

Parish Newsletter



SUPPORT BUBBLE

This time last year we had never used the term ‘support bubble’. Most of us now know what it means. During Covid-19 times, a support bubble is a close network between one household with a single adult and another household of any size. It was intended to keep people living alone (400,000 in the Republic of Ireland at the time of the 2016 Census) safe, while enabling healthy social interaction. For many it became a lifeline. As a veteran of three lockdowns in Offaly, I speak with a voice of experience when I say that we are social beings, meant to connect, and these socially distant times have been most frustrating. People were invited to choose their ‘bubble’ carefully. Baptism is also about choice: making a positive decision on the ultimate connection – that between ourselves and Christ. It’s just as well that the Almighty is not so picky in choosing us!

In today’s Gospel we encounter John the Baptist. One of the aspects of John the Baptist that I like most is his very healthy relationship with himself. Insecure people make things all about themselves due to low self-

confidence; the perfect antidote is to make someone else the hero. John the Baptist does just that with his cousin Jesus. He points people to God, to Jesus – never to himself. To this day we use his words at Communion, ‘Behold the Lamb of God’. So often we do God a disservice: we project all manner of things, like wrath and judgement, into God’s mouth. God doesn’t often get a word in edgeways – but he does today. Do we remember his words? ‘You are my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on you.’

this to happen. These are testing times. I only discovered recently that violinists prefer to use tested violin strings because they give a more true tone. The strings are first stretched on a rack, to take all the unsteadiness out of them, then they are hammered and put through a chemical test. All of this is to enable a perfect and full tone. It seems the music will be noticeably warmer and richer than without the process. We can only hope that, in the same way, all the stretching and straining of these times will be part of a process of each one of us becoming the unique, warm, authentic person that God wants us to be.

– Tom Cox

At our Baptisms, people are keen on having as many loved ones as possible present – even choosing to delay the sacrament to enable

Reflection

In which ways do you identify Jesus? Make a list of answers to the question, ‘Who is Jesus?’

Lesson

The voice from heaven describes Jesus as the faithful servant of the prophecy of Isaiah, ‘Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom my soul delights’ (Is 42:1).

Prayer

Lord, give confidence to all candidates for Baptism and keep the wavering flame of faith alight. Amen.



YOU ARE MY BELOVED

How we each adapt to and accept the many differences in each other is a remarkable insight into the Spirit of God deeply seeded within us. It is this which calls us to say to one another: you are my chosen one in whom my heart delights! Let us celebrate with joy God’s love for us and for all marriages.

– Marriage Matters

www.twoinoneflesh.org.uk



This Week (11–17 January)

- 11 M St Silvanus of Amiens
- 12 T St Aelred of Rievaulx, abbot
- 13 W St Hilary, bishop and doctor
- 14 T St Felix of Nola
- 15 F St Ita, virgin, St Arnold Jansen
- 16 S St Fursa, monk
- 17 S SECOND SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME