

ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

ENNISKILLEN

LISBELLAW



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NEWSLETTER

September 2021

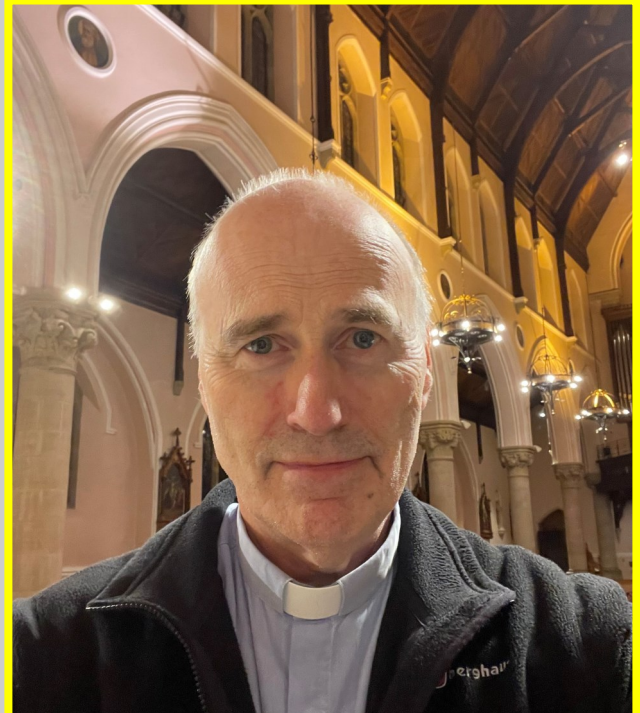
It has been a year since the previous edition of this Newsletter: a year of caution for some, incaution for others; fear for some, disregard for others; keeping out for some, staying in for others. Over a year into this pandemic, we know that it's not over yet. Indeed, if we take the pandemic of 100 years ago - the Spanish flu - it may be here for a while longer. This edition of our Newsletter was conceived as a sort of record of these times: a few pieces to give a sense of what it was like to live in these times; something to give a sense of what changed and what encouraged us. So, I am especially grateful to all who provided the articles.

I'm also grateful to those who brought this edition together. The energy levels are lower. There's been a lowering of the public profile, the lessening of public life: much less of the usual happenings. Yet, as the photographs of Confirmation and First Communion groups demonstrate, there is every bit as much going on. The children are growing, regardless. They have a future and they deserve the best shot at it. What will nourish and nurture them?

Whereas before the pandemic we looked to *outward things* to nurture and nourish us, to support and relieve the tensions or the boredom, to distract from the suffering, to inspire idealism, to manifest love and connections.... now we have to be cautious of all that. We have to nurture the *inner life*.... and if one thing is fragile today it's the inner life. The signs are there as to how it is being undermined in us by the worst of public culture in general. I sometimes ask myself how many more funerals it will take for us to realise what's going on. Yet, it must be said that modern technology served us well in the parish during the pandemic: our parish Facebook page, our parish webcam (installed in 2012) and our parish website has proved invaluable in putting out information, both locally and much further afield. (Take this year's video presentation for the Blessing of Graves as an example.)

These times are calling us to strengthen our inner resources. The foundation stone of St Michael's Church was laid in August of 1871. Here we are 150 years later: the church is still standing. However, the church-as-people, the church as the felt presence of what the building represents: that has gone into abeyance. We can't avail of the buzz of each other's presence. There's no longer the lift from the bigger occasions. There's not the same 'showing ourselves' to each other and to ourselves that comes from being together for the bigger occasions: Christmas, Easter, funerals, weddings, baptisms, even Sunday Mass.

This pandemic has fast-forwarded the change that's happening. It has rendered church culture harder to see. We have had to leave the pitch, so to speak. The important thing now, in my view, is to build the church at home: to have a sense of God in everyday conversation, to have God as a reference point in morning and night prayer or reflection. It's one thing to have our church building and that building is there to serve what God really wants: a people. But it's another thing for each of us to take on being that people through the way we live our lives and through the public witness we give to family and friends. It's the integrity with which we do so that will matter at this time. Without a sense of God, people weaken. Without a People of God, God's truth is harder to hear.



Monsignor Peter (after 10pm Night Prayer, which he leads each night over the Parish Webcam in these pandemic times)



Holy Trinity P S: Miss Quigley's Group



Enniskillen Integrated P S: Mrs Hobbs' Group

Confirmation 2021



Holy Trinity P S: Mr Star's Group



Holy Trinity P S: Mrs Clarke's Group



Tattygar P S: Mrs McCaffrey's Group



Holy Trinity P S: Mrs Daley's Group

Confirmation 2021



Model P S: Mrs McCartney's Group



Jones Memorial P S: Mrs McGrath's Group

MY LOCKDOWN!

As I write these few words, I can look out the window and see the beauty of God's creation all around; though the days are shortening, the sun is shining, and hope is returning.

Lockdown also allowed us to see, hear and feel nature all around us in new ways. We heard the singing of the birds; the skies were clearer and there was a quietness that brought us to focus on the gift of creation, a gift that is given to us by God.

We are social beings; generally, we need the company, the friendship and often the care of others. The time of pandemic restricted us very much in that regard. To be truthful, lockdown has been tough on us all!

For a bishop, to get around the diocese to meet people at important moments such as Confirmation is a great blessing. I did not get that opportunity to meet young people and their families in 2020 and in 2021. That is something I missed.

As a bishop of a diocese that straddles the border, it was particularly challenging having to cope with two sets of regulations governing restrictions. I had to make some tough decisions and try to stay on top of a very changing situation. I could not have got through all this without the back-up and support of a great team at diocesan office level, and indeed the support of all our priests and our deacon as well as the staff and volunteers in all our parishes.

The restrictions themselves brought many hardships for people, not least of which was not being able to be physically present at Mass. This has been a great cause of pain for many. And the restrictions on our worship also brought many letters and emails to my desk! I can sense the pain that many are feeling, and I can empathise with a great many of the different points of view put forward.

Covid-19 forced me to spend so much time at home and in front of the laptop. I'm not a man for being on my own for very long. But I had to get used to interacting and participating in meetings via a laptop. So many meetings, so many webinars! I'm tired of them, to be truthful!

I missed the golf and the football. It's great to have them back now and I look forward to being able to get to a few matches later in the summer and into the autumn. And my golf is improving!

I missed meeting my family and friends, but I value what they have done for me and what they have given to me during this time. Keeping in contact with clergy helped me. Keeping in touch with priest friends in Africa made me realise how much worse it could have been. And it reminds me that we all have a responsibility to care for those people who are not as fortunate as we are.

Maybe that is the overall message we should take from this period: that we need each other, that we need to slow down and concentrate less on ourselves and more on each other and the needs of those less well off than we are. Covid has challenged us to seek out the Lord, to know where He is found. Maybe as Catholics we tend to box God into the church building too much. Pope Francis constantly reminds us that our faith is given to us as a gift – a gift for others. We must guard against being self-reverential and go out with joy, showing Christ to the world by the lives we live. Vaccines may stop us from spreading Covid-19, but there is no vaccine to prevent the spread of our faith through the love we have for each other. I hope we can learn that lesson!

Enjoy what remains of the summer! May God bless you!

+ Larry Duffy,



Bishop Larry Duffy

St Michael's Parish Shop - more than a Shop!



St Michael's Parish Shop, as we now call it, was set up as a Religious Bookshop some 28 years ago, selling religious books, cards, candles and gifts. It was the brainchild of Monsignor Seán Cahill and an enthusiastic young curate, Fr Ben Hughes. After careful consideration, and with the help of a heritage grant, the old stables at the foot of Halls Lane were renovated to become the Parish Bookshop, store and meeting room with a further quarter of the building on lease to the council for public toilets. With the help of a similar shop in Belfast, and a modest investment from the parish, the Bookshop opened to great fanfare -

with Fr Ben convincing Monsignor Seán to have a Grand Opening Ceremony and Blessing after 10am Mass, complete with a procession of servers (carrying a processional cross, aspergillum for holy water and a thurible), priests and a huge cohort of parishioners.

At the time, Fr Ben "head-hunted" two recently retired and highly capable women to oversee the nascent enterprise - Sr Gertrude Lynn, retired Principal, Mount Lourdes and Ms Bridie Tannian, retired Vice-Principal, Mount Lourdes. Along with several volunteers, they ran a highly organised shop. Over the years, the shop has been hugely successful - providing a range of religious giftware, books and cards for all occasions as well as being a point of contact in the community - a place of welcome, hospitality and service. Its very existence is testament to the dedicated volunteers, who diligently manage the shop five days a week - generously offering their time to make it a success.



An important dimension of the Parish Shop is its pastoral outreach. Every person coming through the door has a story - perhaps they are looking for a Mass card for a deceased relative or friend, for a person who is ill, for a special occasion, a gift for Baptism or one of the sacraments or a prayer card to a particular saint in times of difficulty. Every story is important to us and so we endeavour to assist in a supportive and confidential manner.

As a result of Covid-19, it was necessary to restructure the Parish Shop. Nowadays, our main focus is on providing high quality giftware for Baptisms, Holy Communions, Confirmations, Ordinations, Weddings and special occasions like Christmas and Easter. We work closely with our main suppliers, CBC, Newry, and Veritas, Letterkenny, to provide a wide selection of giftware, cards, religious art, statues, votive candles, rosary beads, and books. For example, we stock new items like the statue of Sleeping Joseph for this Year of St



Joseph, as well as the New Jerusalem Bible, CTS Weekday and Sunday Missals and the Catechism, as well as a small selection of books on faith, prayer and parish life. We are happy to assist with special orders - and guarantee next day delivery from our suppliers. The Parish Shop is open Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday and Saturday: 10.30am - 1.30pm.

We acknowledge and thank all who contributed to the development of the Parish Shop over the years and to all who support us. We look forward to many more years of service to the Church and wider community.

Fr Raymond.

The Permanent Diaconate

It was away back in the 60s that the Church decided, at Vatican II, to re-introduce the permanent diaconate. In many countries, men began to train for the ministry in the decades that followed. In the USA, for example, preparation was well underway by 1969. Today, there are some 19,000 deacons there.

The Irish Church did not move as quickly. Indeed, it was not until 2000 that the Irish Bishops' Conference approved the ordination of deacons. It was another twelve years, half a century after Vatican II, before the first deacons began work in the dioceses of Dublin and Elphin. Today there are over one hundred ordained deacons in Ireland and several more are at different stages of discernment (thinking and praying about God's will) and formation (personal, spiritual and pastoral development and academic study).

In a recent article in *The Irish Catholic*, some newly-ordained deacons spoke of their experiences. Brett Lockhart QC, from a Presbyterian background, was ordained as a permanent deacon for the Diocese of Down and Connor in 2018. Based in St Brigid's parish in Belfast, Brett is married with four adult sons and continues to work as a barrister. He describes his time in the diaconate so far as *"first class ... everything that I hoped for, and more, in some ways"*. He describes his work as being *"a kind of bridge ministry between the laity and the clergy. The key is not to get too clerical. You want to stay with a foot in both camps ... I try to do things to identify with the fact that I'm still a parishioner as well."*

Of course, the introduction of deacons can pose something of a challenge to those priests with whom they work. Problems can arise. Brett recognises this: *"I understand it is a transition for clergy and it hasn't all been the same experience, but my experience personally has been nothing but collaborative and positive. There is a danger a certain territorial approach can take root. Sometimes priests can feel like deacons are mini priests, but it's an entirely different ministry ... I think if you understand the ministry and if priests begin to understand that it's complementary then I think it can work extremely well. Yes, there's a danger, of course, that deacons can get a bit isolated, or if a relationship with a particular priest in the parish is not good then obviously that can be problematic. But I think it can be solved often by a wise bishop putting you with people who are more open to that kind of ministry."*

Our own deacon, Martin Donnelly, is also quoted in the article. Martin was ordained in 2018. So far, he is the only deacon in the diocese but it is expected that he will be joined next year by Paul Flynn (our current Parish director of Music). Martin says that, with the ministry gaining more recognition, there are people interested in the next discernment programme which gets underway next year.

As the only candidate from Clogher, Martin studied and went through with a group from Down and Connor. He was ordained with eight of them in 2018. *"I was well supported within my own diocese; I had a couple of priests assigned to me who were close friends and a great support to me throughout my journey of discernment ... I'm accompanying two gentlemen at the minute that are considering a vocation to the diaconate and I meet with them regularly ... We have a small formation group here in Clogher and we will be walking with these people as they go through their journey."*

Following a period of discernment, those training to become deacons prepare for the ordained ministry. This preparation includes academic study, and spiritual, human and pastoral formation. In Ireland, roughly 60% of dioceses are engaged with the permanent diaconate. Dublin leads the way, with thirty-three permanent deacons, two more who should be ordained in eighteen months and nine or ten applications to begin the year of discernment next September.

Fr John Gilligan, the Director of Permanent Diaconate in the Dublin archdiocese, explained that *"We're getting few vocations for the priesthood, the calls we're getting now is for the diaconate ... A lot of these guys are very faith-based in their own communities, they're helping out and assisting. When they come to you they feel they are unworthy but they can bring so much, their experience of married life and their experience of family is so important. It has been a good programme I must say ... I think during Covid there is probably more interest because a lot of priests saw the need ... and the benefits."*



Deacon Martin Donnelly

Applicants to the permanent diaconate must be under sixty. The majority are in their fifties, men approaching retirement, no longer with childrearing responsibilities, who foresee, in the not-too-distant future, having time to devote to parish work. Of course, not all are married. Unmarried candidates must be over twenty-five before they can be ordained. They are required to make a solemn promise to remain celibate. Married men must have reached the age of thirty-five and have the formal consent of their wives.

Our deacon, Martin Donnelly, is quoted as saying, *"I have been married for 40 years. I think that one of the things that the formators at national level are looking at is a programme of continual support for deacons and their wives both before and after ordination. I know in my own case during formation my wife was afforded the opportunity to go on retreat weekends with me as part of the formation process and there were sessions organised for the wives to get together and talk as well and to be part of the retreat process."*

Permanent diaconate programmes are still at an early stage in Ireland but the ministry is proving invaluable. During the pandemic, which has put a huge strain on the work of priests, parishes with deacons have benefitted greatly. As the church and society recovers from Covid, deacons will have increasingly significant roles.

P Maguire

Not What I Expected



Rory Blake

Here we are, more than halfway through 2021, but did anyone even notice 2020 go past?

The days leading up to the first national lockdown weren't quite normal, handwashing videos could well have been the latest TikTok trend and 70% alcohol sanitiser was hotter than vodka. I remember the final days in school, starting into our last few A Level modules, oblivious to what was around the corner. A group of us performed at St Fanchea's on the 11th March, in what turned out to be the final song for the Feis to date. A virtual interview for university followed, foretelling the new norm for delivering education. By St Patrick's Day, school was out, and 'the Hollow' fell silent. A week later we were officially 'locked down'.

Initially, for me, the prospect of a lockdown did not seem too bad, and I can't say I was disappointed that exams were cancelled. But boredom soon set in, and no amount of permitted daily exercise could cure it. Walking along a ghostly main street even wore off

(albeit you could walk in a relatively straight line, contrary to the obstacle course of bollards and potholes we currently endure).

Fast-forward through a half-hearted summer and I left for university on the promises of a new idea called 'blended learning' and plenty of clubs and social activities to get stuck into. Following a couple of weeks of the proper student experience, things began to tighten up, and halls of residence became more like a detention centre. Sports training migrated online, and after earning a place and having my first meeting with the University Air Squadron, it too became a virtual affair. I counted myself lucky in a way, being on a Health Sciences course that required some amount of in-person teaching in our own group of six but staring through a laptop screen 4/5 days a week was getting to me.

I decided not to return to studies after Christmas, online lectures weren't worth getting up for never mind the £9k price tag! I have since been fortunate to secure employment in the health service locally, for one to gain some experience and to keep sane.

This year has had a bearing on so many aspects of how we live our lives, and faith has been no exception. Many Christians rely on the structure of communal worship which has been absent during the pandemic. I think one thing that has allowed us to persevere is that we are praying for one common cause. Where previously people have held private intentions, these have been united in hope, for our friends, families and each other - to keep safe from coronavirus.

Faith and Worship in a Socially Distanced Parish

One morning in the early days of the Covid-19 Pandemic, I witnessed an incredible sight - a man and woman kneeling inside the gates of St Michael's Church right in front of the closed doors. There wasn't a sound, apart from a plastic wrapper blowing in the wind. They were deep in prayer. My heart sank at the sight of them. I understood their desire to be close to the physical space of the church for prayer and worship. I also knew at that time it was unlikely we would return to private prayer and Mass, at least in any recognisable form, for quite a while.

Over the past year or more, we have been forced to grapple with the reality of churches being off limits, then gradually open for private prayer and finally open for public worship, albeit with social distancing and limited numbers - only to be followed by another lockdown. It has been challenging and far from perfect or even desirable. Yet many theologians and others in ministry say that these challenges present a real opportunity for catechesis, especially around the sacraments. As a parish and clergy, we were acutely aware that our response to the lockdowns in terms of how the faith is taught and celebrated would have a lasting impact on parishioners. I believe that the pandemic has prompted many people to re-engage with their faith and to reflect on what is important in life. What the pandemic has shown us is a real hunger for faith. This was evidenced in the response of parishioners, friends and total strangers to our prayer offering via the church webcam each day since the first lockdown in March 2020 - Mass, Angelus, Divine Mercy, Rosary, Night Prayer and a Holy Hour and Benediction on a Wednesday & Sunday - an offering which developed quite organically - and undoubtedly under the guidance of the Spirit. With audience figures from as far afield as Germany, Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong and the USA, the webcam created a vital connection to people who were alone, isolated, afraid and lonely.

In terms of our Sacramental Prep for P4 & P7 children, we offered parents formation talks via the church webcam and adapted resources, originally intended to be used in person in a parish, to online resources, including video presentations. When lockdowns eased, it was our priority to celebrate First Confession, First Holy Communion and Confirmation for families in a prayerful, dignified and safe manner. This year, the celebration of First Confession took place in school on assigned dates. First Holy Communion and Confirmations were celebrated on weekday evenings over a four-week period from the end of April - some 16 evenings in total! We are thankful to the principals, teachers, classroom assistants and staff of our local schools for preparing the children and for encouraging the participation of parents and children in our sacramental prep programmes: *Do This in Memory* and *Hearts on Fire*. By God's grace, as a parish community we made the best of a difficult situation. The children were absolutely terrific and rose to their special occasion. We are particularly grateful to all the parents for their cooperation and understanding.



So where to from here? I think it is fair to say that we are looking forward to more freedom and a level of normality which resembles life as we once knew it! People often ask me if parishioners will ever return in number now that they have become so accustomed to tuning in from the comfort of home. I believe they will. While streaming Mass and prayer via the church webcam is a good and necessary thing in certain circumstances, it is different from being present in person. It's a substitute right now because of the pandemic. But it is a substitute. The American Jesuit priest and academic John Baldwin put it well when he said, *"The thing about sacraments that I don't think we've adequately catechised is the communal dimension - the bodily dimension. It means bodies coming together. This is a quality not limited just to worship on*

Sundays. Even in individual penance, body language tells me a lot, even when somebody is behind a screen.” The tactility of our sacraments is extremely important because “It involves the laying on of hands - Confirmation, Baptism and the Eucharist are by definition embodied”. So, we should look forward to coming together in greater numbers when it is safe to do so, because there is no communion with the Lord without communion with one another.

During this Year of St Joseph, we pray for the safety and protection of the People of God.

St Joseph, Pray for us.

Fr Raymond.



A daily prayer to St Joseph.... and a challenge



In a new Apostolic Letter entitled ***Patris corde*** (With a Father's Heart), Pope Francis describes Saint Joseph as a beloved father, a tender and loving father, an obedient father, an accepting father; a father who is creatively courageous, a working father, a father in the shadows.

The Holy Father wrote *Patris corde* against the backdrop of the Covid-19 pandemic, which, he says, has helped us see more clearly the importance of “ordinary” people who, though far from the limelight, exercise patience and offer hope every day. In this, they resemble Saint Joseph, “*the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence,*” who nonetheless played “*an incomparable role in the history of salvation.*”

“Fathers are not born, but made,” says Pope Francis. “*A man does not become a father simply by bringing a child into the world, but by taking up the responsibility to care for that child.*” Unfortunately, in today's society, children “*often seem orphans, lacking fathers*” who are able to

introduce them “*to life and reality.*” Children, the Pope says, need fathers who will not try to dominate them, but instead raise them to be “*capable of deciding for themselves, enjoying freedom and exploring new possibilities.*”

True fathers, “*refuse to live the lives of their children for them,*” and instead respect their freedom. In this sense, says Pope Francis, a father realizes that “*he is most a father and an educator at the point when he becomes ‘useless,’ when he sees that his child has become independent and can walk the paths of life unaccompanied.* Being a father, the Pope emphasizes, “*has nothing to do with possession, but is rather a ‘sign’ pointing to a greater fatherhood*”: that of the “*heavenly Father*”

Pope Francis notes how, “*Every day, for over forty years, following Lauds [Morning Prayer]*” he has “*recited a prayer to Saint Joseph taken from a nineteenth-century French prayer book of the Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus and Mary*”. This prayer, he says, expresses devotion and trust, and even poses a certain challenge to Saint Joseph, on account of its closing words: “*My beloved father, all my trust is in you. Let it not be said that I invoked you in vain, and since you can do everything with Jesus and Mary, show me that your goodness is as great as your power.*”

At the conclusion, he adds another prayer to St Joseph, which he encourages all of us to pray together:

*Hail, Guardian of the Redeemer,
Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary.
To you God entrusted his only Son;
in you Mary placed her trust;
with you Christ became man.
Blessed Joseph, to us too,
show yourself a father
and guide us in the path of life.
Obtain for us grace, mercy, and courage,
and defend us from every evil. Amen.*

When the bell stopped and education restarted: Managing Education through Covid 19

Holy Trinity Primary and Nursery School is situated in the heart of Enniskillen on a split site either side of Brewster Park GAA pitch. There are just under 700 children attending the school and, while the numbers may be larger than in most primary schools, the challenges faced by the school are similar to those embraced by all other schools in the last 18 months.

Over that time, our school, like so many others, had to come to terms with remote learning, supporting anxious children, accommodating children of key workers, reassuring apprehensive staff and other such things. Staff members in Holy Trinity made phone calls to families late into the evening to check on children's welfare; there were those who delivered foodstuffs to homes in the community; there were others who came into school even though they were in medically vulnerable situations in their own homes; and there were numerous others who undertook hundreds of acts of human kindness towards those in our school community in a quiet, selfless, humble way. The pandemic has surely taught us the things that people reach for when the challenges of life arise. The essence of our schools was always on developing personal qualities such as respect, dignity, tolerance, self-esteem, perseverance and love.

As a school we were asked to "Adopt a Ward" in the local South West Acute Hospital. Each class connected with one of the Hospital wards and wrote cards and messages to staff to let them know how much their work was appreciated. It taught us all valuable lessons about the kindness and the commitment of those in our Health Service and deepened our gratitude for the caring professions.

Because of the pandemic, we have become an even stronger school community and we rediscovered what we believe in,

- A world where "I can" is more important than "IQ";
- A world where the simple things in life are appreciated;
- A world where we don't get bogged down in the "thick of thin things";
- A world where success is about self-worth, not net worth;
- A world where the purpose of life is a life of purpose, focused on concern for others.

The pandemic has reminded us what being a truly Catholic school means: we focus on the common good; we want to do the very best for our children and our communities. Will we hold on to the lessons learned? We must and we will.



A Lockdown Reflection

When I think back over the past year or more since Covid-19 became a determining factor in the direction of all of our lives, I am truly blessed to have been given a strong Christian faith that gives me the strength to cope with life and the many struggles it presents.

In the last weekend of February 2020, I visited Prague with three friends on what was to be my last trip abroad to date. I watched curiously, whilst attending Sunday Mass at The Church of Our Lady Victorious (which houses the Infant Child Jesus of Prague), the many Chinese tourists wearing surgical facemasks. Covid-19 had been confirmed in Europe and we followed the unfolding scenes on TV with great interest – never once really realising how quickly life as we knew it would change.

I had been studying for a Postgraduate Certificate in General Practice nursing and was on placement in a GP surgery when lockdown was announced. Daily updates from the Department of Health highlighted the gravity of the situation. It was overwhelming. Having lost two sisters in recent years, I was terrified at the possibility of losing my parents. I was offered the opportunity to work from home to complete my PGCert, as I had already met the placement requirements of the course. I readily accepted.

Working from home as a nurse during the pandemic, if only for a few months, presented many challenges; despite being extremely grateful, I felt guilty for not working in the acute sector like my friends and colleagues. How could I, as a nurse, not follow my duty and answer the calling of the HSC Workforce appeal? For a variety of reasons I didn't have an option to postpone completion of the course. Stress and anxiety became a daily companion and a daily challenge. My normal coping mechanisms - gym classes, holidays, meeting friends - suddenly became obsolete. I became more aware of the need for structure in my life and I found this in the daily scheduled Masses and religious devotions via Saint Michael's Parish Webcam. As other areas of life disappeared, I relied on my faith to help, support and sustain me. Virtual Mass and devotions brought us together at a time when everyone was apart but for me it could never replace the sense of community experienced whilst physically attending Saint Michael's Church – not only for Mass, but for personal prayer and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

Upon completion of my Postgraduate Certificate I started in Ward 2 SWAH (Acute Medical) in June 2020. Though anxious, I had missed patient interaction and hands-on patient care. There is something very humbling in being able to help an individual in physical or mental pain and distress. I have been privileged to sit with patients, giving reassurance when it was needed most, often when family have been unable to visit. I have lost count of the number of times I have quietly prayed the Divine Mercy Chaplet at the bedside of a dying patient; the grace of God offering a comfort to many that no medical, nursing or pharmaceutical intervention can achieve.

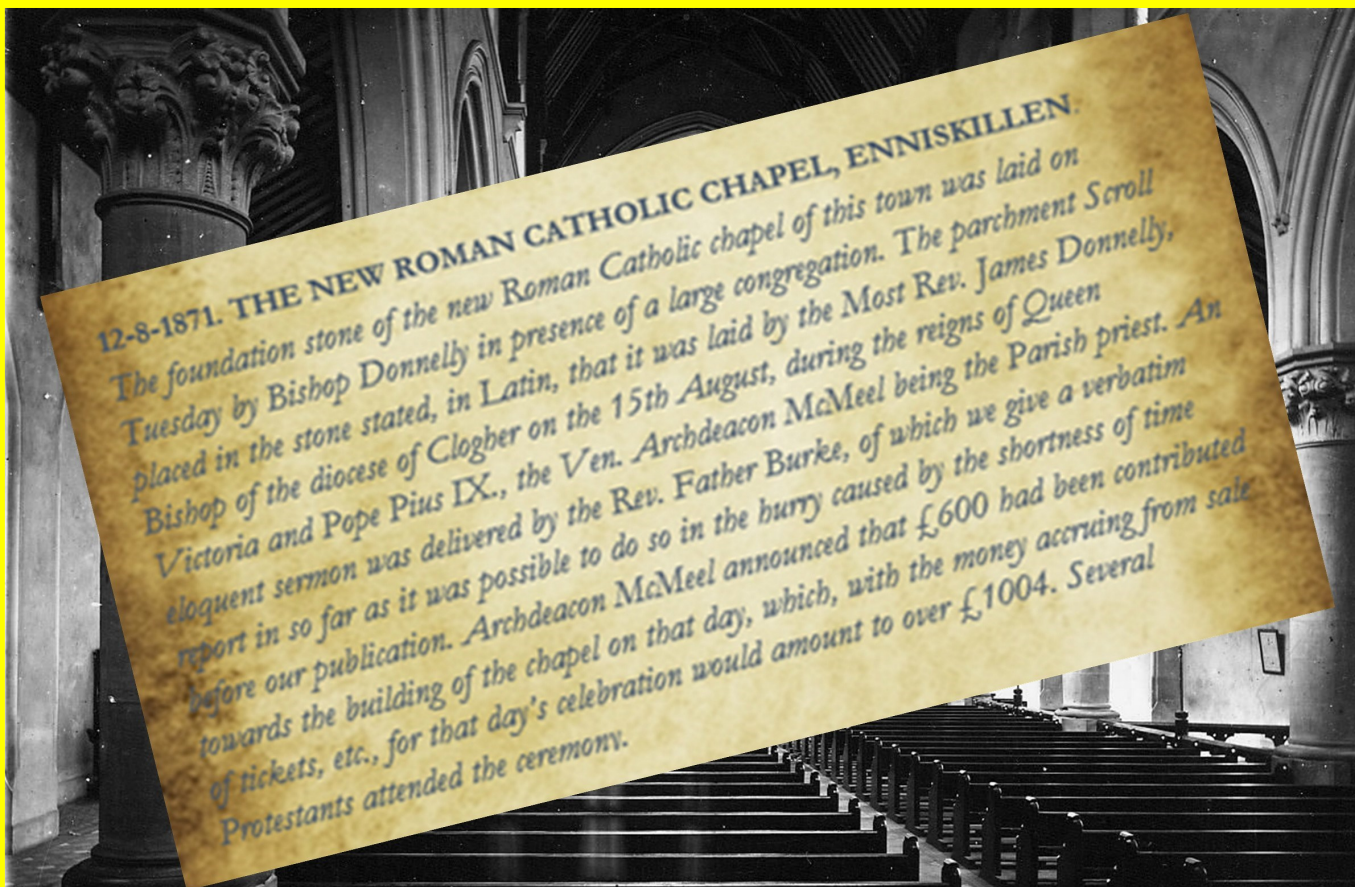
The success of the vaccination programme has led to a cautious return to life. We are very fortunate to have resources in Saint Michael's Parish that have enabled a safe, limited return to communal services and sacraments. The importance of such cannot be underestimated. The heart of our Parish is its people - present and together. I look forward to the day we all return.



Emma Reilly



First Communicants in Tattygar Primary School — with Fr Joe and Mrs Cleary



News item from 1871 courtesy of Bryan Gallagher

What's Missing Today?

A Reflection by Fr Joe



I am convinced that what is missing in our so-called modern world is reverence. It is a quality that the late John O'Donohue, (author of *Anam Chara*) urges everyone to cultivate for the sake of future generations. He writes: *"The notion of reverence is full of riches that we now need desperately."*

Reverence may sound like an old-fashioned word in the fast-moving consumer society that has taken hold in Ireland which is an integral part of the wider capitalist economic system. There is much evidence that the world we live in has become a deeply unhappy place and is already in the process of disintegrating because of climate change caused by human activity. The amassing of material goods does not bring happiness. It is also clear that there are many who are left behind in the consumer society and many who feel excluded in this society. It is clear that the proliferation of nuclear weapons does not bring security – but rather the opposite.

By 'reverence' I mean respect for the dignity of the human person and awareness of the beauty and variety of life that is everywhere around us. In the consumer society, there is a loss of the sense of the sacred and the connectedness of everything. That is dehumanising because we are created to care for one another, for the downtrodden and for all creatures. When we lose that we lose what it means to be human.

We were created with the capacity for wonder and imagination which often finds expression in art, poetry, song, dance, drama - and sometimes in silence and contemplation. When we lose that capacity for wonder and awe we lose the sense of reverence. When we lose that sense of reverence, we cannot be happy since we have lost our soul. It is no wonder the world is in such a sorry state. We need a new appreciation of the sacredness of all of creation which needs to be promoted in our schools and colleges.

There is a loss of reverence towards people seen in the way older people are often ignored or locked away. It is seen in the plight of refugees and asylum seekers; in the greed that results in the endless buying of unwanted and unnecessary goods. It can be seen in the way some motorists think of nobody but themselves and show no regard for other road-users. It is seen in the lack of concern for the common good by some who cling to a narrow view of the world and religion.

There is a loss of reverence for all of God's creatures which is seen in the wholesale destruction of our natural world with the unnecessary felling of trees and hedges; with the mining for oil, gas and minerals, the pollution of our rivers and oceans; the use of toxic pesticides and with the throwaway culture that Pope Francis has highlighted. This loss of reverence for the natural world leads to serious damage to the ecosystem and to the loss of biodiversity which results in the destruction of the habitats of the birds, bees and insects.

If we, in the Faith community, have anything to offer the fast-moving consumer society, it must be a sense of reverence for all of life. It was a dominant feature of the Celtic way of life of the early Christians in Ireland which we should all work to recover - along with our native language. There are many expressions of reverence in our native language. We are grateful to those good people who keep the sense of reverence alive. I see hope with the growing awareness of the younger generation about climate change. I see hope wherever there are acts of solidarity with the poor and oppressed in our world. I see hope when I see people making a big effort to speak our native language - ár dTeanga Dhúchais.

The sense of reverence for all Creation and one another should grow in all our lives when we contemplate the wonder and Beauty of God's Creation and our connectedness to one another. Our sense of reverence will grow when we experience the flow of love that comes when we care for all of creation.

We have to be thankful when we observe the natural world going through the Cycle of Life in each season; when we see the new lambs frisking in the fields, the birds building their nests and the flowers blossoming once again. Reverence is the only human response to the miracle of life that we share and see all around us. Reverence for all of God's Creation is much needed in our world to counteract the destruction and disregard for the natural world and for the poor who struggle each day to survive.



Holy Trinity: Mrs Corrigan's Group



Emmiskillen Integrated P S: Mrs Nolan's Group

First Communion 2021



Holy Trinity: Mrs Smyth's Group



Jones Memorial P S: Mrs McGrath's Group



Holy Trinity P S: Mrs Mongan's Group



Model P S: Mrs McCartney's Group

First Communion 2021

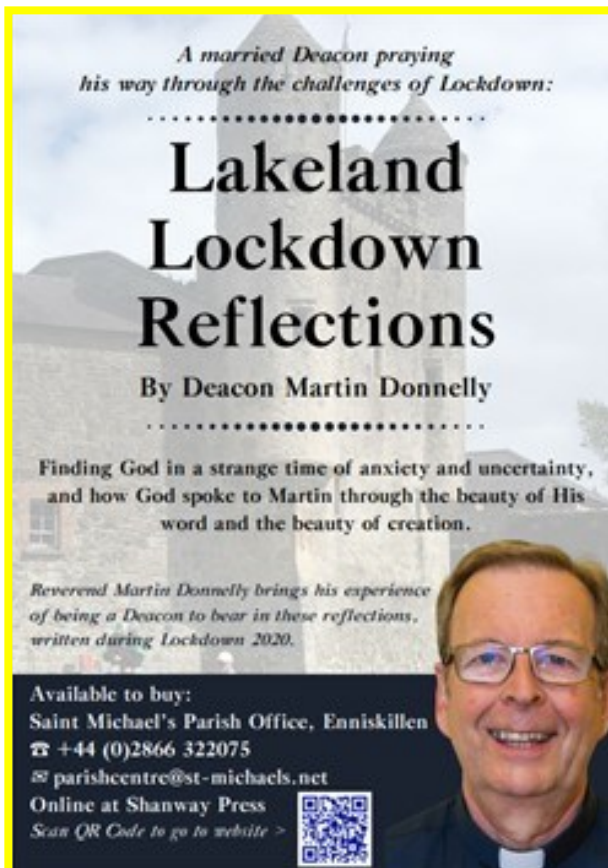


Holy Trinity P S: Mr Dooris' Group



Willow Bridge: Mrs Williamson's Group

Married Deacon's Fermanagh Lockdown book has a distinctly Ignatian flavour!



During Lockdown, Deacon Martin Donnelly wrote a number of reflections for the Enniskillen Parish website. His book, 'Lakeland Lockdown Reflections', illustrates his Ignatian ability to find and communicate with God in strange times of anxiety and uncertainty. Martin did his diaconate training with Alan McGuckian SJ before he became bishop, and also had a Jesuit Spiritual Director as part of the programme. He credits this formation for his ability to find God both in the Word in his preaching and also in the beauty of creation, specifically in Fermanagh lakelands where he lives. The reflections are brought alive by images of lake and forest scenes photographed by Brendan McManus SJ, who also wrote the foreword for the book. Martin underscores the importance of the photography stating that the images "*illustrate how the beauty of the environment becomes a stimulus for silent prayer.*" Martin adds: "*The words challenge the reader to reflect upon experiences of God in everyday life and to see God in the little things we often take for granted.*"

In addition to being a good read, it is also a useful resource for meditation and prayer with many different methods including Ignatian contemplation. Martin, with Brendan's help, shows the images to enable the reader to look at the 'ordinary' with new eyes. The reflections, with stories from Martin's life and ministry, appeal to the heart and open it to

wonder and awe of God's presence. What is unique about this book is that Rev. Martin brings his experience of being a married Deacon to bear in the reflections he wrote during Lockdown 2020. Being a deacon is a new ministry in the Irish Church and he gives an insight into his formation, his prayer and his ministry. In some ways it represents a bridge between clergy and lay people, Martin has a foot in both camps and shows readers the benefits of both: the experience of married life, grandparenting and its demands, along with the commitment to prayer, liturgy and making the Scriptures speak to human experience.

Brendan Mc Manus SJ

A Prayer for Vocations to Priesthood, Religious Life & the Permanent Diaconate

O Jesus, send labourers into your fields, which are awaiting holy apostles, saintly priests, heroic missionaries and dedicated sisters and brothers.

Enkindle in the hearts of men and women the spark of a vocation. Grant that Christian families may desire to give your Church helpers in the work of tomorrow. Amen

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

Assistant Priest Rev. Joseph McVeigh

Deacon Martin Donnelly

Telephone: 028 6632 2075

Presbytery, 4 Darling Street, Enniskillen,

St Michael's Parish Centre

28 Church Street, Enniskillen

Open: Monday to Friday: 10.30 – 2.30

Tel: 028 6632 2075

Email: parishcentre@st-michaels.net

Facebook Page:

<https://m.facebook.com/enniskillenstmichaelsparish/>