

The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Hollywood Congregation

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Newsletter for the week of Sunday 17th January.

Dear friends,

Last week the leaders of our four main church denominations met with Stormont's junior ministers to discuss the position of places of worship during the current lockdown.

They decided to cease public worship until at least early in February and only remain open for individual prayer.

Most churches have anyway been streaming their services online since many months so it was not such a big step for them to come to this voluntary agreement.

Some of the smaller denominations have decided to go along with it but by no means all.

But the legislation re. places of worship for this new period of lockdown hasn't changed.

On the NI Direct website it says that you are still allowed to leave your home to attend a place of worship.

Having services online is not an option for us so we had to make our own decision.

Covid rates in the North Down area are at the moment the lowest in the whole of Northern Ireland, so I feel that as long as we are careful and keep to the regulations we can continue with most of our Hollywood program.

But we will have to cancel the service for children which was planned for this Sunday as we can't really manage the amount of cleaning and ventilation that the new rules ask for in the short space of time between the two services.

Everyone will need to be extra aware that if you have any kind of symptoms of cough, cold or temperature or if you have been in contact with anyone who is ill you would not come. And of course, if you do not feel safe then there is always the option of the quieter service on Thursdays or to accompany us in spirit from your home. Please get in touch if you have any questions or concerns.

Ben van Lieshout

Hollywood

For Sunday services, please ring, text or email to book a place as we can only seat 11-13 people.

Epiphany

Thursday 14 th January	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Sunday 17th January	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
	The Sunday Service for Children	11.30
	Instead we will have the next of a series of short talks on The Act of Consecration of Man as a path: "Finding the guide on our way"	
Thursday 21 st January	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00

The gospel for January 17 is Luke 2, 41-52 (I must be in my father's house).



Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover.

And when he was twelve years old, they took him with them.

Now after they had gone there and fulfilled the custom during the days of the feast, they set off on their way home.

But the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem.

His parents did not know this; they thought he was among the company of the travellers. After a day's journey they missed him among their friends and relations.

When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

After three days they found him in the Temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

And those who heard him were amazed at his mature understanding and his answers.

And when they saw him, they were taken aback, and his mother said to him, "My child, why have you done this to us? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress."

And he said to them, "Why did you look for me? Did you not know that I must be and live in that which is my Father's?"

But they did not understand the meaning of the words he spoke to them. And he went down with them again to Nazareth and followed them willingly in all things.

And his mother carefully kept all these things living in her heart.

And Jesus progressed in wisdom, in maturity and grace in the sight of God and man.

A Homily on Luke 2: 41-52



For perhaps long periods of time the stream of our life flows smoothly. Then suddenly something unexpected happens—a great event, a loss, a chance encounter, and something new breaks forth.

In today's reading, this moment in the life of the young Jesus is just such a moment. It is a kind of second birth. For three days he was cocooned in the Temple as His soul was being born. The child is becoming a man. Things can no longer be what they once were. For a moment, the light flares up in great promise, awakening both fear and hope. The mother ponders this in her heart. But His parents' grief and confusion over the loss of the sweet, uncomplicated child will ultimately be a gain for all of humanity.

But it is not yet time. The Spirit Child has a further path before him. And so he covers the flame again. He goes home in humble submission to his earthly parents, to grow, to progress, and to mature.

We, too, are nurturing a spirit child. He is brought to birth in prayer, in the Act of Consecration of Man. We hear Him speak of what belongs to the Father. We don't always understand. But we ponder in our hearts. And we carry Him home, and out into the world with us where we, too, 'progress in wisdom, in maturity and grace in the sight of God and man.'



The Star of Grace

The reception of the Christ sun into our heart, this most intimate, mystical process, is the start of a world-shattering transformation, a transformation of human beings right to the level of their body and blood, indeed, a transformation of the earth itself.

Christianity is not just about inwardness, it lives in trust of the lion-like prowess of the mystical forces of the heart to overcome the world.

What inwardly is the mystery of Christ in our heart is, outwardly, culture in the most profound meaning of the word—transformation, transfiguration, the penetration of physical matter by the sun.

Christian inwardness is not just compatible with the earthly tasks of human beings; it makes it possible to fulfil these tasks.

Rudolf Frieling