



tidings

DIOCESE OF TUAM, KILLALA AND ACHONRY

LENT AND EASTER ISSUE 2021

SLIGO GRAMMAR SCHOOL

One Body, One Spirit

Home from Home

This is Sligo Grammar School, a Church of Ireland co-educational boarding and day school situated in the heart of Sligo Town, on the banks of the Garavogue River, a stone's throw from Lough Gill and Yeats' Lake Isle of Inisfree. The setting beautifully combines the easy pace of country life with the buzz of a small but vibrantly cultural urban centre

The school takes full advantage of all the beautiful North West coast has to offer. As well as going on field trips to experience the history, geography and ecology of the area, students are encouraged to make use of the river, lake and ocean through timetabled and extra curricular activities. We have a kayaking club and a rowing club, while surfing is part of our TY programme. Other sports offered include rugby, hockey, soccer, basketball and athletics.

Sligo Grammar School offers over 20 subjects at Leaving Cert. level with consistently excellent academic results. In 2018 over 60% of our students were offered University places both at home and abroad.

Sligo's rich cultural heritage is reflected in extra-curricular activities such as debating and public speaking, music, choir, chess, and evening trips to the theatre.

Throughout the year lunchtime concerts, public debates, the school musical and focus events such as Wellbeing Week, and Seachtain na Gaeilge allow our students to develop their skills and grow emotionally and intellectually.

Sligo Grammar School offers a rounded education which values all intelligences. We pride ourselves on our friendly, family atmosphere. The wellbeing of our students is important and our pastoral care team includes a Transition Year, Junior and Senior School Co-ordinator, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain and Matron.

Bursaries, scholarships and grants are available.

Contact the school for details at: admin@sligogrammarschool.org or phone 071 9145010 and visit us at www.sligogrammarschool.org

Headmaster: Mr. Michael Hall M.Sc B.Ed

tidings

EASTER ISSUE 2021

The magazine of the Church of Ireland Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry

www.tuam.anglican.org

COPY DEADLINE

All submissions for the Easter Issue of Tidings, including advertisements, must be in by **7th May 2021**

VIEWS EXPRESSED

Views expressed in Tidings are those of the contributors and are not necessarily the views of the Editor or the magazine committee.

DIOCESAN MAGAZINE

All advertising enquiries should be directed to: Revd Dr Andrew Ison rev.andrew.ison@gmail.com

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THE BISHOP WHITES . . .



and beyond will sponsor a chapter at 10 euro each, thus raising approximately 12,000 euro for a water project in our link Diocese of Kajiado in Kenya.

The second initiative is a series of readings, thoughts and prayers for Holy Week. These are printed elsewhere in Tidings and I hope they will be of assistance with your Holy Week devotions. By including them in Tidings, they are accessible to all and will replace the daily virtual services we ran last year during Holy Week. On-line services will, however, continue throughout Lent and Easter – currently the rota of conductors is scheduled to the end of April. Again, our sincere thanks to Dean Alistair for all his work in editing and producing these and to the clergy, Diocesan Reader and the other lay members who have taken part.

I am aware that parishioners in many of our parishes and others in communities across Counties Galway, Mayo and Sligo have suffered through bereavement and illness as a result of Covid-19. As I write, Belmullet and Clare Island are in the news with the highest ratio of infections in the country. All who have suffered in any way are in my thoughts and prayers.

As with everything else since the middle of March 2020, Lent and Easter this year will again be far from normal. Writing at the end of January, churches are once more closed for worship with little likelihood of in-church worship for some weeks. The arrival of the Coronavirus/Covid-19 vaccines is a lifeline for us all and offer a way out of the present pandemic but it will be some months yet before we can begin to anticipate a return to 'normal'.

But Lent, Holy Week and Easter will still be observed. In the Diocese we have planned two initiatives:

The first will involve the reading of all sixty-six books of the Bible over the course of weekday mornings (Old Testament) and evenings (New Testament) in Lent. Each parish will be involved and all groups/unions have kindly agreed to take responsibility for the readings on set days – see elsewhere in Tidings. The hope is that parishioners and friends across our united dioceses

Easter is the great festival of the Christian Year as we celebrate our Lord's Resurrection. I hope it might be possible to meet together by then in our churches as we give thanks for the Christian hope of life made new in union with Christ Jesus. Traditionally, during the Easter Season we celebrate new life with a series of confirmation services. I trust it will be possible, perhaps with limited numbers in church, to welcome our confirmation candidates into full membership. If not, the plan is to have one large confirmation service for all candidates in the Autumn. Please pray for our young people and their families at this important time of preparation for confirmation.

I am also looking forward in the post-Easter period to meeting with all our clergy and readers for our annual Quiet Day – postponed from early March to the 28th April.

I take this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy Easter and pray that you will keep safe in these, we hope, final few months of the pandemic.

+Patrick Tuam



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

DUE TO COVID 19 RESTRICTIONS, ALL OF THE FOLLOWING ARE PROVISIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

FEBRUARY

Wed 17th Ash Wednesday, Diocesan 'Read all about it' begins, 10am & 7pm
Tue 23rd Clergy Book Club, via Zoom, 10.30am

MARCH

Mon 9th RB Week, via Zoom

APRIL

Sun 4th Easter Day, Dawn Service, Dunmoran Strand, 7.30am
Sun 4th Claremorris Service, 12noon – to be confirmed
Sun 25th Confirmation in Aughaval Group, HT Westport, 11.30am
Mon 26th Diocesan Finance Committee, via Zoom, 7.30pm
Tue 27th Diocesan Glebes & Property Committee, via Zoom, 7.30pm
Wed 28th Annual Clergy and Readers' Quiet Day, Tuam, 10.30am

MAY

Sun 2nd Claremorris Service, 12noon – to be confirmed
Thu 6th Diocesan Council Meeting, Claremorris (or via Zoom), 7pm
Sun 9th Confirmation in Achonry Group, St George's Tubbercurry, 11am
Sun 16th Confirmation in Tuam Group, St Mary's Cong, 10am
Sun 23rd Confirmation in Galway Group, St Nicholas Galway, 11am
Sun 30th Confirmation in Ballisodare Group, St Paul's Collooney, 10.45pm
Sun 30th Mothers' Union Diocesan Service, HT Westport, 4pm

JUNE

Thu 3rd Diocesan Board of Education meeting, via Zoom, 7.30pm
Sun 6th Confirmation in Killala/Kilmoremoy, St Michael's Ballina, 11.30am
Sun 6th Claremorris Service, 12noon – to be confirmed
Mon 7th Diocesan Finance Committee, via Zoom, 7.30pm
Tue 8th Diocesan Glebes & Property Committee, via Zoom, 7.30pm
Thu 10th Diocesan Council Meeting, Claremorris (or via Zoom), 7pm
Mon 14th RB Week, Dublin (or via Zoom)



AUGHAVAL GROUP INSTITUTION TIDINGS LENT 2021



The Institution of Revd Canon Jen McWhirter to Aughaval Group of Parishes (Westport, Castlebar, Turlough and Achill) took place in Holy Trinity Church, Westport on Thursday 10th December.



Canon Jen has been de facto Incumbent of Aughaval since early spring 2020. However, Jen's actual institution was delayed and postponed several times due to Covid-19 restrictions. So it was with a mixture of joy and relief that 'the job could be completed' (as it were) in the year of her appointment.

A small but representative congregation, limited by Level 3 'Plus' considerations, gathered in Westport for the Service of Institution led by Bishop Patrick Rooke and The Rural Dean, Very Rev Lynda Peilow. Local Councillors represented the community and Fr. Charlie McDonnell attended on behalf of Ecumenical Partners.

The scripture lessons were read by Revd Maebh O'Herlihy (Dugort), Mr Trevor Ardill (Castlebar) and

Revd Canon Andrea Wills (Straid). The sermon was preached by a former Archdeacon of Killala and Achonry, Revd Alan Synnott (Rector of Bessbrook Parish). Sadly, because of current circumstances, no



singing of customary hymns was permitted. In the same way, there was no traditional reception after the service, however Fr Charlie welcomed Canon Jen on behalf of the local Christian family and Mr Eamon Smith on behalf of the Group of Parishes.



KILCUMMIN CHURCH BELL

The bell in the tower of Kilcummin Church Oughterard is accessed by a fixed wooden ladder from the first floor. A similar wooden ladder from the porch area to the first floor 18 feet above was removed during major renovations to the church which were carried out under a Community Employment Training scheme between October 1994 and July 1996. Access to the first floor is now achieved by way of a regular aluminium ladder which is stored in the porch area.

The crow-step battlemented tower may have had a flat lead roof or pitched slated roof when it was erected as part of the original church in 1810. It is not known what kind of bell hung there originally but the existing bell, mounted on a traditional pivoted headstock supported by two large ten feet long pitch pine beams which stretch across the tower, bears the inscription “Thomas Hodges Founder, Abbey Street, Dublin 1853. Rev'd John O'Callaghan, Rector”. With a diameter at the lip of 31 inches (78.75 cm), a height to the shoulder of 23½ ins (59.6 cm) it is estimated that it could weigh from 272 to 407 kilograms or 5.3 to 8 hundredweight.

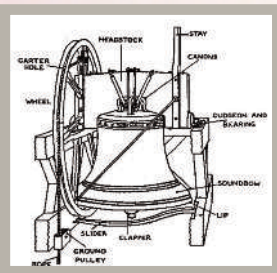
In 1852 the original small single cell church was extended to include a chancel and transepts designed by Architect Joseph Welland. This large extension was added “for the purpose of providing free and comfortable sittings” and to accommodate the growing congregation including members of the garrison of soldiers stationed in the army barracks at the end of Camp Street. William Wilson of Belfast gave the sum of £700 towards this work and it was at this time also that the Thomas Hodges bell was installed in the tower.

It was designed to be rung in traditional manner by way of a strong rope attached to a large grooved full-circle wheel but, for many years past, it has just been chimed by a simple bell rope attached to the clapper and reaching down to the porch 30 feet (over 9 metres) below.

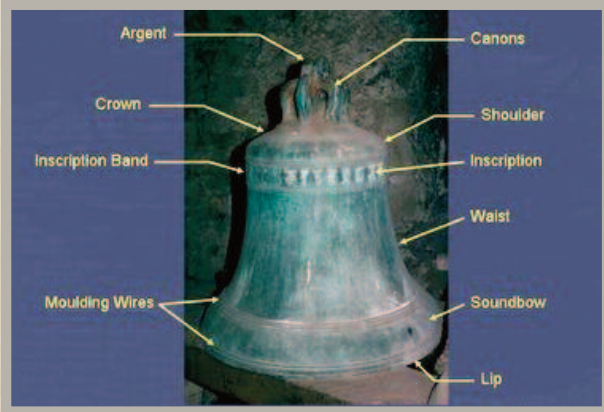
My father once attached a length of rubber tubing to the clapper which allowed for a double chime and, for some years in the late 1950s, we would ring the bell at midnight on 31st December in order to welcome in the New Year. One parishioner, a retired army colonel, who lived on the other side of the Owenriff River would open the front door of his



Kilcummin bell-tower



Bell parts and Mounting Church arrangements



Parts of a church bell

the advice is that the consequences of a collapse would be disastrous, potentially fatal, and that the bell should not be rung or chimed. The rope has been removed and the bell itself has been temporarily secured by the attachment of two ratchet straps.

Replacing the headstock will involve the installation of steel girders across the tower underneath the bell so that it can be raised up and securely supported while the wooden beam is removed and replaced.

What follows is an edited extract from an article by

home in order to hear the sound which seemed to be all the more pleasant in the stillness of the night when there was no such thing as television.

Since the installation of the bell in 1853 deterioration has taken place in the wooden headstock including significant damage by woodworm and, if the bell is to remain operational and hanging in the tower, this headstock will need to be replaced as there is uncertainty about its capability to support the weight. Following inspection by a conservation architect and engineer in July 2020,



Ladder for access to bell from 1st Floor

In 1837 Thomas Hodges was the operator of the foundry in Lower Sackville Street in Dublin (Now Lower O'Connell Street) and in 1848 he moved his foundry to 99 Middle Abbey Street where he ran it until he retired in 1865 with the business then being taken over by William Curtis.

Thomas Hodges cast many single bells and, in 1851, produced a ring of six bells for St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny. The tenor is 49" in diameter at the mouth, is in Eb and is reputed to weigh 22 cwt. At the Great



Bell and grooved full - circle wheel



View of decayed headstock

Exhibition in London in that same year Hodges was

Colin Lewis published in 'The Weekly Journal for Church Bell Ringers since 1911 No. 4754 June 7, 2002'

During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries there were at least four foundries in Dublin where ringing bells were cast: John Murphy, James Sheridan, Thomas Hodges and Matthew O'Byrne.

awarded First Prize for his entries in Class 22 with the adjudicators reporting that his large bell was 'Excellent' and that his brass bell was 'Of remarkably fine tone and of great power'.

In 1853, the year in which he cast the Oughterard bell, he also cast his last ring of six bells for St Mary's Church, Grassendale in Liverpool so it could possibly be the case that the Oughterard bell was the very last to be made by him.



Grooved wheel with original rope attached



One of the two pitch pine supporting beams



Interior of church



Interior of church

FUNDRAISING IN LOCKDOWN - SPONSORED CYCLE RIDE

I usually embark on this at the end of May along with a few hardy supporters but we had to delay and ended up getting out on our bikes, (Mary Vesey, Jacob Craig and myself) at the end of September. This was our fourth year and involved cycling from the northern most resident parishioner within the parishes to the most western, the most southern, the most eastern and then back to the Rectory, a round trip of some 73km. An 8.00am start in the north at Noelle Carter's house really felt like it as it was - I but at least it was sunny and dry. Our parishes being what they are meant that within 45 minutes we were



at the most western house, that of Helen Sproule, on the way to Coolaney. It was then a long trek cross country where we added seasoned cyclist Pamela Benson just outside Ballymote before heading off to Culfadda, our southern most point where John Gorman resides. The parish stretches down as far as Ballaghedereen but fortunately no one lives that far south. We then headed east with a lot of hills, up past the Caves of Kesh and into Graniamore where Marie Maxwell Davey and her children put on a lovely coffee break for us. Continuing east we encountered a



stretch of road being resurfaced which involved a detour during which we picked up a companion, a lovely border collie who joined us for the fun and was still with us 2km later when a quad-bike turned up to try and take the dog home. I am not sure he wanted to go as we had to catch him first. Fortunately, this occurred on a long slow climb and offered us a legitimate reason to get off our bikes! We cycled up past a couple of other parishioner's houses including Sarah Cole's before heading over to the N4, our only outing on a major road for a brief ride into Collooney. It was then east to Ballygawley and up to the house of our most easterly home, that of Sandra Browne and family. As an aside, the dog you see in the photos, Bella, was a stray that wandered into Holy Trinity one Sunday morning (all are welcome!) which Sandra kindly gave a home to. After leaving Sandra's it was just up round Union Wood and then into Ballisodare and the Rectory to finish at around quarter to two.



All in all we raised around €2500 for the three churches. It was a lot of socially distanced fun and at least something we could do under the circumstances.

Andrew Ison

Connemara
WILD ESCAPES



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY

Founded in 2011, Connemara Wild Escapes is a small tour operator based in Galway reselling activities all along the Wild Atlantic Way mainly to the North American, French and German markets. We have decided to use this "pause" in the tourism industry to re-engineer our business by expanding our business model and investing in the latest technology. To do this we need partners.

Interested? Please contact

Colin on colin@colin@connemarawildescapes.ie or 086 399 2475 for more details.

WISHING YOU A HAPPY 2021

DISCOVER THE HISTORY OF YOUR FAMILY IN MAYO



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BALLINA CHURCHES TOGETHER

Ballina Centre of Mission

bctballina@gmail.com

Tel: Emma Rodrigues 087 4347612



mostly men who live alone and who have been struggling with isolation due to restrictions. Most of them use the Dolmen Centre (Mental health day centre) for support, but that has been closed since March 2020. We had a few new visitors too. Some have shown an interest in Ballina Churches Together and would like to volunteer and help in the community when some sense of normality returns.

Christmas Bags

We gave out 40 activity bags from the Blue Bus to the children in Millview and Greenhills estates before Christmas. This was thanks to the help of two of our volunteers Anja Greitsh and Leslie Herron who make up all the crafts and activity sheets. Each bag was filled with colouring sheets, a craft for Christmas, crayons, markers, crisps, chocolate and sweets!



We also gave out Christmas gift bags to the men who come along to our drop ins/ Bus and we gave out

Penney's car park

In December we had to take the Blue Bus off the road because we were not able to use it due to restrictions.



When COVID-19 restrictions did lift before Christmas, we set up our table and chairs in Penney's car park beside market square on a Friday and Saturday evening. This was good as we gave out hot drinks and Christmas chocolates. It was nice to see our regular visitors,



chocolates to our volunteers and Blue Bus drivers as a thank you.

Missional community



Our post Alpha Bible study stayed on Zoom throughout December and this has continued into January on Thursday's at 7:30pm. We also brought the men's group from the bus (on zoom) and have a time of worship, prayer, and Bible study on Wednesday evenings at 8pm. Our prayer group has continued through zoom on Sunday evenings. We will continue this until restrictions are lifted and we can all meet in person again.

Ministry of Presence

Here is what Henri Nouwen said about the ministry of presence.

"More and more, the desire grows in me, simply to walk around, greet people, enter their homes (not in Covid-19 times), sit on their doorsteps, play ball, throw water, and be known as someone who want to live with them. It is a privilege to have the time to practice this simple ministry of presence."

One of the great lessons of this time was learnt when we left the cars at home and began to walk around the streets of Ballina more and more. Going for a take-away tea became one of life's simple pleasures. Through being on the streets, we have come to know many more people by name, listened to their stories and made them laugh and smile! One lady Anne, who lives alone commented – "I haven't laughed in ages!" Street ministry requires us to go – where the people are and that can be outside Costa Coffee or Mocha Beans Café. These places can become spaces where friendships are developed and care given, to those who live alone and others who struggle with addictions such as alcoholism.

Pastoral Care

In December Ballina Churches Together helped one family, who due to debt was not able to buy fuel and food leading up to Christmas. We also linked them with St Vincent De Paul who will provide support and

food parcels on an ongoing basis.

January came and we were full of hope for the future. There was much talk about vaccines, and it looked like brighter days were dawning. However, the arrival of a new variant of Covid-19 brought with it continuing challenges to our communities. Our work has continued in pastoral care. There are people who live alone, the elderly - isolated from family and friends, some of whom do not have a support network. We continue to reach out to them through various means: phone calls, messaging, post and doorstep visits to those who live alone in the countryside. We have also continued to take elderly people for hospital tests in Sligo.

Sharing God's love on Valentine's day



This Valentine's Day, we thought of some simple gestures that can show God's love, through acts of kindness. Love is a verb and we put gift packs together and to share God's love on this day. Many of the people that we encounter in the community have difficult lives and challenges to face. Some are elderly and live alone. Others are single mums and dads. According to scripture – "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress" (James 1:27). Being a single parent is a challenging job and single parents today have often had to leave abusive and violent relationships. We also have contact with some men in the community, who have been left alone raising their children, because their partners have passed away. On Valentines Day we demonstrated the love of God to these families with gift bags packed with gifts, chocolate, sweets, arts and crafts materials, 'happiness kits' and vouchers!

Farewell

We wish to thank Mike and Leslie Herron and Diane Philips who have helped and volunteered with Ballina Churches together since 2016. Mike has also been the BCT secretary for this time. We wish them well in Scotland and our thoughts and prayers go with them.

HOLY WEEK DEVOTIONS

Sunday 28th March - The Sixth Sunday in Lent
Archdeacon Stephen McWhirter
Matthew 26: 47-49 (NRSV)

Judas
While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, “The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him.” At once he came up to Jesus and said, “Greetings, Rabbi!” and kissed him.

Judas was always a bit of an outsider, the only one of the twelve who was not a Galilean. However, like the others, he had high hopes of this teacher who had called him to follow. Unfortunately, like them, he consistently misunderstood Jesus’ true mission. Jesus talked a lot about his own death rather than focusing on the struggle against the Roman occupiers of their land. Jesus’ focus and teaching was on the kingdom of Heaven rather than the kingdom of Rome. Jesus liberated the poor from their afflictions by healing them and promising them eternal life rather than by speeches of political activism and rallying them to rising and liberating themselves from their bonds to the Roman Empire.

Scripture tells us in Luke’s account that during the feast of the Passover Satan entered Judas; although I don’t think that this was all that sudden. When Satan entered Judas, when he enters us, it’s usually very subtle! We hardly feel it at all, it begins with little white lies and wrongdoing and the little seed of sin takes root and grows. Judas began his journey with Jesus full of enthusiasm and faith, even as the outsider he held a position of great trust, the holder of the purse, and yet increment by increment he slipped into falsehood and deception.

In Judas’ signalling to the authorities that the man they were to arrest is the one he would kiss, was a poor choice in identifying Jesus. Let’s face it, he could have hidden behind a tree and pointed him out, he could have told them what he would be wearing in secret and not have been present at all; and yet he chooses this kiss, the kiss of peace and ultimately this kiss was his downfall. This was too much for Judas to handle. Immediately regretting his choice, and that kiss, he tried to return the money and undo his betrayal. Too late!

Judas’ story is a sad one! As we look to scripture and the lessons we can learn from the characters within, who of us would aspire to be like Judas? Yet we can easily overlook the fact that Jesus chose to call him along with the rest of the disciples; that Judas followed Jesus throughout the whole of his three years of active ministry.

Just as he underestimated the true nature of Jesus’ mission so he underestimated his capacity to forgive;

and so Judas made his final mistake. So broken by remorse was he that only a few hours after kissing Jesus he took his own life and in doing so lost his final opportunity to seek that forgiveness for himself. That’s what Jesus wants to do, he wants to forgive us just as he calls us to forgive not only each other, but harder still to forgive ourselves. As Jesus journeyed to cross and hung there, so he forgave. In his final words he prayed ‘Father forgive them they know not what they do’. If only Judas had asked!

Prayer
Father God, Judas betrayed his Lord Christ for his own greed and ambition. Let not us your children, betray our love of Jesus through our selfishness and indifference. May we ever be mindful that whatever we do for the least we do for him. In this time of Lent may we ever draw close to you. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Monday 29th March - Monday in Holy Week
Dean Alistair Grimason
Matthew 26: 57-65 (NRSV)

Caiaphas
Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward and said, “This fellow said, ‘I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.’” The high priest stood up and said, “Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?” But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, “I put you under oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” Jesus said to him, “You have said so. But I tell you, From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power and coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, “He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy.

You can picture them all sitting in that room, heads together, mumbling to each other and nodding in the direction of Jesus. And Caiaphas, their chief, looking around the gathering, listening, wondering, pondering what to do.

Let’s get something straight at the outset. Caiaphas wasn’t a ‘bad’ man. He was a product of his time and religion and would have been, in many ways, constrained by the responsibilities of his office as High Priest. He could be defined as ‘Defender of the Faith’, the final

court of appeal to orthodoxy and propriety and all things being done with ‘decency and order’ (cf 1 Corinthians 14) So what was he to do?

He is faced with a man who, by all accounts, claimed to be the long-awaited Messiah. And reading between the lines of the gospel stories, Jesus wasn’t the first or only one who made this claim about himself. And he didn’t ‘fit’ the handed-down expectations of what the Messiah should look like. So what would you have done in Caiaphas’ shoes? Throw over centuries of tradition, cast to one side the known and well-loved and embrace the new and innovative embodied in the man Jesus? Or stick with the tried and tested, stay in the comfortable armchair of what you’re used to?

And that’s the question, really, that Caiaphas poses to us all, isn’t it? When we’re challenged with the ‘New’, a fresh way of doing and being God’s disciples (Church in our case), how do we respond? Do we throw a Caiaphas and stay in our safety zone? Or do we step out boldly, even in the face of opposition? Because make no mistake, it would have taken incredible courage for Caiaphas to have done other than what he did do. When faced with a similar challenge, would we have more courage than the High Priest?

Prayer
Almighty and merciful God, who in days of old didst give to this land the benediction of thy holy Church; Withdraw not, we pray thee, thy favour from us, but so correct what is amiss, and supply what is lacking, that we may more and more bring forth fruit to thy glory; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Tuesday 30th March - Tuesday in Holy Week
Canon Andrew Ison
Matthew 26: 69-75 (NRSV)

Peter
Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before all of them, saying, “I do not know what you are talking about.” When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, “This man was with Jesus of Nazareth.” Again he denied it with an oath, “I do not know the man.” After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, “Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you.” Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, “I do not know the man!” At that moment the cock crowed. Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: “Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times.” And he went out and wept bitterly. Have you ever done something you immediately regretted? Whatever it was, you knew it was wrong and you wished you could undo it. You wish you could go back and change things. I think we can all admit we have said or done something that we regretted.

That must have been what Peter felt just after denying Christ 3 times. The night before Jesus had warned Peter about what was to come but Peter didn’t think he would ever do such a thing. Yet here he was, having just denied Christ 3 times. It was the darkest moment in Peter’s life – a time of pain, disappointment and regret. Yet the good news is that the story didn’t end there. Peter’s story demonstrates the healing power of forgiveness.

There were two betrayals that night, Peter betrayed Jesus in the courtyard and Judas betrayed Jesus in the garden with a kiss for thirty pieces of silver. Judas’ response is very different to that of Peter, for Peter ‘went outside and wept bitterly.’ Now his tears alone were not enough, but we know from observing the rest of his life that these were tears of repentance. He was truly upset with himself and he wanted to make things right. These were not crocodile tears because once Peter heard that Jesus had risen from the dead he ran to the tomb to see and never looked back, showing that Peter knew the true forgiveness available in Christ.

When we have truly experienced forgiveness, it will make a difference in our lives because forgiveness calls for a response. If Christ has forgiven you, then there should be fruit in our lives as there was in Peter’s! After all, he founded the church.

The night he denied Jesus, Peter was a broken man. He had failed the one he loved, and he wept bitter tears of regret and pain. Yet in 3 days following the resurrection, Jesus reached out to Peter to forgive and restore him to service. Despite these failures Jesus empowered Peter who responded to that call.

On the day of Pentecost notice who emerges as the primary preacher of the gospel, it is Peter. The one who failed so miserably is now a forgiven man, and that forgiveness has brought new power in his life. That’s the good news of the gospel, when Christ forgives us, he finishes the job, empowers us and enables us to bear fruit.

Prayer
Lord, for all our failure in doing your will, we thank you that you always forgive. Empower us, like Peter, to do your will and to bear much fruit for the kingdom. In the name of the one who brought our forgiveness. Amen.

Wednesday 31st March - Wednesday in Holy Week
Canon Jen McWhirter
Matthew 27: 15-24 (NRSV)

Pilate
Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they

wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he realised that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?" All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."

Before this scene in the Holy Week narrative, Jesus has been standing before Pilate who asks if he, Christ, is the king of the Jews. Jesus' only response is to answer, 'You have said so.' The rest of his time before Pilate he stays silent. Anybody in that position would normally, it seems to me, want to answer the accusations, to try and prove their innocence. But Jesus says nothing more, answers none of the charges, and Pilate is amazed.

The truth was staring Pilate in the face, and he knew it, 'it was out of jealousy that they handed him over.' Pilate knew it, his wife knew it, even the crowd knew it at some level. Pilate tries to suggest that Jesus was innocent, asking what evil he had done, but the crowd is not to be swayed, having been whipped up by the chief priests and elders. And, as happens all too often in such situations, truth can be, or can seem to be, silenced when mob rule takes over and what is right can be quashed. Pilate, perhaps unsure of his position as governor, wanting to keep the peace and not rock the boat, attempting to stop a riot, eventually lets the mob have their way. But he then washes his hands, passing on responsibility for Jesus' death to the crowd.

Pilate often gets a bad press for this action, washing his hands of the whole thing. And yet, backed into the corner as he might have felt, with a man who refused to answer for himself, perhaps this was the only thing that Pilate could do. Demonstrate the truth of the matter, which was staring everyone in the face, by washing his hands and ridding himself of the blame for the death of an innocent man.

We are quick to judge, but often we find ourselves in a similar situation, situations where there is no one to

stand up for what is right in the face of powerful opposition. Situations where those in power make decisions which affect others and their lives without seeming to care. And it can be difficult in those situations to speak up, for in doing so makes us vulnerable. However, we are called in our Christian life to be courageous, to do and say the hard thing. To show the love of God for those who are oppressed. Those who have no voice. To do the exact opposite of Pilate and speak the truth, for the truth will set us free.

Prayer

Almighty God, When we find ourselves facing those who would hide the truth or try to cloak it, help us to be courageous to stand up for what is right. Give us grace to gently show others the truth and strength to make ourselves vulnerable for the good of others. In Jesus name. Amen.

Thursday 1st April - Maundy Thursday
Provost Lynda Peilow
Luke 23: 39-43 (NRSV)

The Thieves

One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!" But the other rebuked him, saying, "Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." He replied, "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

Despite all the crowds on the day of their crucifixion, it was a very lonely walk to Calvary, for Jesus and the two criminals, it is hard to imagine what they must have endured and what went through their minds.

In their own context the criminals watched and must have been shocked at the attitudes of the people towards Jesus – they mocked him, jeered him, gambled for his clothes and in all of this, what perhaps was even more shocking, was that Jesus did not retaliate with either anger or hostility. They witnessed and heard Jesus speak in love 'Father forgive them for they know not what they do'. Despite all that was happening to him, Jesus still reached out in love and forgiveness.

All three men that day shared something, that the crowds of people did not, in the fate of their crucifixion, the emblem of suffering and shame.

At a time when the first criminal should have been thinking of his life and preparing for his death, he chose to join the crowd and mock the dying man next to him.



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The other criminal was looking at his life now that he was facing death. In the midst of his pain he turned to Jesus and said 'Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom', and Jesus responded 'today you will be with me in paradise'. This was a prayer of simple faith, humility and realization.

Faith is not a feeling but a choice, to trust God even when the future is not clear. As Jesus ministered to this man, the realization of salvation shone through the cross that day. Perhaps in his concentration upon Jesus, he momentarily forgot about his own pain and suffering. It is as if Jesus drew him out of himself, and in the work of love, for that moment the body forgot its weight and pain.

It reminds me the Thomas Merton quote 'We should let ourselves be brought naked and defenceless into the centre of that dread where we stand alone before God in our nothingness without explanation, without theories, completely dependent upon his providential care, in dire need of the gift of his grace, his mercy, and the light of faith...'

As we reflect on our own lives, and ponder our earthly days, and the mysteries of life and death, we too will want to say Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom. There is a comfort, a certainty and a sustenance in the words of Jesus spoken in his agony and in his undeserved suffering on the cross; 'Today you will with me in paradise'. It is a guarantee written in heaven and engraved on our hearts, and in knowing this we are enabled to fill our lives, with faith, hope, courage and love. And like the criminal, in the words of St Augustine – we trust the past to God's mercy, the present to God's love, and the future to God's providence.

Prayer

Lord Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom. In that confidence and assurance may I trust my past to God's mercy, my present to God's love, and my future to God's providence. Amen.

Friday 2nd April - Good Friday
Bishop Patrick Rooke
Matthew 27: 51-54 (NRSV)

The Centurion

At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"

I have always thought of Holy Week as being like the old-fashioned remedy of a poultice. Once administered, it helps draw poison to the surface so that it may be dispersed and allow healing to begin. It is a painful procedure and for a time, the cure can be more intolerable than the cause.

During Holy Week, we observe the poison of men's hearts drawing to the surface; the poison of betrayal (Judas), plotting (Caiaphas), denial (Peter), weakness (Pilate) and derision (thief). Christ, we assume, foresaw this would be the case but it was the only means whereby that same poison might be dispersed...and he was prepared to bear the intolerable pain that it would involve.

On Good Friday, with the poison at bursting point in our Lord's agony, we are introduced to the Centurion. He is believed to be Longinus the leader of the six-man 'Centuria' entrusted by their superiors with the responsibility of the Crucifixion. Legend has it that Longinus was in fact blind and that as he pierced our Lord's body with his sword to ensure that he was dead, blood squirted into Longinus' eyes and he could see again. His physical healing is said to be symbolic of the healing that the Crucifixion and subsequent Resurrection made possible. That out of the worst possible of situations the best possible solution emerged.

As the curtain of the temple which covered the 'Holy of Holies' beyond which no one could penetrate, (except the high Priest on high festivals), was torn down, so the revelation of Christ was now to be made know to all. Furthermore, the reference to the opening of the tombs is symbolic of the opening of the gate to eternal life. With the poison released, it is not without significance that the Centurion who witnessed these strange happenings was the first to proclaim Christ as the Son of God. Significant in that he was a Gentile, not a member of our Lord's inner circle, not even a Jew but a member of the tyrant Roman occupation. Thus, at this poignant moment, we are reminded that Christ died for all and that his mission (and ours), is to all people without exception. Anyone, even the most unlikely of characters, is capable of seeing that 'Truly this man was God's Son.'

Prayer

Almighty God, through your Son Jesus Christ you overcame death and opened to us the gate of eternal life:
Grant that, as by your grace going before us you put into our minds good desires, so by your continual help we may bring them to good effect;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.



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THE VIRUS OF POVERTY (BUT THE VACCINE IS HERE!)

As a teenager of 14 in the early 70s I knew everything. This knowledge primarily consisted in the absolute certainty that my parents knew nothing, that my teachers were dull and uninspiring and I alone, had a unique insight in to the world and the general torment of teenage suffering. I had an opinion on most subjects and even felt a responsibility to express a view on subjects I had yet to even vaguely encounter during my brief existence on the planet.

To recite every record in the top 30 was a doddle. The names of every DJ employed by Radio Luxembourg slipped off the tongue, and once, I even answered a question correctly on University Challenge – that was one in the eye for Bamber Gascoigne I can tell you. My wisdom and knowledge was almost as expansive as my favourite pair of ‘elephant flairs’ (with apologies to those who never lived in the 70s).

Even the subject of poverty was not outside my scope of knowledge and I remember insisting that there was in fact, no poverty in Ireland! How could there be? We had a stable democracy with a Social Welfare system to uphold those who needed help. No problem! My father, a generally undemonstrative soul, helped distribute Christmas Hampers each year for a local charity and following my proclamations on the absence of poverty in Ireland, invited me to accompany him on his city centre route. As distribution was to take place on Christmas Eve I was less than pleased but my patient father eventually cajoled me into joining him, so on a cold, wet, drizzly day we wended our way into Dublin city centre. Why, I might even enjoy the experience!

I could go into various descriptions of what we encountered but, suffice to say, inner city Dublin almost 50 years ago was more than enough to persuade me of the error of my ways, and I can still vividly remember the stark scenes that assaulted my naïve south Co. Dublin sensibilities. Dark cold rooms without heating and poor, if any, cooking facilities as well as bathrooms, descriptions of which are best left to the confines of the imagination along with furniture that would have looked more at home in a skip. The only impressive parts of that day were the people we met – their polite struggle for dignity was striking and a sharp lesson for this ignorant teenager.

That level of poverty was obvious at that time and impossible to disguise. It was raw and unforgiving with any the notion of a Celtic Tiger being merely a laughable optimistic mirage.

Ireland today has come a long way – our position on most comparison charts has improved considerably and, as reported in December 2020 by The Irish Times, our position in the Human Development Index Ranking in terms of quality of life (taking into account longevity, education and income) puts us in second place, just behind Norway. For heaven’s sake, we’re ahead of Germany, Sweden, Australia and the UK amongst others.

And yet, poverty in Ireland has not gone away. I’m not going to throw percentages at you of how many children are in poverty or unemployment rates or indeed any of the other statistics that fail to present an empathetic face to a reality that still haunts many an Irish family. The stats, good, bad or indifferent can say what they want, but the 1000 plus General Grant applications we in Protestant Aid received last year tell their own story. And while those stories are not always as obvious as those I came across almost 50 years ago, they are as real and heart-breaking.

The official Government approved poverty measure used in Ireland was developed independently by the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and is based on lacking two or more items from an 11-item index. This index includes such basic items as two pairs of strong shoes, a warm waterproof overcoat, a roast joint once per week, a home that is adequately warm etc. Many people with whom I have conversations can chalk up 9 or 10 of the 11 criteria without difficulty, let alone the two or more needed to define what we know as ‘consistent poverty’.

Images of poverty are no longer the Dickensian pictures of the workhouse or children climbing up a chimney – it is struggling to pay a utility bill, it is feeling a pit in the bottom of your stomach as the insurance bill lands on your mat (or computer), it is that suffocating feeling that you cannot catch up with your bills or give your children good food and warm clothes. These difficulties very often manifest themselves in mental or physical health problems and

in our applications we have seen where these issues are becoming more pervasive.

Financial distress is not an alien or unknown force – it can hit our next-door neighbours, our friends, our cousins, our brothers and sisters. It can reach our own front door. It can often creep up stealth like and catch us unawares, taking us by surprise. It is like a virus, making no distinction between age groups, denomination or location.

Covid-19 has exacerbated financial struggles for many individuals and families as we have seen but if financial problems are a virus, then I am happy to say that donations to Protestant Aid have provided something

of a vaccine. We are so grateful for the number of regular donors who have increased their giving in the face of increased need and are happy to report that in 2020 100% of this help was distributed in grant aid. Asking for help can often be awkward, but if you are in financial difficulty, please contact your Rector regarding a General Grant Application to Protestant Aid – the process is discreet, emphatic and confidential. If you have any questions please contact us directly at info@protestantaid.org.

Geoff Scargill is Head of Charitable Services at Protestant Aid
Protestant Aid, 202A Merrion Road, Dublin 4, D04 R9W8

ANNUAL CLERGY & READERS QUIET DAY (RE-ARRANGED)

For all clergy and readers – diocesan & parish

in St Mary’s Cathedral, Tuam / or by Zoom if necessary
on Wednesday 28th April 2020 at 10.30am

Lead by: The Rt Revd David Chillingworth
formerly Primus of the Scottish Episcopal Church and Bishop of St Andrews

TIDINGS – NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Tidings is distributed free within the Diocese of Tuam, Killala and Achonry however, if you would consider making a modest contribution towards the production costs we would be most grateful as our advertising only partially covers the costs.

Also, at this time we are looking to centralise the administration and in future Tidings finances will be run through the Diocesan Council account. So, if you are making a donation, please send a cheque to the Diocesan Administrator, Mrs Heather Pope, 11 Ros Ard, Cappagh Road, Galway - payable to the United Dioceses of Tuam, Killala and Achonry Dioc Council No 1 a/c and write Tidings on the rear of the cheque.

Or, alternatively via online banking using the bank account details below, with Tidings in the notification section depending on how your bank does this. Thank you for your support and stay safe.

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DIOCESAN LENT FUNDRAISER

The diocese is raising money for a new project in the diocese of Kajiado in Kenya. We will be partnering with Water Drops, and raising money for a pump house which is planned for the new bore hole at Imaroro to provide fresh, clean water for the village and surrounding communities. We are hoping to raise a total of just over £10,000 sterling.



The idea is that the whole of the Bible will be read over the course of Lent, starting on Ash Wednesday and finishing on Friday 26th March. Each parish has been assigned days to read and the chapters to read as displayed below.

The idea is that each parish will be responsible for advertising their own week and will send out a zoom invitation to any who will want to watch or take part. If anyone is interested in reading contact your own rector. The Bible has a total of 1,189 chapters, 929 in the Old Testament and 260 in the New Testament. So each day 33/34 chapters of the Old Testament will be read in the morning and 9/10 chapters of the New Testament will be read in the evening. It has been suggested that the morning readings start at 10.00am and the evening readings start at 7.00pm and that means if anyone wishes to read along each day, perhaps as your own Lent devotion, you can.

TKA Lent Bible reading fundraiser

Ballisodare	Morning	Evening
17th February	Genesis 1 - 33	Matthew 1 - 9
18th February	Genesis 34 - Exodus 17	Matthew 10 - 18
19th February	Exodus 18 - Leviticus 10	Matthew 19 - 28
Tubbercurry	Morning	Evening
22nd February	Leviticus 11 - Numbers 16	Mark 1 - 9
23rd February	Numbers 17 - Deuteronomy 13	Mark 10 - Luke 2

Skreen	Morning	Evening
24th February	Deuteronomy 14 - Joshua 13	Luke 3 - Luke 12
25th February	Joshua 14 - Judges 21	Luke 13 - 21



Foxford	Morning	Evening
26th February	Ruth 1 - 1 Samuel 31	Luke 22 - John 6
Killala Group	Morning	Evening
1st March	2 Samuel 1 - 1 Kings 9	John 7 - 16
2nd March	1 Kings 10 - 1 Kings 20	John 17 - Acts 4
3rd March	2 Kings 21 - 1 Chronicles 29	Acts 5 - 13
4th March	2 Chronicles 1 - 33	Acts 14 - 23
5th March	2 Chronicles 34 - Esther 7	Acts 24 - Romans 4

Aughaval Group	Morning	Evening
8th March	Esther 8 - Job 30	Romans 5 - 13
9th March	Job 31 - Psalm 21	Romans 14 - 1 Corinthians 7
10th March	Psalm 22 - Psalm 55	1 Corinthians 8 - 16
11th March	Psalms 56 - Psalms 88	2 Corinthians 1 - 9
12th March	Psalms 89 - 121	2 Corinthians 10 - Galatians 6



Cong Group	Morning	Evening
15th March	Psalms 122 - Proverbs 5	Ephesians 1 - Philippians 4
16th March	Proverbs 6 - Ecclesiastes 7	Colossians 1 - 1 Thessalonians 5
17th March	Ecclesiastes 8 - Isaiah 20	2 Thessalonians 1 - 1 Timothy 6
18th March	Isaiah 21 - Isaiah 53	2 Timothy 1 - Philemon
19th March	Isaiah 54 - Jeremiah 20	Hebrews 1-11

Galway Group	Morning	Evening
22nd March	Jeremiah 21 - 52	Hebrews 12 - 1 Peter 3
23rd March	Lamentations 1 - Ezekiel 29	1 Peter 4 - 1 John 5
24th March	Ezekiel 30 - Hosea 2	2 John - Revelation 5
25th March	Hosea 3 - Micah 4	Revelation 6 - 14
26th March	Micah 5 - Malachi 4	Revelation 15 - 22



TKA Diocesan Project 2021

WE'RE READING THE BIBLE FOR LENT
HELP US RAISE FUNDS FOR THE WATER PROJECT IN IMARORO IN KENYA

sponsor €10 per chapter
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"But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him, will never thirst, but the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."
 John 4:14

Our hope is that each chapter will garner €10 in sponsorship which will, all being well, raise the money we need. We are looking into a method of donating to this fundraiser online and will have this information sent to clergy before Lent starts. You can also donate to your parishes, specifying that it is for this fundraising event, and the parishes will pass on all donations to the diocese.

Happy reading!

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PARISH NEWS



ACHONRY GROUP

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St George's, Tubbercurry
Rathbarron
Priest in charge: Revd. Peter Norman
Tel: 071 9181685
E-mail: peternorman1959@gmail.com

Gospel for that day, as I have done all the time we have been in lockdown. You can find the Achonry page by going to www.tuam.anglican.org/achonry/

Whether we can meet safely at Easter is anyone's guess but we were able to celebrate Christmas in Church and my thanks to those who made this as safe an arrangement as possible. Thanks also for your patience and understanding regarding the need to book in advance to make sure no-one had to be turned away because the Church was full. As it turned out we had a few spare seats as some people were unable to come at the last minute due to Coronavirus and of course others felt safer staying at home. I had my reservations about allowing Churches to open as I said last time and as it turned out it would probably have been better if restrictions had been tighter over that period.

Funerals

Over the Christmas period there were three funerals. Brian Wheeler on 21st December (Tubbercurry), Enid Hall on 28th December (Rathbarron – a faithful member of the Church there in her time) and Elizabeth (Betty) Connolly on 6th January (Rathbarron). Our sympathies go to their families as we pray that their souls may rest in peace.

The season of Lent is just around the corner. A penitential season as we prepare for the joys of Easter. It is a season usually marked by either 'giving things up' (chocolate or biscuits perhaps) or 'taking things on' (a few minutes of extra prayers, reading a spiritual book maybe). A time when we remember the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert. Not a fruitless time but a time to grow in his understanding of his own nature as Son of God and the path of his public ministry. time of testing and temptation.

Last year the season of Lent was interrupted as Church services were suspended and this year may well be similar. However, we can still observe Lent in some way or other whilst staying at home. For the time when we are not allowed in Church I will continue to celebrate the Eucharist at home every Sunday at 11.00 a.m. and invite you to pause for a while at this time (if you can) and perhaps use the prayers that I will put on the Achonry page of the Diocesan website, together with a reflection on the

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Christ Church, Castlebar
Turlough
St Thomas', Dugort
Priest-in-charge:
Revd Canon Jennifer McWhirter
Tel: 098 25127
E-mail: revjkmcwhirter@yahoo.co.uk

Christmas

Christmas was certainly different this year. While Covid-19 might have meant a different sort of Christmas, I was grateful to be able to worship in church on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. I have to thank those who decorated the churches for the Christmas services, and also to those who stayed after the service in Westport on Christmas Eve in order to clean the church ready for services the next day. My thanks also to the churchwardens who kept things running smoothly.

Podcasts

Who know when we'll once again be able to meet in church, but until then the twice weekly podcasts will continue, indeed, they'll continue for the foreseeable future. If anyone is not yet receiving these, please let me know your email address and I'll add you to the mailing list. I'd also like to draw your attention to the diocesan website, where recorded worship is available every Sunday.

Diocesan Lent Fundraiser

The diocese is raising money for a new project in the diocese of Kajiado in Kenya. We will be partnering with Water Drops, and raising money for a bore hole and pump house which is planned for Imaroro to provide fresh, clean water for the village and surrounding communities. In a pandemic where we are reminded to always wash our hands this clean water will mean better hygiene and health for all who access the water. The whole of the Bible will be read during Lent, with each parish group/union taking on to read 33 chapters in the morning and 9 chapters a night for 5 days. Aughaval Group is responsible for 8-12th March. This will be done using Zoom, with invitations being sent out to the parish so people can watch. We hope to raise €10 per chapter read. If anyone is willing to read a few chapters, please let me know as I'll be putting a rota together for our five days.

Confirmation

In fervent hope, confirmation has been scheduled for Sunday 25th April and we look forward to having the Bishop with us for this special service. If anyone is interested in confirmation, for themselves or for a young person, and hasn't already been in touch, please let me know.

Westport Eco-congregation

Westport Eco-congregation is hosting two talks around Lent this year. The first is a seminar with Alistair McIntosh entitled, "Faith in the Environment" which will be held on zoom on Tuesday 16th February at 7.30pm. The second is a discussion session on climate change and feedback loops, looking especially at forestry. Details of the speakers for this are yet to be confirmed, but it will be held on Monday 15th March at 7.00pm. If anyone is interested, please let me know and I'll send you the zoom links for these evenings.

Funerals

Jeremy Hutchinson, Kilgeever, Louisburgh, aged 69, Thursday 3rd December 2020 at 11.00am in Holy Trinity, Westport, followed by interment in Holy Trinity graveyard.
Brenda Jackson, Castlebar, aged 82, Monday 14th December at 10.30am in Christchurch, Castlebar, followed by cremation at Shannon Crematorium.



ST. THOMAS, DUGORT

Achill Island
Ordained Local Minister:
Revd Maebh O'Herlihy
Tel: 087 2789912
E-mail: maebhoh@gmail.com

Christmas week saw us come back together in St. Thomas' which was a real joy for all of us. On the Sunday, 20th, we had a slightly shorter Carol Service, with recorded carols and all wearing masks. We were joined by Canon Jen which allowed some of the parishioners to meet her for the first time which was a happy occasion.

On Christmas morning I was able to celebrate Holy Communion for the first time since ordination as

priest, a very special day for that celebration, and a real joy to have a service in the church on Christmas morning.

A sincere thank you to all who helped to heat-up and decorate the church.

On Sunday 24th January we had a first 'live' short Morning Prayer Service on Zoom. As we each joined in from our homes, it gave us the great opportunity to unite the parishioners of St. Thomas' who live away in Dublin and Cork, and who have not been able to travel back to Achill, with the parishioners who live here on the Island. At the end it was decided by everyone that we would do this on a fortnightly basis for however long the restrictions stay in place.

Our thoughts and prayers are with everyone during these times.



BALLISODARE GROUP

Holy Trinity, Ballisodare
St Paul's, Collooney
Emlaghfad, Ballymote
Rector: Canon Dr Andrew Ison
Tel: 071 9133217
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Like everyone we had been trying to work out what to do at Christmas with the limit set at 50 attendees. Fortunately or sadly, the inability for families to meet meant that we were okay on the day, our last day together in church. However, as we spend more time online, I have lost that sense that this will be as temporary as I first thought and realising that I will have to up my game so investments have been made in Zoom and video editing software. Parishioners will have to be the judges on the fruits of my labours.

Occasional Offices

Since the last edition it has been a busy time for the occasional offices with both joy and deep sadness. On Monday December 18th we held the funeral of



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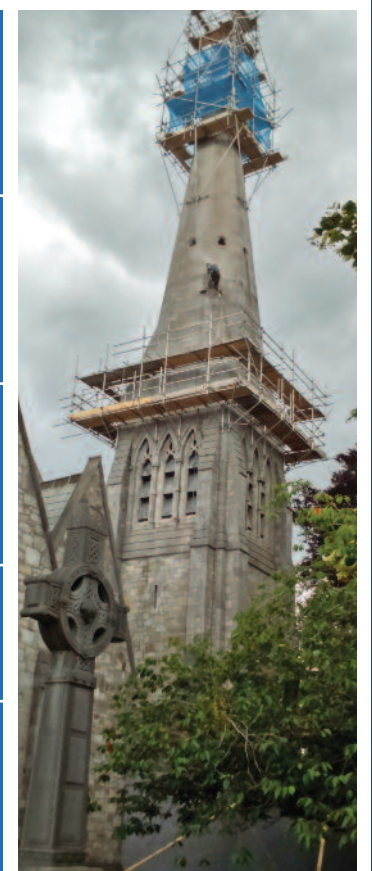
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Howard Young who was just 38 years old. Howard's death was a shock to the family and community. Our prayers remain with his immediate family, Ashley and Rose, his parents, sisters Trudie and Kim. And we remember his work colleagues and many friends who will miss his light-hearted way of seeing the world.



We have also celebrated three weddings in the last two months. The first was on December 5th when 25 guests were allowed. Robert Craig and Elizabeth Clarke are both parishioners at St Paul's in Collooney. We wish Robert and Elizabeth a wonderful future together.

On January 16th at Holy Trinity, Ballisodare we celebrated the marriage of Nadine Shannon and Charles Larkin. This was under the stricter lockdown however, we had well over 100 online connections as the marriage was livestreamed to enable Charles' family in America to participate and friends around the world to share in their great day. It was a pleasure to share the day with Kieran Dunne, the Parish priest of Foxrock in Dublin and a great friend of Charles for many years. We wish Charles and Nadine a great future.



On the 23rd January, St Paul's Church in Collooney hosted the wedding of Richard Fleming and Dawn Williams. Initially, due to have taken place in May 2020, the wedding was postponed like many in that period in the hope that things would improve but they eventually decided to continue and again live streamed the event. The church was beautifully decorated and the service taken by Canon Noel Regan, known to both bride and groom. We wish Richard and Dawn at the best for their future together.

In addition, we have had two baptisms although we never knew until quite late if we could be able to go ahead. On December 17th we baptised Noah Parke



at Holy Trinity, Ballisodare in a small gathering. Congratulations to parents, Denise and Philip. And then we held the hastily rearranged baptism of Lily Crehan around Christmas, also, at Holy Trinity, Ballisodare. Congratulations to Wendy and Adrian Lily's parents. We welcome Lily and Noah into the church and we pray for them as they grow in the faith.

Confirmation 2021

Due to Covid-19 confirmation in 2020 had to be cancelled. For 2021 the date for confirmation in the Ballisodare Group is May 30th in St Paul's church, Collooney at 10.45am. We will see how things develop in 2021.

St Paul's School

In December we said farewell to Ms Gemma Sherlock who had been subbing with us in St Paul's NS. A dedicated teacher who worked extremely hard for the welfare of her pupils and the school. We wish her well for future days. We welcome the return of Mrs Olga McNulty to her classes as she has missed them very much.

The start of January was not the one that we hoped for as we find ourselves reverted to remote learning. This is disappointing for all, parents, pupils and staff as on-line education is a challenge. However, we are hopeful that we will in time return to more normal day to day education in the classroom.

We are accepting applications for enrolment for September 2021 and encourage anyone interested to view our Admission Policy on the website.

GALWAY & KILCUMMIN GROUP

Rector: The Very Revd Lynda Peilow
Tel: 091 521914
Email: rector@stnicholas.ie
Revd Carole Reynolds Tel : 087 6067848
Revd Dr. Paidi Delaney Tel : 089 9779649
Facebook: www.facebook.com/stnicholasgalway/
YouTube https://youtu.be/0cplQfvIfA



Revd Carole Reynolds



Revd Dr. Paidi Delaney

Zoom Services

We continue through this season of Covid-19 with services online by zoom every Sunday morning at 11am, and on Thursdays for Compline at 8.30pm. Zoom has proved popular in the parish and enables us to meet together for live worship, gathering us as a community. Our congregation on zoom also includes worshippers from across Ireland, Europe and the USA.

Christian Unity

Seven churches from across Galway gathered for the Christian Unity service which was held on Thursday 21st January. Bishop Patrick and Bishop Brendan joined us, with a large congregation to worship on the platform of zoom.

Christmas Fayre

Well done to all involved in the virtual Christmas Fayre for St Nicholas' and the production of the anniversary edition of the calendar. It showed great initiative and thank you to all who both supported and worked for it.

Conservation Management Plan

After many years in the planning, the vestry of St Nicholas' received the first draft of the CMP in December, and we look forward to the potential and vision it encapsulates.

Christmas Services

It was lovely to celebrate together over Christmas - great to see familiar faces, and despite the difficult circumstances we managed. Thank you for your patience and understanding. We thank the churchwardens in both churches and the stewards who ensured everything went to plan. Without their help and assistance the services could not have

proceeded. A very special thank you in Oughterard from Rev Carole to Faith for helping to light the final candle on our Advent Wreath and Lily for placing baby Jesus in our crib. They both performed their tasks splendidly.

Funerals

The parish of Oughterard were greatly saddened to hear of the sudden death of Roger Thomas on New Years Day. Roger and Hilary have been part of the Kilcummin family for many years. Originally from England, they moved to Oughterard some time ago and settled into the community. Roger's funeral took place on 6th January and with the present Covid-19 restrictions, unfortunately none of his children, stepchildren, grandchildren or great grandchildren could attend. We live streamed the service to his family in England, which they greatly appreciated. We extend our sympathies to Hilary and the wider Thomas family at this time. Roger was a wonderful member of our parish, a good friend to many and popular in the community. Whilst the funeral was small due to Covid-19, it was heartening to see the community show their love and support, as they formed a socially distanced guard of honour on the road and around the church. When it is safe to do so, we will hold a service of thanksgiving for Roger at Kilcummin.

The community was devastated to hear of the sudden death of 17 year old James Harrison following a fall in Co Kerry. James was one of our founding choristers at St Nicholas, with both his parents being hugely involved in the Schola Cantorum. Matthew, his father, sings in several of our choirs. Members of the Schola and the parish joined in the guard of honour on the day of his funeral which stretched from Sea Road, around the crescent, then left towards Salthill. The community showed great love and support to the family which was breathtaking in the silence, the solidarity and the respect that the socially distanced guard of honour demonstrated. The rector and our organist, Mark Duley were present at the funeral which took place in the Jesuit Church. We continue to hold James' parents, Matthew and Maire, his siblings, Daniel and Aoife, his grandparents, extended family, classmates, teachers and friends in our thoughts and prayers at this tragic and difficult time.



KILMOREMOY AND KILLALA UNIONS

St Michael's, Ballina (Kilmoremoy)
Killanley Church, Castleconnor
Kilglass, St Anne's, Easkey
St Patrick's Cathedral, Killala
St John's, Ballycastle
St Mary's, Crossmolina
Rector: Ven. Stephen McWhirter
Tel: 096 60829 & 085 875 9921.
www.stmichaelsballina.killala.anglican.org
www.kilmoremoy.killala.anglican.org

Kilmoremoy Union

This Christmas was a Christmas like no other! However, I'm delighted to say we managed worship on Christmas Day throughout the Union with little difficulty. It was a great opportunity to see each other, however briefly and at a distance. A particular thank you to those involved in the deep clean between the services on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day in St Michael's in order that we could ensure a service at Christmas for everyone.

Another important feature in our usual Christmas preparations is the service of Holy Communion in the Ard na Gréine Nursing Home in Enniscrone. Worship is usually conducted by Canon Noel Regan and myself and we are assisted by Mrs. Mildred Gilmore who uses the afternoon to visit with the indoor members of



Mothers Union in the home. This year Canon Noel, Fr. Gerry O'Hora and myself conducted worship in an outdoor vigil on Tuesday 22nd December for residents families. We thank the management and staff of Ard na Gréine for organising this event.

Killala Union

As we finish 2020 we would like to take this opportunity to thank the Revd John Farr for his support of the Union over the last months. Revd John visited the Union once a month to provide services of Holy Communion in Killala and Crossmolina. He also spent time making pastoral calls. We thank him for his time among us and wish him every blessing in his continued ministry. Thanks also to Bishop Patrick for celebrating Holy Communion

with us on Christmas Day he was assisted by Revd Clive and by Arthur.

Water Drops

This year over Lent we will be holding a Diocesan Fundraiser to support a water project in the Diocese of Kajiado at the village of Imaroro, a remote village in the Diocese. At this time of global pandemic we are fortunate to be in a position to wash as much as we need to. We hope to bring safe water to this remote area, enabling a safe and healthy water supply for the village and surrounding community. During the fundraiser we will be reading the entirety of Scripture over the period of Lent, which will be broadcast for all to see over the Zoom platform. The Kilmoremoy and Killala Unions will be reading from Monday 1st - Friday 5th March 2021. It is hoped we can raise sponsorship of €10 for each chapter we read. If you would like to take part and read in this project please contact the Archdeacon.

Confirmation for Kilmoremoy & Killala Unions

At this time of year we usually begin our confirmation classes, this year classes will be arranged differently than the usual six week course. If anyone is interested in confirmation classes please speak with the Archdeacon.

Worship

I will continue to record podcasts for the two Unions and send out the 'Archdeacon's Study' newsletter twice a week. This provision will continue until further notice. A Government review of these restrictions is expected on the 5th March but the current signs are that the restrictions may continue to be in force for up to two months. An announcement will be made as and when clarity emerges and I will keep you informed by the usual means. During lockdown, I along with my clerical colleagues, will be available for pastoral matters by phone.

Should we find ourselves in the unfortunate position of a funeral in any of the parishes during this period it should be noted that a maximum of 10 mourners will be permitted to attend.

It continues to be a difficult time for us all and I would once again ask that you continue to be good neighbours, especially with those known to you who live alone and are cut off from relatives who may live away. Again, I would urge anyone who is struggling financially at this time, as so many are, to either contact me directly or indeed any of my clerical colleagues within the Unions and we will endeavour to assist through the ministry of



Protestant Aid who have always been generous and a friend of our parishes. Take heart there is a vaccine on the near horizon and that, coupled with restricting our contacts for a while, might give us a chance to get ahead of the virus.

As we journey through Lent toward Easter so we pray for God's hand of protection as we all await vaccination against the Coronavirus Covid-19. I wish you and your families safety, health and God's blessings at this time.

Funerals

Kilmoremoy Union - Kilglass Parish
McKinley Cyril, Leaffoney, Enniscrone on the 1st December 2020, aged 76, in Kilglass Parish Church followed by interment in St Patrick's Cemetery, Kilglass. Service conducted by Revd Karen Duignan.

Carnegie Isabel (Belle), a resident of Ard na Gréine Nursing Home for many years, formerly Leaffoney, Enniscrone on the 29th December 2020, aged 94, in Kilglass Parish Church followed by interment in the Churchyard. Belle was a well-known and loved member of Kilglass parish where she had served as organist for many years. Service conducted by Ven. Stephen McWhirter and Revd Karen Duignan.

Reid Brenda Sheila, Briar Hill, Ballintean, Enniscrone on 22nd January 2021, aged 72, in Kilglass Parish Church followed by interment in the Churchyard. Brenda died suddenly in Galway Hospital on 20th January 2021. Brenda's passing has left us deeply saddened. She was always smiley and good humoured. Service conducted by Ven. Stephen McWhirter, Revd Karen Duignan and Canon Noel Regan.

Killala Union

Carroll George Robert, Mullafarry, Killala on 21st January 2021, aged 79, in St Patrick's Cathedral, Killala followed by interment in Mullafarry Churchyard. Service conducted by Ven. Stephen McWhirter.



ST ANNE'S, EASKEY & KILGLASS PARISH

Revd Karen Duignan
Phone: 087 2200 638
E-mail: kgduignan@gmail.com

Christmas 2020 had a strange feel to it. We managed to have a "Carol Service with a difference in Kilglass". While nobody was allowed to sing, Rev Karen managed to download some nice versions of well-known carols for the congregation to listen to. We also had the debut performance of Kelly Greer as she played Away in a Manger on the organ. Kelly did an amazing job and we look forward to watching her grow in her skills. The children from Leaffoney NS also added to the service by presenting their prayers. We were very fortunate to be able to hold Christmas Eve service in Easkey and Christmas Day in Kilglass. Thank you to everyone who helped prepared the churches.

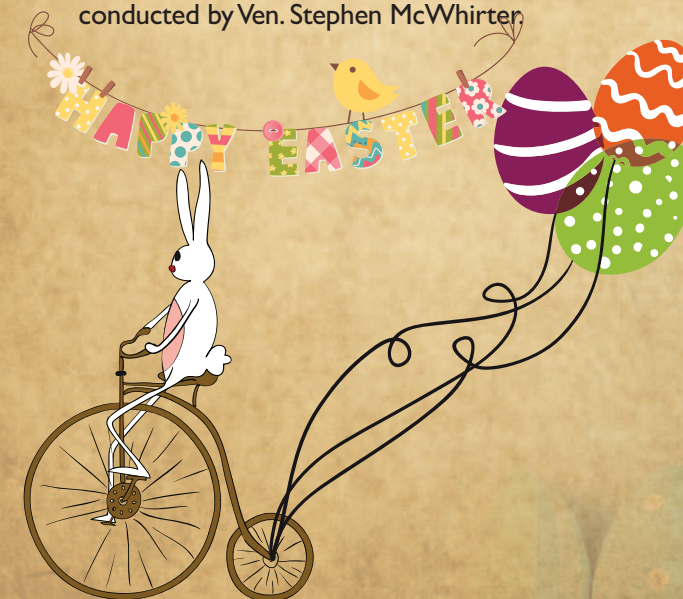
Sadly, over the Christmas period we lost two very faithful members of Kilglass parish as recorded above by the archdeacon.



CROSSMOLINA AND BALLYCASTLE

Revd Clive Moore
E-mail: lclvmoore@gmail.com
Phone: 087-6563238

I am writing this in the midst of the lockdown. We are all a bit disorientated without the familiar "landmarks" of our normal lifestyles, at work or socially, so I suppose that is why I am looking forward to taking time this Lent to "ground" myself. I hope that you will all find time to be still, to read scripture, to reflect, to pray and to renew. In the language of our time we might say "to reboot", to turn off so that we can turn on again, without the glitches and all the stuff running in the background that inhibits our progress with the most important task. Taking time to do this will I hope ground us not only in sight of a cross on a hill, but also in sight of an empty tomb. Our time of reflection will equip us to respond to both. Ultimately, however we are able to observe it in these times, we are an



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E: rev.andrew.ison@gmail.com T: 89 2221483

“Easter” people and the joy of the Easter message is what we are all about.

We were lucky enough to have our churches open to celebrate Christmas, and both St. John's and St. Mary's had Carol Services where we enjoyed listening to the carols even if we couldn't sing them. In St. John's readings by Tadgh Jackson and Abby Bourke, as well as Abby playing “Away in a manger” on the tin whistle, were greatly appreciated and elevated our worship. Archdeacon Stephen presided at St. John's traditional Christmas Eve service and in order to help keep attendance below 50 in compliance with restrictions due to the pandemic, St. Mary's had a family friendly service on the afternoon of Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day Bishop Patrick presided for our Holy Communion service. I would like to take this opportunity to record my thanks to the congregations and particularly the church wardens of both parishes for their willingness and supportive compliance which insured that we could safely gather for worship at that time.

Funerals

It was with sadness that in early January the parishioners of St. John's and St. Mary's learned of the death of George Robinson in Birmingham, England. George was from Gurtnahurra, Crossmolina and we remember his brother Walter (a member of St. John's congregation) and extended family in England and Ireland in our prayers.



KILLANLEY – CASTLECONNOR

Revd Caroline Morrow
Phone: 087 2053996
E-mail: cmorrow1963@gmail.com

As I sit here writing up my notes for tidings, it has been without doubt one of the wettest days we have seen so far. And on days like this, when the cloud is low and the skies are grey, and when one day seems to roll into the next, one cannot help but feel down. But... think ahead, better days are coming. The days are getting longer and we have better weather to look forward to (hopefully) and of course the vaccine rollout. We cannot allow these damp wet days to get us down, and, yes, even I am confessing that I have down days. This present lockdown has been much

harder for us to bear than the last two.

But remember this “IT IS OK NOT TO BE OK” because, after all, this too shall pass. The book of Deuteronomy says, “The Lord himself goes before you. He will never leave you, nor forsake you. Do not be afraid, do not be discouraged” (Deut. 31:8)

We are now in a new year, and unfortunately Covid-19 has not gone away, but we did get a brief respite from lockdown in December, and churches were once again allowed to open for worship. I was heartened by the response we had to Sunday worship during the season of Advent. Christmas day was going to be a challenge but a plan was put in place to allow those who wished to come to church, to attend in a manner that kept everyone safe. Thank you to Rebecca who oversaw this plan and this allowed everyone to worship in a safe environment.

As we are now in a third lockdown, worship has once again moved online. Services can be accessed on tuam.anglican.org every Sunday and also on our Facebook page Killanley church. We do, however, look forward to churches reopening in the not-too-distant future (hopefully) but until then stay safe.

OMEY GROUP

Christ Church, Clifden
St Thomas', Ballinakill
St Mary's, Roundstone
Priest in Charge: Vacant
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www.omeygroup.ie

The four churches in the Omev Group are quiet once more. We are dormant in the way perhaps the garden slumbers during winter, because it is necessary. We quietly await better times ahead and we take refuge in our loved ones and in small things. The bulbs that were planted in the Autumn have started to shoot in all of our church grounds. This small sign of hope reminds us of the continuum of life and of the promise of good days ahead. We hope that we will have news to share in this publication in the months ahead and we wish all our family, friends, neighbours and fellow parishioners good health and happiness for 2021.



Spring bulbs in the grounds of Christ Church, Clifden



SKREEN GROUP

Skreen
Christ Church, Dromard
St Mary's, Kilmacshalgan, Dromore West
Priest in Charge:
Canon Noel Regan
Phone: 071 9166253
Mobile: 086 8875714
Email: revnoelregan@hotmail.com

Christmas 2020 is already very much a memory. The hope was that it would be a respite for people to visit their families and have some time together. However, the underlying anxiety being experienced by most people and the imminent lockdown which had to be introduced earlier than expected meant it was an abrupt and short-lived affair.

In the group of parishes we did succeed in having a carol service in all three churches on the Sunday before Christmas. Recorded music in Dromore West

and Skreen provided a sense of normality. In the absence of recordings and no electricity Dromard improvised wonderfully. Our organist played a verse of each of the carols and one person read the lyrics. Well done to those who organised this service, it worked very well.

The staff of the Nursing Home in Enniscrone organised an outdoor service for relatives of the residents. A great deal of effort was put into this event to make it festive. The various clergy attending took a part and while the residents couldn't attend some viewed the proceedings through the windows. The staff had practised a number of musical items which added very much to the service (see also report in Kilmoremoyle).

On Christmas Eve prior to the Holy Communion in Dromore West Canon Noel extended greetings to the Roman Catholic congregation and was warmly welcomed by Fr. Tony Gillespie and those attending. Social distancing was very much in evidence in all churches and can I thank those attending for your patience and co-operation in these matters.

We extend prayerful good wishes to Mrs. Hazel Moore of Skreen who having spent some time in Sligo University Hospital as result of a fall is now recuperating in the Nazareth House, Sligo.

Now that we are approaching the season of Lent it is an opportunity to reflect on our lives and see how we can grow in our spiritual journey and prepare once again for Easter, the most important festival the Christian year. Just as we journey from the dark days of Christmas to the brightness of a new hope in the spring of the year, Lent is an opportunity for us to revisit our own personal spiritual journey and remind ourselves of Jesus' isolation and preparation for that final journey to Jerusalem. The darkness of Holy Week and especially Good Friday is all changed when brightness breaks through with the power of the Resurrection on Easter Day. Just as the longer evenings bring a sense of hope so too with the Easter story. May we find new vigour and spiritual hope as we journey and as the Hymn says “Lift high the cross, the love of Christ proclaim till all the world adore his sacred name”

Bereavements

Dr. Jonathan Moy-Thomas and his wife Jill and daughter Kate and family have been a part of the parish of Dromard for some time. Due to the early

onset of Alzheimers Dr Jon had been a resident of Sonas Ard Na Greine Nursing Home Enniscrone for a number of years and passed away there on the 16th January. This debilitating disease robs so many of a quality of life and they slowly retreat from the world to the extent that professionals have to be involved in their care. The staff at the Nursing Home are so dedicated and provide residents with such wonderful care when family are no longer able to do so. We extend sincere sympathy to Jill, her family and Dr Jon's family at this sad time.

May I personally and on behalf of the group of parishes extend our very sincere sympathy to Mr. Norman Reid whose wife Brenda died unexpectedly in the early hours of Wednesday Jan 20th, 2021. For all who have lost loved ones during this pandemic it has proven very difficult as there isn't the opportunity to meet family and friends who at a time like this provide much needed support. Norman is well known in Diocesan and parish circles and also nationally in his Masonic career. As Provincial Grand Master of North Connaught he is known throughout the province and all over the island of Ireland. Members would have travelled from all over the country but this couldn't happen. As clerical chaplain to the Province I did attend the funeral service in Kilglass to act as representative for the many who couldn't attend. My sincere thanks to Archdeacon Stephen McWhirter who on my arrival invited me to take a part in the service. This was very much appreciated. May I on behalf of all of us extend to Norman and family our very sincere sympathy.

some loved ones again in that short window when some travel could take place.



Our Claremorris service cannot take place at this time and we always have an Advent wreath handmade by Catherine Gilmore. However, she brought it to Foxford and it brightened our services throughout December. The last service we had in Claremorris was 1st March when Bishop Patrick was with us. Never did we think how our lives would be changed since then. The little group is remembered in prayer and we pray especially for those in hospital at this time.

Each year Anthony Ruane presents us with a Christmas tree which he puts in position in the church



STRAID PARISH, FOXFORD & CLAREMORRIS

Priest-in-charge: Canon Andrea Wills
Tel: 094 9256403; Mobile 086 261 7572
Foxford: 10.00 a.m. every Sunday
Claremorris: 12 noon in McWilliam
Park Hotel – 1st Sunday of the month
andrea.wills@gmail.com

There was joy in December when we were able to be back in Church. Advent brought a time of contemplation and expectation – looking forward to celebrating the birth of Christ and perhaps seeing

grounds. This year it was tall and a hoist was acquired to put on the lights. Thank you to Anthony and to James McGreal and Patrick Browne for their help. We also managed to get some of the gutters cleaned. We had a lovely service on Christmas Day – thank you to everyone who came. The church was very nicely decorated and we listened to carols and felt that special Christmas atmosphere.

Baptism

During that short window when restrictions lessened Kendra Nzembi Muema was baptised on 22nd December in Foxford Church. Kendra was brought by her mother Rispa who lives in Ballyhaunis and her godmothers were Faith Wagacha and Xanthe Pratt. Rispa is originally from Kenya and knows the Diocese of Kajiado with which this Diocese has fond links.

Engagements

Another happy note is the engagement of Leuween Beattie and Thomas Skelly from Co. Meath. They are currently living in Canada. Also engaged are Trevor Wills and Basia Dziok. Congratulations to both couples.

Birth

Yvonne Morrison and Christopher Dempsey welcomed a son, Neil Christopher, on 25th January, a brother for Sophia May. Very best wishes to them all.

Death

Ruth Chilcoat died on 27th January in her 99th year in St. Anne's Nursing Home, Charlestown. Originally from America, it had been her home for 14 years, and the love shown by the staff and residents at her removal was special. Following prayers at the home, staff formed a guard of honour as Ruth was brought on her final earthly journey. Her only daughter Joanne in America was unable to travel. We extend deepest sympathy to her.

Bereaved

We stand with and sympathise with Patrick Browne on the death of his sister Pauline in England. May she rest in perfect peace.

We remember in prayer all those known to us who are ill or anxious, awaiting hospital appointments or results.

Foxford is very fortunate to not only have the River Moy but nearby Lough Cullen which during the special light in early January looked stunning. As the days lengthen and the evenings shorten and we move from Epiphany to contemplating Lent we must continue to be vigilant, to hope, to care and to love.





TUAM GROUP

St Mary's Cathedral, Tuam
St Mary's, Cong
St John the Baptist, Aasleagh
Rector: The Very Revd Alistair Grimason
Tel: 094 9546909
Mob.: +353 85 2821073
Email: deantuum@gmail.com

As one might expect, given the current Covid-19 restrictions, there hasn't been a lot of 'on the ground' activity in the parish since the last issue of Tidings. Nonetheless, what we have been able to do 'face to face' is recorded here.

Advent and Christmas

We managed to be in church on three of the four Sundays of Advent. This included two partial and 'sort of' Carol Services; one in Cong and one in Tuam, both on Sunday 20th December. Neither was the full-blown, traditional Nine Lessons and Carols. Each comprised a Celebration of the Holy Communion incorporating Carols that we listened to rather than sang. It was the best we could do.

Services on Christmas Day were held in Cong and Tuam. Both were Celebrations of Holy Communion. However, numbers attending were massively lower than in a normal year and there seemed to be an air of nervousness and hush enveloping the Festival. That notwithstanding, we must thank all those who made the considerable effort to inject a note of normality into things by decorating Church and Cathedral, and for clearing up afterwards.

Funerals

It is with great sadness that we record two deaths in the parish during January. Teresa Maginnis, beloved wife of Eddie Maginnis, died early in January. Her funeral Mass

was held in St. Mary's Cathedral, Tuam. The Dean and a very few parishioners were able to be in attendance and the whole parish extends our heartfelt and prayerful sympathy to Eddie and all of Teresa's family.

David Shaw-Smith also died during January. A burial service was conducted by the Dean in Burriscara Abbey graveyard. Our sympathy and prayers go out to Sally, David's wife, and their whole circle of family and friends.

This is a horrible time for anyone to have to come to terms with the death of a loved one. We simply are not able to say 'farewell' as we would wish to. So our condolences to all those who have lost loved ones take on a significant depth and feeling.

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity

We weren't able to have our customary Prayer Service in Tuam this year, for obvious reasons. But Unity is alive and well and celebrated in a most practical way in Tuam right now.

Our sister cathedral in the City, The Cathedral of the Assumption, is closed for renovations. And we in St Mary's have offered the use of 'our' cathedral to the people of Tuam for as long as the renovations take and in any way they think it might be useful. While it was permitted, daily Mass was said in St Mary's on weekdays. Now, with the harder restrictions in place, our Roman Catholic partners are using the building mainly for funerals. It has been our heartfelt delight and privilege to be able to extend the hand of true ecumenism in this way which goes far beyond simply a once year gathering.

The future

There's a saying attributed to Woody Allen but which, in reality, is based on an old Yiddish proverb: 'If you want to make God laugh, tell him your plans.'

The Covid-19 bomb dropped on 27th December and we've been in lockdown ever since. And it really is pointless at this juncture to set out any plans for the

foreseeable future. We may come out of lockdown after St Patrick's Day. Or it may be after Easter. Or this thing might take us right up to the summer. No one can be definitive and gazing into a crystal ball just hurts the eyes. What will be will be and whenever we do get out the other end, resumption plans will be well publicised.

For now can I remind everybody of our live stream worship at 10am every Sunday on the Cong Facebook page and the weekly TKA Diocesan Worship videos

which are published on the website at www.tuam.anglican.org each Saturday and remain there for the following week.

It goes without saying that, wearingly hard as it is, we all need to stick with the programme and mind ourselves and others as best we can by observing the regulations. The better we do that, the sooner we will emerge into the light. God Bless and Keep every single one of You.

GREENER CHURCHES



Churches and communities can do a great deal to contribute to a greener future, and there are lots of initiatives already in place. All churches have the opportunity to make a difference, so here are a few tips from other churches.

Alternatives to single-use plastics

Single-use plastics such as cutlery and crockery can be easily avoided by using traditional washable items such as china plates and metal cutlery when serving food and drinks at your church. However, this isn't always possible, for example while on the move, so disposable items made of materials such as bamboo and paper can be good alternatives.

Carbon fasting

Small changes that help to protect the earth by exploring alternatives to the daily routine can help break habits that lead to long-term positive changes. Carbon fasting suggestions include:

- Using alternative modes of transport or carpooling.
- Eating meat-free meals.
- Choosing only fruit and vegetables that are grown and processed in the Ireland.
- Giving up plastic.

Green church gardens

Bees are essential to the pollination of flowers. According to the BBC's Countryfile programme, to make one pound of honey, bees fly over 55,000 miles. You can create a bee-friendly rest-stop at your church by:

- Providing a place for them to rest or shelter from harsh weather conditions.
- Minimising the use of pesticides used as these can poison bees.
- Choosing the right flowers gives a list of bee-friendly plants you can plant for each season.
- Making sure there is a source of water nearby.

Cycle to church

Are there ways you could encourage your congregation and other church users to cycle? Introducing areas where bikes can be stored safely at the church is a great start. You could also create a map of cycle routes to the church for your website.

Energy-efficient lighting

Your church should be well-lit to help reduce the risk of accidents such as slips and trips occurring. Although they cost more initially, light-emitting diodes (LEDs) use less energy than traditional bulbs and therefore have less impact on the environment.

Improving insulation

Insulation can be placed above, between or just below the church rafters to keep heat inside. But be aware of heritage concerns and check with your local County Council.

Solar panels and giving back to the grid

Solar panels only require daylight rather than direct sunlight, so even on a cloudy day, they can generate electricity. Grants or loans may be available to fund solar panels at your church subject to planning and heritage concerns.

Air source heat pumps

In some churches, air-source heat pumps may be a suitable alternative to traditional heating systems. There are examples where these systems blend well within a church and it may be possible to site external compressor apparatus on the church roof.

This form of heating can heat a church to a comfortable temperature within a short time and may help to reduce heating costs. It is essential any system is installed and maintained by a competent engineer.

Adapted from the All Churches Trust in the UK



BISHOPS' APPEAL

Legacies that Make their Mark



Like many, Bishops' Appeal saw a sharp drop in donations and in its ability to fund vital supports for struggling communities around the world since the beginning of the Pandemic and the closing of church buildings. However, due to the continued generosity of parishes and individuals combined with the receipt of two generous legacies, the Committee was recently able to fund multiple transformative projects. Added to these our Mother and Child Advent Appeal was also partially funded by these legacies, which is supporting:

- emergency food for lactating mothers and malnourished children in Nepal,
- adequate shelter for families fleeing conflict in DR Congo,
- training supports for emergency foster parents for children with trauma or disabilities in Cambodia
- rehabilitation of health clinics for pregnant women in Sierra Leone.

One such legacy donation was from a lifelong advocate of education so it was our privilege and our honour to direct those funds to support quality education for vulnerable children in Uganda; access to education and inclusive extra-curricular activities for children with disabilities in Kenya; and to Literacy Circles in Burundi for women who never before had the opportunity to access education.

Anyone gifting a donation in their Will can direct their giving based on their life's passions. We will identify carefully vetted projects to ensure they not only meet

with best practises, are sustainable and are properly monitored, but that the people who are most in need are targeted to access the supports.

Your legacy could fund vocational training for Self Help Group members who learn basic numeracy, accountancy and business skills to help them grow their small enterprises.

Your legacy could support ante-natal and post-natal care in countries where it is dangerous to have a baby or to refurbish health clinics that currently have no water or electricity.

Your legacy could fund emergency responses after natural disasters as well as the longer term response of rebuilding the communities again.

Your legacy could support access to drought resistant seeds and training in conservation farming methods for entire communities where erratic weather patterns are causing hunger, desperation and migration.

Your legacy could support the provision of a clean water source, the protection of people being trafficked, access to sanitary protects for young women, the safeguarding of creation through the protection of a tribal group or forests and soil. Through our global partners we have the capacity to direct legacies to the causes closest to your heart and for those funds to reach the people who need it most.

Our legacies can be extraordinary. Our life's passion can have an impact on the world's poorest people. Thank you for your support and consideration of the work of the Bishops' Appeal.



Judith, a nurse and midwife in Sierra Leone received her training through a legacy gifted to Christian Aid. Now Judith looks forward to working in improved health clinics, currently without running water or electricity, because of a legacy gifted to Bishops' Appeal.



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