

12 January 2025



# *Mount Argus Bulletin*

## *The Parish of St Paul of the Cross and Shrine of St Charles of Mount Argus*

-- *Saint Paul's Retreat, Mount Argus, Dublin 6W (Eircode: D6W XR66) --*

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*Facebook Page: Mount Argus – The Shrine of Saint Charles*

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### **Masses at Mount Argus**

Sunday: 8.00 am, 11.00 am, 4.00 pm  
Monday to Friday: 10.00 am, 6.15 pm  
Saturdays: 11.00 am, 6.15 (Vigil Mass)  
Working Holydays 6.15 pm Vigil, 10.00 am, 6.15 pm

### **Church Opening Hours**

Sunday: 7.30 am to 5.00 pm  
Monday to Friday: 9.30 am to 6.45 pm  
Saturday: 10.30 am to 7.00 pm

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### **Blessing with the Relic of St Charles**

Monday to Friday after 10.00 am Mass  
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday at 4.00 pm  
Saturday after 11.00 am Mass  
Sunday after 11.00 am and 4.00 pm Mass

### **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Wednesday, Thursday, Friday:  
11.00 - 11.30 am, 4.00 - 4.30 pm  
Saturday: 4.00 to 5.30 pm

**St Charles Novena Mass:** Saturday, 11.00 am

### **Eucharistic Adoration**

Wednesdays and Fridays: 4.00 to 6.00 pm

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## **The Baptism of the Lord**

### **THAT'S THE SPIRIT!**

A few years back I had occasion to be saying the prayers at a graveside when I noticed, after the prayers were finished, that there were two other burial ceremonies taking place relatively close by. One might describe the day as breezy, but dry, which made it possible for them to carry out the final part of their ceremonies, which I have to say were new rituals to me. In the one case they lit what looked for all the world like a miniature balloon – you know, the kind that Phineas Fogg went around the world in 80 days in. The balloon rose, slowly at first, looking like it might just crash-land; but the design was obviously good, and gradually it rose higher, and as it got above the tree level the wind caught it and it started heading away off to the north-east, appearing ever smaller until at last it disappeared from sight.

At the other graveside they were going through a different ritual. They had brought with them a cage with, I was told, sixteen doves in it – I have no idea of the significance of sixteen. The doves were distributed among the mourners, and at a given signal were released. With a great flapping of wings they rose above the cemetery, seemed to hover for a moment – maybe getting their bearings – and then flew somewhat higher and around in a circle a few times, and then flew away out of sight over the trees.

I didn't think it was an appropriate time for me to be approaching either set of mourners to ask them what the two rituals symbolised, but I suspect that in some way the departing flame and the

departing doves were representing the departure of the spirit of their beloved deceased from their mortal bodies. If so, then give me the doves any day! I have no idea what happened to the flame carried away by the balloon, or how far it travelled in the end, or where it ended up. But I do know where the doves ended up! Back home, of course, and they may very well have been back at the cemetery the next day, going through the same ritual! And when it comes to my time, I'm hoping that my spirit will be 'going home' rather than disappearing to God knows where!

You might very well be asking what's all this got to do with today's feast, the Baptism of the Lord? The link, of course, is the Holy Spirit, which after His baptism comes down 'like a dove' on Jesus. Reminiscent of course of the spirit hovering over the waters at the very beginning of creation – reminding us that Jesus is the beginning of a new creation. And as God walked in the garden of paradise, so now God had come to make His home among us. To go back to the rituals in the cemetery, the challenge for us is whether we can home in on Christ, as it were, or whether like the lantern we allow ourselves to be blown about by whatever wind happens to be there, never knowing where we will land. Give me Jesus any time!

But Baptism was never meant to be ending of anything – even original sin! It was always meant to be the beginning, the commitment to a way of living 'from now on'. And of course that's the only real way that we can make an awful lot of sense of today's feast – the Baptism of the Lord. He certainly wasn't being baptised to get rid of any sin, original or otherwise. But as an event to mark the beginning of His public life and his ministry it makes a lot of sense. Not only is He leading by example, but He's also reminding us that our faith, our commitment to following the 'way, the truth and the life', to following Jesus, in other words, is a public commitment – not something secret and only 'our own business', as it were. As Christians we're not asked to wear symbols as such – rather, our entire way of living is supposed to be the sign, the symbol, that we are His followers. I hope people don't find it too difficult to recognise us!

**Thank You:** We hope you all, whether you managed to get away or not, had a most enjoyable celebration of Christmas and the New Year. I take this opportunity on behalf of all the community here in Mount Argus to express our very genuine and heartfelt appreciation of the many expressions of good-will received, and for the many thoughtful and generous gifts left in for us prior to and during the Christmas season. (You have to take responsibility if you think some of us are looking a little plump and rosy-cheeked – over-indulgence in chocolates and wine will do that!) We also thank and congratulate you on the magnificent turn-out at the various Christmas celebrations, particularly at the two Christmas Eve celebrations. It is so heartening to see so many people taking the time and making the effort to focus on the deeper meaning of the festive season as well as enjoying the more material side of the festivities. A special thanks to all who put in so much work towards making Christmas in Mount Argus so special - we think particularly of those responsible for cleaning and decorating the Church; for those who erected and decorated the Cribs and Christmas Tree; those responsible for the Music ministry; but not forgetting the other ministry groups and individuals who as usual were generous in giving of their time and talents. The list could go on and on, but let's just draw the line there and say to you all that your wonderful support is very much appreciated.

**Help Desperately Needed!:** Apart from the Christmas Special, this is my first Bulletin since being asked to act as temporary administrator for the Parish. As you can see, the presentation is a mess; not much in terms of content; and generally greatly in need of overhaul. But the Bulletin is probably the least urgent of the areas in which help is needed. I take great comfort in the amount of people who, since they heard that Fr. Paul Francis was leaving, have offered to assist in whatever way they could. Hopefully, by next week I can more clearly highlight the many areas in which your help and support would be greatly valued. Please bear patiently, and pray earnestly, for me in the meantime!

**Financial Update – 12 January 2025:** Collection last Sunday, €1545. Standing orders for week, approx. €250. Donations via website, €101. Payments via credit card machines to date, €1801.

#### **MOUNT ARGUS PARISH MISSION STATEMENT**

Our mission is to be a living parish where all will feel welcome, everyone will be appreciated and encouraged to use their gifts and people and priests work together to develop a community of faith and compassion.