

# The Christian Community

Movement for Religious Renewal

Holywood Congregation

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## Newsletter for the week of Sunday 11 July.

Dear friends,

It has been a busy week here in Holywood with family visiting, painters working all week around the house and telephone engineers trying to restore our landline and broadband.

As I am writing this newsletter our visitors have left, the phone is working again and our broadband is also back in use.

The painters have just completed the finishing touches, there are no more plants in the gutters, the walls are clean and freshly painted, the woodwork is protected from the weather and the house is looking better than it has done for a very long time.

It is a year now since Christel died, on the 5<sup>th</sup> of July 2020 and three days later we managed to come together in Helen's Bay to celebrate the funeral that she had planned for herself, out in the garden surrounded by beautiful flowers, lots of people young and old and beautiful songs and music .

On Saturday morning we will have a special Act of Consecration in Holywood to remember her. Sadly we are still restricted in numbers and I understand from Ciaran that all spaces for the service itself have been taken.

But afterwards, starting at 11.30 there will be a walk along the coastal path and if you want to join Christel's family and friends for that you are very welcome, it will be starting off at about 11.30 from 3 Stewart's Place.

## Holywood

### ***St Johns***

Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
Saturday 10 <sup>th</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00
(A special service remembering Christel, afterwards refreshments and a walk along the coast)		
Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.00

## Glencraig

Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	9.30
Thursday 15 <sup>th</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	9.30

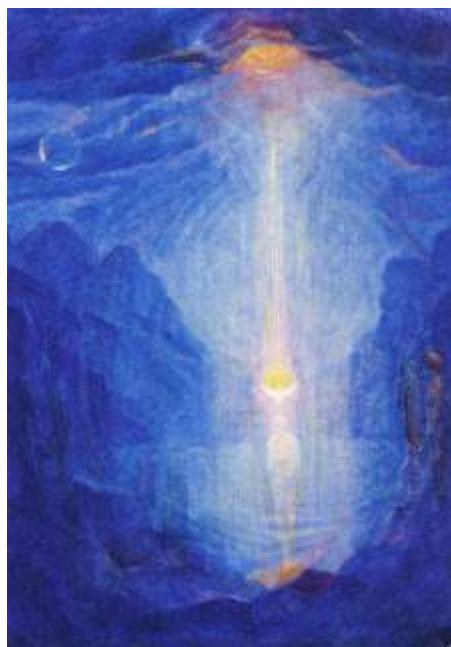
## Mourne Grange

Sunday 11 <sup>th</sup> July	The Act of Consecration of Man	10.15
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## The gospel for Sunday 11 July is John 3:22-33

After this, Jesus and his disciples came to the land of Judea. There he stayed with them and baptized. John also baptized; he was at Aenon near Salim because there was much water there, and people came to him and were baptized, for John had not yet been imprisoned.

Then a dispute arose between the disciples of John and the Jews about the path of purification. And they came to John and said to him, "Master, he who came to you beyond the Jordan, to whom you bore witness – here he is, baptizing, and everyone is going to him."



Baptism in the Jordan, by Ninetta Sombart

John answered, "No human being can grasp spiritual power for himself that is not given to him from the higher worlds. You yourselves can testify that I said, 'I am not the Christ, but I have been sent before him.' He who has the bride, he is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom, who stands by and listens to him, is filled with joy at the bridegroom's voice. This joy of mine is now full. He must increase, but I must decrease.

"He who descends from above, out of the spiritual world, is elevated above all beings of the earth. Whoever is only of the earth, whose being arises from the earthly, his word is also earthbound. He who comes from the heavens is elevated above all who have arisen from the earthly. What he has seen and heard in the world of the Spirit, to that he can bear direct witness, but no one accepts his testimony.

"But whoever accepts his testimony sets his seal to this: that there is no higher truth than the reality of God."



### A homily on John 3:22-33

John the Baptist came with a mission.

He was to witness the incarnation of the Light of the World in Jesus at His baptism.

He came to prepare souls to also be able to perceive Christ.

He inaugurated a rite of purification, a ritual immersion, which allowed individuals to have their own unique spiritual experience.

Some saw the quality of their own lives pass before them; others felt the glorious beings of the spiritual world.

As we hear in the reading, those following Jesus were also undergoing baptisms.

John's reaction to the 'threat of competition' is noteworthy.

John's very name means 'God is gracious.'

God graced John with the opportunity to complete what he had come to do.

He witnessed; indeed, he helped to bring to birth the incarnation of God's Light and Love.

And John speaks out of the meaning of his own name when he says that spiritual power is given as grace.

He recognizes that his own day is beginning to decline while Jesus's sun is rising.

And so John graciously lets go the baton as he passes it on.

God is gracious. He gives us our lives and sends us to fulfil our tasks.

And when we have accomplished what we have come to do, when we have borne witness to our times and loved those whom we were sent to love, we send the Father our heart-warm thanks for the opportunity to be on the earth, doing what we do.

And so as the poet John O'Donohue says:

May the light of your soul bless your work  
with love and warmth of heart.

.....

May the sacredness of your work bring light and renewal  
to those who work with you

.....

May it release wellsprings of refreshment,  
inspiration and excitement.

.....

May dawn find hope in your heart, ....  
May evening find you gracious and fulfilled.