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**December 6th – 12th.
The joy of salvation.**

“(John) went through the whole Jordan district proclaiming a baptism for the forgiveness of sins.” Every day we are made aware of how much evil there is in our world, with stories of cruelty and vandalism at home and abroad. And yet in spite of this awareness there is a huge decline in our sense of sin. In some ways this is a good development because in former times so much was thought of as sin. However, as we approach Christmas and beyond, it is important that we hear the call for repentance and leave anything that is harmful in the past behind us by placing it firmly in the hands of Christ, especially through celebrating the great Sacrament of Confession. This makes it possible for us to make a fresh start again and again in our relationships with God and with one another in our homes and in our faith community.

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Immaculate is a negative way of saying something very positive. Said of a suit, shoes, a table-cloth, etc., it means they are in perfect condition, without blemish, exactly as we would wish them to be.

Of Mary, it means that all her life, from the very first moment, she was exactly what God wished her to be, the delight of His heart, full of grace. Conceived and born of human parents in the normal way, Mary was especially gifted by God from ‘the first moment of her conception.’ The grace which others received in Baptism, God gave Mary even before her birth, through the foreseen merits of Christ, to prepare her to be the Mother of the Redeemer.

The doctrine of the Immaculate Conception makes clear that no one is saved apart from Christ. This is true of all people who have ever lived, even though they were born many centuries before Christ.

Mary Immaculate is a new creation, a new beginning. Mary the Immaculate One already personifies the Church of Christ which St. Paul described in the Letter to the Ephesians:

“in all her glory, without stain or wrinkle or any such thing..... but holy and immaculate.” (5: 7). She already personifies the Church of the future life, the Heavenly Church. She shows us what saved humanity is. Mary is our new departure, our fresh start.

The Immaculate Conception helps to maintain a climate of Christian optimism. Yes, God is more powerful than the course of history and greater than the hearts of humankind.

There are practical lessons to be learned by us from this Feast.

(a) The cult of the instant. We find it rather difficult to wait for results. We want instant friendships - calling people by their first name after a rather casual meeting, instant beverages, even instant holiness. God is patient. He plans, he prepares, he takes thousands of years to bring about His purposes. From the Fall thousands of years had passed. Mary had been in the mind of God but the realisation of the plan was patient. We want instant results. God’s mills grind slowly.

(b) The Cult of the Temporary, the Mediocre. Mary’s “Yes” at the Annunciation was a total and lifelong response. There were no yearly renewals, no temporary vocation for her. But today there is nothing but compromise, going ahead and turning back, half-hearted efforts, temporary commitments, without any total giving to anything or anybody.

**Weekly Masses
Special Remembrance**

Mon. 7th Dec. to Sun. 12th Dec. 2009

Mass at 8.00 and 10.00 each morning, Monday to Friday, is offered for all those whose names are on the list of Mass intentions. If you wish to have someone mentioned specifically - for an anniversary, a recent death, an illness - please leave the name at the Reception Office.

In the Novena Masses on Saturday at 8.00 and 10.00 we remember especially all those who have sent in petitions and those attending the Novena..

Tues. 10.00 a.m. Ann Marie Daly R.I.P.

Wed. 10.00 a.m. Jane & Edward Egan R.I.P.

Thur. 10.00 a.m. Bridget, Michael & Edward
Mongan & all Deceased
Members of the family R.I.P.

Fri. 10.00 a.m. William O'Shaughnessy R.I.P.

Feast Days of the coming week.

Mon: St. Ambrose, Doctor of the Church'

Tues: The Immaculate Conception of the
Blessed Virgin Mary.

During the coming week:

In The Retreat House:

11-13: Advent Retreat.

In the Youth Village

Dec 10: Crumlin N.S.

*Please share in this Redemptorist
Apostolic Work by praying for its success.*

THE SICK

Please pray for
Fr. Brian Foley,
Fr. Seán Mullin,
Majella Fahy,
Michelle O'Donnell,
Patricia Kelly.

Last week-end you were introduced here to one of our Redemptorist students, Tony Rice, who is preparing for the priesthood.

On the previous week-end you were introduced to Brian Nolan who is also preparing for the priesthood.

The third student in the group is Seán Duggan, from Galway city. You can read his story overleaf.

The Ordination of all three by Cardinal Seán Brady takes place at 12.30 p.m. on Sunday, December 6th, in the Redemptorist Church, Dundalk.

Seán's first Mass, a Mass of Thanksgiving, will be in St. Oliver Plunkett Church, Renmore, Galway, on Wednesday December 9th at 6.30 pm with refreshments afterwards in the Carlton Hotel. All are welcome.

Seán will be here in Esker for the 8 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Masses on Sunday,
December 21st.

May God bless Seán in his priestly life!

SEÁN DUGGAN:

My name is Seán Duggan. I am 28 years of age and from Galway city where my parents run a family business in Renmore. Besides my parents there are four other boys and five sisters in the family. I am sixth from the top. I attended secondary school at St Joseph's Patrician College in Galway, later graduating with a bachelor of corporate law degree from NUIG. Before I joined the Redemptorists in 2001 I also worked and studied in Paris and worked on a voluntary basis in Haiti. I have a wide range of interests, which includes playing music.

I studied philosophy as part of my first two years with the Redemptorists. I was professed on 22nd August, 2004, after completing the novitiate and then studied theology for two years. I worked in Lagos, Nigeria, for a short time with our Nigerian confreres. That was a very good experience.

I returned to Ireland and lived in our Dundalk community for almost two years. These two years are what is called MICE. MICE is a two-year placement and is part of the third phase of training. My main ministry was through parish missions in different parts of the country. After that I moved to Dublin to complete my theological studies. I was also involved in the Redemptorist parish in Dundalk. During the summer of 2007 I studied the Polish language in Cracow for a short time.

