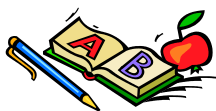




# Seeds of Faith

Sept 2015



## Family Life

September is here and we are all getting back into the routines of life again. School uniforms are ironed and ready, school lunches are made. Perhaps bedtime is earlier than it was during the holidays and we all have to be up earlier in the mornings to get everyone ready and out the door.

There is probably homework to be done in the evenings and of course all the after school activities start up again. Our lives are shaped by the expectations and responsibilities we have. We can see that even in small ways—if our children are part of a Gaelic club or a soccer team then we find ourselves going to training, matches, meetings, club events.

In the same way our lives as Catholics are shaped by the expectations and responsibilities of baptism. When as parents we choose to have our children baptised we are claiming a particular identity for them.

So something to talk about perhaps:

- What are the biggest influences on our life as a family?
- How does faith shape who we are as a family?
- What are the habits of faith in our lives? Do we talk about faith, pray together, celebrate the sacraments?
- How does the faith we claimed in baptism affect the decisions we make?
- How does faith influence what we think is important in life?



## Praying as a family

The bible offers us a way to pray and grow in relationship with God. The psalms are found in the Old Testament. You will find every sort of emotion expressed in the psalms—love, delight, rage, fear and even the desire for revenge! The psalms show us that we can come before God in prayer just as we are, feeling what we feel and can place everything in God's hands. We can pray with a psalm or other piece of scripture just by reading it over slowly and stopping with any word or image that strikes us. What is that word or image saying to us about God or about the experience of our own lives?

One of my children when she was very small, announced that before she was born she was "in God's pocket". Psalm 139 is a beautiful psalm which captures that sense of how we have belonged to God since before ever we were born. Our baptism is a celebration of that sense of belonging.

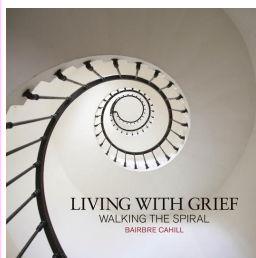
It was you who created my inmost self,  
 And put me together in my mother's womb;  
 For all these mysteries I thank you:  
 For the wonder of myself, for the wonder of  
 your works.  
 You know me through and through,  
 From having watched my bones take shape  
 When I was being formed in secret,  
 Knitted together in the limbo of the womb.  
 God examine me and know my heart,  
 Probe me and know my thoughts;  
 Make sure I do not follow sinful ways  
 And guide me in the way that is everlasting.

(extracts from psalm 139)

Newly published by Redemptorist Publications

## Living with grief—walking the spiral

by Bairbre Cahill



Grief is not something that we deal with once and then "move on" from but a spiral that calls us back to explore our loss and seek deeper healing so that we may truly live.

Available from [www.rpbooks.co.uk](http://www.rpbooks.co.uk) and also [www.veritasbooksonline.com](http://www.veritasbooksonline.com)

We would love to hear your comments. What's useful for your family? Would you like to receive this newsletter each month by email? Send your email address to

[bairbre.cahill@gmail.com](mailto:bairbre.cahill@gmail.com)

## September Gospels

September is part of the Ordinary Time of the church's year. The gospel readings for this month all invite us to look at what it means to follow Jesus in the ordinary time of our day to day lives.

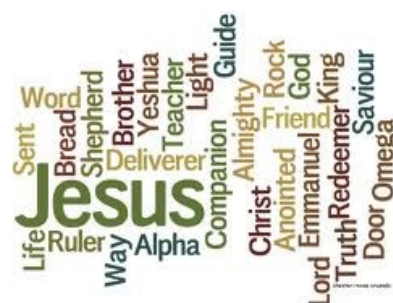
**6th Sept** Mark 7:31-37. What does it mean to be open to the Word of God?

What attitudes or hurts do I need to be healed from so that I can really be open to God in my life?

**13th Sept** Mark 8:27-35 Jesus asks the disciples "Who do you say I am?" - what would our response be if he asked us?

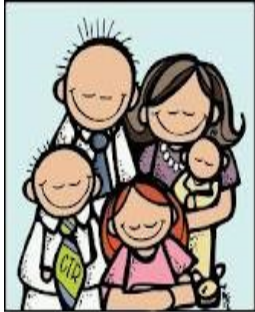
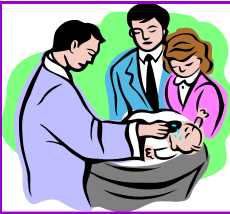
**20th Sept** Mark 9:30-37 Together with the disciples we may struggle to understand that following Jesus is about service not glory

**27th Sept** Mark 9:38-43,45,47-48 What are the obstacles, perhaps habits or attitudes, which make it more difficult for us to live out our faith?



## Prayer Space

This month we are thinking about the first sacrament we celebrate—baptism. So in your prayer space why not put some holy water, photographs of family baptisms and the baptismal candles that were used. When you gather to pray as a family you could light the candles and let them remind you of your baptism and how it shapes your life. Maybe ask each person to draw a picture of how faith makes a difference in their lives and add these too.



Thank you God our Father  
For the gift of baptism.  
We are your children  
Help us to live our lives  
So that the love & hope of the Gospel  
Shine brightly for others to see.  
May the grace of our baptism  
Guide us every day of our lives.  
AMEN

*Rather than saying  
"I was baptised"  
it is better to say  
"I am baptised"  
because it is a sacrament  
that we live  
each and every  
day of our lives*



Colour me  
in and stick  
me up!!

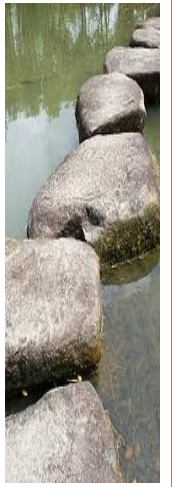
## Stepping stones on the journey of faith

Over the coming months we will explore the sacraments

- Why do we celebrate them?
- What do they mean?
- How do they connect with our daily lives?
- How do they help us to grow in relationship with God?

Baptism, Holy Communion and Confirmation are called the sacraments of initiation—which means they are the sacraments by which we are welcomed into and made part of the Christian community. From before ever we are born we belong to God and the sacrament of baptism is a public way of celebrating that fact. In baptism we are saying “yes” to faith, “yes” to being part of God’s family, “yes” to a life lived in relationship with God.

We know that our lives as human beings are often fragile and broken. Sin is a reality in all our lives, part of being human and we see it in anything that damages our relationships with God and one another. Baptism reminds us of the divine life and goodness at the heart of who we are—even in the midst of brokenness. Baptism promises us new life, new hope—now and always. Baptism strengthens us for the journey of life. Equally important, baptism makes us part of the Body of Christ, part of a Catholic Christian community. We are asked to take an active part in our Christian community, to see ourselves as disciples. Baptism is not a private thing. We are baptised so that we can bring the light and hope of the gospel to the world we live in. This is possible if we give God space right at the heart of our lives. Through baptism we are invited into relationship with God through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Like every relationship we need to give time, attention and energy to our relationship with God. Through baptism we belong to God—and to each other. We are not alone. We are part of a faith community. Together we are part of the family of God.



**Name** - by which we are known to ourselves, to others and to God “I have called you by name, you are mine” (Isaiah 43:1)



**Water**—a symbol of life and birth. As we are born from the waters of our mother’s womb so too we are born from the waters of baptism with a new life in the Spirit.

**Oil**—a symbol of strength. Oil was also used to mark someone out for a special role. Jesus was “the Christ” - the anointed one. In baptism we too are anointed or Christened so that we can share in the work of Jesus.



**The white garment**—a sign of our new life in the Holy Spirit. In sport we put on the colours of our team. In baptism we put on the colours of Christ and show our support in the way we live our lives.

**The lighted candle**—Jesus Christ is the light of the world. In baptism we are called to share that light of Christ with all those around us. As parents and God parents we are asked to keep the light of faith burning brightly in our children’s lives.

