

Voice from the Vicarage 6th October 2022

Dear All,

Acres of Joy...

I'm writing this 'Voice' from a beautiful **Jesuit House** in Sevenhills in the Clare Valley where I'm leading a retreat for clergy from the diocese of The Murray. Founded in the mid 19th century by Austrian Jesuits the buildings are a lovely warm honey colour reminiscent for me of the stone found in the Cotswolds in the UK. The monastery is totally surrounded by vineyards planted by the Jesuits to provide Communion wine for the burgeoning Catholic community, but now, as many of you will know, their wines are available to the general public—and a very nice drop it is!

The vineyards remind me of an old rabbinic adage: **'Where there is no wine, there is no joy'**.. I have quoted it before! Wine

and joy are so linked in the Old Testament that I feel justified in stretching the words of the Holy Mother at the wedding at Cana : *'They have no joy'*. For most of us there are times when we seem to be running on empty, when we lose our joy. Sometimes others rob us of joy, oft times without intent, but sometimes with it. Whatever may be so, the truth is we are surrounded by joy, and are called to be the bearers of holy joy to others. In the New Testament it's a spiritual gift. Joy belongs to the Lord!



Surrounded by (potential) joy....Jesuit vineyards

I've been encouraging the priests here to let the vineyards surrounding them remind them of the joy of the Lord which is their strength. (Nehemiah 8:10), to pray for the spiritual gift of joy..and to have a glass or two of red for good measure!

As many of you will know I was recently in Canada staying at a **Carmelite monastery** near Niagara Falls. How fortunate we are to live in an age when such places are as open to Anglicans and others as they are to Roman Catholics, and we can so easily rub shoulders and learn from the great catholic spiritual traditions that have given so much to the world! There was a time when the doors to such treasures were closed to non Catholics, and indeed, were treated with suspicion by our own forbears. How much better to be a hunter gatherer than a rigid denominationalist!

And a church full of joy...

There was much joy to be found in our own parish church on Sunday as Father Jack presided at the Eucharist for the first time.

In my sermon on that occasion I offered this advice to our new priest:

'..always pray the Mass...And if you pray it, then perhaps your distinctive voice will be lost in the accent of the Galilean'.

I spoke of the delight and beauty found in the trembling hands of a newly ordained priest as he offers the bread and the wine for the first time. But more beautiful still are the trembling hands of an old priest as he takes up the same chalice and paten; the priest who has kept on and stayed faithful. I remarked that of course I won't be around when Jack is an old priest, but no matter. I hope to be in the heavenly cheer squad urging him on, and joining in the prayer...



Now Fr Jack, dressed in the chasuble of the priest, administers the Holy Sacrament alongside his father, Fr Mark.

One of the great privileges of a priest is to bless and absolve God's people in his

name. And one of the joys of a new priest's 'training incumbent' is to act as Master of Ceremonies at the 'first mass'.

That was my joy, though I have to say Jack was very well prepared and needed hardly any gentle prodding at all!

Evidence of thanksgiving

was also to be found in the generous amount contributed for a gift to Jack to mark this turning point in his Christian life. At the end of mass, churchwarden Cecilia Fairlie spoke gave an envelope to Jack. It seemed sensible to give him money since he will soon be on his academic adventures in the U.K. He will also receive a cross carved by Ukrainian Christians. **If you have not had the opportunity to sign the card it will be possible on this Sunday**

The **Archbishop of Canterbury** is visiting the diocese this weekend and will be preaching at the Cathedral on Sunday evening at 6.30 pm. It is ticketed but there are 200 seats on a first come first served basis. Try your luck!

There will be no **Lamb B&B** on Sunday night, but all are welcome to come to the vicarage for an informal light meal and we will sit around watching a couple of episodes of the wonderful 'Derry Girls', an amusing take on life in Northern Ireland during the 'troubles' from the perspective of a group of teenagers and a grumpy nun...

And finally, soon we will be turning our hearts and minds towards the great season of Advent which will be upon us before we know it. We are already planning our Christmas events. In the meantime, while I'm talking about events, I want to give notice that the **Annual Meeting of the Parish will take place on Advent Sunday, November 27th after the 10 am Mass.** It will be a good opportunity to review the year and look ahead.

Sr Cara is preaching on Sunday. Hope to see you. Much love, +Lindsay



The shaft of light from above that seems to be in this photo as Fr Jack blesses the congregation is probably a coincidence....shame that the camera angle makes the person next to him look much shorter than in reality!