

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

ENNISKILLEN

LISBELLAW



Volume 1, Issue 5

NEWSLETTER

December 2014



"Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you."

Christmas Greetings to all and God bless our New Year 2015.

Coming home for Christmas is one of the best things in the world. It is the feast of the home place, the feast of belonging. Imagine not having somewhere to call home. Imagine having nowhere to return to at Christmas or at other important times. Imagine the feelings of the emigrant at Christmas. In the Wizard of Oz, little Dorothy was right to say, *'There's no place like home'*. In Enniskillen, we are fortunate to have a fine hometown and county. It has its own distinctive geography, in being an island town. It has its own distinctive history, including the recently-discovered crannóg. It has its own distinctive community, where neighbourliness tends to trump tribalism. Enniskillen is a welcoming town and the population has changed over the years. Close to one hundred children at our town parish primary school were born in a land other than this one. This is now their home too. We are literally unable to describe ourselves merely in terms of old divisions though there is always work to continue doing in this regard. This year, the local community benefited from the presence of Glenn Harvey as a Project Worker given to the county for a time by the Irish Churches Peace Project. Glenn began by bringing the local clergy together, something which had

already been happening, and very soon we had a meeting of invitees who represented the whole town community. At that meeting, these people had a chance to discuss the present state of our local community and what initiatives might be taken to develop it. The conversation went on into the summer, with the most tangible result yet being the group of young adults from across the community who meet regularly. That said, all of us contribute to the local community especially in what we do for our family life, and in the way we respect and befriend our neighbours. Please don't underestimate this. By doing this, you are making Enniskillen an even better place to which to come home, for those special occasions and especially for Christmas.

Monsignor Peter

A very happy Christmas to one and all. God bless from the priests of the parish: Father David, Father Raymond, Monsignor Peter and Father Joe.



Carved in Stone

I was born in Enniskillen in 1968. My parents, Pat and Eamonn had recently returned from Portadown to their native Fermanagh and, within two weeks of leaving hospital, I was christened in St Michael's, named after the Saint himself. First Communion, Confirmation and Marriage duly followed, there in the Church.

My earliest memory of being in St Michael's is one that had a profound influence on my future life, although it was many years later when I realised it. As a child, I remember staring up at the huge carved capitals on top of the sandstone columns during Mass and wondering how they had come to be and who, indeed, had managed to sculpt them. The angels playing their harps, and the profuse floral carvings had me captivated, when perhaps my attention should have been elsewhere.



It was not until I was in my late teens that I decided to embark on a life of stone carving. Following a successful Foundation year at Art College in Belfast, I went on to England to study Architectural Stone Carving.

Late one evening, in September 1996, whilst I was living in Manchester, I got a phone call from Tom Mullarkey, the architect in charge of the work in St Michael's at the time. He had been shown some photographs of my work, by Richard Tracey, and he asked me to come and join him and to do some of the stonework on the re-ordering of the church. It was a difficult offer to refuse, and Tom was genuinely enthusiastic about having someone from the parish undertake the stone carving. And I was equally willing.

It was a busy few months, a few additions were made to the plans, to incorporate my skills, but against all odds, we got the work completed in time for the opening Mass - I delivered the top piece of the Tabernacle at 5am that morning and the stone fixers were there waiting to put it in place!

Even now, 18 years on, I get great satisfaction when I see my work there, especially the carvings of the Madonna and Child (see front cover), the eagle on the ambo, and the Lamb at the base of the Tabernacle.

I have worked on many churches, cathedrals, landmark buildings and gravestones, and in many countries too but my best and my most memorable work is my first independent work - in St Michael's, Enniskillen.

Michael Hoy





St. Michael's Choir

Standing, (from left): Michael Boyle, Frank O'Reilly, Eddie Sharkey, Gerry O'Reilly, James Lunny, Claire Carney, John Illand, Jim McDonagh, Martin Donnelly, Shauna King, Jade Donnelly, Sinead Pitts, Robert Fitzpatrick, Caecilia Bastian and Aisling King.

Seated: Marie Doherty, Ethna Maguire, Chubby Fitzpatrick, Pauline Dunbar, Mary Boyle, Mary Morris, Sheila Colville and Roisin O'Connell

Gentleman Jim

This day in November we've gathered en masse
To pay tribute to a great man who alas
Has decided to call it a day in our choir
Though he's our lead tenor and sings with great fire.
He spans generations, yes he's sung it all
From Adeste Fideles to After the Ball.
We're losing the senior choir member in him
But we'll all remember our Gentleman Jim.

When a young Father Murphy founded the choir
To keep some of his flock well away from hell's fire
He hardly considered that sixty years hence
There'd be one of the starters still at the first fence.
And when old Tom Morris recruited the lad
He sang Gilbert and Sullivan and songs good and bad.
From McCormick to Lanza to psalm and to hymn
The rafters rang out to our Gentleman Jim.

An experienced tenor will be a great loss
(Though I'm a believer that basses are best)
But Paul don't you fret for as someone did say
Our Gentleman Jim has not gone away.
He'll be there to listen and he'll let you know
If you are conducting too fast or too slow.
He'll keep you in order, your sails he will trim
Our Mister St. Michael's that's Gentleman Jim.

He's seen choral directors come and then go
From Father Murphy to Monsignor Joe
Sister Florence to Helen and now we've got Paul
Yes he can say that he's seen it all
And when the bald heads of John Illand and he
Reflect the light over the choir gallery
There's more than reflected light shown to him
That St Michael's stalwart, our Gentleman Jim.

John Illand

Baptism Ceremony

Gathering at the door

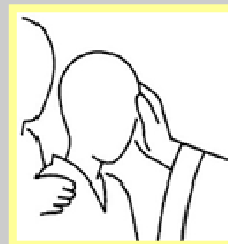
The Baptism ceremony usually begins at the door of the church. Just as this door is the means by which we enter the church building so Baptism is the door by which we enter the family of God, the Church of Christ on earth. Baptism is the doorway into mercy and entry into eternal life in Christ.

Naming of person to be baptised

Most relationships begin with us offering our name. The ceremony begins with the giving of the name for the one who is to be Baptised. This is a powerful statement that we understand how being Christian means being named by God. The naming ceremony teaches us that through our Baptism we are invited into a relationship with God. Godparents make a promise to help bring the child up in the practice of the Faith.

Signed with Cross over forehead

Once the naming ceremony is finished the person being baptized is claimed for Jesus by the sign of the Cross. They no longer belong to this world, they belong to the Kingdom of God.



Walk to front of the church.

Christians are a pilgrim people. Our life begins in God and will end in God. We are moving constantly towards the Kingdom. As a symbol of this we walk from the door of the church to the Altar, the place on earth where we meet Christ who is present in the Eucharist.



Readings & Prayer of the Faithful

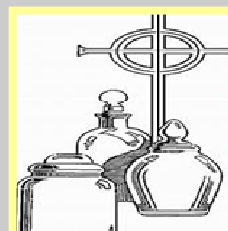
St Jerome said that if we wish to know the mind of God we must know the Scriptures. It is for these reasons that we include Readings from the Sacred Scriptures during *all* of our ceremonies.

Litany of the Saints

Having offered prayer as the Church on earth we then ask that our sisters and brothers, the Saints who are the Church in glory, will pray for us too.

Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing with the Oil of Catechumens

Catholic tradition teaches that we are all living temples of God's Holy Spirit. In the prayer of exorcism we ask that the Holy Spirit come and live in us so that anything unworthy of God may be wiped away.



Blessing of water

Life would be impossible without water. It is no accident therefore that we are told to make others members of the Church through Baptism. Christ uses something that life on earth depends on to teach us that He is necessary for having life in Heaven.

Baptismal ceremony

To emphasise that Baptism is not just a naming ceremony, or a nice social convention, or a cool way to welcome a new life into the world, parents are asked again if they are certain they want their child baptised. If the candidate is an adult, they are asked a second time if they truly wish to be baptized.

Once it is certain Baptism is desired the candidate has water poured over them three times, once in the name of the Father, then in the name of the Son and, finally, in the name of the Holy Spirit.



Anointing with Chrism

Once baptised, to emphasise that we are no longer citizens of earth but belong to the Kingdom of God, the newly baptised are anointed again. This time they are anointed with Chrism, the oil of priests and kings.



Clothing with the White Garment

In baptism we are reborn into our first innocence, the state we enjoyed before the fall of Adam & Eve. We become a new creation in Christ so are clothed in a spotless white garment.

Giving of Easter Light

We no longer walk in darkness but rejoice now in the light of Christ. We receive a lighted candle as a symbol of the truth that we walk in the light of Christ.



Blessing of ears and mouth

Baptised people are meant to listen first to the voice of God, to hear what God asks of them rather than following the changing fashions and fads of our world. It is only when we give ourselves over to listening to God in prayer that we can hope to speak well of God to others.



Invitation to pray together

We recognise our unity as a community, a family of God by offering together the prayer of children to their loving father when we recite the Lord's Prayer or 'Our Father'.

Blessing over the Parents.

Parenthood is a call to share in a very specific way in the creative and life giving activity of God. So we ask that God will bless parents with the gifts they need to fulfil well the task they have been given of caring for children. We then bless the whole congregation before proclaiming that the ceremony is over.

Fr. David



"One cannot separate Christ and the Church. The grace of Baptism gives us the joy of following Christ in and with the Church."

Katie in Zambia with Chmunga



I am 20 years old, a student at St Mary's University Belfast and a person with a lot to be grateful for.

From a young age my family brought me to Mass weekly and I became an altar server in P5. However, after 3 years I had to retire; I had simply outgrown the vestments. Instead I took on a new uniform and began at Mount Lourdes. Growing up in Enniskillen and attending Holy Trinity and Mount Lourdes I was very much part of the parish and all but one of the most important Masses in my life have been in St Michael's. The exception was in 2013, a Mass led by Papa Francisco, on none other than Copacabana Beach. The people of the parish contributed in countless ways to making that a possibility.

When I began the Pope John Paul II awards I didn't enjoy speaking in front of groups of people. Between Celia and Fr Martin someone volunteered me as a second reader; what I felt was a disaster became the first of many opportunities. I have now been an altar server, a reader and

a Eucharistic minister. I have helped with sacramental preparation, brought ashes to patients in hospital (for Ash Wednesday) and have been on pilgrimage to Taizé and Brazil.

In July I spent a month teaching in Zambia and living in an orphanage. I fell in love with those children. One of the orphans said to me, "Don't leave us Katie". When I explained that I had to, that it wasn't a matter of choice, he said, "It's OK, I'm going to be a pilot. And I'll fly Lance and Dan (his twin and another orphan) to Ireland and we can all live together in a house and I'll buy us cars". How do you reply to that from a child who struggles to read aged 10? I just tried to hold back the tears.

I returned to Brazil for September, but this time on my own, gaining experience teaching English and spending time in las favelas (shanty towns). You often hear how happy the children of deprived regions are, that they have smiles on their faces, and this was somewhat true, many children were smiling. But the sadness in their eyes is undeniable. It would be fair to say that witnessing such poverty broke my heart but the love of these people pieced it back together and left me stronger and more determined.

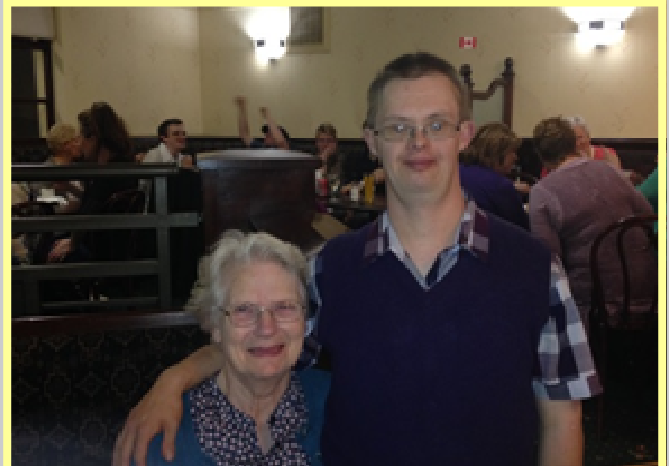
I have been both inspired and humbled by these experiences as well as astounded by the generosity of our parish of which I am proud to be a part. Thank you all.

Katie Masterson

Devenish Faith & Light Enniskillen



Dwayne and Pat Monaghan



Kitty and Noel Stewart

The seed of Faith & Light was sown back in 1968 when a French couple who had two profoundly handicapped children attempted to attend their Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes. Their request was rejected as they were told that their children would only upset others.

They did travel to Lourdes independently; however, the experience was not a good one. They were stared at in the streets and had to eat their food in their hotel bedroom. They returned home lonely and dejected.



Margaret Maguire & Fr. Brendan

They then met Jean Vanier and his friend Marie Helen Mattiau. They told them of their experience in Lourdes. Moved by the story Jean and Marie Helen told them not to worry and that they would organise a pilgrimage especially for our special people.

In order to prepare for the trip, people were asked to meet in groups of 15-30 people, made up of parents, special friends and young people. These groups were named Faith & Light groups. The first pilgrimage took place at Easter in 1971 and has continued every 10 years since. It is a wonderfully joyous time for Faith & Light communities from all over the world.

Devenish Faith & Light Enniskillen dates back to 1986. Michael Hand had returned from a L'Arche Retreat. He subsequently met a

local family whose first child had been born with special needs and felt that a local Faith & Light group was required. He set up a public meeting in the crypt, and from that the first core group was formed. Faith & Light meetings or "fiestas" are held monthly in the Scout Hall thanks to the generosity of St. Michaels Scouts. Our Community is one of the most successful in Ireland with approximately 100 members: parents, those with special needs, friends and carers. Fr. Brendan Gallagher has been the Chaplain from 1988, with the exception of a few years when his duties took him to other parishes outside Fermanagh. As Fr Brendan has recently taken a position with L'Arche in Canada, Monsignor Peter is the current Chaplain.

Each month we have a welcome; parents sharing, singing and fun, the celebration of Mass and a cup of tea, all within two hours. Our special people are always at the centre of everything we do and our community revolves around them. We are always looking for additional members of all ages, young people to help and friends. Please know that everyone is welcome.

(Please contact the Parish Office for more information.)



Clodagh Rooney & Fr. Brendan

Getting to know Monsignor Peter

I was born in Maguiresbridge in 1953. My mother lives there yet. I am the third son and middle child of a family of five. Both my sisters still live and work in Fermanagh; my brothers are retired in Co Down, having spent their working lives in Belfast.

I hadn't really thought of being a priest until my final year at school. One of the priests at St Michael's College, Father Peter Livingstone, mentioned it to me. I didn't believe him at first. Then I began to see priesthood as a life that would take all I could give it. That appealed to me. There is something about a life lived wholeheartedly for God and others.

Bishop Mulligan ordained me a priest in June 1979, together with Father Pat McHugh and Father Aodhán McCrystal, SMA. My first curacy was in Carrickmacross, Co Monaghan - Father David's hometown. I was one of three curates in the town at the time. (Today there is one.) Ardal O'Hanlon, who played Father Dougal in 'Father Ted', was growing up there at the time. I've always suspected that one of the characters in that series was based on one of ourselves. There was the usual busy round of things to do, including my first - and last - efforts at being a teacher (of RE) at the local secondary school.

Bishop Duffy asked to see me in summer 1985 "*to talk about my future*". I was surprised when he asked me to become Diocesan Adviser to Primary Schools, based at St Macartan's College. The RE programme was being revised at the time and he thought that the postgraduate theology degree that I had would give me the kind of background needed to explain and support it. So began my annual trek around the diocese, visiting each classroom, in each school, every year. There were some one hundred schools then. That number dwindled with time through amalgamations. Being in all those classrooms convinced me of one thing: the importance of home. Every time I asked the children to show me a page in their workbook, it was almost always a photograph or drawing of the family.

My path with Father Livingstone crossed again in 1988, when he died and I succeeded him as Curate in Clogher Parish, Co Tyrone. I remember anointing Father Woods in the Home there; he was the priest who baptised me. Times then were stressful. Visiting the schools necessitated crossing the border and there was no knowing how long that could take at the height of 'The Troubles'. I remember a mortar bomb exploding outside the curate's house and blowing in the downstairs windows on a miserable rainy December morning. For all that, I loved my time in Clogher Parish. I remember the people fondly and I remember the beautiful Clogher Valley. It was the longest appointment I've held to date.

My father died in the Erne Hospital in December 1989. His final illness was a sorry time. It brought home to me the value of the priest, especially at the time of the funeral.

After that time, Bishop Duffy asked me to be Director of One-Day Retreats at Lough Derg, in addition to the schools work. I clocked up nearly thirty thousand miles a year in those years. But in April 2000, I got an unexpected change. I was asked to work for the Irish Bishops Conference as a writer and production manager for the primary school RE programme that was then being revised for the third time. It's gratifying to see the programme still in use throughout Ireland though, some fifteen years on, it needs to be updated to include our modern culture.

In September 2006, I was appointed Parish Priest for the first time to the parish of Roslea, which included Smithboro, Co Monaghan: a cross border parish with two currencies, two different sets of marriage regulations and two different education system. I was with Father John Flanagan there. I remember the strong sense of community there and the good people.

All too soon I had to leave. When the then Bishop-Elect, Liam MacDaid, phoned me on a morning in July 2010, though he didn't specify what he wanted, I knew it meant a move. And so, here I am. Since coming here, I've found in myself a strong desire to do what I can to draw our community together, stronger than I knew was in me. In Dean Kenny Hall, particularly, in Rev Sam McGuffin (Methodist) and in Rev David Cupples (Presbyterian), I have found wonderful, compassionate fellow clergymen. History has not been kind to this part of the world. These men have given me a new sense of belonging that encourages me to do what I can to deepen the roots of a common community



Mgr. Peter, with Martin Kelly, at a recent Faith & Light Fiesta

'Life is Precious'- Donal Walsh's Message

Many people were touched, moved and inspired by the life and death of the young Kerry teenager, Donal Walsh, who died in May 2013, after a four year struggle with cancer. He was only 16 years of age. A huge crowd came out for his funeral in his native Tralee. Donal faced his illness and early death with courage. He was honest about himself and his future. *"I couldn't believe it; that all I had was 16 years here. Soon I began to pay attention to every detail going on in this town".* He added: *"I wanted to live, to play for Munster, to travel the world, to raise children and die when I'm one hundred years of age - not sixteen".* He began to appreciate life and so he also came to realise the awfulness of suicide; of young people ending their own lives when they had so much to live for: *"I feel angry that these people choose to take their lives, to ruin their families and to leave behind a mess that no one can clean up. Yet, I am here with no choice, trying as best I can to prepare my family and friends for what is about to come and leave as little mess as possible."*



Donal Walsh: 1997 - 2013

Donal spoke openly about his faith: *"As a family, we went to Lourdes. While I was there I didn't experience much healing but I went to Confession and met a priest from South Africa. I asked him why God could give such an illness to young infants (in Crumlin Hospital for Sick Children) who have not had a life".* His reply gave me great comfort: *"We are not in this life for answers"*.

In April 2013, Donal made a powerful plea to those thinking seriously about suicide to think differently about their lives. He believed his short life could be a sign of hope for others. *"Please, as a sixteen year old who has no say in his death sentence, who has no choice in the pain he is about to cause and who would take any chance at even a few more months on this planet, appreciate what you have, know that there are always other options"* was his plea to those who were feeling depressed.

When we listen (really listen with our hearts) to the Word of God, we are moved and inspired to become who we are meant to be as disciples of Jesus. Donal Walsh was and is special to many people because of his courage, honesty, wisdom and maturity. He is an example to all of us of someone who was touched moved and inspired by the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It was Jesus who gave him the courage to face his early death and to make the plea that life is very precious. His father has written an account of his son's life in a bestselling book. 'Donal's Mountain - How One Son Inspired a Nation' by Fionnbar Walsh is available in all bookshops.

Christmas is about recognising that life is precious and sacred - and should be cherished and protected at all costs. We Catholics should never accept a culture of death and violence - to oneself or others.

Fr. Joe

(Another recently published book, by Fermanagh priest, Fr. Brendan McManus S.J., deals with the difficult subject of suicide. Entitled 'Redemption Road', Grieving on the Camino', the author talks openly about how he was deeply affected by his own brother's suicide.)

St Michael's Parish

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"On this night, let us share the joy of the Gospel. God loves us. He so loves us that he gave us his son to be our brother, to be light in our darkness. To us the Lord repeats, 'Do not be afraid,' ... And I, too, repeat, do not be afraid."

Pope Francis, Christmas 2013