

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

ENNISKILLEN

LISBELLAW



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NEWSLETTER

July 2018



**Monsignor O'Reilly PP and Deacon
Martin Donnelly, after Martin's
ordination on Sunday June 17th 2018**

Welcome to our Summer Newsletter. The photograph below, and more within, show a Class group after this year's Confirmation, administered by our Diocesan Administrator, Monsignor McGuinness. Congratulations to all involved in Confirmation and First Holy Communion. Isn't it lovely to see the flourishing of family life that such days represent. Pope Francis is coming to Ireland this August for the World Meeting of Families, continuing the practice of his immediate predecessors to honour family life. Isn't it the central ministry of any parish. The things we do in the church buildings are all connected with family and community life. Baptism honours the new arrivals as part of God's plan. First Confession and First Communion nourishes and shapes family life: *'This is me, given up for you'* are the words of Jesus at the Last Supper but those same words could just as easily represent the ideal family and community life. Confirmation honours the action of God's Spirit in the growing person and in the community within which they are growing. Our funerals remind us that the *'bonds of love and affection that knit us together as one in life do not unravel in death.'*

I take the view that the main minister in our Parish is the Parish itself. I am one part of the range of ministry here. And we are blessed with the range of our Parish Ministry Groups here. As Parish Priest, I try to cultivate ministry for the present and the future; for example, the ordination of our new Parish Deacon, Martin Donnelly. When the possibility emerged some five years ago in my conversations with Martin, I could foresee the benefits that might come from it. It was a matter of raising the matter and making the arguments at diocesan level.

Leadership has its challenges. I smiled when I read the final paragraph of the old newspaper article, part of which is quoted on page 9. From Dr. William C Magee (Church of Ireland Rector of Enniskillen in 1860, later Archbishop of York), I thought I'd quote it here: *"To do the people (of Enniskillen) justice, they are very well disposed to follow any man who can make good his claim to lead them; but they will not be driven an inch."* I hope you have a lovely summer and enjoy the blessings of rest and recreation.



Looking Down and Thinking Back



Joe Sheils, presenting his library to the Linguistic University of Yerevan, the capital of Armenia.

In 2012, Joe was awarded the rank of Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters, France's highest cultural honour, in recognition of his work in promoting language learning and linguistic diversity throughout Europe. Having been appointed as an adviser to the Council of Europe in 1992, Joe became responsible for the Council's modern languages work. In the years that followed, his responsibilities took him into nearly every country in Europe. The work he was involved in with the Council of Europe has influenced language education throughout Europe and beyond.

It is 6 p.m. on the 30th of April 2018, a bright and surprisingly warm evening. I am attending the anniversary mass for my father and mother in the Convent chapel. Afterwards, my brothers and myself make the short walk up the hill to the family grave. Standing there in silence, thinking about our very dear parents Paddy and Mai, and our baby brother Anthony, my eyes are drawn to the panoramic view of the town stretching out below me. I try to pick out my childhood home in Cornagrade, off to the right. Cornagrade was a peaceful place with a great sense of community. When I look to the left, the neighbouring steeples of St Michael's Church and St Macartin's Cathedral seem to echo that peace, suggesting a sacred space of spiritual harmony and community.

Although St Michael's church didn't have a spire when I was a boy, it has always stood out in my memory as a key landmark, full of early memories from the times when Gabriel, Ciaran and I served there as altar boys. I remember well the plumes of perfumed smoke rising from (gently) swinging thuribles during High Mass, followed by the lingering smell of melting wax as we stretched up to extinguish the six tall candles on the High Altar. Even today, incense and candle wax can instantly transport me back to those times.

Turning from the view of the steeples below me, I look across with more than a tinge of nostalgia at the old building just outside the cemetery gate where so many had their first experience of school, a happy time thanks to wonderful nuns such as Sr Concepta and Sr Regina. In my childish innocence I may have believed that I could get away with mischief because Sr John-Bosco was my father's cousin. I'm sure, however, that mischief was not so well tolerated when we moved over to the Presentation Brothers for our primary education. A couple of steps takes me to their grave, and I pause in gratitude. I can put a face to most of the names inscribed on the gravestone, and I particularly remember Br Adrian and Br Faulkner as gifted teachers, ably assisted by excellent lay teachers such as Jack Keenan.

I turn around and walk back up the steep incline, past our family's grave, to a large cross bearing the inscription, "*Tully*". More mature readers will remember their extensive drapery shop at the corner of High Street and Middleton Street (where Topshop is located today). It was here that many suits and outfits were bought for First Communion and Confirmation and priests could be measured and fitted. Mrs Tully was a very kind and devout lady. Our dad spent 60 years in Tullys, and as readers of the interesting reminiscences published in "*Enniskillen in the rare ould times*" will have learned, each day before the shop opened the staff got down on their knees to say the rosary, usually led by my father.

The next grave is that of a lovely lady whom we used to visit as part of our Legion of Mary weekly duties, under the guidance of Jack Hoy. She lived just around the corner from our house, not far from where Gabriel, Ciaran and I spent many happy hours honing our football skills on what were then almost traffic-free roads or on the green space in front of *our* house, known to our pals as Sheils' field. They came to our Riverside 'grounds' from the surrounding streets and we played the more serious inter-street matches on the larger green space around the corner by the river, our schoolbags or jumpers serving as goalposts. No matter what stage our match had reached, at 5 pm sharp we had to call half-time and hide until the Estates Manager had driven by. If she saw us, we all got the red card.

Cornagrade was a great place in which to grow up, full of true friends and great neighbours. Leslie, who was a bell ringer in St. Macartin's Cathedral, and his wife Lily, lived next door to us. I will always be grateful for their great kindness as they watched out for our aging mother, all the while bearing their own family tragedies.

I walk down the hill and out through the gate, continuing past Mt Lourdes towards my old school, in effect retracing the steps of the wonderful French teacher who used to come from the convent school to teach us after normal school hours. I think ours was the first class to benefit from this 'entente cordiale' between the boys and girls schools, and I am indebted to Bridie Tannian for taking on the extra teaching load, and indeed for her patience with those of us who

would rather have been in the nearby handball alley than tackling French grammar in a sweaty classroom. But, we were in what had been called a 'grammar' school after all, and thanks to this initiative the French language was set to become an important element in my later life.

St. Michael's College soon moved to its new location – a much longer walk to school but well worth it for the many new facilities. I fully agree with previous contributors to the Parish Newsletter who have praised the many dedicated teachers who helped to open our minds and develop our creativity. I won't repeat all their names (or nicknames) but I have to give a special mention to two: our Latin teacher, Canon McIlroy, who managed to make a 'dead' language come alive, and remained a reference point in my own teaching career; and our A levels French teacher, Dr O'Shea, in his black graduation gown, who was guaranteed our full attention, not only because he was such a great teacher, but also because (as he was wont to remind us) he had at some point taught one of the Beatles.

Our school was a rich source of vocations and no doubt the example of dedicated priests in our school and parishes (gentle Fr. Edward Murphy immediately springs to mind) played a part in that. Those from around my time include Fr Joe of this parish, along with Fathers Brian, Alan, Dick, Sean, Pat (RIP) and Leo (RIP). I also took tentative steps in that direction, and while it was a valuable experience, I eventually followed a different path.

After studying French at university, I was a teacher in Co Offaly, where I also helped out in the local youth club, and developed a link with the parish youth club in Enniskillen. Some years later, I moved to Dublin to work in an institute concerned mainly with promotion of the Irish language. Although my work was concerned with foreign languages, daily communication was in Irish. Fortunately I was able to build on the solid foundations provided some fifteen years earlier by my committed Irish teachers, Fr Livingstone and Fr Marron.

The curriculum development projects at the institute eventually took me to Strasbourg to work with the Council of Europe which was developing European reference tools to improve standards in language learning and teaching. The Council's working languages are English and French and once again I was conscious of the debt I owed to my former French teachers in Enniskillen. My wife, Fionnuala, had been a French teacher too, and our three daughters acquired the language naturally through their schooling.

The Council of Europe has 47 member states, so our work required us to travel to many different regions of the continent, including central and eastern Europe. On those trips I sometimes managed to visit churches during Orthodox liturgical celebrations, in Russia, Serbia, Moldova, or Armenia. I was surprised at first by the lack of seats as people generally stood, often moving around, coming and going during the liturgy. I was struck by their intense devotion and the beautiful singing, while the ever-present incense awakened past memories.

The Council of Europe was set up to protect human rights, which include language rights. In addition to working with countries on modern language learning and teaching, we supported a number of member states in addressing tensions between different linguistic and cultural groups, particularly following the break-up of the Soviet Union. I experienced at first hand how language, like religion, can be a strong marker of identity, especially in multilingual contexts. Our role was to promote language rights, and to support language teachers in their work to help young people develop respect for the languages and cultures of others. I am grateful to Fermanagh District Council for inviting me to a celebration of this work at a memorable event in the Town Hall a few years ago.

My return to Ireland last year after twenty-five years abroad meant that for the first time in as many years I was able to be present at the blessing of the graves. As we recited the rosary, I briefly closed my eyes to concentrate on the familiar images and words. When I opened them again and looked down at row upon row of people standing beside their family graves, the scene brought to mind a childhood image of resurrection. Now, looking back, I can't help thinking that the image that came to me was a message about life - hope, recovery from illness and the beginning of a new life back in Ireland. As the ceremony ended I was warmly greeted and welcomed back by former neighbours and old friends. I feel that no matter where I live, Enniskillen will always be 'home'.



Joe and his brothers, Ciaran and Gabriel

Tattygar Primary School

As a Catholic school, we believe that there should be close links between the home, school and parish. We aim to provide a safe, secure and stimulating environment where everyone feels valued and respected. The school is committed to the widest and fullest education of all its pupils, in partnership with the home and Parish; encouraging each child to develop their full potential.

While Tattygar PS is one of the smaller schools in St Michael's parish, it is one with a huge school community; a small school where big things happen. We are a happy place, promoting a love of knowledge and a culture of learning. With Jesus as our guide, we strive to inspire all to be the best they can be. We are child-centred and inclusive and believe that everyone deserves to succeed in life. It is our aim, through the provision of a caring and effective Catholic education, to enable all pupils to attain their full potential academically, socially, physically and spiritually whilst catering for individual needs in a happy stimulating environment. As part of our weekly assembly we reinforce the school's seven central values:

- Community – We are stronger together;**
- Justice – We want what is right and fair;**
- Forgiveness – At times, we all need a fresh start;**
- Service – Here, we put each other first;**
- Thankfulness – We appreciate everything we have;**
- Perseverance – We never give up;**
- Compassion - We are kind.**

Pastoral care is central to the daily life of the school. It can be seen in weekly assemblies, PDMU (Personal Development and Mutual Understanding) lessons, recognition of pupils' achievements in and out of school, celebration of the children's work, the school council, our play leaders, lunchtime leaders and, most vividly, in the positive relationships we foster between staff, pupils and parents.

We strive to foster close links with our parents, school community and parish. We are mindful that the first teachers of our children are their parents. It is the example of parents that children will follow and it is through a strong partnership between school and parents that our children will develop. Links are strengthened through parent meetings, pupils' reports, the PTA, monthly

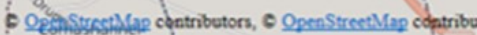
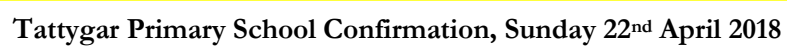
newsletters published on the school website, the school app, the sacraments, the Christmas show and other events such as the summer fete and grandparents' assembly. Our PTA is a highly committed group of parents who give up their time to organise events and raise funds for our school. We are supported well by our local community, who actively take part in the life of the school through volunteering in the classroom, taking part in reading partnerships with some of our pupils and donating resources for learning and annual prizes for the Christmas raffle and Summer fete.

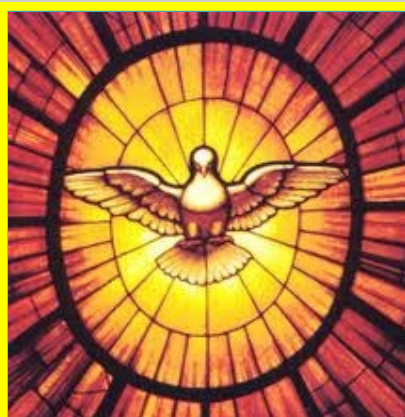
Parish links with the school are strong. We have regular visits from Father Joe. Pupils take part in sacramental programmes in both St Michael's Church, Enniskillen and St Mary's, Lisbellaw. Every year the school uses St Mary's church as the setting for our Christmas show, which is the highlight of our school year. Alms giving is promoted and valued here at Tattygar. Every year we hold Christmas and Easter raffles and the money is donated to a local charity. Throughout the year, we have dress-up days and other events, which raise money for other charities. We strive to instil in our pupils a sense of community and the knowledge that a good deed, no matter how big or small, can make a huge difference in the lives of others.

We are a small school that aims to make a huge difference in the lives of our children, their families and the local community. If you would like to give some of your time to the school through volunteering, please call 02866387674 or contact the principal, Joanne McCaffrey, through the school website: www.tattygarps.com



First Communicants: Saturday 5th May





Prayer for those being confirmed

*All-powerful God,
Send your Holy Spirit upon those
to be their helper and guide.
Give them the spirit of wisdom and understanding,
the spirit of right judgement and courage,
the spirit of knowledge and reverence.
Fill them with wonder and awe in your presence.
We ask this through Christ our Lord, Amen!*





First Communion 2018



Born Between the Bridges



Benny Cassidy

I'm Benny Cassidy, I am a true townie in that I was born on the actual island of Enniskillen or as many would call it 'born between the bridges'. I'd like to reflect on parts of my childhood and growing up in my home town. I was born in number 11, Abbey Street and I was delivered by community nurse Rooney. This street was one of the many island town streets that were along the back of the town that was shamefully cleared from the late 50's to the mid-1960's for car parks and government/public buildings. The area I was born is now where we have the library, HRMC office (Abbey House) and the Housing Executive office - progress they called it at the time.

I was one of 9 children born to Brendan and Chrissie Cassidy, nee Houston. Both of my parents were true townies also. I have a close affinity and affection for Enniskillen and our people and have spent all my life living and working here and I married a local girl, Charlotte, nee Boyd, who. Incidentally, should be

awarded a commendation for her strength in putting up with me. We have four lovely grown up sons.

I remember vividly so many very happy memories of growing up in Enniskillen and I think in many ways I tend to see those times through rose tinted glasses as they were also very tough times; money wasn't very plentiful. Nevertheless, back then in those streets there was a great community spirit, a feeling of belonging and although the houses were old they were lovingly cared for by the people who were extremely proud. The houses were whitewashed from time to time, hiding the cracks created through the course of being aged and weather-beaten.

I was very young when our family, along with all the other people, were moved from those streets to Kilmacormick. I remember the excitement of going into the brand new house and all of us shouting as we discovered how well our voices echoed in what were to us huge rooms. There was so many lights, a huge kitchen area, a proper bath and so much else to see, things many others took for granted but for us it was a huge adventure as we explored our new home.

There was still a great deal of work going on so the houses were part of an on-going building site. We lived directly across from a large temporary tin shed where the workmen stored equipment and had their tea- breaks. I decided it was time to go and meet these men and at first I just peeped in through the open door but within minutes the men spotted me and started talking to me. They asked me was I any good at singing. I told them I was and they said if I was really good they'd give me a bit of a Paris bun. I immediately agreed and sang 'She loves you, Yeah, Yeah' by the Beatles and, to be honest, I only knew the part that went 'she loves you, yeah, yeah, yeah; she loves you yeah, yeah, yeah', but I stood there in my short trousers and jelly sandals, chest stuck out and I belted it out loud and proud over and over again and in the end they gave me a whole bun as they said I was so good. In reality I'd probably given much more than they'd asked for and needless to say it became a daily routine for me and them for a while! Indeed I expanded by borrowing my brothers toy guitar and so what if it had only two out of its four nylon strings left.

I remember well the excitement as a child as our family boarded the bus to head off for a day trip to Bundoran. We'd have just left the bus station in Eden Street when some of the children would ask "*are we nearly there yet?*" Everyone joined in a singsong as we swung our feet back and forth on the seats and that passed the time as we made what seemed like an eternity journey. When we'd eventually arrive we'd go straight to the shop and grab a couple of small buckets and spades and then it was off down to the beach. We spent hours building castles or playing with a beach ball whilst my ma and da had a primus stove going to make tea and the sandwiches stayed wrapped in tinfoil inside a biscuit tin until the last minute to keep them sand free. As we didn't get down very often we'd make a full day of it and shortly before we'd catch the last bus we'd take a dander along the main street, eating chips and invariably meeting others from Enniskillen.

And what about the black and white tellies (I read a recent press article that said they are still very much alive in Enniskillen - according to the licencing) or top loader video players, or when we got a trip to the matinee the odd Saturday afternoon. I remember the clicking noise of the reel at the Regal cinema whenever one part of the film ended and they took a few minutes to load the next reel. Then there was the Sunshine Fund, a group involving local parents that brought smiles to children through trips away, sports days and street parties.

My parents were quite religious and each evening we would come together to recite the Rosary, invariably one of my siblings would make a funny face and we'd giggle, my mother would go back to the first decade as a response to that happening.

I recall us reaching out of the slide-back top windows of the double decker bus on the way back from Mass to pull at the flowers of

a cherry tree at the top of Derrin Road, I apologise now to the person who owned that beautiful tree. And who can forget people getting chips from the Derby Café in Church Street on a Friday night on their way back from the bingo in the Foresters Hall, (When children were brought to bingo we used to gorge away with the funny shaped bottles of Club orange and delicious Tayto crisps.) the playing of cards using the street lights and a roar going up if someone won or, indeed, if someone that wasn't so popular lost. I remember hiring a boat from Dermot Corrigan and my first real exposure to lovely Lough Erne - in a rowing boat.

Back then most people walked to school, lumbered with an oversize schoolbag, but we enjoyed having the craic along the way - no hectic school runs at that time. Pennies, shillings and the good old pound note and being sent messages to the shop, no real rules in place as your note may well have been for 10 Woodbine, an unsliced plain loaf and a quarter of snuff.....

I have just given a few examples of growing up in Enniskillen but there are so many more. To modern day young people my activities as a youngster probably seem very boring compared to play stations, mobile games and social media; staying out playing street games with friends until the street lights came on would now seem to be too much to ask. They were, I agree, simple times but times that created lovely memories that I will carry forever.

Enniskillen's Three R.C. Churches

From a local newspaper article c. 1950.

How each came to be built

The recent death of Mrs. Ellen Gillin*, Enniskillen's oldest inhabitant, recalls to mind the Enniskillen of the period when she was born, over 97 years ago, and the Church with which she was associated during those years. The late Mrs. Gillin was grown to womanhood before the present Roman Catholic chapel was built – the foundation stone of which was laid in the year 1870. Up till this period the Roman Catholic congregation of Enniskillen was presented with many difficulties in the way of worship.

Protestant Ascendancy

Just as old Enniskillen lay between the two bridges, it was not permitted that in the 18th century in a town devoted to Orangeism and Protestant Ascendancy in Church and State, that a Roman Catholic chapel should obtain a site between those two gates of the 'ancient and loyal borough'. The penal restrictions had been removed. No longer did the fearful Romanist repair to the Mass Bush beside the old racecourse, with the Mill Lake on one side for a protection and on the other Kilmacormick hill, affording at the same time a vantage point from which to scour the country with an anxious eye lest military should break up the gathering. Thus, in time, the necessity of obtaining a building for worship became obvious.

The First Church

It was difficult to obtain a site, but that was found at length by Sir James Caldwell giving the Roman Catholic people part of a Burgess acre in the townland of Toneystick, near to what is called the chapel well, and beside a row of trees dividing Fort Lodge from the rear of Fort Lea. It was approached by what was called 'Chapel Lane'. This chapel, which was shaped like a cross, was small, thatched, and had an earthen floor.

The Second Church

This chapel was not convenient for the townspeople who repaired to it but it was difficult to get a better site. Eventually Mr. James Kernan, whose brother Edward became Parish Priest of Enniskillen and subsequently became Bishop of Clogher, secured a lease in 1793 from Mr. John Armstrong, of Lisgoole, of a piece of ground originally of the Darling property exactly opposite Hall's lane and the Motor House premises; and Mr. James Kernan sold to the church authorities for a good rent.

This piece of ground stretched from the front street down by a slope to the Broad Meadow boundary and the new chapel was built on the low ground, while steps led down from the main street through a chapel yard shaded by lovely chestnut trees to a small building; one of the outhouses leading to a gallery called the 'cock-loft'; the main entrance admitting the main body of the congregation; and the third door gave admission to the clergy. This second chapel also had a clay floor, sometimes covered with Corngrade gravel, while the congregation had to stand, as there was no seating accommodation except a form provided by and for 'Lord' Thomas Maguire and his son Denis.

The Third and Present Church

As the accommodation of this chapel was altogether unsuited to the requirements of the people, a new and enlarged chapel was projected to reach to the main-street; and for years before 1870 the people were uncomplainingly taxed to provide a new chapel, the foundation stone of which was laid in the year 1870, in the presence of Dr. Donnelly, Bishop of the Diocese. The sermon on the occasion was preached by the Rev. Thomas Burke, the most eloquent priest of his day.

The new chapel was to have occupied the ground of the whole plot; but before operations had proceeded far the adjoining house and back – return of the house of Mr. Archibald Collum were procured. This enabled the new building to be widened by several feet, and on the enlarged ground space the new church arose, until it was finally completed and consecrated, and on special occasions its limits are taxed to the utmost..

**Ellen Gillin, Townhall Street, was born in 1853*

A Long Way from Vilnius



My name is Kamilia Branickaya. I am 18 years old. Originally from Vilnius, the capital of Lithuania, I moved to Enniskillen in 2011 with my parents and siblings. It was difficult to leave my grandparents behind but this was a new adventure and I had to welcome it with both arms!

When I left Lithuania I was in fourth form and 11 years old. The education system in Lithuania is very different to the one here; for example, we begin school at 7 years of age! It may seem strange to you but where I come from there are several different schools such as, Russian, Lithuanian, Polish and Belarus. I attended all but the Polish school and particularly loved my time in the Belarus school. These schools educated me in Russian, Lithuanian, Belarus and I got a smattering of English. There were many subjects on the curriculum but Religious Education was not one of them.

I loved Vilnius and still do. It is a beautiful, vibrant place and like other buzzing European cities. Its people have Russian roots as well as Lithuanian, Belarus, and Polish. In our home Russian is the first language.

It was a culture shock to find myself in an island town on the island of Ireland; so small, compared to my city! However, I was struck by how friendly the people were and this was especially important for me when I began my education in St.Fanchea's College. Despite having

very little English, my form teacher and my class made me feel at home very quickly. Little by little I became a St.Fanchea's girl and over the next 5 years I grew in confidence and achieved my GCSE's; not bad for a 'new girl'!

I progressed into my post 16 A-Level course in St.Fanchea's, studying Double Health and Social Care and Applied Business. A whole new future is opening up for me and university is on the horizon. My hope is to progress towards a career where I can use my languages (I am fluent in Russian, Lithuanian and English). My ultimate goal is to start up my own business internationally.

Over the years, I continued to visit Lithuania and spend time with my beloved grandparents. Family is very important to me. Perhaps because of this, I made a decision 2 years ago to receive the sacraments of initiation and become a full member of the Catholic Church. In my future life I would like to get married and have a family of my own. I think the church would support me throughout my life in all my decisions, both personal and spiritual.

For one year I attended an evening class in the Parish Centre with a few other adults who, like me, had decided to become Catholics. Maria was the name of the lady who worked with me and who prepared me for the sacraments. For a young person, spending Friday night doing this was unusual! I enjoyed it. I was to make my Holy Communion and my Confirmation at the Easter Vigil 2017.

When I committed to this, I felt I became part of the Parish and the community which is St. Michael's. It deepened my sense of belonging. I believe I have two homes now; my family and my Parish. I have come a long way in a short time.

Kak oni govariat, ja zelaju horoshava zhizn. Bog svami!



The Parish Office



Our Office Staff: Jackie Tierney, Bernie Gallagher and Una Hanley

In a parish of over 8,000 parishioners, enquiries to the parish office are frequent. Nowadays, the Office is the first 'port of call'. First off, there are the things that have to be booked: baptisms (over 150 of them a year), marriages (some 50 a year), and Masses (more than 550 a year). That is 750 conversations, over the phone or by email to start with. Then there are meetings to be booked. On behalf of Accord (the Catholic Marriage Advisory Service), the staff see to all pre-marriage course enquiries and check bookings; they also channel requests for marriage counselling. Between the Parish Centre and the Community Centre, the Office took bookings for 55 meetings during May 2018. That would suggest a total of more than 500 meetings or events through the year. All these bookings have to be recorded - and recorded correctly - to avoid confusion. There are other enquiries: people checking when things are taking place, genealogical enquiries, parishioners who are getting married elsewhere checking to see what they need, initial enquiries about availability of facilities. The Office staff also see to quite a number of participants in our Parish Draw.

People also drop in notices for the church for our noticeboards. And that brings us to the major event of the week in the Parish Office: the production of the weekly Parish Messenger. This job requires an eye for detail to ensure that the details that appear are correct; it requires technical know-how; it requires organisation in arranging the correct delivery bundles. The Office also prepares leaflets, booklets and fliers for parish events.

Other major Parish Office responsibilities have to do with our Parish Registers for Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage and Deaths. Then there is the maintenance of our Parish Census, which is the basis of our Parish Envelope system. This is a huge task, perhaps the single biggest one. So many labels to print and record. So many boxes of envelopes to arrange for delivery, all sorted into the correct delivery areas. And on top of that, there is the production of the Parishioner Contribution Statements. There are hundreds of them.

One of the sadder tasks is the preparing of the list of names of those who have died during the year for each November's Parish Remembrance Service. When a funeral announcement comes in, the details are recorded on our parish telephone answering service and, with the undertakers, arrangements are made for the Month's Memory and the First Anniversary Masses.

But for all these activities that are carried out so faithfully by the staff of our Parish Office, they do not forget their first task: to be a friendly voice, a listening ear (especially when people call in a distressed state) and a welcoming presence to those who make contact either in person or by telephone or email. It's hard to beat human kindness. Those who work in our Parish Office deserve the thanks of the Parish for all they do. They are a vital group in the life of our Parish.

UBUNTU – We Are Interconnected

...Just a Thought by Fr Joe

An anthropologist from Europe, studying the habits and customs of an African tribe and often finding himself surrounded by children, decided to play a little game with them. He managed to get Chocolates from the nearest town and put them all in a decorated basket at the foot of a tree. Then, calling the children, he suggested they play a game. When the anthropologist said, "*now*", the children had to run to the tree and the first one to get there could have all the chocolates. So the children all lined up waiting for the signal. When the anthropologist said, "*now*", the children took each other by the hand and ran together towards the tree. They all arrived at the same time, divided up the chocolates, sat down and began to munch away.

The anthropologist went over to them and asked why they had all run together when any one of them could have had all of the chocolates. The children responded, "*Ubuntu. How could any one of us be happy if all the others were sad?*"

Ubuntu is a philosophy of African tribes that can be summed up as, "*I am what I am because of who we all are.*" Bishop Desmond Tutu gave this explanation; "*One of the sayings in our country is 'Ubuntu'. It is the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can't exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can't be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality called Ubuntu, you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do good, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.*"



Fr. Joe McVeigh

Official Family Prayer for World Meeting of Families 2018

God, our Father, we are brothers and sisters in Jesus your Son, one family, in the Spirit of your love.

Bless us with the joy of love.

Make us patient and kind, gentle and generous, welcoming to those in need.

Help us to live your forgiveness and peace.

Protect all families with your loving care, especially those for whom we now pray:

[We pause and remember family members and others by name].

Increase our faith, strengthen our hope, keep us safe in your love,

Make us always grateful for the gift of life that we share.

This we ask, through Christ our Lord, Amen

Mary, mother and guide, pray for us.

Saint Joseph, father and protector, pray for us.

Saints Joachim and Anne, pray for us.



"Faith opens a 'window' to the presence and working of the Spirit. It shows us that, like happiness, holiness is always tied to little gestures. "*Whoever gives you a cup of water in my name will not go unrewarded*", says Jesus (cf. Mk 9:41)

These little gestures are those we learn at home, in the family; they get lost amid all the other things we do, yet they do make each day different. They are the quiet things done by mothers and grandmothers, by fathers and grandfathers, by children. They are little signs of tenderness, affection and compassion. Like the warm supper we look forward to at night, the early lunch awaiting someone who gets up early to go to work. Homely gestures. Like a blessing before we go to bed, or a hug after we return from a hard day's work. Love is shown by little things, by attention to small daily signs which make us feel at home. Faith grows when it is lived and shaped by love. That is why our families, our homes, are true domestic churches. They are the right place for faith to become life, and life to become faith."

Pope's homily at World Meeting of Families Mass in 2015

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,

Deacon Martin Donnelly

St Michael's Parish Centre

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