

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

ENNISKILLEN

LISBELLAW



Volume 1, Issue 15

NEWSLETTER

December 2019

There's no place like home. It's where we go at Christmas. A sense of home keeps us grounded and keeps us connected to ourselves. No matter the horizons to which we aspire, no matter the hassle we have to endure, no matter the labours we have to undertake: a sense of home - even if it's flawed - keeps life sweeter. So, whatever else you and I do for Christmas, do something to help the sense of family for you and yours. Put the screen out of your hands and make conversation. Like everything else, it takes practice. And if you and yours are out of practice, it may seem a little strange or artificial at first. But do it anyway. Ask the older ones about their memories. Ask the younger ones about their dreams and what excites them. Be interested. In the longer term, we get to know one another better through chat and conversation and that's what creates the connection: that's what nurtures the sense of home.

Home isn't only about immediate family. Home is about place too. That includes the landscape, the buildings and the particular features that are natural to this place. The need to protect and cultivate our natural home is more frequently mentioned nowadays, as the awareness of our dependence on nature grows. We only exist within the network of the natural world. So, in practical terms, do things that care for the world. Look at it. Walk in it. Take a boat trip. Do anything that enhances our experience of wonder and appreciation for the world about us. And then do the protective things of recycling and energy conserving. The world is our home. And, as we know, our island town in its drumlin setting is beautiful indeed.

Home is community. We know the saying: it takes a village to raise a child. We have a town with memories and connections, groups and gatherings. Being part of these enhances not only the sense of home for us, it enhances the sense of home for others. When giving gifts at Christmas, give the gift of conversation, chat and connection to the passer-by, to those we haven't seen in a while, to those who are home for Christmas.

Home is also faith. In terms of what makes us tick, in terms of what means anything, home is crucial. A strong sense of home makes it easier to have a strong sense of faith. Our Christmas faith is naturally about family because we believe that Jesus came to let us know that we are all one family under God. Each human being, each life counts. Jesus came as the most vulnerable of all lives. No matter how flawed or how vulnerable we are, we all count in God's eyes ... and the Christianity of Christmas invites us to see that sense of what counts both in ourselves and in others. It's so much easier to hear this Good News, and to believe it, when we have a strong church community. When we turn out for Church at Christmas, our presence there is not only a help to ourselves, it's a help to others too.

Monsignor Peter



The parish clergy want to wish each and all who share Christmas with us, whether native or visitor, whether regular attendee or not, God's special blessings of this time.

Monsignor Peter, Fr Joe, Fr Raymond and Deacon Martin

Bishop Larry Duffy

Bishop Larry was born on 27 November 1951, to the late Thomas and Elizabeth Duffy, in the Parish of Magheraclone, where four counties (Monaghan, Cavan, Meath and Louth) and four dioceses (Clogher, Kilmore, Meath and Armagh) converge. He has three surviving siblings – Anna, Patrick and Peter. His brother Brendan died three years ago.

Bishop Duffy received his early education at Ballynagarn in Lower Magheraclone and at the Patrician High School, Carrickmacross. Having studied for the priesthood at St Patrick's College, Carlow, he was ordained in St Macartan's Cathedral, Monaghan, in 1976 by Bishop Patrick Mulligan. He then served for a short period in Maguiresbridge (Aghalurcher) where his granduncle, Canon Thomas Duffy, had been PP in the early 20th century. Fr Larry's pastoral ministry in the diocese included Enniskillen (1976-78), Castleblayney (1978-94), Monaghan & Rackwallace (1994-98), Ederney (2003-2008), Clones (2008-2013) and Carrickmacross (2013-2019). He also worked for four years in the Diocese of Kitui in Kenya. During that time, he helped to lead the building of a church in Mwingi. He was a Vicar General of the Diocese of Clogher from 2013.

His appointment by Pope Francis as Bishop of Clogher was announced on 8 December 2018 and he was ordained bishop in St Macartan's Cathedral on Sunday 10 February 2019. Bishop Duffy is a dedicated pastor to all people of the diocese. He fulfils his episcopal ministry in a way that is close to the people he serves, especially through his pastoral visits to parishes, schools and families. At national level, as a member of the Bishops' Conference, he attends many meetings, sharing in the work of leading the church in Ireland today. He chairs the Council for Ecumenism and is a member of the Council for Vocations and the Council for the Missions. A keen sportsman, Bishop Larry is a former player with Magheraclone Mitchells GAA, an avid GAA fan and a keen golfer.

When Fr Larry Duffy came to Enniskillen in 1976 he was one of five priests, the others being Monsignor (Dean) Flanagan, Fr (later Bishop) Joe Duffy, Fr Denis Dolan and Fr Joe Mullin – in addition to priests attached to St Michael's College. Like today, parish life was busy. Unlike today, there was time and the resources for house visitations. Bishop Larry recalls the competitive nature of the visitations, remembering a bet that he would complete the visiting of houses in Hillview by Christmas – a bet he won when he visited his last house there on Christmas Eve. Homes were also visited for less onerous purposes, especially one home visited every Saturday night to watch Match of the Day.

Bishop Larry recalls the great friendship of the Enniskillen people and the company and support of his fellow priests. *'I enjoyed the company of my fellow priests, Fr Joe Duffy, Fr Joe Mullin and Fr Denis Dolan, as we shared the workload and kept under the radar of Dean Flanagan! I remember too the great kindness and support from the Sisters of Mercy, always so homely and welcoming, just as I was later to find them during my long stay in Castleblayney ... Another very positive experience I had in Enniskillen was involvement in a youth club. This was something that I didn't have experience of back in Monaghan and I found it very enriching. Another new and great experience was being chaplain to St Joseph's. This too was enriching and enabled me to develop skills for later in my priestly life ... I love sport, so getting involved with sports clubs was important to me. I enjoyed indoor soccer and had a weekly game in The Forum. I was even to tog out with the second team of Enniskillen Gaels for a time. Alas that wasn't to be. My ambitions of being a regular on that side came to an end when my mother died unexpectedly at that time. Then my ministry as a priest called me back south, to Castleblayney.'*



Bishop Duffy is greeted by Pope Francis at the Vatican on Thursday 12 September 2019



Bishop Duffy, talking to pupils in Holy Trinity Primary School. Looking on are Deacon Martin Donnelly and the school's principal, Brian Treacy.

Bishop Larry has happy memories of his time in Enniskillen. *'They were the early days of my priesthood, and Enniskillen was the place where I first learned about the coalface of parish life. Those were challenging times in the north but they were times which I will always recall; times and a place that gave me the chance to put my foot forward on the journey of priestly life and to realise the love of God that is present in our world through the people we meet on that journey.'*

Parish Ministry into the Future

When I went to Maynooth to train for priesthood, there were around 450 students for the twenty six dioceses of Ireland. By the time I left, there were around 250. Recently the number of priests ordained each year for the whole island has been less than ten. Our diocese has two students for priesthood and they won't be ordained for five years or more. Change is coming. In fifteen years, if things carry on at the present rate, our Bishop reckons we will have about fifteen priests to serve the entire diocese. That's much less than half of the priests we have in the entire diocese at present. Even now, four parishes in our diocese do not have a resident parish priest. So, change is not so much coming as already here.

The good news is that situations like this can be managed. We know there are ways of doing things. It's not just a question of doing the minimum to keep a parish ticking over. A parish can flourish even in circumstances like this. Remember the main contribution that a parishioner makes to her or his parish is in the way they are family at home, in the way they are citizens in the community, in the way they conduct themselves in the world of work. Parents look after children; children look after adults; neighbours help neighbours; workers do their work with integrity.

Nonetheless, given what's coming in terms of clergy numbers, that still leaves unanswered the following questions:

How are Mass and Sacraments to be provided across the diocese for parishioners?

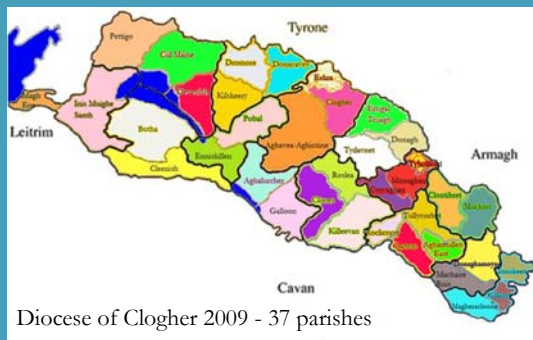
How are Mass and Sacraments to be organised when clergy have to cover three or four different areas?

How are funerals to be organised when a priest is unavailable?

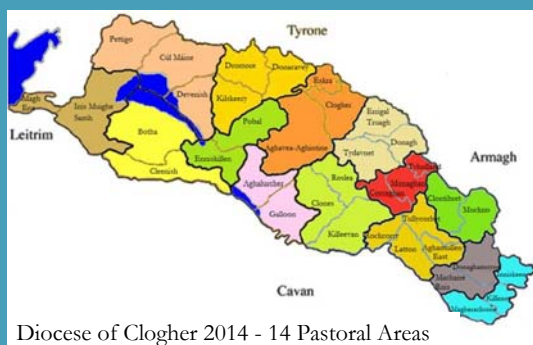
How is a parish to be administered in terms of finance, safeguarding, arrangements for sacraments (Weddings, Baptisms, First Confessions, First Communion)?

Recently while attending Sunday Mass in a parish in France, I heard the local priest and a lay leader were making an appeal for volunteers to come forward to be trained in taking funeral services.

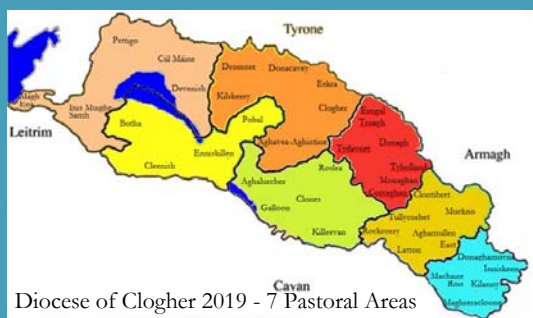
Now, I know that I haven't mentioned Deacons so far. Our parish is fortunate to have the first serving deacon in our diocese for over a thousand years. There's been a lot of learning to get us to this point of re-animating this venerable and ancient order of clergy. We have another candidate, Paul Flynn, in training presently. We are going to need more. However, more clergy isn't going to be the answer because we don't have them. But even if we had, is having more priests and deacons the best way to invigorate and share responsibility in our parish life?



Diocese of Clogher 2009 - 37 parishes



Diocese of Clogher 2014 - 14 Pastoral Areas



Diocese of Clogher 2019 - 7 Pastoral Areas

For now, though, in the coming five to ten years, the bigger question by far is the question of how our parishes are to be led into the future when clergy (priests and deacons) aren't available. Like any organisation, a parish needs to be organised, to be led, to be enthused? I have no doubt that part of the answer is for a parish to have a fully functional Parish Pastoral Council. It's a recognised way of cultivating parishes and is used in many countries. Part of the answer is to have Parish Ministry Groups to address different pastoral issues. Part of the answer is to combine the gifts and voluntary help across parishes. It's not a question of wilfully doing without clergy. (Of course, we would really welcome some more suitable candidates in the immediate future. We are praying for vocations to priesthood, diaconate and the religious life.)

As for the longer term future, who knows what it will contain? Our earliest Christian ancestors in these parts were used to ministry that was monastic: Cleenish, Devenish, Lough Derg are places they knew well. Following developments on continental Europe, parishes then came to be the main focus of local ministry, particularly as clergy numbers allowed. But if you and I were to return to this place in 200 years, what would we find? My guess is that while the local place will give coming generations a sense of home and identity, nonetheless the ministry they need - marriage, baptism, weekend community Mass and other Sacraments - will be developed and delivered in the context of a wider pastoral area, such as the pastoral areas that are emerging now. There will be a greater pooling of resources and of working together among what are now the parishes of Enniskillen, Tempo, Cleenish and Botha.

In the immediate future, we will have to ask ourselves how to combine efforts and use the gifts of clergy and people together in ways that give recognition to the calling that we all receive at Baptism for the benefit of all our parishes. It can be done. It will take prayer. It will require the ongoing generous practical help of volunteers and clergy together..

Monsignor Peter

Growing up Above the Shop

Enniskillen town in the 1970s was characterised by a multitude of small family shops, and the families often lived above the shops. That was the case in our family, where my parents, John and Kathleen, ran their drapery shop in East Bridge Street. With our neighbours the Nixon, Corrigan, Lucchesi and Gillen families, we experienced a strong sense of community and formed bonds of friendship that have lasted a lifetime.



Marie McHugh

It was during this time that I went to Mount Lourdes and my brothers, Seamus and Sean, went to St Michael's. For me, it was literally a skip and a jump to school in Belmore Street. With the exception of the O'Dohertys and the O'Dolans, I lived closer to the School than anyone else. However, my proximity to the School was certainly no guarantee of my punctuality. I was frequently on Miss Tannian's list of latecomers.

During those years, Mother Eucharia, followed by Srs Damien, Francesca and Consili, together with Miss Tannian in her role as Vice-Principal, ran what could be described as 'a tight ship'! However, it was a very successful and happy ship, and one where a set of highly committed and dedicated teachers nurtured the development of many intellects and sought to bring out the best in each pupil.

In retrospect, I probably presented a significant challenge to those teachers. It took some time for the penny to drop in Maths, French and Chemistry, in

particular, and Mr Burns, Mrs Lunney and Miss Friel all, as they say, had their work cut out for them with me as a pupil.

At the time, Music was one of my stronger subjects and I was a proud member of Mount Lourdes Choir. Sister Gerard, our Music Teacher and Choirmistress, was exceptionally skilled in generating, with apparent ease, the fabulous sound of perfect harmony from a collection of boisterous teenagers. She played a key role in organising the operettas for which the School was well known. I participated in one of these, The White Horse Inn.

Preparing for The White Horse Inn was great fun, a team building exercise in the truest sense, and an opportunity to have a laugh and make new friends. Professionalism was the name of the game. Everything in the show had to be just right. Such was the case when poor Sinead Mulhern, who played the Mayor, lost her voice on the night of one of the performances. Undeterred, Sr Gerard conferred with Mrs Carty who was the Producer, and 'Plan B' was put into operation. Sinead was seated at a table covered by a cloth. Underneath was Mrs Carty with a microphone speaking the words at the appropriate time. No one in the audience was any the wiser, and in the finest traditions of show business, the show went on.

Together with my classmates, I sat 'A' levels in 1979. When we received our results, many of us went to Belfast to study at Queen's. Each Monday I boarded the 261 bus to Belfast, returning home to Enniskillen on Friday. Forty years on, the Enniskillen-Belfast bus service is still the 261. Some things in life never change, and maybe that's not such a bad thing!

Editor's Note: Marie McHugh is Professor of Organisational Behaviour in the Department of Management, Leadership & Marketing of Ulster University. In addition to her roles there, she is a member of the Council of the CBI (NI), and Editor of the *Leadership and Organizational Development Journal*. Marie has been a member of the Royal Mail/Communication Workers' Union Third Party Independent Review Team Chaired by Lord Sawyer to improve employment relations at Royal Mail. She has also been a member of the UK Government's Business Schools' Taskforce, which focused on the contribution that business schools make to the development of the UK economy. She has been a Visiting Distinguished Scholar at the University of Nebraska (USA) and the University of Halmstad (Sweden). She is also a Visiting Professor at Hebei Geo University in China.

From Children's Liturgy to MacRory Cup Success

My name is Conor Love, I am an eighteen-year-old student currently living in Belfast and a lifetime member of the St Michael's parish in Enniskillen.

Throughout my whole life I have been involved with my parish in one way or another. My earliest memories go back to the children's liturgy group meetings on a Sunday when I would learn and come to understand more about that week's gospel through games and listening. At around nine years old, I trained to become an altar server. This introduced me to a variety of liturgies, e.g. funerals, weddings and Holy Week.

In the last 4 years I have been to Taizé twice with Clogher don Óige. Both trips were amazing experiences that really opened my eyes to the wider spiritual community, teaching me a lot about acceptance and helping me mature. In 2018 I undertook the Pope John Paul II Award. This saw me

become more proactive within my parish community, visiting Drumclay Nursing Home for Christmas carols, bringing up candles in the November Mass for the Dead and collecting for various charities in the town centre. A significant part of my involvement was due to the parish schools that I attended. At Holy Trinity, Cecilia Burns led me to become an altar server. In my final year I played a key role in the 'Joseph' school play. Later on, for GCSE, at St Michael's College, I studied Mark's Gospel and World Religions. I regularly visited the Tuesday Breaktime services held by Fr Macartan McQuaid as well as the retreat days that he organised in my exam years. St Michael's also allowed me, alongside fellow parishioners Brandon Horan, Conor Murphy, Jack Tierney and Josh Horan, to achieve sporting success by winning the MacRory and Hogan cups earlier this year. Achieving that long-time dream and ambition would not have been possible but for the school and its support. Of course, I am in grateful to my all of the teachers who guided me through a stressful examination period that led to my acceptance into Queen's University Belfast to study Planning, Environment and Regeneration. So far, I am really enjoying the course and the student life but as of this moment I am anxious to get home and enjoy Christmas in Enniskillen.



Enniskillen Gaels boys from the victorious St. Michael's College MacRory Cup team of 2019.

From left:: Conor Love, Conor Murphy, Brandon Horan, Ronan Beattie, Josh Horan and Jack Tierney

A Boy called Emmanuel

There is a legend of an African boy called Emmanuel who was always asking questions. One day he asked the question, "*What language does God speak?*" No one could answer him. He travelled all over his country to find the answer but did not get a satisfactory answer. Eventually he set out for distant lands to find the answer. For a long time he had no success. At last he came one night to a village called Bethlehem and as there was no room in the local inn, he went outside the village in search of a shelter for the night. He came to a cave and found that too was occupied by a couple and a child. He was about to turn away when the young mother spoke, "*Welcome Emmanuel, we've been waiting for you.*" The boy was amazed that the woman knew his name. He was even more amazed when she went on to say, "*For a long time you have been searching the world over to find out what language God speaks. Well, now your journey is over. Tonight you can see with your own eyes what language God speaks. He speaks the language of love that is expressed in sharing, understanding, mercy and total acceptance.*"

St. Michael's Parish Baptism Team

A Service Of Almost Thirty Years...

Our Parish Baptism Team goes back quite a way now, back to the 1990s. At that time, a programme of parish development and renewal (PDR) was run in many parishes as a diocesan initiative. In this parish, several parish groups were formed. One was our Baptism Team. In the nearly thirty years since, many of the original members have given continuous and dedicated service to our parish community. Together with some new members, they are still providing an essential ministry of hospitality and welcome today. Who more important is there for us to welcome than the new-born child? As with any service, there is need for occasional renewal and updating. The team are always conscious of the need for such spiritual development and they have attended several renewal days and courses.

So Important...

The birth of a child is high up the list of significant and life-changing events. For parents, it opens the door to new responsibilities and opens the mind to a different level of mature reflection. It is a time of hopes and dreams; a time of openness and wonder at new life. When all other things are equal, it is a special time for the entire family.

Parenting a child has always been a challenge, especially when you want to include a level of faith in family life. By asking for Baptism, parents are already showing an awareness of the significance of God in their lives. The preparation sessions facilitated by the Parish Baptism Team are designed to help parents to reflect on the reasons for requesting Baptism and to lead them to a clearer understanding of the responsibilities they are undertaking: the responsibility of bringing their child on a journey of faith within both family and the parish faith community.

The 3 Rs of Baptism: Request, Responsibility, Realisation...

The first R of baptism is *Request*: parents request that their child be baptised. The experience of birth can change us. It can open us to the presence of God and to the desire to include God in our lives and to thank God for the gift of new life that we have received. These things and more can motivate us to request baptism for our child.

The second R is *Responsibility*. As the Deacon or Priest says at the ceremony: *"In asking to have your child baptised, you are accepting the responsibility of bringing this child up in the faith, by loving God and loving neighbour. Do you clearly understand what you are undertaking?"* Godparents are then asked: *"Are you willing to help the parents of this child in their duties?"* So at a Baptism, both Parents and Godparents formally take on new duties and roles. The baptism draws attention to this change in their lives. Of course, it is a responsibility they want to take on because they want the best for their daughter or their son.

The final R we speak about is *Realisation*: parents need to clearly understand what they are undertaking. Sometimes in the overwhelming business of the weeks that follow a birth, there is no time to think. As with any Sacrament, the moment makes a space for us to take on board the change that has come about in our lives. We are encouraged to see the hand of God in this happening. We are encouraged to hear the call of God in what we are now called to do. That responsibility is mainly for the new baby's family, but it is not just for them alone. Every family needs help from outside their four walls. They need the help and support of their wider family circle in particular and of their local community in general. The custom of a great gathering attending baptisms is an occasion for us all to realise the responsibility we share.

Practical Arrangements for Baptisms in St Michael's Parish ...

We have a lot of baptisms in any given year, over 150 of them. To help the parish manage this high level of provision, help is needed from those requesting baptism. We would therefore highlight the following points:

- ◆ Parents arrange Baptism through the Parish Office, giving at least 4 weeks prior notice.
- ◆ Parents should bring an original Birth Certificate which will be copied for correct entry into Parish Baptism register. The copy is shredded when entry is made.
- ◆ Parents will be provided with a Baptismal Pack that includes a Baptismal Card which must be completed and brought to the session.
- ◆ Baptisms take place on the second and fourth Sundays of each month at 3pm. There may be up to four Baptisms on each of these occasions.
- ◆ Parents and Godparents are invited to attend a preparatory session in the Church. These are facilitated by the Parish Baptism Team and are held on the Wednesday after the first Sunday of each month. The monthly session is advertised in the Parish Messenger. It lasts approximately 45 minutes and it explains the Baptism ceremony and provides some sacramental guidance.
- ◆ On the day of Baptism, families should bring a white shawl and a Baptismal candle (available in the Parish Shop).
- ◆ Parents will receive a Certificate of Baptism and a small bottle of the blessed Baptismal water.

Rich in Symbolism...

The symbols of our faith associated with Baptism are:

Water - associated with new life

Lighted candle - representing Jesus, the light of the world

White garment - sign of Christian dignity

Oils of Catechumens - this anointing calls on God to protect the child

Oil of Crism- this anointing marks the child out as a special member of the Christian community



Being a Godparent...

It is a privilege and honour to be asked to be a Godparent of a child for baptism. The Godparent's role is to help and support the parents as they hand on the faith to the child. A Godparent should be over 16 years old. At least one Godparent should be Catholic.

Would You Like To Explore The Possibility Of Joining The Parish Baptism Team?

Enquiries from parishioners who would like to join the Baptism Team are welcome. Of course, it is not for everyone. To find out whether it might be for you, please contact the Parish Office and they will put you in contact with a member of the team. Serving others can be a blessing.

Clogher don Óige

Youth Ministry in the Diocese of Clogher

On pages 8 and 9 of this publication we celebrate the work of several of our young parishioners during their pilgrimage to Lourdes in July. They were among sixty two young people from across the Diocese, who, accompanied by Fr. Leo Creelman, Youth Director, James McLoughlin, Youth Ministry Director, and nine volunteer leaders, travelled to Lourdes as part of the Diocesan Pilgrimage. During their six days there, they played key roles with the Assisted Pilgrims from the Diocese, making sure they got to all the Masses, liturgies and other events of the pilgrimage. They also played a central role in the liturgies - leading the Low Stations, in the Closing Ceremony and with various prayers and music at Masses. The young people are a credit to themselves, their families, the parish and our community.

In existence since 2003, Clogher don Óige was created by the Diocese of Clogher to provide a wide-ranging, varied programme of activities, events, initiatives and pilgrimages for young people. Its work is planned and carried out to inspire our youth, enabling them to grow in faith, confidence and self-esteem. As well as the annual pilgrimage to Lourdes, members have opportunities to travel to Taizé for a week in August, to participate in the Pope John Paul II Awards and to be part of other events throughout the year. (For example, Clogher don Óige were asked to celebrate Mass in the RTÉ Studios in Dublin on December 8th last - for a live broadcast.)

Clogher don Óige wants to show and help our young people recognise their place in a welcoming Church: that values them, their gifts, their ideas, their creativity and their call as disciples.

Website - Clogherdonoige.org

Email - info@clogherdonoige.org

Telephone - +353 (0)47 72784



Fr. Leo Creelman, Chairperson of Clogher don Óige, and the other leaders of the July pilgrimage to Lourdes

— Inspiring —
YOUNG PEOPLE
TO GROW IN
FAITH,
CONFIDENCE
→
& SELF-ESTEEM

August Trip to Taizé

The Taizé community is an ecumenical monastic order strongly devoted to peace and justice through prayer and meditation. The 100-strong community of Roman Catholic and Protestant monks is drawn from 30 countries.

Today Taizé is one of the world's most important sites of Christian pilgrimage. Each year tens of thousands of young pilgrims flock to the village in central France to share in the community's way of life. Young people from across the world are encouraged to live out the Christian gospel in a spirit of joy, simplicity and reconciliation.

Along with 3,500 other young people, more than sixty Clogher teenagers attended daily small group bible study, joined with the Taizé Brothers three times a day for prayer, Mass and the Sacrament of Reconciliation and spent time together reflecting on their Taizé experience ... simple living, stepping away from the regular routine of life, times of silence and less access to technology.

Clogher Don Óige in Lourdes



Pilgrimage can be a powerful experience. Away from their everyday lives, it offers people a chance to focus on their faith – and encounter Jesus in a profound way. The annual pilgrimage to Lourdes undertaken by the Diocese is no different. This year over 300 pilgrims, including more than 60 young people plus nurses and carers, travelled to the French town and Shrine nestled in the French Pyrenees for a week of reflection, community and prayer. Lourdes is a special place for so many. Saint John Paul II described it as a place where “[Mary] began a dialogue between Heaven and earth which has lasted through time, and continues to this day.”

Our diocesan youth ministry organisation, Clogher Don Óige, coordinates the contingent of young people from parishes across the diocese that travels as part of the pilgrimage. It was wonderful to welcome ten young people and five of the leadership team from Saint Michael’s Parish. It was great also to have Fr Raymond as one of the team of clergy.



Our young, enthusiastic, cheerful teenagers helped and assisted pilgrims, giving of their time with zest and vitality, bringing many a smile to the faces who gazed upon their goodness. The young people play a key role throughout the pilgrimage, not only by taking an active role during the various liturgies and Masses but in their work with the assisted pilgrims who travel as part of the Diocese of Clogher family. Over the course of the pilgrimage the young people and assisted pilgrims form strong friendships. Their interaction with each other, but, more importantly, with these assisted pilgrims, is a memory and a witness that challenges us all.

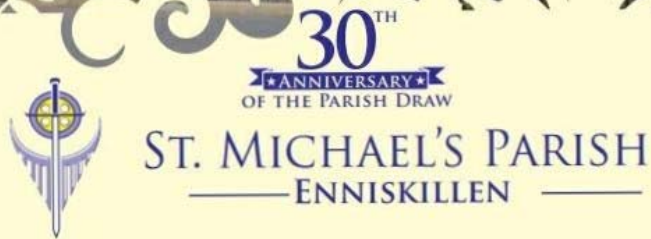
Fr Leo Creelman, Chairperson of Clogher don Óige, said of the pilgrimage and its impact for the young people: “We had nearly 70 teenagers there, it is very formative for them. One thing they find is that they’re in a place where praying is natural, where their peers are at prayer. It enables young people to get a perspective on life and what it means to be part of the Church. They are looking for something real in their lives, which they find here, I think. The theme of Blessed are the Poor has given everyone an opportunity to focus on what are true riches in their lives – there are a lot of false riches.”

I often tell people that it is a true honour and privilege to be in the role of Youth Ministry Director at Clogher don Óige and the annual Lourdes pilgrimage is one of my highlights. I have yet to meet a young person who has not benefited from their experience of travelling to Lourdes, where they have encountered who they are, been part of the global Catholic Church and discovered where God may want to lead them in the future.

James McLoughlin



St Michael's Parish Draw



PARISH DRAW 2019 / 2020

FANTASTIC PRIZES & GREAT CHANCES OF WINNING

MONTHLY PRIZES:

1st Prize: £1,000 • 2nd Prize: £500

3rd Prize: £300 • 4th Prize: £200

FINAL DRAW SPECIAL PRIZES:

5 x £1,000 • 5 x £200 • 1 x £500

In late summer 1990 a committee representing all areas of the Parish and chaired by the then Parish Priest, Mgr Sean Cahill, considered a proposal for a weekly draw. Its specific aim was to fund renovations to the Churches of the Parish. It was necessary to get promoters to collect and bring the monies, on Friday and Sunday nights, to the Crypt (our 'office' in those days). Many volunteered to do so. People like the late Murty Cornyn, Paddy Farmer, Peter McAloon and Lily Wynne diligently collected every week for 50 weeks each year. They were, as all promoters have been down through the years, the lifeblood of the draw.

Everyone can see the fruits of this in our magnificent Churches in Enniskillen and Lisbellaw. The income from the draw is our only funding for the repairs and renovations, which commenced with major works in St Michael's Church in 1995, and have continued to the present day. This year sees the 30th anniversary of the draw and a number of our promoters are still with us after all those years.

Tish and Gerry

Visitors who haven't been to our Parish Centre recently will have cause to delay as they go up the stairs, and again when they reach the meeting rooms - to take time to admire the beautiful artworks that now adorn the walls. The collection features a range of framed pieces from pupils of Years 8 - 12 in St. Fanchea's College. The work greatly enhances the visual environment and gives a sense of community to the space used by parish groups. It encompasses collage, fine art painting and mixed media.



Welcome to 'The House of Bread'

Holy Land Priests' Pilgrimage 2018 - Day 7 of 9

After spending a whole day in Jerusalem, walking in the footsteps of Jesus through the Mount of Olives, the Kidron Valley, the Temple Mount, the steep, windy and crowded Via Dolorosa, Golgatha (the site of the Crucifixion of Jesus) and, finally, the empty tomb, our tour guide, Drora, announced that we had one more place to visit (you are not serious, I thought to myself) - and then she said: "*Bethlehem*"! So overwhelmed by all I had seen (and in need of a strong coffee) I had almost forgotten about the birth place of Jesus. Imagine!

Bethlehem is located in the central West Bank of Palestine, six miles south of Jerusalem and is home to an ever decreasing number of Palestinian Christians. The mountains and valleys between Jerusalem and Bethlehem make it impossible to see the one from the other. Considered a fairly small and insignificant place, biblically, Bethlehem is most notable as the birth place of King David and Jesus. As we entered the city, crossing the Israeli border checkpoint, our guide said "*Welcome to the House of Bread.*" Bethlehem means 'House of Bread'. The first mention of Bethlehem in the Bible occurs in Genesis 35:19 and then Isaiah 58:6-7 indicates that it is a place where one could come and eat when hungry; a place of supply for the hungry. I was really struck by this literal meaning: 'House of Bread'. How beautiful our faith is: Jesus Christ was born in a feeding trough in a place which means 'House of Bread' and later proclaims himself, saying "*I am the bread of life*" - the Holy Eucharist we receive at every Mass. Amazing.

There were many high points throughout our trip. For me, the opportunity to visit the birth place of Jesus at the Basilica of the Nativity, Bethlehem, one of the oldest churches in the world, was the pinnacle. The basilica is shared by three Christian Traditions: Roman Catholics, the Greek Orthodox and the Armenian Orthodox. Queuing for over two hours, six abreast, we slowly meandered around the inside of the church, our eyes captivated by the sparkle of some recently discovered 4th Century wall mosaics (previously buried under centuries of plaster and decoration), each one of us silently praying (the Orthodox are strict about silence in the church) and patiently waiting our turn. When entering the grotto (the place where Jesus was born) situated below the sanctuary of the basilica, you must bow your head - the door is low! And yet this seemed so appropriate - in God's design,



Fr Raymond at the site of The Baptism in The Jordan

there is a 'door of humility' when seeking to enter the birth place of Jesus. It reminded me of the Liturgy of the Mass when we bow our heads during the Gloria at the name of Jesus, when reciting the Creed, we bow acknowledging the Incarnation of God: "*and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man*" and also when receiving Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. As a mark of reverence and respect, each pilgrim kneels down and kisses the spot where Jesus was born, marked by a fourteen point silver star with the inscription: "*Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.*" (Here Jesus Christ was born to the Virgin Mary.)



"*Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.*"

At that moment, I couldn't help but think about the genius of our God - to choose to enter the world so unassumingly, in absolute poverty and for our benefit. As I kissed the place where our Lord was born, I thought about all the families I have encountered in my priesthood and offered a prayer for them there in that holy place, for this is the place where the Holy Family resided and began their journey.

Fr Raymond Donnelly

facebook.com/stmichaelsparishenniskillen

Over the last twelve months, St Michael's Parish Enniskillen has entered the Social Media world, having launched a Facebook page on 6th December 2018. The idea of the page came about when one of our parishioners noticed the lack of information from the parish on the social network.

The intention was to inform people about Daily Prayers, Mass Readings, Funeral Death Notices, Novenas, prayers of Saints, etc. Included are notices for Eucharistic Adoration, Divine Mercy Holy Hour and the Daily Rosary as well as announcements of Carol Services and Music Concerts.

Since the launch, the number of page LIKES, has risen. The rise was slow over the first eleven months but in the last few weeks, with more attention being given on a daily basis by both the clergy and page administrators, it has accelerated. On the 1st birthday of the page (6th Dec), there were 1,004 Likes, an increase of twenty three over the previous four days.



Public Posts at St Michael's Parish Enniskillen

St Michael's Parish Enniskillen was mentioned in a post.

Adrian Morrisson is with Fidelma Mcadam and 4 others.
November 16 at 7:05 PM

I love the Architecture of St Michael's Parish Enniskillen
But this lovely Bridal Party also made this church even stand out more.



The Parish Page has brought the parishioners into more contact with the clergy as many now have a greater awareness of what is happening within the parish. Family members who are living away from home are able to keep abreast of what is happening back in their native parish.

The updating of the page is carried out by two administrators, Emma Reilly and Pat Clarke. The clergy are greatly appreciative of these two people for giving their time to keep the page up-to-date with information and pictures. Emma and Pat also give their time to other ministry groups within the parish.

Editor's Note: Once again we are grateful to the many people who have contributed to this, the fifteenth, edition of our Newsletter. This time, as we had articles that were too important to omit, we have expanded to sixteen pages. Many of those articles, the photos and other illustrations celebrate the successes and activities of our young parishioners. Among those illustrations are some examples, such as that immediately above, of the beautiful art work that the girls from St Fanchea's College now have on display in the Parish Centre. Monsignor Peter, Fr Raymond and Fr Joe continue to inform and inspire us. Once again, we have Patricia Donnelly providing her poignant memories of an Enniskillen that fewer and fewer of us remember. As editor, it is a delight to get such interesting contributions. I encourage others to send in their stories of the parish of years gone by and/or other appropriate items. I would also like to hear suggestions for future editions and comments on this publication. Please send to stmnewsletter2019@gmail.com.

P. Maguire

The Deeper Meaning of the Bible

Pope Francis has called for World Bible Day on the Third Sunday in Ordinary Time (26 January 2020) to raise awareness among Catholics about the need to read and reflect on the Bible all the year round. That can be done on your own or, preferably, in small groups. For most Catholics, the only time they hear the Scriptures is when they attend Mass. The Homily at Mass is meant to be a prayerful reflection on the Scripture readings - pointing to ways of living and witnessing. Often, because it is so rushed, the Liturgy of the Word has little meaning or impact. Hence, we need to read and reflect on the Word of God in the Scriptures at other times during the week.

It is the Bible that must shape how we think and act as followers of Christ. It is the Word of God that motivates us to do what is right and just in order to form communities of faith. It is what encourages us to live purposeful lives in community as people baptised in the Spirit and sent out to be witnesses in the world today. Pope Francis reminds us of our responsibility for the Earth and our calling to be people of peace and non-violence.

It was my own discovery of the deeper meaning - the spiritual and political meaning - of the Bible that renewed and helped deepen my understanding of the Gospels - and of the whole Bible. I now find the Scriptures exciting, challenging and always interesting. I like to reflect on the readings chosen for the Sunday Liturgy and the Daily Liturgy and I like to read other people's interpretations of these in various books and magazines. I am amazed at the depth of meaning in the conversations of Jesus that I never noticed before. I know that I will continue to discover new and deeper meaning for as long as I am able to ponder on the Scriptures.

When I came out of Maynooth almost 50 years ago I had not a very deep or extensive knowledge or understanding of the Bible. Even though we went to Scripture classes for 3 years, it still did not help me understand the deeper meaning of the Scriptures. It was only after reading some liberation theology in the years after I left Maynooth that I began to discover a deeper meaning of many of the readings I had never understood. I then began to understand why the Bible is called The Word of God. I began to discover that the prophets and Jesus are completely counter-cultural.

We can see all of human life in the Bible. It is a love story - the story of God's love for all of Creation and God's power at work to renew and recreate the earth. It is the story of the spiritual power and courage given to human beings to overcome adversity, misfortune and failure. It is the story of the victory of Light over Darkness.

I would suggest that in returning to reading the Scriptures, on our own or with others, we might begin with the New Testament and then dip in and out of the Old Testament - especially the Psalms and the Prophets. I suggest that we could begin by reading the Sermon on the Mount, then the Parables of Jesus. Then I suggest we read Jesus' conversations with so many different people. These stories and conversations are full of deep meaning for our lives. They will repay a close reading and time spent in reflection. The reading from Chapter 25 of Matthew's gospel - *"I was hungry and you gave me food"* - is always challenging.

I believe that if enough Catholics in every Parish began to read and reflect on the Scriptures, on a regular basis, it could lead to the enrichment of our faith and the renewal of the Church. It might be the way to encourage the young people who do not go to Mass regularly, to engage with the rich Wisdom and Vision of the Jewish-Christian tradition in order to find meaning for their lives. In making his appeal Pope Francis wants us to make a real effort to keep the faith alive through engaging with the Word of God.

Fr Joe McVeigh



"The word of God is alive and active; it does not die, nor does it age, but it remains for ever. The bible is not a beautiful collection of sacred books to study. It is the Word of life to be sown, the gift that the Risen Christ asks to be gathered and distributed so that there may be life in his name ... The Word gives life to every believer, teaching them to renounce themselves in order to proclaim Him. In this sense, it acts like a sharp sword which, entering in depth, discerns thoughts and feelings, brings to light the truth, wounds to heal."

Pope Francis

Christmas in the 1950s

*In the bleak mid-winter
Frosty wind made moan
Earth stood hard on iron
Water like a stone'*

Christina Rossetti 1872. Music Gustav Holst 1906.

Every Christmas in St Michael's Church, when I hear the choir sing this haunting hymn, I am immediately transported back to my childhood Christmases of the 1950s and the three dawn Masses of Christmas Day: something magical and wonderful. We would have walked to church from the Forthill. Occasionally there was the unexpected wonder of snow but, for the most part, the mornings were the usual grey Fermanagh 'bleak mid-winter'. However, the streets were lit by coloured light bulbs and on The Diamond a Christmas tree meagrely lit with a few more coloured bulbs, a few balloons and tinsel streamers. But for us children of the black and white 1950s it could have been Oxford Street or New York.

Once as we passed Ternan's shop I remember remarking to my mother that all the toys, so long coveted, had disappeared. She was flustered and replied that Santa used Ternans as a toy depot as it was too far for him to bring all the toys from the North Pole!

When we arrived at the absolutely packed church, we were mesmerised by the altar, beautifully decorated with flowers and all the candelabras dancing with magic light from very many candles. The three Masses were said by the dearly loved and much respected parish priest, Monsignor Gannon. It was pre-Vatican Two, so he was behind the Altar rails and facing towards the altar. The Mass was in Latin and ably answered not only by the Altar boys, but by most people in the congregation who knew the Latin by rote. As it was a special occasion. There was incense which filled the church adding to the ethereal solemnity. All this, plus the heavenly singing of 'Adeste Fidelis', 'Angels we have heard on high' and 'Silent Night' by Fr Murphy's choir, temporarily transporting us to our own special Bethlehem

In those days many in the congregation still adhered to the separation of the sexes with men on one side and women on the other. This was the immediate post-war period. Clothes rationing had only ended in 1949. Food rationing continued until 1954. Most of the congregation, therefore, were dressed in serviceable apparel. The men wore gabardine, belted coats, with caps in their coat pockets. The women were in warm, but somewhat drab, winter coats. However, their

drabness was lessened by the colourful scarves, berets and hats as it was still the rule that women must have their heads covered while in the church. Many of the children also had berets and those dreadful hand-knitted pixies in garter stitch with a very pointy top, probably knitted by themselves in the Convent Primary school.

Unlike today, there was no special mention of the children and not many would have brought any of their Christmas toys. However, the stern adults who usually monitored our devotion and attention at Mass, would relax a little and smile, enquiring if Santa had called.

In compiling this piece I have talked to other parishioners of the 1950s. Many have similar memories to my own. Frankie Roofe recalls his mother, then living in Strand Street, kneeling in her kitchen at midnight to hear Pope Pius XII giving his special *Urbi et Orbi* blessing. My memory is of this at lunchtime, probably rebroadcast by Radio Eireann, then known as Athlone. This would have been on an old Pye radio that crackled and hissed no matter how much my frustrated father tried to tune it. Eventually, often after a sound thump, we would have the Pope right in our living room. Like the Roofes we also knelt reverently to receive the Blessing which also carried an Indulgence.

Vera Fee (nee Simpson) has a lovely story of coming to the Dawn Mass by boat. It was 1950, the family's first year in Cornagrade. This was prior to the construction of the Johnston Bridge. To save themselves the long walk down Rutherford's Hill and Mill Street and up the town, they came over from the old Fever Hospital on Dick Lally's ferry, to the bottom of Market Street. For this, they wore their wellingtons, changing into their shoes in the Church porch - except for one unfortunate girl, who lost her shoe en route. I hope that the Christmas spirit prevented too much scolding by her parents on her return home.



Patricia Donnelly



Vera Fee, nee Simpson, at her First Communion



Behind Front Row: Jack McDonagh, Noel Burns, Kevin Maguire, Tommy Kelly, Eugene Kelly, Frank O'Reilly, Jeff Ringer, Aidan Gormley, Micky Fee, Ben Keaveney, Jim McDonagh, Tom Morris, Lily Kelly, Ethna Morris, Kathleen Burns, Imelda McLernan, Chubby Hynes, Bernie O'Connor, Leo Gormley, Charlotte Hynes, Christine McCusker, Martina Smyth
 Front Row: John Murphy, Angela Smyth, Freda Dooris, Catherine Murphy, Jennifer O'Donoghue, Pam Dooris, Maura Martin, Kathleen Farry, Evelyn Young, Catherine Presley, Margaret McConnell, Katie McCusker, Agnes Smyth

St Michael's Choral Society - Christmas Day 1961(?), visiting Jeff Ringer's first baby, born that morning



Enniskillen's Salvation Army Band

Another old townie, Chris Campbell of Eden Street, recounted how for her the magic of Christmas started a few weeks before the big day with St Michael's Choir going round the streets and on the Diamond singing carols. There was no accompaniment, only Fr Murphy starting them off on the right key with his tuning fork. To her the pure unaccompanied singing in the dark, cold air meant Christmas had truly arrived.

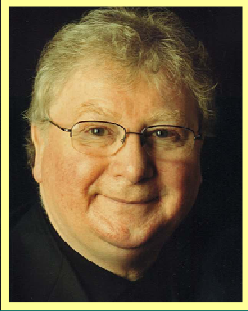
In addition to the St Michael's choir I remember the Methodist choir and, of course, the rousing Salvation Army band with the lovely Frank Allett and the indomitable Maggie Cox lustily singing on the streets and on The Diamond. All added to the pre-Christmas hustle and bustle in anticipation of the big day itself.

Thanks to Catherine Scott, Fermanagh County Museum, and Frank Roofe, local genealogist, for assistance in compiling this short piece.

Patricia Donnelly



Actions Speak Louder than Words



Climate change is the Big Issue of our time. It will be the Big Issue for many years to come - if our planet survives. That depends on how we, in this generation, respond to the crisis facing us. The threat to the Planet Earth is serious. Climate change seen in storms and fires are already destroying life on the planet. It is also causing poverty and famine.

The need for each of us to act is urgent. Pope Francis, in his Letter to the whole world '*Laudato Si'*', stressed the urgency for every person and every government to act. This is an issue that concerns everyone of the human family. It is encouraging to see the young people in the world taking on this issue. Sixteen year old Greta Thunberg has set an example for all of us. She stresses the urgency and the need for action NOW.

She says that the governments of the world must do more. Pressure must be put on and kept on until they act responsibly and confront the big corporations. The US government's response is disgraceful.

Farmers need to act. Motorists need to act. We all need to act. We should think before we travel - by land or by air. We need to think when we are shopping about the use of plastic. We need to think before we eat: cut down on eating meat.

On a recent television report I noticed a poster at a student rally in Dublin which stated ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS. That poster prompted me to write this and urge action. Like many people, I greatly admire David Attenborough who, through his TV programmes about life in the seas and on the earth, has alerted the world to the serious crisis facing our planet.

Biodiversity is a critical issue. We must do all we can to preserve the hedgerows and the trees. Let the hedges grow. Protect our wild life - the birds and the bees, the plants and the trees. Without bees there would be no food and human life would soon disappear. We need to plant more trees in order to absorb the greenhouse carbon gases from the atmosphere. These are a major cause of climate change.

I would urge everyone to make the saving of our Earth the number one concern in the coming year (and years). We owe it to the future generations. As the Kenyan proverb says: "*We did not inherit the earth from our parents: we borrowed it from the children coming after us.*" We should see it as our work for God to care for the earth since we are co-Creators with God while on this earth. It is the most important moral issue for all of us. It is about respect and reverence for all of God's creation. It is also a way of growing up spiritually and discovering a whole new meaning of what it means to be holy/spiritual. We need to change our ways. We all need to be converted.

Fr Joe (On behalf of Clogher Justice, Peace and Integrity of Creation Group)



St Michael's Parish

(www.st-michaels.net & [facebook.com/stmichaelsparishenniskillen](https://www.facebook.com/stmichaelsparishenniskillen))

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