NEWRY PARISH NEWSLETTER

YEAR OF MERCY
2016 Vol 1 No 1

FOR 2016 STEP INSIDE THE NEWRY PARISH YEAR OF MERCY

OUR SPECIAL EDITION IS THE PERFECT START TO 2016 .....

MEET THE MISSIONERS ON PAGE 4-5

SEE THE PHOTOS FROM THE PARISH ON PAGE 6-7

READ THE STORY OF THE HOLY DOOR ON PAGE 2

A PRAYER FROM POPE FRANCIS FOR THE START OF THE YEAR OF MERCY ...

PRAYER OF POPE FRANCIS FOR THE JUBILEE

Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief. Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: "If you knew the gift of God!"

You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error: let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with His anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.

BISHOP MCAREAVEY OPENING THE DOOR OF MERCY AT NEWRY CATHEDRAL

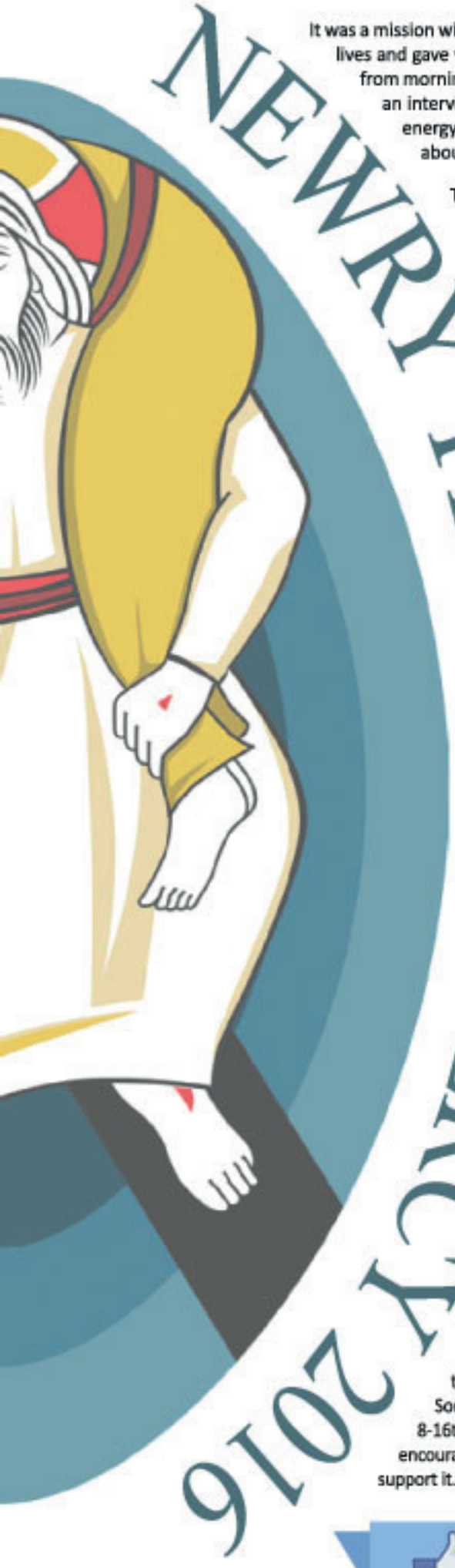
THE DOOR OF MERCY

The tradition of Holy Doors dates back to the early 15th century. During the Jubilee of Mercy, every cathedral and basilica around the world will designate a Door of Mercy. The front door of the Cathedral of St Patrick and St Colman in Newry was symbolically opened and designated as the Holy Door for the Diocese of Dromore by Bishop McAreavey on Gaudete Sunday.

The door symbolizes Christ, who called himself "the gate" to eternal life (Jn 10:9). For pilgrims, to walk through the Holy Doors is to walk, in spirit, from sin to grace and from death to life, acknowledging Christ as the only way to the Father.

Everyone who walks through a Holy Door in the right spirit will have the opportunity to obtain a plenary indulgence for themselves or a departed loved one. We walk in and out of the Cathedral door regularly, however each of us in Newry parish should make at least one special mini-pilgrimage, maybe as a Lenten exercise, to it as the Door of Mercy, perhaps going to confession – the sacrament of God's mercy. There will be special events to mark the year of mercy so watch out for them. The year also gives us an incentive to think about the ways in which we carry out the works of mercy in our lives.

REFLECTIONS ON NEWRY PARISH MISSION



It was a mission with a difference. We had one priest and 39 lay-people who spoke of Christianity in their own lives and gave witness in all the churches, in houses, in clubs, on the radio and on the streets of the city from morning until late evening. It was a very different dynamic from that of missions of years past. In an interview on EWTN Radio- Celtic Connections program, Canon Brown said "'We wanted a new energy in the Parish and the Emmanuel Community seemed to offer the possibility of bringing it about.

That has definitely been demonstrated this week. The missionaries took the parish by storm...they were able to touch hearts we were not able to touch. People they met on the street and in visitation came to the Mercy Night which was a wonderful celebration of God's mercy and forgiveness. People left the church full of joy. The general impression from the missionaries was their joy and happiness in their faith. Meeting them gave people a sense of hope that they had perhaps lost."'

Each day there was prayer and adoration in the Cathedral. The missionaries gave testimonies at all the Masses in the parish, however a highlight was "Mercy Night", a penitential service. There was beautiful music, singing, scripture readings and opportunities for prayer. It was an open-ended evening which continued until the last person had their needs met. A special healing Mass was held at St. Brigid's Church. The service was enriched by poignant life accounts from the adult lay missionaries.

MISSIONARIES VISITING THE SCOUT TROUP

A WORD FROM CANON BROWN

This edition of the Parish Newsletter celebrates our recent mission. It was a great experience for many of our parishioners and I hope that its influence will continue to be felt for a long time to come.

It is important that we do not let the impetus of all the enthusiasm and hard work fade away and I would ask parishioners to think about how we can carry it forward. There are several events ongoing in the parish which give us a chance to be a bit more involved with our faith – they are listed here in the newsletter. Think about joining in one of them.

Some like the Mercy Night are a direct follow on from the Mission. Our St Patrick's Novena is from 8-16th March and its theme is 'Being in right relations with God'. There are interesting speakers to encourage us to think about our faith – the faith that St. Patrick brought to us. I encourage people to support it. You can find more detail about the speakers on the parish website and Facebook page.

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BARNEY FROM WALES

'One of the highlights for me was the Mercy Night on the Thursday, which was a really beautiful evening of prayer and of people coming back to the church and experiencing their church in a new way, coming to meet Jesus.
One man came up to us and said that Mercy night really changed his life. That one evening had made such a big impact on him that he had come back to the church.'

BRIANNA, AN AMERICAN FROM THE MIDWEST

'Meeting people where they are is all that we wanted to do. Not to push anything on them, but just to meet them were they're at. One of the ways that we did that was through the open houses. We just had a night of conversation about faith and our beliefs. We went wherever the conversation would go .....'

'..... I'm twenty-one years old and the older generation were really touched by our witness. It's important for them to know that, as young people, we do care. It's important to build a bridge between the older generation and the younger generation. '

'AS YOUNG PEOPLE, WE DO CARE. THE YOUNG CHURCH IS ALIVE AND WELL'

GERRO FROM THE NETHERLANDS

'We went knocking on virtually every door in some streets and everybody was so kind to us. We were invited in for tea and even people whose cup of tea this mission wasn't, were never unfriendly.'

WHO WERE THE MISSIONARIES?

The Emmanuel community is a global organisation with a body of activists scattered all over the world, including Ireland North and South. They have a School of Mission in Rome which takes twenty young people from across the world and provides a year's training in practical missionary work.

They came from as far away as Australia and Vietnam. There were some from France and Germany, American and Egypt, England and Wales. Newry was the location chosen for their mission in Europe, which was their first full mission practical experience.

They will do three more missions in the United States in the late spring and summer. The Irish team travelled from Belfast, Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Dungannon and Offaly. Some stayed for the entire mission, whilst others came and went to fit with their work commitments.

The Newry mission was a great experience for them as well as the parish. Here are some of their comments:

EMER FROM THE IRISH EMMANUEL COMMUNITY

'Two of the lads had a story for us: It was a really cold and wet morning and they were standing outside a bakery, trying to get a little bit of shelter. The owner of the bakery invited them in and gave them free coffee and cakes. They were able to talk to the customers and they were in out of the cold. That sort of welcome has been so apparent all week.'

'WE FIND THAT IF YOU PROVIDE PEOPLE WITH OPPORTUNITIES, THE LORD DOES THE REST'

'IT'S BEEN AN OPENNESS THAT HAS PASSED ALL BOUNDARIES, ALL FAITH GROUPS AND NON-FAITH GROUPS'

'WE WENT TO THE SCHOOLS, ON THE STREETS AND ALSO THE HOUSE TO HOUSE VISITS'

GERRO FROM THE NETHERLANDS

'We went knocking on virtually every door in some streets and everybody was so kind to us. We were invited in for tea and even people whose cup of tea this mission wasn't, were never unfriendly.'

MAKING IT HAPPEN

It was quite a logistical effort to make the mission happen. There was travel and transport to be organised, accommodation to be found and arranged. The missionaries had to be fed. This all depended on voluntary help from the parish and demonstrated the strength and dedication of parish volunteers and staff. The Salvation Army members added the ecumenical dimension to the planning.

Planning started in the summer. A group led by planning-group chairperson, Fred Hollowood started in June. They found out what the Emmanuel Community could provide as well as but it was also necessary to develop activities which would be new to Newry but which they hoped would be effective in the context. Ed and Fiona Collins, members of the Emmanuel Community from Belfast, acted as the conduit between Newry parish and the Emmanuel community in Ireland and Rome.

Underpinning the whole project were the host families, who opened their houses to the Emmanuel missionaries and provided them with a safe home away from home and ferried them around the city to their various assignments. Ireland has a reputation for hospitality and Newry lived up to that reputation. Host families formed a bond with their charges that has outlived the mission itself. The sentiments of host, Harry Smyth could be echoed by all of the host families: "Eliza from Australia and Gabrielle from France, two very different characters, were a breath of fresh air. Their sense of purpose and their joy in the love of Jesus were infectious. It was a privilege for my wife Anne and me to have them in our home".

Parishioners opened their doors to their neighbours on three evenings during the mission. Groups of neighbours as few as eight and as many as twelve squeezed into living rooms to hear the missionaries bear witness, to discuss issues and pray. Each house meeting set its own agenda and timetable and ended up with tea and biscuits, which facilitated even more conversation. All who attended these house meetings found something new. What Michael Carlin wrote could have been written by any of those who opened their houses "During the Mission Joan and I hosted an 'Open House' for some of our friends and neighbours. It was a tremendous success. We were all impressed by the energy, enthusiasm and commitment of the missionaries. Their strong faith shone through in their sharing and helped stimulate a lively discussion. My lasting memory of the evening is how happy they all were. I firmly believe that smiling helps to spread happiness and these young people managed to put a smile on everyone's face."

The host families provided breakfast for the missionaries, but a great catering operation was set up in the Newry Conference and Banqueting Centre to provide lunches and incidental catering for the group. Pauline McGovern performed her usual miracles of organisation and, helped by her staff and dedicated volunteers, provided delicious meals for the group for the whole week. This culminated with a celebratory farewell lunch before the missionaries left Newry at which they were presented with crosses and certificates by the Knights of Columbanus.

RAISING MONEY TO SUPPORT THE MISSIONARIES

It was necessary to raise some money to fund all this activity and some events were planned, some more successful than others. The Firewalking Event, which was held on the evening of December 6 gave participants, including Fr Krzysztof, a chance to show off their courage, and raised over £3000. Many thanks to the participants and their sponsors.

Michael Burns and Mark Byrne worked hard at publicity, the latter keeping the Parish website and Facebook page uptodate. Michael organised local radio to play its part in setting the scene. On Saturday 5th and Sunday 6th and again on Sunday 13th of December our mission team was featured on local radio stations.

NIGHT FEVER – RESPONDING TO AN INVITATION

NIGHT FEVER COMES TO NEWRY

"Night Fever" another important event had a youth focus. It was a pleasure to see the missionaries on the steps of the cathedral talking to passers-by of all ages and taking them inside to light a candle and say a prayer. Each candle represented a person that was influenced enough by the mission that evening to respond to the invitation

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Youth clubs including the Dromore Diocesan and Newry Parish youth groups and Bosco Youth Club were visited. The SVP included the missionaries in their language classes. Some missionaries also accompanied The Salvation Army's Newry Knights on their Saturday night-Sunday morning patrols, showing commitment to good works as well as evangelisation.

You may remember the weather was quite challenging during that week. Despite being used to a dry 20°C in Rome, the missionaries braved the wind and rain to talk to people and sing on the city's streets and neighbourhoods. The reception was warm even if the weather was cold. Alexandra from Egypt was granted a wish - she saw snow for the first time.

LENDING A HELPING HAND

FIREWALKING IN NEWRY

SOME OF THE MISSIONARIES AT Q RADIO STATION

MAJOR MARJORY PARROT GAVE US HER THOUGHTS ON THE MISSIONARIES:

Major Marjory Parrot of the Salvation Army gave us her thoughts on the missionaries; 'This was the first time that we have had the opportunity to work so closely with another Church in Newry. It was a very beneficial experience, and we were thankful for the invitation being extended.

We found it useful, being involved in the planning process, as it helped to build relationships with those planning the event, and to gain an understanding of what was to take place.

Those missionaries who were involved with our street outreach on the two weekends showed a quick grasp of what was involved, and were a pleasure to work alongside.

Our church members enjoyed the more informal atmosphere of the Open House night, and found what the young missionaries had to share was both challenging and inspirational.

It was a real bl essing to be able to join with fellow Christians, and also to worship God in ways with which we are not so familiar.' This collaboration was also a blessing for the parish too.

FR CESARE OP GAVE US HIS THOUGHTS ON THE MISSIONARIES:

Farther Cesare OP took the time to give us his thoughts on the missionaries within the parish; 'As a religious community, we felt privileged to be involved in such an important Parish Church activity. It was really great to bring our Dominican contribution in joining the planning committee, hosting the young missionaries and helping the Parish clergy in hearing confessions and anointing the sick.

It was particularly rewarding for each of us to share our pastoral experience with the missionaries, to hear of their stories, aspirations and achievements.

We enjoyed their company, appreciated their enthusiasm and got carried away with the joy of their music and lively initiative.

We all are sure that the positive repercussion of this vibrant mission will influence Newry Catholic life for many years to come.'

POLISH-IRISH CELEBRATION

It's over ten years since the first influx of Polish people came to Ireland. The Society of Christ, at the invitation of Bishop John McAreavey, supplied many of the Polish priests who have come here since, including Fr Stanislav and Fr Krzysztof. In recognition of the role that Bishop McAreavey and Honorary Consul of Poland, Jerome Mullan have played, the Superior General of the Society, decided to honour each of them with a medal. The presentation took place in Newry Cathedral on Sunday, 18th October, at 10.00am Mass. The Mass was a joyful and colourful celebration of the diversity of our parish and parishioners, as well as the Polish visitors and representatives of Polish organisations, enjoyed the hospitality offered afterwards in the Parish Centre. It is a sign of the importance of the Polish community in our parish that we now have a Polish representative on the Parish Pastoral Council.

THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBANUS

On 20 September, the Knights of Columbanus celebrated the centenary of their establishment. They were founded in Sacred Heart Parish, Belfast by Fr James K O Neill in 1915, with the aim of implementing the social teachings of Leo XIII and Pius X and to promote and foster the Catholic Faith and Education. Many Knights from all over Ireland, including the Supreme Knight, Barry McMahon, came to Newry for the celebration. During the Mass, Canon Francis Brown presented Bro. Michael Warde with the Benemerenti Medal on behalf of Pope Francis. Congratulations to Michael and to all of the knights, and thanks to them for all the work they do in the parish.

CELEBRATION OF PARISH ORGANISATIONS

On 14 October our annual Mass was again a great celebration and affirmation of all the work done in the parish by all the organisations, big and small, which make up the tapestry of our community. There was a good attendance and it was great to have representation from the schools and youth groups. A candle was lit and carried up by a member of each group to symbolise the light that the organisations bring and also to be symbol of the prayer of thanksgiving for all their work.

NEW EVENTS ADAPTED FROM THE MISSION:

- 'Mercy Night' penitential service as part of the Lenten observances. This will happen on 4 March as part of the '24 Hours for the Lord' requested by Pope Francis to happen all around the world. Our twenty four hours will be from 6.00 on Friday March 4 to 6.00 pm Mass on Saturday 5 March
- 'Night Fever' drawing young people back into church. This will take place on 19 March.
- House Meetings will continue from their success in the mission. If you would like to take part by opening your home, please contact the Parish Office.
- Living in Faith pamphlet – a Christian perspective for the 21st century

Keep an eye on the bulletin, the parish website and Facebook page to keep up-to-date with the details of what is planned.

LOOKING FORWARD TO LENT AND INTO 2016, FOLLOW UP TO OUR MISSION

In many ways the mission was a testing ground. It allowed the parish to try out new approaches and train ourselves in new techniques. The event is now passed, but what is important is what we do from now on. We have learned that young lay-people can be just as effective as anyone else at spreading the Good News.
There are ongoing activities provided in the parish so you could think about joining in some activity for Lent or for the longer term. There will be several opportunities to get involved:

ST PATRICK'S NOVENA 8-16 MARCH

Our St Patrick's Novena is one of our major events coming up. We will look again at the life and times of St Patrick, our patron saint, as an inspiration in today's world. As in previous years there will be nine homilies on the nine evenings from visiting speakers – you can get more information about the speakers on the parish website or on the Facebook page closer to the time.

Tuesday 8th March, Rev Philip Carder, at 7.30pm
Wednesday 9th March, Rev Kenneth Hall, at 7.30pm
Thursday 10th March, Sr. Deirdre McKenna, at 7.30pm
Friday 11th March, Rev. Des O'Donnell, OMI, at 7.30pm
Saturday 12th March, Rev Michael McGuckian, S.J., at 6.00pm
Sunday 13th March, Rev. Eddie McGee, at 5.30pm
Monday 14th March, Major John and Marjory Parrott, at 7.30pm
Tuesday 15th March, Mrs Briege O' Hare, at 7.30pm
Wednesday 16th March, Fiona and Ed Collins, at 7.30pm.

Come and join us in asking St Patrick to reignite the faith of the Irish people.

ONGOING ACTIVITIES TO PUT IN YOUR DIARY

Understanding the Bible – Thursdays at 7.15 (6 sessions beginning on 28 January) in the Parish Centre.

Centring Prayer with Canon Hackett in Cathedral after 10.30 Mass on Monday.

Lectio Divina meetings on Tuesday and Thursday in Parish Centre after 10.30 Mass, and on several occasions each week at the Dominican Hall.

Novena to St Peregrine 2-4 May in St Brigid's Church.

Blessing of the Graves: Monkshill – 1 May / St Mary's - 8 May

10/11 May – the Jubilee visit of the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour to the Cathedral. Prayers and devotions will be led by Redemptorist priests.

Corpus Christi Procession 29 May.

Mass Rock Sunday 26 June.

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KIDS SECTION

Lent 2016

Follow the Journey of Lent with this special Calander

February

SUNDAY | MONDAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY | SATURDAY

10 Ash Wednesday Begin Lent with a prayer: Loving and kind God, have mercy on me and wash away my sins. Psalm 51:1-2

11 Lent is the perfect time to speak to God through your prayers. Take time to pray and to thank God for the good in your life.

12 Think of the people in your life who love you most and thank God for them with a prayer

13 **PRAY** Praise God for all his blessings. Repent. Tell God you're sorry. Ask God for his help and care. Yield – let God answer!

14 Worship th Lord your God and serve only him. Luke 4:8

15 16 **Remember Jesus' Teachings** Lent is a time to remember the teachings of Jesus and how you can use them in your everday life. Remember to pray, give thanks and be nice to your family and friends. 17

18 **Take Time to spend with friends** Take Time to be with a friend and remember your friends in prayers 19

20 Who are people who shows Jesus' love to you?
_____
_____
Thank God for them!

21 Jesus said to them... "I must be on my way..." Luke 13:33

22 **Jesus** is the Bread of Life.

23 **Pray with your Family** Take the time to sit with your family to pray. You could say a prayer to thank God for all the good things in your life. 24

25 Say a prayer for those people who may not be able to sit down with their family for a hot meal today

26 When you are having your dinner this evening make sure to thank God for the blessing of your food

27 Take time to pray with your family and to thank God for having a warm bed, a family and your friends.

28 God is faithful and will not let you be tested beyond your strength. 1 Cor. 10:13

29 **Thank you,** God, for all my blessings! (Make a list of some of them here)
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
7

What is your favourite story from the Bible?
_____
March 1

2 Sometimes Jesus went to a lonely place to pray. Spend some alone time in prayer today.

3 4 Thank God for Family. Who are yours?
_____
_____

5 Thank God for the birds in the sky and the trees in the ground and for all the wonderful things around.

6 The cross... to us who are being saved, it is the power of God. 1 Cor. 1:18

8 Thanks, Lord, for puddles

9 Make a cross with twigs and twine. Hang it someplace where it will remind you frequently of Jesus' great love for you! 10

11 Thank you, Lord, for your new creation! What are the first signs of spring near your house?

12 Please, God, send the wind, I pray. So I can fly my kite today!
God makes his wind blow and the waters flow. Psalm 147:18
Read Psalm 147.

13 Jesus Christ has made me his own. Philippians 3:12

14 **An Evening Prayer** Thank you God for listening to my prayers. May you guide me when I wake.

A Morning Prayer Help me to be like you God in all I do today 16

17 **Next Week is Easter Week** Take the time to sit with your family to talk about the meaning of Easter. Say a prayer to thank Jesus for saving us. 18

19 **Palm Sunday**

21 **This Holy Week** we remember Jesus' death. He died just as he lived – giving and forgiving and sharing God's Love.

22 As The Good news of Jesus is coming on Sunday, take time to find some good news stories in your local paper. Share them with your family and your friends to remind everyone of the good all around us. 23

24 **Holy Thursday** What happened when Jesus prayed in the garden? Read Luke 22.

25 **Good Friday** Thank you, Jesus, for dying on the cross for my sins.

26 **Easter Vigil** Now make your Lenten prayer tree into an Easter egg tree!

27 **Easter Sunday** Sing Alleluia! Jesus lives again