

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

ENNISKILLEN

LISBELLAW



Volume 1, Issue 10

NEWSLETTER

December 2016

There is a lot to be thankful for in a parish like this. The recent parish mission is a good example. Many people worked together to bring about a wonderful experience. I am particularly thankful to my brother priests: Father Joe, who provided the inspiration and drive, and Father Raymond, who (as always) kept careful watch on so many of the details necessary to make this happen. The same thanks goes to the Parish Mission Organising Group, the Parish Pastoral Council, those who saw to the catering, the other volunteers, the musicians, the local schools, teachers, and young people, But above all, thanks to the people of the parish (and beyond) who attended and took part. When we turn up we make the space that welcomes and includes others. That is the parish in action. It was the same for the Parish Dance. When the preparation for the Dance had been so good, it was gratifying to see so many turning up and bringing the night to life.

The newly-refurbished Parish Centre came into its own during the Mission. It had been out of action for a long time, during the installation of the lift and the general upgrade of facilities: within three weeks of re-opening, there had been some forty meetings there. It remains a busy place. We also experienced warm hospitality there both in the food and, more especially, in the conversation.

For me, last September's reduction in clergy has been a significant change and challenge. The parish had five resident priests in the 1970s. Now it has two priests in the town and one semi-retired priest in Lisbellaw. And this is happening when the parish census indicates that the number of parishioners has increased from 6400 to some 8500 people. We need to pray and think about vocations to the Priesthood. Somehow we still seem to assume that priests are widely available. They are not. What has happened here is set to happen elsewhere too as our clergy get older. Against this, I look forward to welcoming a permanent Deacon to the parish ministry team: Martin Donnelly from the parish here will have completed his training by July 2018. It's also great to have Sr Rosa on our parish team. You'll see her interesting article in this issue.

May I thank all the Parish Schools, the Parish Pastoral Council, the Parish Office, the Parish Shop and the various Parish Ministry Groups for the great service they continue to give. May I appeal to all parishioners to complete a Parish Census form (available at the back of the church). If you are a taxpayer, please consider contacting the parish office to give the parish the benefit of your *Gift Aid*. And please consider joining the Parish Draw. Every amount helps!

God's blessing for a peaceful and a wholesome Christmas from the priests to the people home for Christmas, to all who read this over the Internet, and to the people and the Sisters of the Parish!



"A very happy Christmas to everyone: God bless you one and all"- Father Raymond, Monsignor Peter and Father Joe



"Let us open our hearts to receive the grace of this day, which is Christ himself. Jesus is the radiant 'Day' which has dawned on the horizon of humanity. A day of mercy in which God our Father has revealed his great tenderness to the entire world. A day of light, which dispels the darkness of fear and anxiety. A day of peace, which makes for encounter, dialogue and, above all, reconciliation. A day of joy: a 'great joy' for the poor, the lowly and for all the people. (cf. Lk 2:10)

On this day, Jesus, the Saviour is born of the Virgin Mary. The crib makes us see the 'sign' which God has given us: 'a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger' (Lk 2:12). Like the shepherds of Bethlehem, may we too set out to see this sign, this event which is renewed yearly in the Church. With the shepherds, let us bow down before the lamb, let us worship God's goodness made flesh, and let us allow tears of repentance to fill our eyes and cleanse our hearts. This is something we all need!"

Getting to Know: Reverend David Cupples - man of faith and conviction and fan of ABBA

“Reverend David Cupples is the Minister of Enniskillen Presbyterian Church since September 1987. When I asked him to do this interview for our St Michael’s Parish Newsletter he did not hesitate. It is an interesting insight into his Faith and also into the man himself and his interests. Thank you, David, for sharing with us.” **Fr Joseph McVeigh**

Where were you born and reared? Banbridge, Co Down. We lived on a council estate.

Schools? Abercorn Primary and Banbridge Academy.

What career did you want to follow? I realised when choosing O level subjects at age 15 that what had always been in my heart was the desire to be a preacher

Many in your family? I grew up with my mum, dad and sister, Eleanor, who is 8 years older. Today I am married to Rosemary, my wife of 22 years, and we have two children; Ellen aged 20 and Peter aged 15.

Was it a religious family? We went to church twice on a Sunday. Dad was the organist and mum and Eleanor sang in the choir. My mother placed her faith in Christ for salvation in 1960 at the age of 44 and my father on the eve of major surgery in October 1977 at the age of 64.

When did you come to Enniskillen? September 1987.

Where were you before that? I served as Assistant Minister in 1st Bangor Presbyterian from September 1983.

When and why did you become a minister? Ordained in January 1985, I had been taking services and preaching in Presbyterian churches since 1979 at the age of 22. From young adulthood I have had a burning and unquenchable desire to preach the Word of God and see the church built up to fulfil God’s purposes in the world as a witness to Christ.

What is important to you about your church? The church is a community of people who believe, live and share the gospel of Christ in word and deed. So the central thing for me in church life is encountering the living Lord Jesus Christ through the preaching of the gospel i.e. the message of the Scriptures. When the Spirit is at work this will produce a community who love God, love each other deeply and love their neighbour. The gospel is the seed and love to God and neighbour is the fruit.

What religious person inspired or inspires you? None of the names would mean anything to your readers but I have been greatly influenced by wonderful Christians whom I have known personally, great preachers and leaders whom I have met e.g. at conferences, and also by the giants of faith from church history whose books or biographies I have read e.g. Augustine, Luther, Calvin, Charles Spurgeon.

What do you enjoy about working as a minister in the church? Studying and preaching the Scriptures, seeing people grow in their knowledge of God, working as a team with my elders, getting close to people in their problems. In the Presbyterian system elders share with me in the pastoral oversight of the congregation.

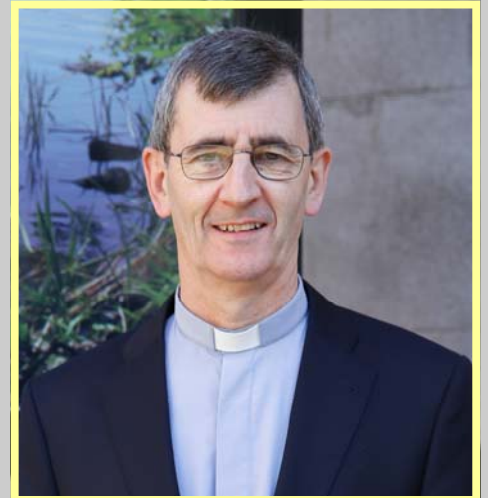
What do you think about church relations in Enniskillen? There is more respect and better communication, personal friendships among church leaders are modelling a better way; but basic doctrinal differences will always limit the extent to which there will be partnership in worship, ministry and mission. We have to pray for continual renewal and reform in all the churches by the gospel and the power of the Holy Spirit.

What do you think of Pope Francis? I like his kindly, human approach and admire his obvious compassion for the poor and marginalised. His attempts to reduce bureaucracy and challenge tradition in the Vatican are bold and courageous. I agree with his call for simplicity in preaching but if I limited my homilies to eight minutes, as he advises, my congregation would go home hungry.

What is good about the Catholic Church – in your view? Its catholicity! If Protestants had more of a sense of there being one, holy, catholic and apostolic church there would be fewer divisions and a better attitude to minor differences of belief and practice.

Are you interested in politics, local/global? Not deeply. I am not a member of any political party. My interest focuses on freedom of religion across the world.

What is your attitude to local politics? History has shaped us and made us prisoners and I suppose the national question will never finally go away. But slowly there is an attitude of politicians seeking to co-operate for the common good, which is what I think the purpose of politics is. Politics is simply how we try to organise love of neighbour at the level of how society is governed. We need people in politics who want to serve the whole community. Our problems are more than political. All political programmes that aim at the common good and reject violence are legitimate; but people’s hearts and moral vision need to be changed and only Christ’s love can do that. Ireland today faces new problems. We are losing the knowledge of God and that will bring a disaster such as we have never known before.



How do you see the peace process progressing? I would prefer not to make a political comment as such. But Jesus pronounced a blessing on the peace-makers and I believe everyone should try to work this out at every level of their lives, private and public. But true reconciliation is achieved not by begrudging compromises but by radical repentance, forgiveness and a deep commitment to seeking the good of all.

What can the main churches do to make peace permanent? Pray, highlight issues of common concern which all politicians and the whole community should address, work together where possible and set an example of how to relate respectfully and maturely with those with whom we may differ.

What do you regard as the biggest and most urgent social problem in Fermanagh/in the north? Marriage and family breakdown is the root cause at a social level of most other social ills. Without security, discipline, stability, love and instruction, our society is degenerating into selfish chaos. But behind all this is an outright rejection of God. All our social problems are ultimately spiritual ones. A whole new vision is taking over of what it means to be human; it is based on secularism which I, of course, believe is untrue; a society based on falsehood must eventually collapse.

What do you think about climate change and caring for the earth? On the science I can't comment but we are stewards of God's earth entrusted to us to work with and entrust to coming generations. I am personally diligent about recycling, not wasting, careful disposal of waste. I also take personal steps to keep the area where I live free of litter.

Have you any pets? A golden cocker spaniel called 'Charlie.'

How do you relax? Walks, reading, playing piano, cinema, meals with friends, going to the gym. No all-absorbing hobby

Classical or Country and Western? Classical but I'm known for my renderings of Abba songs on the piano at church social functions!

Your favourite country outside Ireland? France – such beautiful countryside, buildings and villages

Favourite County in Ireland? Co Down, where the mountains of Mourne sweep down to the sea, and Castlewellan Forest Park, my favourite place in the world for a long walk. I also love the Wicklow Hills

What's your favourite book/film/song or music/prayer/Bible story? Book – War and peace, Tolstoy. Film – the Lord of the Rings trilogy. Song or music – I like some of the 70's pop music; in classical the music of Chopin, especially the 2nd piano concerto and in Christian music I love the modern hymns of Stuart Townend and Keith Getty. Prayer – we tend not to use written prayers but some of the Book of Common Prayer Collects deeply move me. Bible story – hard to say on my own journey in faith and in ministry. I have preached on the story of the raising of Lazarus in John Ch.11 more than any other Bible passage. It gives us profound insights into why Jesus came into this world and what it really means to know God.

Volunteering with Trócaire - *Bridie Duffy*

When, in 2011, I saw a notice in the parish bulletin that Trócaire was looking for volunteers, I couldn't believe my luck: just retired, I was looking for something interesting and useful to do. This seemed like the perfect opportunity. Now, five and a bit years later, I'm still volunteering with Trócaire and still enjoying every minute of it. I've been involved in such a range of different things, from school talks and representing Trócaire at cheque presentations to organising fundraising events and speaking at Masses. I even got to feature on the iconic Trócaire box for Lent 2016!

In 2012 I got a chance to visit Trócaire projects in India. Seeing first-hand the extreme poverty there and how Trócaire was helping was an amazing experience and one that made me even more determined to continue my volunteering. Today when I speak at Masses I still talk to people about my India experience, to show them that their support for Trócaire really does make a difference.

One of my favourite ways to support Trócaire is by selling Trócaire Gifts for Christmas. These are a great alternative present and the money raised makes lasting changes in people's lives. I sell them in the parish with the help of other volunteers and with the invaluable support of Mons. O'Reilly and Fr Raymond. Over recent years more and more people have been buying the gifts so it feels like a real parish community effort to support Trócaire's work. I'll be selling them again this year so keep an eye out in the bulletin for details.

Volunteering for Trócaire has given me the chance to put my faith into action. I have learned more about global issues and it has pushed me to do things I wouldn't have thought I was capable of. I've also made some really great friends along the way. I would encourage anyone interested in volunteering with Trócaire to just give it a go - whatever time you have, a little or a lot, can still make a difference.

Interested in volunteering? Contact volunteering@trocaire.org or Freephone 0800 912 1200, give me a call directly at: 0773 950 4657 or email me at duffybridget@gmail.com



Bridie Duffy, Fr Martin O'Hagan and Pat McQuaid at the Lenten Trocaire launch

Holy Trinity Primary and Nursery School

Serving the Parish and Supported by the Parish



Holy Trinity is a Catholic Primary and Nursery School of St Michael's Parish. A central part of the Enniskillen community, it is the parish in action.

As a Catholic school, Holy Trinity strives to develop each child to their full potential in a community where everyone is valued, nurtured and cherished and where the self-esteem and dignity of everyone is promoted. Since Catholic Schools are inclusive, so are we. We have pupils from some fifteen different countries and six different faith traditions. We celebrate our diversity. It helps develop all the children in our school.

As a school community, our common goal is to be “*an inclusive learning community striving to meet the needs of all*”. Our ethos is strongly child-centred and permeates all areas of school life. We make the pastoral care of each individual child central to everything we do. So we were especially delighted, after the inspection last May, when the *Education and Training Inspectorate* recently named the pastoral care in Holy Trinity as “*outstanding*”. Our pastoral care is delivered through a range of initiatives including: a PATHS (Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies) Programme for the children, a Student Council, a Pupil-Buddy System, a School Counselling Programme and, most importantly, through the relationships we develop with our children, their families and the local community.

To provide the best for those we serve in the parish, we work closely with our parents and other groups to create a community of support for the children. Links are developed through parent meetings, information evenings, newsletters, the school website, monthly assemblies, sacramental meetings, Christmas events, parents' events and Catholic Schools Week. Strong partnerships between the school and other parish groups have developed over the years. We work closely with St Michael's Scouts and the Devenish Partnership Forum to develop learning opportunities for our children. Coaches from parish sports clubs, including Enniskillen Gaels, support the children in their physical activity. The children also take an active role in parish life in a range of ways. Each year in St Michael's Church we have our Carol Service at Christmas and a dramatisation of the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday. We visit the local Residential Care Homes. Some classes come along to the 10am Morning Mass each week. We provide some singing in the South West Acute Hospital and we visit areas of interest in Enniskillen, including the Library and Museum, to find out more about our local community.

The school also raises funds for a number of local community groups including Saint Vincent de Paul, the South West Acute Hospital, Friends of the Cancer Centre and the Aisling Centre. Holy Trinity works closely with our other local schools and is the lead school in the parish primary transition project with St Fanchea's, St Michael's, St Joseph's and Mount Lourdes.

We believe that children should grow up with a strong sense of their home community and should have an opportunity to give something back to the community that supports them in their formative years. Our school draws on the gifts, talents and energy of the local community to support the children so that they grow into individuals who will continue to give back to the home community that serves them so well.

If you would like to give some time to supporting our children you can contact the principal, Brian Treacy, at the school on (028) 6632 4959. For more information visit the school website www.holytrinityps.com.



Among the 750 pupils of Holy Trinity are children from Bulgaria, China, England, Hungary, India, Latvia, Lithuania, Malaysia, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Slovakia and Spain.

Those were the Days

My earliest memories of Enniskillen date from late 1931 while our family were living in Bundoran during the reconstruction of our house in Belmore Street. I recall visits to Enniskillen then and being left with my aunt and uncle in Darling Street. People spoke of the fine spring of the following year and the Eucharistic Congress was a great occasion. We had a Papal flag and my parents went to the Phoenix Park. The streets were bedecked with bunting and flags and there were numerous shrines and statues in house windows. Processions were held and hymns and prayers were led by the locals. In 1932 also, the area celebrated the victory of



Michael Donnelly with sons Packie, Kevin and John

Fianna Fáil in the then Free State and I heard of confrontations with the police. We left Bundoran in Spring 1933. My brother now attended the Convent Primary and I joined later in the Autumn - Sr Catherine's Babies class. We sat on bench desks, wrote and drew on slates and older boys dusted the high pressure heating pipes each morning. When the priest, usually Mgr. Tierney, called we stood up and said "*cead mile failte don scoile seo*". We also answered the roll call with "*annseo*" so Irish wasn't unknown. The tall windows had high cills and the walls were used as blackboards for Sr Catherine's skilled drawing. Funerals often passed close to the windows and we stood up and said "*my Jesus mercy*". High infants was the charge of Sr Veronica, a wee cross patch who had a soft spot for birds which she fed on the cill which was above her eye-level. It was an eventful year; Gerry Farrell and I were recruited to appear in a Mt Lourdes production as two boy princes and, though we had no active role, the girls collected us for every rehearsal and made a fuss of us. My grandfather died and my cousin Kathleen brought John and me away from school for a few days and we were fitted with black Oxford overcoats, ties, shoes and socks for the funeral. Mourning was a major culture then. A girl from school was drowned off Market Street and I remember seeing, from the school yard, the boats trawling for her body for days. Sr Veronica had a Christmas tree with small gifts to be selected and I picked a small miniature violin. She also had a band which marched to the gate and back to finalize the year. Each day concluded with prayers at the Lourdes Grotto.

Sister Paula's 3rd class had an influx of girls from Abbey Street. Boys and girls were separated so we weren't compelled to knit and sew with the girls. Then we were introduced to Irish dancing by Miss McCaffrey. We became aware of wars; "*Will you come to Abyssinia will you come, bring your own cup and saucer and a bun*". Each year terminated with a written exam and all, including the babies, were subjected to a religious oral exam by a visiting priest, a Fr Finnegan.



**Michael's grandfather, John Donnelly
(1845 - 1935)**

Boys proceeded to 3rd class in the Presentation Brothers' school under Brother Killian. There was an earlier class group under Master O'Neill in which my neighbour, Kevin Lunny, started. (Many years later he would greet him at a funeral of Mrs Falconer by which time he was a centurion.) The classes had a spread of age groups. First Communion and Confirmation were for 7-year olds. I was in a group where most of the class were already confirmed. I was confirmed by Bishop McKenna and teachers were common sponsors for all the children. I had made my First Communion a week earlier in Mt. Argus at my uncle's first Mass.

The Spanish Civil War had a noticeable effect on Enniskillen. General O'Duffy came to recruit, staying in the Royal Hotel and perhaps in a house in Eden Street. He recruited a curate, Fr. O'Daly, who may have been instrumental in others joining, as volunteers included Tom Mackel and Jim Scallon, both of whom had helped Fr O'Daly in the planting scheme at the Gaelic Field. Fr. O'Daly was notably unpunctual and how he managed army discipline was surprising; he was so unconcerned when P.P. in Trillick that parishioners went to Mass in Fintona. However, he was a more popular man than his superior in the Irish group in Spain and became chief chaplain. When he visited the school he generally spoke on topics of personal interest - he advised that salt and soot were useful substitutes for toothpaste. He was also effective in getting the local group back to Fermanagh. All nine landed in Dublin

without the fare home and he arranged their tickets. They arrived home broke but to a parade led by the Grattan Band. Not all who volunteered had made it to Spain; my cousin Jackie and his friend Johnnie Dolan were intercepted at the station by their families who had learned of their plans. On returning, only Jim Scallon got his job back and Charlie Campling, Rocket Rogers and Jack Gallagher again went to war - against their former allies.

Archdeacon Tierney arrived as P.P. in 1931. His immediate disposal, for £2,000, to the Bank of Ireland of a site intended for a parish hall was not well received. He was a political figure who, though he wasn't given to inflammatory speeches, controlled the local nationalists. He was a notable diver who regularly dived from the top of Rogey in Bundoran. Fr Meagan, the 1st curate, was a hearty pleasant man, probably the most popular confessor. He spent the summers, from June to August 15th, in Lough Derg but there were always local priests on holiday here at those times to help with Masses. Fr Dignam was a very long serving curate who became attached to the town and I understand he was happier here than later as P.P. in Clogher. He wore an overcoat from his ordination for all of his 25 years in Enniskillen.

There were two Sunday Masses, 8:00am and 11:30am, with a door collection on entering and one for St Vincent de Paul at the end. I think the Lisbellaw and Cradien churches had Masses at 10:00am and 11:00am on Sundays only, except for occasional requiems. There were evening devotions of rosary and benediction on Sunday and on weekdays in May and October. A men's confraternity had rosary and benediction every Monday at 8:00pm. That continued until Vatican II. However, the woman's Sacred Heart Sodality, which met monthly on the first Tuesday and in my early altar boy years packed the church, was discontinued before the war ended.

The Pulpit was used for sermons and the rosary. The original timber had been replaced with Irish marble by the Men's Confraternity in celebration of the Silver Jubilee. Every word was heard, especially during the yearly mission. At first this was for just one week when the seating was expanded with benches taken from the crypt area by altar boys. When men's and women's weeks were introduced by Mgr. Gannon accommodation was adequate. Killisher had the only local midnight Mass at Christmas and the Easter, Lent and Advent seasons were very different from today. Priests would say three consecutive Masses on All Souls Day and at Christmas. St Patrick's Day was low key. Corpus Christie was celebrated with a procession in the Convent grounds, finishing at the Grotto. The Blessed Sacrament was borne in a monstrance under a canopy, carried by the Presentation Brothers in white cloaks, with the choir and girls' choir and Children of Mary providing music and colour and the public following, reciting prayers, under the gaze of local Protestants from Fort Hill. Altar boy thurifers were necessary and the seniors got that duty. On All Souls Night everyone went to the church and graveyard to seek indulgences. Ash Wednesday is the least changed feature. Everyone wore their badge of identity including those confined to the house. Taw Love carried ashes home to all his neighbours, including Alice Shannon who opened the window and stuck her head out. Weddings did not require any special church arrangements. Most had special music and singers. Some went to side altars after morning Mass. Easter ceremonies started with Tenebrae on Spy Wednesday. Holy Thursday was not markedly different except that there was only one Mass. Good Friday had a Missa Sicca and the unveiling of the cross, which, like all statues, was veiled in purple from Passion Sunday, with the kissing of the crucifix the main event. The sense of mourning was profound and many people observed total silence until 3:00pm. The ceremonies of Holy Saturday in those days took place in the morning from 7:00am, starting with the Pascal fire. The organist, Tommy Maguire, was often the only one to give the responses at first. It was a big altar boy day, the main roles being eagerly sought. Mickey Love was present in the seats offering his services years after his boyhood. Joe Hallett and Leo McGandy got to be MC's and only Leo's marriage ended his term of office. At the Gloria the bells sounded for the first time in a fortnight. Jimmy Muncey unveiled the statues with a long pole and Lent ended. My own best memory is of Fr Mulligan, (later Bishop), and Mgr. Flanagan rendering the passion in accomplished plain chant.

Altar boys were a permanent presence on all church activities, four for Sunday masses and two for weekdays. They were on duty for devotions and all special occasions. Latin Masses required Latin responses and boys lit and extinguished candles, attended with cruets and cleansing, moved the Mass book, rang the consecration bell, held communion plates, covered and uncovered the altar rails, lit and swung thuribles, collected offerings at funerals and held candles and holy water for baptism and churching. Only at confessional and Extreme Unction services were they absent. They provided their own white surplices and slippers and the black everyday soutanes; the red ones for big days were church property. They were trained and regulated for everyday duty in school and special arrangements were normally managed by the church, principally by the sexton. They were rewarded with a day off school in the Autumn and those lucky to serve at funerals and weddings benefitted financially. Visiting priests saying private Masses were also a source of reward. Local boys were recruited for the Lough Derg season and on my first visit I was enlisted to serve by Fr. Meighan.

The sexton's house was the end one adjoining Peg O the Bulls Lane and the other houses in the terrace were church properties. The presbytery had three curates' quarters and a basement kitchen and rooms for housekeepers as well as a dining room and reception parlour. The adjoining house had Mrs Maguire's baby shop on the ground floor and, on two upper floors, parochial rooms used by a variety of church and other bodies, including the Nationalist Party. There were parish houses also at Cradien, occupied by McKerveys who looked after the church, and teachers' houses at Tattygar in Lisbellaw and Mullanaska, occupied by the Corrigan and Brennan families. St Michael's primary school occupied two floors of what was then an old grain store. The basement housed the St Michael's Reading Rooms, a men's club with two billiard tables, an office, a meeting room and several tables and seats for spectators and card players as well as some shelves for books. The Brothers' secondary school, which shared the yard, had a science room and a large and small class

room for five classes. The Brothers' monastery, on the first floor, had an independent hallway and basement kitchen. There were two bicycle and storage outhouses, one of which became a classroom shortly before the transition to the new college. Brother Bede was principal of the secondary school and monastery from my first memory until his death. (He died dramatically after receiving my brother Cosmos's new priest blessing in December 1957.) The primary school had several principals; Pascal, Claver, Cyril, and Boniface. Bro. Claver's boys learned to swim at the Weir's Bridge pool and won choir awards here and in Sligo. The secondary school played rugby at first and Bede had 7 out of 8 wins against Portora. Three of the last team took holy orders and one, Paddy Gillen, played in goals for the Gaels, Fermanagh and Ulster Gaelic teams and for Belfast Celtic and Fulham soccer clubs. The Brothers built their own monastery off Chanterhill Road



1936: Michael, in front, with, from left, Gerard (Fr Cosmos) Michael (father), Mary, Kevin, Mary (mother), Dympna and John (Fr Marius)

and the St Michael's premises was converted to a community centre. Mullnaskea and Tattygar were both 2-room schools initially. Ashwoods was a 1-room school house with two teachers in its later years. Dot Smith was the last principal there, with Maura Hegarty (Flanagan) as her assistant. The school was demolished in a road improvement scheme.

The nuns owned the convent schools and much of the adjoining land as well as outlying farmland. The parish owned the cemetery and some adjoining fields, presumably for any necessary extension of the cemetery. This never happened and when plots ran out people were directed to the public cemetery at Breandrum which had a reserved area for Catholics. As Breandrum was in the Fermanagh District Council area the town's people paid twice that of the rural residents for plots. The first Catholic buried there was a neighbour from Belmore street, a Mr Burns who has many family successors there now. The first priest was Mgr Gannon who opted for burial in Breandrum to encourage more parishioners. His successor, Dean Flanagan, is also buried there.

Monsignor Gannon's time was marked by much change and development in the parish. The church was extensively renovated both internally and externally. Replacing the total internal plaster involved extensive internal scaffolding. The Church remained in full daily and weekend use. External work to the entrance included work to the tympanum figures and all dressed masonry and some defective wall stone. The plaster work has survived most of the subsequent renovations as has the rather incongruous Celtic cross on the apex of the front gable. New intermediate schools, to serve several adjoining parishes, were built under his direction and he secured the site for the new St Michael's College, on behalf of the diocese, from land belonging to parishioners, the Adams and McGovern families. Cornagrade, then in Irvinestown parish as was the Workhouse, was developed and many from the town moved there. The plot reserved for replacing the boys' primary school was instrumental in having the parish boundary changed.

School sites were not grant aided and a percentage of the building costs had to be raised. A large funding operation was initiated, a parish draw and subscription list was begun and the Bazaar, which before the war had been a 1-night affair in the Mt Lourdes hall, was re-established as a week long event in the Townhall. It took place before Christmas and during the summer a carnival was held over two weeks with nightly dances or concerts in a marquee in the Broadmeadow. It opened with a parade through the town with floats competing for best in show awards, children's fancy dress and dancing. Summer was carnival time everywhere then with the Graan also having its own. Other occasional events took place; whist drives, jumble sales, raffles and draws multiplied for a while and a formal parish ball came into being, a permitted past midnight affair in an era of restriction. The Knights' Ball, the other major social event, ran its course for a few more years. This release of energy came after the war when darkness had been the order and double summertime had lengthened the working days. (Rural areas did not advance the clock which may have suited milking time but was out of step with church services.) The war years saw social events organised to entertain the many servicemen, including Sunday cinema for soldiers and their girls. Modest weddings were more frequent and many locals left in uniform whilst many migrant workers from the south arrived for a while, or permanently in some cases. The 10:00am Sunday mass was introduced to serve American military and the new accent of the chaplain was often heard from the pulpit. Many priests, who had prepared for overseas missions, were helping in home parishes while those abroad were unable to return for the

duration. I don't know how their missions and charities coped without the financial help which was cut off by the war. New clergy brought changes. Fr John McKenna established the Catholic Boys Scouts and Girl Guides both here and in other parts of the county. Fr McGuinness was much exercised by the Itinerant settlement movement and Fr Murphy reorganised the choir and children's choir, giving rise to a yearly pantomime in the new Community Centre which also catered for youth, badminton and bridge clubs. The many religious of the time were not often unoccupied.

A major figure in the church was the organist, Tommy Maguire, who was also the choirmaster. The choir performed at 11:30am Sunday Mass, evening devotions and all of the special occasions. Most hymns were in Latin. The organ loft was smaller than as was the choir and the organ was hand pumped. (The Methodist church organ was powered by a water pump.) Tommy was self-taught and may have had cinema experience: he marched the congregation out to the strains of 'Kelly the boy from Killane' or the triumphal march from 'Aida'. Secular music was frowned on except at weddings. Choirs at devotions were informal - whoever turned up, - but singers like Miss Flanagan from Galligans, Mr. Kennedy from the Forthill and Charlie Hynes were regulars and often soloists. Church organs were serviced at intervals and the man from Meldrums would recruit a senior schoolboy to provide power. Approximately £10,000 was spent recommissioning the organ after the war but it needed to be rebuilt in recent years.

Although the Vincent de Paul Society and the Ladies of Charity ran some small events, the only parish functions I can recall in my youth were the bazaars in Mt. Lourdes Hall and a concert in the newly opened Regal cinema, featuring locals, singing, reciting and dancing, and some visiting performers. Tina McLarnon (Campling), Angela Mc Govern, Mary Timoney and Reasha Donnelly were seen with Hubert Valentine, a notable singer and teacher from Dublin, who may have had local connections. He was still singing in Mt. Argus in his nineties. My own favourite was wee Willy Doherty from Derry, a comedian whose clerical son inherited his comic stage gifts. The Graan concert in later years was a more professional affair, run by the Belfast Superoptimists at the end of their summer stint in Bundoran, at which Joe Locke (McLoughlin), a big star with local connections appeared on occasion and boxer Rinty Monaghan was a constant feature.

The early resentment of diocesan clergy to the Graan was still noticeable up to the election of Bishop O'Callaghan from Armagh diocese. My father, who had built the church and monastery on the former Cassidy estate, was engaged in extending the accommodation which opened in 1937. My grandfather Boyland was foreman and I was much interested



Michael and his late wife, Theresa

in the work, preparation for which involved his early breakfast at 6:00am with eggs boiled in the electric kettle - including one for me on occasions. On one occasion I escaped harm when the Graan dogs arrived; the Alsatian went for me but the Airedale saw him off. There was a considerable farm at the Graan which the novices helped to run and, in my brother Marius's year there, led to a tragic drowning when they went to Lough Erne for a swim after work. The monastery attracted considerable support from a wide area with such notable figures as Fr. Ignatius, a great preacher and missionary whose stammer never affected his public utterances. Feast days of the patrons, St. Gabriel and Paul of the Cross, were honoured with processions in the grounds and the arrival of new saints, Gemma Galgani, Vincent Strombi, and Maria Goretti in particular and then Fr. Charles of Mt Argus, kept devotions on a high note.

Like the Graan, the churches at Lisbellaw and Cradien had galleries for the public and the choir with a more modest harmonium in lieu of an organ. Without a resident priest, both areas were actively served by laity and supported each other's events. Tattygar had its own bazaar and Mullnaskea sports, a north county event, was administered from the school although competitions were outdoor events. The then tiny band hall was in frequent use for parish and other interests, including concerts, visiting drama groups, local sketches, dances and card drives, My earliest memory is of Joe Rafferty as Kevin Barry and Matt Henderson as his jailer.

Indeed, those were the days.



Tish and Gerry Elliott received a Testimonium, on behalf of the pilgrims from the parish who travelled to Rome in May. Signed by Pope Francis, it acknowledges the Year of Mercy pilgrimage from St. Michael's Parish of Enniskillen.



Benefits of Parish Involvement

Pride in our local community and helping those in need: these are what come to mind when I think of St. Michael's Parish, with our energetic, welcoming and bustling parish life. Such things make it a joy to be engaged and active within the parish, as well as sharing our faith journey alongside others who can inspire us on that journey, give us new answers and, most importantly, make parish involvement genuinely enjoyable and fun. A turning point for me particularly was the visit of Queen Elizabeth II to Enniskillen and the consequential feel-good factor in the parish. Such cross-community work with the Protestant-based faiths had led me to the Ulster Project a year before. Having my eyes opened by witnessing at first-hand the benefits of co-operation and reconciliation over suspicion and hatred was gratifying. Seeing the Queen's visit only reinforced that. Beforehand I had done some Church activities such as being a part of the Second Readers' Rota. Such things seemed like a chore, but through that event, coupled with increased maturity, I realised the parish doesn't end at the Church doors. In fact there is a vibrant scene with a whole host of social activities involved.

These events, along with encouragement from friends, led me to participate in the John Paul II Awards. This involves completing Church-based and social-based activities once a week for between 8 and 20 weeks, depending on whether you wish to gain a Bronze, Silver or Gold Award. This opened up a whole host of opportunities to allow me to give back to the parish that had given me chances such as the Ulster Project. Perhaps the most satisfying aspect of the Award for me was the Lourdes pilgrimage, when I went along with other youth pilgrims to assist elderly and disabled diocesan members. Aiding them on their faith journey, alongside their joy at the little things, kicked home an appreciation of what I have and reinforced my personal faith in such an awe-inspiring location.

The faith was important when my late father passed away 18 months ago, while the support of parishioners will never be forgotten by myself. So visible again was the unity present within the parish, as parishioners rallied to support those with deceased relatives. The relationship our family holds with the priests of the parish has led to a whole avenue of opportunities; from the interesting conversations from the African Missions with Fr. John Skinnader to being invited to meet President Michael D. Higgins when he came to St. Macartan's Cathedral last year. Writing this has made me appreciate the parish, recalling all the experiences it has opened up and provided. Something which means a lot and is a very positive aspect of my life that I hope can long continue.



Tarlach Russell

A Very Memorable Experience - *Gerry and Tish Elliott*

Rome and Assisi - our parish pilgrimage. Accompanied by Fr Raymond, we flew out from Dublin airport, where we had been joined by other pilgrims from Galway and Dublin. On arrival in Rome we were met by the Tour Operator, Ciaran, and Marella - both very knowledgeable, interesting and fluent in Italian. We visited the basilicas and landmarks such as the Trevi Fountain, the Coliseum and the Spanish Steps. One of the highlights was being in St Peter's Square on the Wednesday morning for the Papal Audience. A few of us also visited the Vatican Museums, including the Sistine Chapel - truly magnificent. Our last days were spent in Assisi, a beautiful, tranquil place to wind down for the journey home.



From the East to the West

Every time when I tell people I am the youngest of five in my family, people would raise their eyebrows. Yes I am very lucky to be born before the one child policy came into practice in China, otherwise no me in this world! I had very happy childhood, loved by my parents, three brothers and one sister. Both my parents are very devoted Christians with strong faith. For you to know me better I have to tell you about my Chinese historical background.

China is an atheist country about 1% Catholic. At school we were told religion is the opium of people's spirit. In order to pass my exam I had to follow their view. I was even called '*Christian devil*'. There was no church and no priests in my childhood. Christians were looked down as lower class, strangers and legitimate targets to be criticised or persecuted especially during culture revolution between 1960s-1970s. My parents had to go to re-education centre to be re-educated. My mother was sacked from teaching because she was a Christian. I was told at home to keep quiet going out as it can be dangerous. Many Christians did not dare to claim to be a Christian in public to avoid the discrimination. My grandfather suffered even more due to the '*anti-foreign religion*' uprising in his time. Christianity was regarded as a foreign religion, which was thought as a link to the foreign invasion of China. His entire family were martyred; he was the only survivor – an orphan. We are now proud to be the heirs of the martyrs; hopefully we can follow their example to be the witness of the Good News.

Chinese government was surprised Chinese Christians still existed after decades without a church. My religious upbringing is very much owing to my mother. She led and still leads prayer morning and evening, at home and in the church wherever she is. My mother used to say "*Mas*" (Mass prayer) on Sunday with our extended family together before we got a priest. I learnt most of my prayer at home from my mother. She used to tell us the stories from the Bible, and taught catechism to us and to other Christian children of the village. I don't know how many babies she baptised, or how many Christian weddings ceremony she organised in private setting. She would also accompany every dying Christian in my village. She was like woman "*priest*" when we did not have priest. She has been a great example for me to follow. Now we have young priest, she is "*retired*" from that ministry.

God's call is mysterious. My sister went to the convent before me and that might influenced me a bit. Anyway after many years later I joined her as a member of Sister of Providence. Unlike Religious in West we have no tradition to follow. We are in very early stage of development and are searching for our identity and the way forward. The church in China is in a very unique situation, we are struggling to face both inside and outside challenges, nevertheless thousands of churches have been built and thousands of priests have been ordained since 1990s. We practice our faith with limited freedom, but we are grateful for what we have, and we hope that with the guidance of the Holy Spirit we can go forward in confidence with the world wide Catholic church.



Sister Rosa



September 15th is Moon Festival in Sr. Rosa's home

"a big feast day for family reunion and celebration of the harvest time". This year it is "the pilgrimage day of our diocese. We climb the mountain, on the way say the 14 station of the cross, and have Mass at the top...thousands of pilgrims of my diocese will be there."

How a Chinese came to Enniskillen is in many people's mind? First, I was privileged to have the opportunity to study in Dublin where I studied theology, pastoral ministry and Spiritual accompaniment course. I also had my hospital chaplaincy training in the Mater hospital. When hospital chaplain in Enniskillen had vacancy I got invitation from Mgr Peter. Above all God has arranged things beyond my expectation. God has been step by step leading me here, a place I had never heard of. Now I am enjoying the pastoral ministry for God's people in the South West Acute hospital, I go to hospital and go around the wards to visit the patients. It is a privilege for me to be involved in this important ministry in St Michael's parish. I am very grateful for people's kindness in this parish and in hospital. I need your prayer for the ministry, God he has brought me to this stage, and I will continue to trust in His providence.

From The Reading Rooms to All Ireland Champion

I spent my early years in Westville Terrace, Enniskillen with my three brothers, Gerald, Eamon and Vincent (Shorty) and my two sisters, Maura and Maria, under the watchful eye of my father and mother, Paddy and Mary. I first went to school in The Convent of Mercy, for three years, where I was taught by nuns. Sister Concepta made a great impression on me. Her stern looks usually melted away into a pleasant and forgiving smile. When I was six my brother Gerald died. I missed him very much – he used to take me out fishing with him to the Weir's Bridge.

On moving to St. Michael's Primary I was greatly influenced by Brother Falconer who put me through the 11 plus. As a young lad I was an altar boy in St. Michael's and in my youth sang in the church choir. Fr Murphy was an inspiration in those days.

I then went across the yard to the grammar school for three years before we were relocated to the new school at Drumclay. My school pals included Paul O'Shea (Eden Street), Ben Keaveney (Queen Street), and, from Ederney, Joe McVeigh and Jim Mulligan, who both became priests. Jim was a late vocation and I attended his ordination ten years ago in London. From St. Michael's college I have fond memories of Fr Marron, Fr McElroy, Colum Gillespie and Mr McCarney., who once said to me "*McIntyre, if I say you were talking you were talking whether you were talking or not*" – just for the record I was talking.

When I left school I went to work in Scallons of Irvinestown but I became redundant quite soon and went to work in the civil service in England. Homesick, I lasted nine months there, returned and got a job in the N. Ireland Civil Service, in Belfast. During the next eight years, I did more studies, eventually getting a BA degree. Then, in 1979, I decided to get into teaching. My teacher training year in Derry was enjoyable; as well as perfecting my teaching skills I was honing my billiards and snooker skills. Indeed, these were also being sharpened in St. Michael's Reading Rooms and The Forester's Hall where I had first started playing. Names that come to mind are Barney McKeown, Frankie Hynes, Francie McAuley, Mickie Carney, Peter Kelly, Pa Adams, Martin Flynn, Cocum Adams, Kenny McGinn and, of course, my brother Eamon. I believe I was the only player to win both the Monsignor Gannon Confraternity Cup for billiards and the Dean Flanagan Cup for snooker in the same year. I was not an overwhelmingly popular winner of the snooker as practically all the council workers had backed Barney McKeown to beat me in the final.

My first job as a teacher was in Larne Technical College but after two years I secured a job in Newtownabbey Technical College where I remained for some twenty years. My working life had many ups and downs. The highlight, however, was when lecturing in educational psychology to student teachers in St Mary's Teacher Training College, Belfast.

My father passed away in 1980 and my mother in 1993, both after lengthy illnesses which were heart wrenching to watch. More recently I lost my two remaining brothers, Eamon and Vincent, both quite suddenly, but their legacies live on.

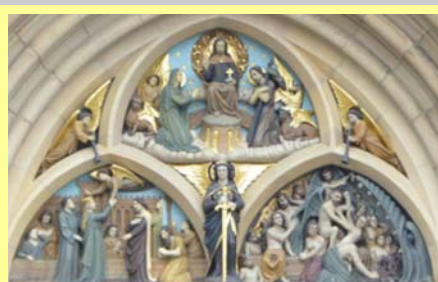
I married Ann in 1990 and our son Simon was born in 1991. He now works as a sports journalist for UTV. The most dramatic thing that has happened to me was in 1996 when I had a brain haemorrhage while on holiday in Florida. I managed to survive, thanks to skilled surgeons and the many prayers of my family and friends and those who prayed for me from St. Michael's parish. That event gave me a rude awakening in my faith for the better.

My hobby in billiards and snooker gave me much enjoyment over the years. I became Northern Ireland and All Ireland Billiards Champion in 1989 and 1991. These sports have taken me to such places as Malta, Romania, India, Bahrain and Singapore. I still get a buzz from playing. However, I had one of my most fulfilling experiences just last month when I visited Medjugorje after reading my good friend Fr Jim Mulligan's Book "*Medjugorje What's Happening?*" Well something happened to me there which I felt was special – perhaps sufficient to say I literally saw the 'light' and a miracle.

On final reflection I feel that the beliefs and values that I got from my family and faith gave me the strength and the substance to face life and its many challenges. My philosophy has always been – *Always do what makes you happy, Be with who makes you smile, Laugh as much as you breathe, Love as long as you live.*



John McIntyre



Tympanum - "*the semicircular area above the lintel of an arched entrance Often decorated with sculpture in the Romanesque and Gothic periods of architecture*".

Sometimes we fail to appreciate or even notice what is most familiar to us. Have you recently looked at the tympanum, wonderfully restored during last year's renovations to the front of our church - or at the other beautiful features of St Michael's?



SAINT MICHAEL'S CHURCH
Cromwell Estate

Reflection by Fr Joe

'Christ Will Come Again'. This statement of faith is a bit puzzling - even though we have been reciting it for years. We must distinguish Jesus and Christ. Jesus was the historical person we read about in the first three gospels. 'Christ'/Christus is the name his first disciples added because they saw him as 'The Anointed One' foretold by the Jewish prophets. He is the One we find in St John's gospel, the word made flesh, the one anointed by God to bring about the liberation and transformation of the world. Jesus is a name; Christ is a title.

I now take the proclamation of faith to mean that Christ will come again when the world is lined up with the vision for humanity as expressed by Jesus - when the spiritual and the material world come together and are seen in events and in people. The mystery of Christ is revealed when human beings live in awe and wonder - aware of their place in the whole Cosmos. So it does not mean that Jesus will be born

again but that the Christ of faith through those working for justice and peace in the world is revealed whenever and wherever people unite to overcome all that is unjust in this world. The New World that Jesus spoke about will be realised as people work together for the good of all. That would appear to be a long way off, given the state of the world today. But we are assured that violence is steadily decreasing in the world. It does not look like it when you see pictures of Aleppo . But there have been some amazing achievements and discoveries in our own times and people continue to work to bring about an end to injustice, war, poverty, global warming and climate change. Doctors work to heal the sick and scientists work to find cures for all kinds of diseases. We continue to believe and hope that Christ 'will come again'.

Christ will come again when we and many others, today, tomorrow and every other day, work to build God's reign of justice and peace on earth. That will take sacrifice, commitment, a lot of prayer and some hard work. Christ will come again when we discover how to live more simply so that others may simply live and when we put the plight of the poor first. **Thy** Will be done on Earth as it is in heaven!



Fr Joe McVeigh at The Martin Luther King Centre for Human Rights in Atlanta, Georgia

Pope Francis often challenges Catholics to live simpler lives so that others may simply live. In a recent article, Fr Richard Rohr quotes a Quaker teacher, Richard Foster, who suggests ten principles for expressing simplicity outwardly.

1. Buy things for their usefulness rather than their status or prestige.
2. Learn the difference between a real need and an addiction. Then find support and accountability to regain "sobriety," freedom from addiction.
3. Develop a habit of giving things away.
4. Avoid unnecessary and short-lived technological gadgets that promise to "save time".
5. Enjoy things without owning them. For example, take advantage of public libraries and parks.
6. Nurture awe and appreciation for nature. Spend more time outdoors!
7. Get out - and stay out - of debt.
8. Use plain, honest speech. Say what you mean and keep your commitments.
9. Reject anything that oppresses others. For example, buy Fair Trade products.
10. Seek God's kingdom of love and justice foremost. If anything distracts you from that purpose, let it go.

These suggestions are good advice for all of us as we approach the Season of Advent and Christmas. It has become so commercialised and paganised that it is up to you and to me to put Christ back into Christmas. We are now his instruments of peace and justice and good sense in a world gone mad on consumerism



St Michael's Parish (www.st-michaels.net)

Rt. Rev. Monsignor Peter O'Reilly, PP

Telephone : 028 6632 2075

Email: pp@st-michaels.net

Rev. Raymond Donnelly CC

Rev. Joseph McVeigh CC

Telephone: 028 6632 2075

Presbytery, 4 Darling Street. Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh

St Michael's Parish Centre

28 Church Street, Enniskillen

Open: Monday to Thursday: 9:30 – 4:30

Friday: 9.30 – 2.30

Tel: 028 6632 2075

Email: parishcentre@st-michaels.net