Christian and Yazidi faiths. He met with Grand Ayatollah Ali al Sistani at the holy city of **Najaf**, one of the most powerful religious leaders in Shia Islam, and a voice of moderation. The pope's plea: that the Christian community in Iraq, have prominent roles in Iraqi society, with full rights, freedoms, and responsibilities. The basic freedoms we all enjoy at home.

At **Mosul**, in northern Iraq, the pope prayed in Church Square for an **end to violence and extremism**, surrounded by crumbling hazardous church buildings. He prayed for the thousands who perished there at the hands of Daesh (the Islamic State group) or fled with their lives, were kidnapped, sold as slaves, subjected to physical violence, or forced conversion, (a Christian community diminished from 1.4M to just under 250,000 or less than 1% of the population in two decades). He prayed for the ongoing exodus of Christians from Iraq and the wider Middle East, the cradle of civilisation due to persecution and discrimination. At a Mass gathering in **Erbil**, he said *"Iraq would stay in my heart"*. It will stay in mine too. I lived in the Middle East and made my Holy Communion (and confirmation) there! At that time, we lived together, peaceably, Christians, Muslims, Druze, Maronite, and Jews.

Pope Francis went to the desert with deep love in his heart and with conviction to speak for the suppressed. To pray, weep and hold the broken. We are all part of the one diverse Christian family. (Chaldean Catholics, Assyrian, Syrian Orthodox, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Apostolic, Anglican, Evangelical or Protestant).

My heart is filled with Hope, by the actions of Pope Francis as peacemaker. Reaching out is his *"signature"*. The first meeting of its kind ever in Iraq or between a Pope and a Grand Ayatollah. I think, happy are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God. And I wonder this Lenten time about my own world view. Does my own inner persecutor seek to control and curtail the freedom of others or shape them to my world view and expectations, on pain of isolation or rejection; or does my inner peacemaker reach out, and permit others to live in joy, freedom, and peace, to be the person God always intended them to be? This lent I am called to listen. The pope is saying a lot, if I could just listen, at least for a moment!

And the Pope's prayer for Iraq:

"May the clash of arms be silenced ... may there be an end to acts of violence and extremism, factions and intolerance"

Audrey O'Sullivan
Chairperson Mount Merrion Pastoral Parish Council

Parish News & Announcements



'Lent is a season of Fasting, Prayer, and Alms Giving in preparation for the joy of Easter'

• Fasting

Some ideas of fasting include: Fast from judging others, fast from harsh words, fast from discontent, fast from anger, fast from worry, fast from complaining & fast from idle gossip.

• Prayer

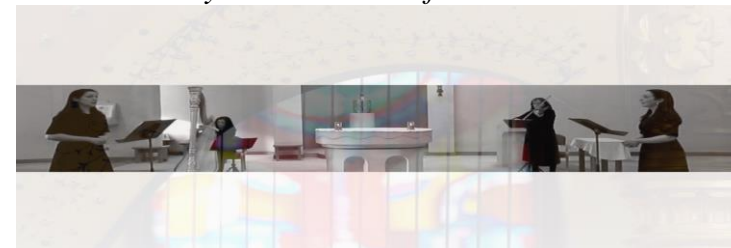
Why not go online at <https://www.mountmerrionparish.ie/webcam/> to join 10am Mass

Mount Merrion Parish Pastoral Council invites you to join our 2021 series of LENTEN "TALKS ON THURSDAYS" @ 8pm (via ZOOM)

- Thurs 18th March - Dr Jessie Rogers Lecturer in Sacred Scripture, St Patrick's College Maynooth "Always the same, always new: becoming ourselves in the presence of an untamed God"
- Thurs 25th March – Fr Columba McCann OSB Monk of Glenstal Abbey "What is God doing for Lent? Wisdom about Christian Transformation from St Thérèse of Lisieux and St Benedict of Nursia"

TO REGISTER: Please contact the Mount Merrion Parish Office by email on parishoffice@mountmerrionparish.ie.

You will be sent a ZOOM weblink to allow you to join the live talk each Thursday. The talks are free and all are welcome.



The 2 part reflection *"A Celtic Lenten Journey - Harp, Voice and Violin"* prepared by Kerrie O'Connor, together with harpists Mary Louise and Teresa O'Donnell and violinist Sarah Lane, is now fully online and can be viewed on the following links.

Journey from Galilee to Gethsemane onto Calvary in Word and song.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bu8GDvSUZ_Y

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cGiFqCswp90>

• Alms Giving

Trocaire once again invite us to join in with their Lenten Campaign. The Trocaire packs are available at the back of the church. All families in the parish are encouraged to take the pack from the back of the church and join in the Lenten Campaign.

Covid-19 Level 5

The churches are open for *private prayer* and those over 70 and those with underlying conditions are asked to limit their contacts, stay in place at home in so far as possible and to exercise a heightened sense of personal care.

The *Parish Office* is closed to the *public* and not available for in person visits to book masses or get Mass cards.

Please email parishofficeclonskeagh@eircom.net as the emails are checked remotely.

We all need to exercise caution in our interactions with the public and with each other.

The norms of social distance, hand washing, and masks are to be strictly observed.

Everyone who visits our church is to wear a face covering, to practice hand sanitising and social distancing, in order to protect everyone's health.

Fr Joe Mullan Adm.

We prayerfully remember all those who are **Recently Deceased** & all whose **Anniversaries** occur at this time.

"May they rest in peace. Amen."

