

the Connection

Easter 2017



Mass Times

St Nicholas' Church, Carrickfergus
Vigil Mass Saturday 6:00pm, Sunday 11:30am
Tuesday and Thursday 10:00am

Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Whitehead
Sunday 9:30am
Monday and Wednesday 10:00am

Confessions

Carrickfergus: Saturday 5:30pm to 5:50pm
Whitehead: Sunday morning before Mass

Eucharistic Adoration

Carrickfergus: Saturday 10:00am to 5:00pm
Whitehead: Monday and Wednesday 10:30am to 10:45am

Baptisms

Carrickfergus: 3rd Sunday in the month
Whitehead: 1st Sunday in the month
One month's notice is required.

Weddings

By arrangement. Three month's notice is required



CARRICKFERGUS
PARISH

Parish Priest: Father Peter Owens

Parochial House, 8 Minorca Place, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim, BT38 8AU
Tel: 028 9336 3269 or Emergency Mobile: 07940 002 830

pp_carrickparish@live.co.uk

www.carrickparish.org



Easter Message



I am delighted to introduce this Easter 2017 edition of "The Connection" and to acknowledge once again the dedication and creativity of our Parish Communications Committee and, in particular, of its Chair, Paul Mayne. To all the contributors to this issue, I say a heartfelt thanks for sharing with all of us something of your work in the service of God's People in the Parish of Carrickfergus and Whitehead.

Many of you will have noticed that for some time now our weekly parish bulletin has contained a section entitled "Our Pastoral Community", providing information about our local cluster of parishes: our own, St Gerard's, Loughshore (Greencastle, Whitehouse, Whiteabbey and Greenisland) and Glengormley. Bishop Treanor has reorganised the local structure of our diocese into various "Pastoral Communities", each of them having its own Leader (Vicar Forane) and Deputy Leader. The purpose of this new arrangement is to facilitate our parishes in sharing resources, coordinating pastoral initiatives and enhancing cooperation among priests and volunteers. To expedite this purpose, Dr Treanor has established Pastoral Community Forums or Councils, consisting of at least one priest and one parishioner from each parish, to act as an overarching consultative body in each Pastoral Community. The first meeting of our Forum takes place in early May and in the autumn the Bishop will formally commission all the members of these new Pastoral Community Forums in a ceremony in Belfast. These new structures will provide the framework for all our pastoral activity in the future, as individual parishes, local Pastoral Communities and as a diocesan family.

It is against this new background that we in Carrickfergus and Whitehead continue to strive to make our parish a model of "coresponsibility" - priest and parishioners working together to build up a community of faith centred on Jesus Christ and welcoming to all. Once again, this Easter edition of our parish magazine beautifully reflects these endeavours, the effectiveness of which is due in no small measure to the leadership of our Pastoral Council under its Chair, Mary McCormack and Vice-Chair, Paul Smith. Recently the Pastoral Council has adopted a new Constitution and agreed a three-year Development Plan for our parish - there is much to do and, thank God, many willing hands and hearts!

A Blessed and Joyful Easter to all.

P. J. Owens, P.P.

the
Connection

Happiness is being part of Children's Liturgy



The late Fr. Cosgrove had a chat with me regarding this new venture, and I was "hooked", what a great idea. I marvel that he asked me to join with Maureen Graham, me with my chequered CV! My mother was a convert and became the most wonderful Catholic, my father was a very sound and unwavering person being educated from start to finish with Benedictine Monks in Ealing, London and then up in Yorkshire. My sisters and I were at different Army schools as we toured around the world with our soldier Dad, priests would come to lunch presumably it was they who kindly got us through with our First Communions and Confessions! I can remember for me, that this special occasion took place in Singapore, I do not remember any other children taking part. Then we were back to the UK when aged about ten I was confirmed. This time I was indeed very special, as the Bishop invited my parents and I to tea and confirmed me in his own little private chapel. I did love becoming a "soldier of Christ", it seemed entirely appropriate in my view. The thought of receiving the gift of "Fortitude" was very welcome to my mind.

Fr. Cosgrove would not have known that my best friend came from Bangor, Co Down. We met at our convent Boarding School in Buckinghamshire. Northern Ireland was my destiny!! I later married a soldier who had spent all his childhood in Greenisland. I met him, in Germany!!

I studied at Stranmillis College and midway my husband was posted to York. During the term time I stayed with my in-laws in Greenisland with our two children and spent the holidays in York. I attended St Colmans and loved the people, they were so friendly, we met each Sunday for tea after Mass. Then off we went to Poland, and what Catholics the Poles were to be sure, churches were packed in that Communist State. Eventually we came back to Northern Ireland and Carrickfergus Parish became my "family". The late Fr. McGarry had been Chaplain at Ballymena Barracks so I felt quite at home. I got part time teaching at Newtownabbey "Tech" and then one day I noticed a large advertisement for an Integrated Primary School and thought I might offer my services in some minor way - being kind of in need of getting integrated myself! I did love being with the children and I admired the Church of Ireland and Presbyterian staff whose love of the bible was so real. These wonderful stories took on a new life for me. Assemblies were joyous affairs, with music, and the stories were woven through with a great love for Jesus Christ.

So I return to my school days! The memories of the beauty and peace of those convent days (11 - 18) deep in the country, will always be with me, I so liked following the changing liturgy, as it played out in that panelled chapel of the large Manor House (in

parts dating back to 1300). I loved my Daily Missal with its gilt-edged pages, I loved my pretty Rosary Beads, a red set and a glass set, I loved the sweet nun who chatted to me while she polished the gold and silver in the Sacristy and arranged the flowers. After school I had a year in the Mother House of the congregation in Rome, they ran a year's course for girls from around the world where they had convents - we were 18 years old. Here Catholicism was quite awesome, with St Peter's down the road, and a marble chapel in the convent with its dome and high ceiling. My oh my, we were walking in the footsteps of St Peter and St Paul.



And so to Children's Liturgy. What fun! When in charge for one of the Sundays, one really does LIVE that Gospel story for days before hand; what message can we bring out, how can we do it to make it real and meaningful. Our training days are amazing, we are encouraged to have our "sacred space" to bring the Gospel alive, with colour, with puppets or costumes, deserts or rivers, or wells with water, pictures, music, arts and crafts.

What a lovely way to get to know the families. Being with the children is a joy. One day I asked **"How can we follow Jesus?"** (remember 'come follow me, says Jesus' to the fishermen'). Well, up went a little hand, and he answered the question so readily - **"BY CAR"**. I was totally taken aback, and felt I had lost the plot, my mind went blank. Oh dear! On my way home I wished I had said **"YES, YES A GREAT IDEA"**. No more being cross with the dithering driver in front going too slowly, no more being cross when the lights turn red, no more being cross when someone cuts in in-front of you. **"OH YES A GREAT WAY TO FOLLOW JESUS"** Thank you, we learn so much from these precious little people!

Mass for the sick at Our Lady of Lourdes



On Saturday 11th February, Fr Owens and Fr Mc Caughan concelebrated a special Mass for the sick in Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Whitehead. The date was very significant, as it was on this day, in 1857, that the first apparition appeared at Lourdes. The celebration was a very moving and prayerful occasion. The sick were blessed with the oil of Chrim, and other members of the congregation were also invited to receive this very special blessing. Refreshments afterwards gave everyone a chance to chat. During the service Fr Owens briefly outlined the life of Bernadette, who had eighteen visions of our Lady, between 11th February and 16th July 1857. Bernadette entered the convent in Nevers in 1863, and did not return to Lourdes. In 1878 she was admitted to hospital with asthma, bone disease and TB. She died in 1878, and was canonised in 1933.



In 1909, our church in Whitehead was the first church in Ireland to be dedicated to Our Lady of Lourdes. After a major refurbishment in the nineties, it was reopened by Bishop Farquhar on 25th April 1999. This was another significant date as Bernadette had a vision of Our Lady on that day in 1857. Our church celebrated its centenary in 2009, and has recently been enhanced with the opening of the Lourdes Pastoral Centre.

Lourdes is a very special place of pilgrimage, honouring Mary, the Mother of God. The sick, and destitute, young and elderly, single or married – such are the pilgrims who come to Lourdes. There is no race or colour barrier, and all pray in their own native language. Every evening there is a torch lit procession, with every nationality processing behind the banner of their own country, carrying lighted candles. Daily Mass, Stations of the Cross, the Sacrament of Reconciliation and a visit to the baths are all a part of the pilgrimage. The faithful come to the Grotto bearing candles, the symbol of their faith in Christ, who is the light of the world. To drink and to wash in the water from the Massabeile Spring is to rediscover the grace and the meaning of that first Sacrament, which makes the person baptised “ a child of the Church.”

Our annual Down and Connor Pilgrimage to Lourdes is 11th – 16th July, 2017
I've travelled far, the land and the sea,
Beautiful places I happened to be
One little town I'll never forget
Is Lourdes, the village of Saint Bernadette

Article by Moira Rodgers

the
Connection

Grandparents Day



It was standing room only in the school hall as pupils, parents, and grandparents gathered for the annual **Grandparents Day**. A great buzz of excitement filled the hall as pupils spotted their relatives in the crowd. Grandparents had plenty of smiles on their faces as the pupils celebrated the important role that grandparents play in their lives through choral speaking, poetry, and song.

It was a lovely event, which was heartwarming for everyone present, and a highlight of the year for all the grandparents.





Do This in Memory



The 'Do This in Memory' programme was developed to help give parents, children and the parish community the opportunity to prepare for First Eucharist.



The programme complements work the children undertake in school and takes place in the context of the Sunday Eucharist in both our parish churches. It is then continued in the home through the use of activities and resources. The **THUMB** Mass book contains the full Rite of the Mass so that children and parents can participate more fully in the celebration of the Eucharist; and the Grapevine newsletter, which children receive each month, contains stories, prayers and child-friendly explanations of different elements of our faith and tradition to help families engage more fully with the programme at home.



This year the DTIM programme is being coordinated by Maura Hughes and Sharon Houston in St Nicholas' and Claire Pollard in Our Lady of Lourdes. As well as distributing the Grapevine newsletter, they liaise with the local schools to distribute and collect the children's artwork which is displayed on the DTIM notice board at each monthly Mass. They also organise a relevant altar display, gather children for reading the Prayers of the Faithful and the Offertory procession, and contact parents to remind them of the date of the next Mass.

Maura, Sharon and Claire have close connections with the parish school and with celebrating the Eucharist in our parish churches.

Sharon has two young sons attending the parish primary school. Her older son has already made his First Eucharist and will be preparing for the Sacrament of Confirmation next year. Sharon's younger son has recently celebrated the Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation and will celebrate his First Eucharist next year.

Maura attended the parish primary school some years ago...! She also made her First Communion in the old church and has fond memories of her special day.

Altar Servers



My name is **Reuben Clarke** and I am 9 years of age. I live in Islandmagee.

I made my First Holy Communion in May 2016. After this I was asked if I would like to become an altar server at Mass.

Paddy and Gerardine Stewart gave me training on everything I needed to know and prepared a rota for all those involved and I was set to go!

I serve at Whitehead Mass every third week and sometimes in between at Carrick. At the start I felt

a little nervous but now I really enjoy taking part in this way at Mass and helping Father Owens who is very kind and understanding when I sometimes forget things!

Recently I served Mass for Bishop Treanor when he visited the parish. I would recommend this to anyone who will make their First Communion this year and fancies giving it a try - I hope to see you soon!

Article by Reuben Clarke (Age 9 1/2)

Pictured below Aoife Devine and Reuben Clarke
at Our Lady of Lourdes, Whitehead



Baptisms



Over the past year, 25 children have been baptised in Carrickfergus and 5 have been baptised in Whitehead. These are just a few of those who have been welcomed into the parish in recent months:



Eoin Liam Johnston was baptised at St Nicholas' on 18th June 2016. Parents Sarah and Richard were joined by family, friends and Eoin's older brothers Callum and Finn in celebrating their special day.

Parents James and Marianne Cowan
at the baptism of baby Fionn Francis Cowan on the 3rd
September 2016.



First Confession



P3 children from both St. Nicholas' Primary School and Acorn Integrated Primary celebrated for the first time the Sacrament of Reconciliation at St. Nicholas, Carrickfergus on the 7th March 2017.



Women's World Day of Prayer



Artwork by Rowena "Apol" Laxamana-Sta. Rosa
Reference <http://worlddayofprayer.net>

Apol Sta. Rosa

Women's World Day of Prayer initially began as separate days of prayer organised by individual denominations in America, in the mid 1800's. It has now become a truly international and ecumenical day of prayer held on the 1st Friday of March each year. This year, an estimated 3 million men, women and young people in 170 countries and islands prayed together on that day, with approx. 6000 services held in the British Isles alone.



Each year the Christian women of impoverished countries prepare the service to be celebrated throughout the world. There is a different theme each year, this year's being, "Am I being unfair to you?" prepared by the Christian women of the Philippines who have suffered in recent times as a result of a typhoon which caused much destruction and death. In 2015 Pope Francis visited the country and highlighted the need to respond to climate change and our personal responsibility to it.

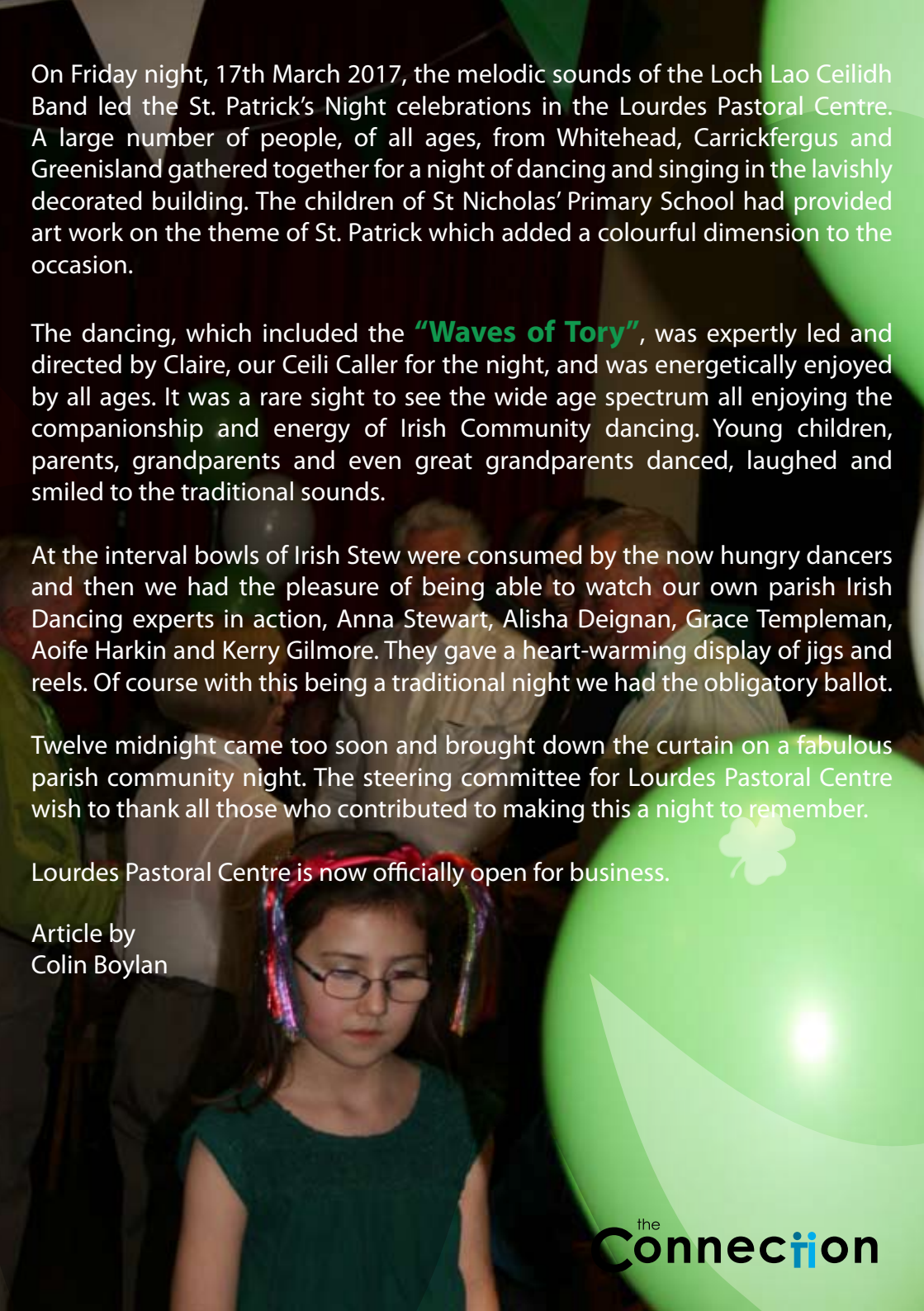
The readings selected centred on Matthew's Gospel highlighting the landowner who hired labourers for his vineyard, helping the unemployed. In the Philippines all help with planting and harvesting. No-one is paid but the harvest is shared amongst all. The seeds are transformed into fruit that symbolise the liberating spirit, so that in time of fruition justice will prevail. We offer the fruits of justice with our desire to bring hope to this unfair world.

This year the service was celebrated in 2nd Presbyterian Church in Islandmagee. In January there was a preliminary meeting, which 2 members of each church attended to be introduced to this year's theme and decide on the readers. Moira Rodgers and Gerardine Stewart attended this and the 2nd meeting in February when choir members from each church also had a practice. The actual service in March was very well attended and Gerardine Stewart and Ann Woods represented Our Lady of Lourdes by reading. Every year there is a gift-aided collection which is shared out to the needy throughout the world. The service ended with the hymn, "The day thou givest, Lord, is ended." A light supper was then served and enjoyed by all.

Next year's theme is **"All God's Creation is Very Good!"** and has already been compiled by the people of Suriname, on the north coast of South America. 2018 marks the 75th anniversary of Women's World Day of Prayer in Ireland – an extra reason to come along on the 1st Friday in March!

St Patrick's Night





On Friday night, 17th March 2017, the melodic sounds of the Loch Lao Ceilidh Band led the St. Patrick's Night celebrations in the Lourdes Pastoral Centre. A large number of people, of all ages, from Whitehead, Carrickfergus and Greenisland gathered together for a night of dancing and singing in the lavishly decorated building. The children of St Nicholas' Primary School had provided art work on the theme of St. Patrick which added a colourful dimension to the occasion.

The dancing, which included the **"Waves of Tory"**, was expertly led and directed by Claire, our Ceili Caller for the night, and was energetically enjoyed by all ages. It was a rare sight to see the wide age spectrum all enjoying the companionship and energy of Irish Community dancing. Young children, parents, grandparents and even great grandparents danced, laughed and smiled to the traditional sounds.

At the interval bowls of Irish Stew were consumed by the now hungry dancers and then we had the pleasure of being able to watch our own parish Irish Dancing experts in action, Anna Stewart, Alisha Deignan, Grace Templeman, Aoife Harkin and Kerry Gilmore. They gave a heart-warming display of jigs and reels. Of course with this being a traditional night we had the obligatory ballot.

Twelve midnight came too soon and brought down the curtain on a fabulous parish community night. The steering committee for Lourdes Pastoral Centre wish to thank all those who contributed to making this a night to remember.

Lourdes Pastoral Centre is now officially open for business.

Article by
Colin Boylan

Parish Contact Details



Finance Committee	Fr. Peter Owens (Chair)	Marian Frampton (Sec.)
Parish Safeguarding Committee	Amanda Stewart (Chair)	Sarah Dixon (Sec.)
Parish Pastoral Council	Mary McCormick (Chair) Paul Smith (Vice-Chair)	Ann Woods (Sec.)
Bethany Bereavement Group	Contact Parish Office	
SVP (Carrickfergus Conference)	Catherine Brock (President)	Patricia McKeown (Sec.)
SVP (Whitehead Conference)	Eileen Vance (President)	Patrick Stewart (Sec.)
Parish Halls & Entertainment	Pat Clarke (Chair)	Teresa Connor (Sec.)
Parish Cell Groups	Tommy Mone (Chair)	Maria Flanagan (Vice Chair)
Choirs	Anne Hayes (Folk Group) Dermot Foley (Vigil)	Kathleen McKenna (Whitehead)
Ministers of the Word	Mary Muir (Carrickfergus)	Patrick Stewart (Whitehead)
Eucharistic Ministers	Ursula Kelly (Carrickfergus)	Gerardine Stewart (Whitehead)
Children's Sunday Liturgy	Ruth Bates (Carrickfergus)	Gerardine Stewart (Whitehead)
Annual Parish Retreats	Ruth Bates	
Parish Repository	Anne Quinn	
Sacramental Preparation	Mary Muir & Maureen Graham	
Do this in Memory Programme	Maura Hughes	
Baptism Preparation	Jayne Logan	

Full membership of all Parish Committees and the contact details of the above members can be found on the Church Notice Boards and on the Parish Website.

Trócaire

Working for a just world.

Trócaire's Lenten campaign 2017 focuses on the millions of people facing humanitarian catastrophe because of extreme weather or conflict. With the support of people in Ireland, Trócaire will deliver humanitarian aid to up to one million people in crisis this year.

More information at www.trocaire.org





Produced by the Parish Communications Committee:

Claire Bagshaw, Patsy Bell, Joanne Campbell,
Pauline Cowan, Steve Diamond, David Gorman,
Sarah Johnston, Paul Mayne, Michelle Mullan
and Caoimhe Rice .



CARRICKFERGUS
PARISH