

THIRD SUNDAY OF LENT

'Lord, you have words of everlasting life.'

(Psalm 19:8)

Newsletter Insert

In Malawi, longer and more severe droughts in recent years have dried up small streams and water holes. Unfortunately, some areas are also affected by cyclones and flooding. When this happens, the simple mud houses are badly damaged. The water that falls is not suitable for drinking or farming but causes a huge amount of destruction. Trócaire is working with local partners to help communities to rebuild after these events and to be better prepared for the future. To learn more, go to: <https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/working-in-ireland/parishes/>



'Parishes are asked to expand their circles of solidarity, to protect and care for biodiversity and creation on 30 per cent of their grounds, and to care for this as a haven for pollinators and biodiversity, that can be enjoyed by the whole community.'

(Irish Bishops' Conference, Spring Statement 2023)



Destruction from Cyclone Freddy in Chinkhwangwa Village in the east of Malawi.

Photo credit: Muiru Mbuthia, Trócaire

Sacred Space

The response to the psalm today is, 'Lord, you have words of everlasting life.' We can find great hope in scripture. Gather some scripture quotes that provide hope and put them around your sacred space.



Prayer of the Faithful

- 1) God our Father, we pray for those parts of the world affected by cyclones, earthquakes and flooding. Give us your grace to stand in solidarity and hope with those who are suffering, and to respond in whatever way we can.
- 2) God our Father, we pray for those who are homeless, in Ireland and around the world. May they find shelter and safety in a place they can call home.



Music

'God of Mercy and Compassion' by Michael Hodgetts

'Behold What You See' by Bernard Sexton

'Lord, Your Mercy is My Hope' by John O'Keeffe



This Week

Did you know that the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference has a plan for parishes to return 30 per cent of church grounds to nature by 2030? You can find out more about the Return to Nature plan here: <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/laudato-si/returning-to-nature/>



GOSPEL REFLECTIONS BY FR PAUL THORNTON

John 2:13-25

Think of the last time you visited a city whose architecture impressed you. Maybe it was Dublin, Galway, Cork or Belfast; have you been overseas, maybe to Rome or London? In admiring the beauty, you get a sense of the historic age of the buildings and a feeling that they will always be here. The temple in Jerusalem, which we hear about in today's gospel, was one of those impressive buildings that took your breath away. It was not the first temple built in Jerusalem but this time they were sure that it would not be destroyed. Yet a few years after Jesus says these things the temple is again in ruins.

There are many things that we take for granted and assume will always be there. One of the fundamental natural resources is water. Year by year the water crisis worsens. We have some idea of it when we hear about or experience the contamination of local water schemes, the problems of aged water infrastructure and the depletion of our reservoirs in the summer.

For people in the global south, however, the water crisis has become a matter of survival.

'Fresh drinking water is an issue of primary importance since it is indispensable for human life and for supporting terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. ... Water poverty especially affects Africa where large sectors of the population have no access to safe drinking water or experience droughts which impede agricultural production.' (*Laudato Si'*, 28)

The lives of Malita and her family, who are pictured on this year's Trócaire box, are hugely impacted by too much water from heavy rains, the rise in the number of extreme weather events like cyclones, and the lengthening of the dry seasons. Close to their village there is a 'bobo' pump, which draws water from a well. When the well is producing water, life is much easier for the people. Read more about Malita's story and find homily notes at: <https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/working-in-ireland/parishes/>

Take Action Day of Celebration – World Water Day

World Water Day occurs every year on 22 March. In 2024 this falls on a Friday just before the Easter break. Use this day to celebrate all things water in your parish. The following are just some suggestions for integrating water issues into your parish for the day. We would encourage you to join with your local school, youth club and community groups for these activities.

- A Pledge Waterfall: Create a waterfall of pledges in a public area. Each water droplet coming down the waterfall can be an individual pledge.
- Organise a river or beach ritual using this Trócaire resource: <https://www.trocaire.org/documents/trocaire-river-ritual-season-of-creation/>

- Do a water liturgy review. How many times during our Catholic celebrations do we use water? One example is during baptism; can you find more, especially as we enter Holy Week?
- Join the Trócaire volunteer programme: <https://www.trocaire.org/join-us/volunteer/>
- Fundraise for Trócaire: <https://www.trocaire.org/ways-to-help/fundraise/community-fundraising/>



Patrick uses the water pump at Puteya Primary School.
Photo credit: Muiru Mbuthia, Trócaire