

the Connection

Summer 2018



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,
Tuesday and Thursday 10:30am to 10:45pm
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 months' notice is required.



CARRICKFERGUS
PARISH

Parish Priest: Father Peter Owens

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Summer Message



Welcome to the eighth edition of "The Connection". I hope you enjoy reading this issue and derive from it encouragement in your life of faith. The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965) often described the Church as "the People of God" - our summer edition certainly communicates the dedication and loyalty to Jesus Christ and His Church of God's People in the Parish of Carrickfergus and Whitehead. It also conveys plenty of joy!

Our parish primary school deserves special mention, not only because it is celebrating the twentieth anniversary of its new building, but also because of the key role it plays in the life of our parish. I thank our principal, Mr Kieran Austin, and his outstanding team of teachers and other staff, as well as our Board of Governors chaired by Mrs Philomena Cunningham.

We celebrated a sacramental mile-stone this year with the Sixtieth Anniversary of Priestly Ordination in the Redemptorist Congregation of Fr Martin Cushnan, son of our parish and one who is held in fondest respect by all of us in Carrickfergus and Whitehead. On this very special occasion we salute him and thank him for sixty years of humble service in India and here at home as a pastor of exceptional generosity. Ad multos annos!

As we prepare for the World Meeting of Families and the visit of Pope Francis this August, we remember that our parish family is a cell in the organism of the universal Church, from Jerusalem to Rome, from Fr Martin Cushnan and India to Fr Martin Mareja and East Africa, from Carrickfergus to Whitehead. Praise be to Jesus Christ in the Church!

I wish all parishioners and visitors a happy and a safe summer. God bless you.

Fr P.J. Owens, P.P.

First Holy Communion



Our wonderful children and their families joined the entire Parish family for the celebration of First Holy Communion. It was a never to be forgotten day for all those involved. Refreshments in the school hall afterwards were much appreciated as people had the chance to relax and chat after the main event. Thanks to everyone who made it all happen.



The Bishop's House



At the end of the Victorian era many rich people were building palatial summer houses in the boom town of Whitehead. This was their retreat from the factory smoke of Belfast, where they could enjoy some sea air and visit local scenic attractions. The biggest of all these villas stands beside Our Lady of Lourdes Church, and is known as "The Bishop's House". Paddy 'PJ' O'Donnell published the history of the house in his book about the Catholic Church in Whitehead.



The Most Rev. Dr. H. Henry, D.D., the Catholic Bishop of the Diocese of Down and Connor, must have been a privately wealthy man. He spared no expense in building 'Eirene', which was named after the Greek word for "peace". One corner has a great octagonal tower which affords a sunlit view for most hours of any day. A flight of stone steps took people to the double front doors on the second level of the three-story structure. The eight-sided door handles echo the shape of the corner tower. Inside the porch are decorative finials on wooden fluted pilasters. The hallway inside has decorative moulding around the high ceiling. Where other villas in the town have a carved wooden newel post at the foot of the stairs, Eirene has a pillar that reaches up to join two arches on the ceiling. The banister joins one side, while the pillar's other faces show the crest of the Henry family, the crest of the Diocese of Down and Connor, and the year 1899, when construction was supposed to be completed.



The interior featured coloured stained glass, elaborate panelling around the windows, and luxuriantly wide corridors. Years ago the children of the couple who live there today, the Austens, could actually get lost inside, and would have to shout, “mummy?” hoping for rescue. The oil tank is inside the house, which saves it from rusting (more modern buildings keep them outside because of the risk of house fires reaching them indoors). The roof has a remarkable feature - you can step out onto its flat central section and gain a view across the town, and the sea beyond.

Bishop Henry even paid to get a better and brighter kind of street lamp put up outside his house, leaving the town’s council to debate whether to try to upgrade the few others in Whitehead to match his new-and-improved light. Bishop Henry passed away one month after work began on Our Lady of Lourdes Church. Despite the lofty interior and very tall roof of the new church, The Bishop’s House top floor windows can see over the church, and from the roof you can even see over the bell tower and its weather-vane.

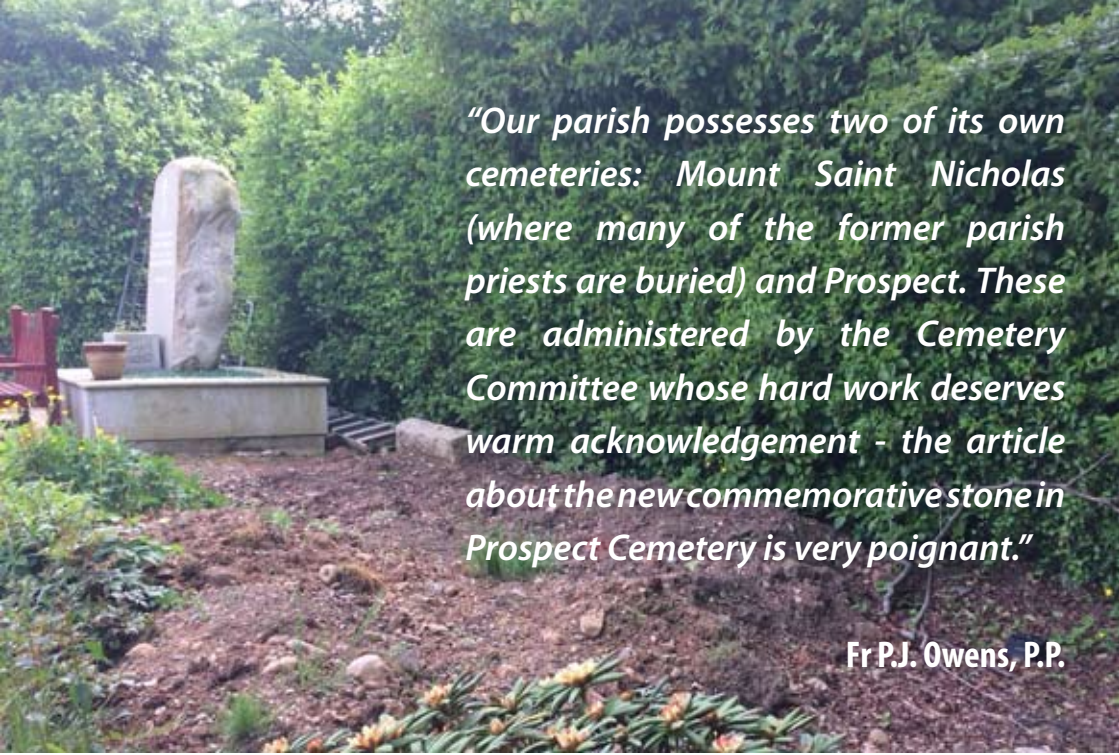


In 1911 the church authorities decided to rent out the house. Families lived there first, before Whitehead High School used the building from 1919 to 1957. It was sold in 1971. Today’s owners are the Austens, and Kevin Austen is working to restore the place. He even paid for a fifth, extra gate-post pillar for the drive-way to the former St. Colman’s Church, to match the other new ones. That was a very neighbourly gift, and many thanks to him for showing me around this remarkable house.

Prospect Cemetery

Ongoing work to improve Prospect Cemetery is nearing completion, thanks to the team of volunteers led by Eamonn Grant.





“Our parish possesses two of its own cemeteries: Mount Saint Nicholas (where many of the former parish priests are buried) and Prospect. These are administered by the Cemetery Committee whose hard work deserves warm acknowledgement - the article about the new commemorative stone in Prospect Cemetery is very poignant.”

Fr P.J. Owens, P.P.

In a previous edition of The Connection, Eamonn spoke of his desire to complete a fitting tribute to those who are not remembered by a name on a headstone. The impressive granite stone, with its touching inscription, is now in place, and the flower bed beside it is ready to be planted.

The idea would be that parishioners can remember a loved one by planting a small shrub or perennial. Eamonn has chosen a range of plants which would be suitable to the rather heavy soil, and people will be sure to find a favourite among them. Alternatively if anyone would prefer to sponsor a plant, Eamonn will organise that for you.

Anyone wishing to spend some quiet time in reflection while visiting Prospect will be grateful for the new seats which have been donated by the Wady and Degnan families in memory of their loved ones.

Parish Wedding



On the 31st May my sister Edel Stewart got married to Gavin Warke at Our Lady of Lourdes Church in Whitehead. This date was also the Feast of the visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth. I was one of the 4 bridesmaids.

The church grounds were in superb order as was the interior of the church, both of which had been tended to recently by church volunteers. Many thanks to them for their hard work. The church was awash with brightly coloured wild flowers,

which complimented the pink bridesmaid dresses beautifully. Edel wore a gorgeous ivory ball-gown. The men in the wedding party wore blue suits with paisley-print ties and pocket-squares. The music was provided by the very talented Catherine Hamilton (harpist & soprano) from Larne Parish.



After Mass we went to the Leighinmohr House Hotel in Ballymena with family and friends to celebrate. On behalf of my family I would like to thank Father Owens for marrying Edel and Gavin

and for putting them at ease with his humour and relaxed manner. Also Pamela Maginn for performing sacristan duties and David Butler for serving Mass. It was a very happy occasion for all of my family.

Article by Bronagh Stewart



St Nicholas' Primary School

It was with great pride that St Nicholas' Primary School gathered on the 11th of May to mark the 20th Anniversary of the opening of our new school building.

The school community felt that it was important to celebrate this significant milestone and to recognise all that is good within our school and also the wider community of Carrickfergus. We are very fortunate to have a community who value and respect the hard work, dedication and commitment of the school staff, both past and present. An important part of the day was the question and answer session in which Mrs Graham, Miss Best and Mrs Byrne agreed to participate in. The session was designed to help those present gain some sense of the transition from the old to the new school building.



All our guest speakers personified a very strong sense of commitment and dedication to the school and our children, both past and present. It was a delight to listen to their memories and clear for all to see, the origins of our strong pastoral care and child centred catholic ethos shining brightly.

The anniversary was celebrated with a 'Photographic Exhibition' and the launch of a '20th Anniversary Souvenir Magazine.' I would like to take this opportunity to thank the PTA for funding the magazine and helping with the arrangements for the day.



The request for contributions for the magazine was met with great enthusiasm. Mr Mayne and Mrs Johnston did a great job in editing and compiling the final edition. We extend our thanks and gratitude for their hard work and professionalism in producing such a fitting and lasting tribute to the school.

I would also like to thank the team at St Nicholas' especially our P7 children and Miss Doherty for our ICT display. A special thanks to Mrs Byrne and Jimmy for lending us their entire photographic collection.

I look forward to building upon the established hard work, high standards and traditions of St Nicholas' Primary School.



Article by Mr Kieran Austin (Principal)

A Most Welcome Visitor

On the weekend of 13th May we were privileged to have a visit from Father Martin Mareja SAC, who came all the way from Tanzania to say Mass in Carrickfergus! Father Martin is with the Pallottine Fathers Mission, and is on an extended visit to Ireland from his home far away in East Africa.



Father Martin paid tribute to the missionaries who travelled from Ireland to Africa, and helped the people there through education, healthcare, and by bringing the faith. He was very pleased to be able to come to Ireland, visiting different parishes, and bringing his faith all the way back to where it had come from. His homily had some very interesting observations on our damp Irish weather, and he referenced the internationally recognised slogan 'water is life' by gratefully drinking a glass of fresh, clean water.

Father Martin was very warmly received by our church family, with spontaneous applause breaking out in the church, and many parishioners stopping to exchange a few words with him as they left to go home.

Hopefully Father Martin's first visit will not be his last and we very much hope to see him back in Whitehead and Carrickfergus again.

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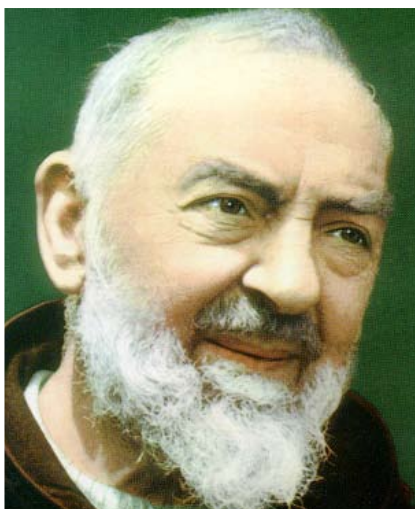
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Saint Pio of Pietrelcina

Francesco Forgione was born on 25th May 1887 to a devout Catholic family in the small town of Pietrelcina in Southern Italy. As a young child, he suffered from severe illness, but nonetheless, he took on strict penances and began to experience holy visions and ecstasies.

In 1897, Francesco felt called to religious life after listening to a young Friar speak about his ministry. A few years later, at the age of just 15, Francesco entered the Capuchins, a branch of the Franciscan Order, professing vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, and taking the religious name of 'Pio' in honour of Pope Pius I. He was ordained Priest in 1910 and became 'Padre Pio', as he has since been known around the world.



Padre Pio received the stigmata, the wounds of Our Crucified Lord, on 20th September 1918 during a religious ecstasy. He bore these wounds, uniting him to the sufferings of Christ in a profound way, for the rest of his earthly life. These wounds, however, made Pio the subject of ridicule and nasty rumours, both within the Church and in the secular world, and he was for a time under strict censure from the Vatican.



As a Priest, Padre Pio became renowned as an extremely holy confessor. Assisted by his extraordinary gift of reading souls, he reconciled many thousands of women and men with God. He also had a wonderful devotion to piously offering Mass every morning for the salvation of the world. – “Every Holy Mass, heard with devotion, produces in our souls marvellous effects, abundant spiritual and material graces which we, ourselves, do not know. [...] It is easier for the earth to exist without the sun than without the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass!”

After renewing his solemn vows and making his last confession, St Pio entered Paradise on 23rd September 1968. On his last breath, holding a rosary, he whispered the words “Gesú, Maria” – Jesus, Mary. His wounds, having afflicted his body for so long, vanished after his bodily death.

After a long and rigorous investigation process, St Pio of Pietrelcina was formally canonised by Pope John Paul II in 2002, and a huge number of miracles have been attributed to his intercession. St Pio’s earthly remains are housed in a crypt in the town of San Giovanni Rotondo, where he spent his Capuchin life, and pilgrims travel from across the globe to venerate him.

Saint Pio, pray for us.

The Rosary and its Beginnings

The rosary is the most popular non-Liturgical prayer in the Catholic Church today. It is used throughout the world as a devotional prayer to the Mother of Jesus. The Rosary, as we know it today, has changed several times since it was first introduced to lay people in Ireland around the beginning of the 9th century. Men who lived the Monastic life read and chanted the Psalms every day and communities who lived in close proximity of the Monasteries received inspiration from the Monks as they listened to them. Lay people wanted to join in but as the Psalms were very long and written in Latin, and with most lay people being illiterate, this proved impossible.

Alternative solution

Monks suggested that lay people should recite the Lord's Prayer 150 times a day which equated to the same number of Psalms. As this form of prayer spread across Europe, St. Peter Damian (1007-1072) introduced the 'Angelis Salutation and consisted', "Hail Mary full of grace, the Lord is with you". This short salutation found favour with laity and was more widely used than The Lord's Prayer. It is also believed that St. Dominic had a vision in 1214 from Mary the Mother of Jesus, who presented him with the Rosary, which included the beads, and prayers to be said. Dominic had tremendous devotion to Mary and promoted her prayer everywhere he went. He encouraged Christians to meet in small groups to recite the prayer. It's believed that this is how 'The Family Rosary' originated.

Further developments of the Rosary Prayer

Another form of 150 prayers, introduced by Theologians in the early 13th century, focused on 'The life, death and Resurrection of Jesus'. This was soon followed by the same format of prayers devoted to Mary. In 1365 a Monk from the Carthusians Order, Henry of Kalkar, began combining the prayers. Eventually, he divided the Hail Marys into 10s with The Lord's Prayer

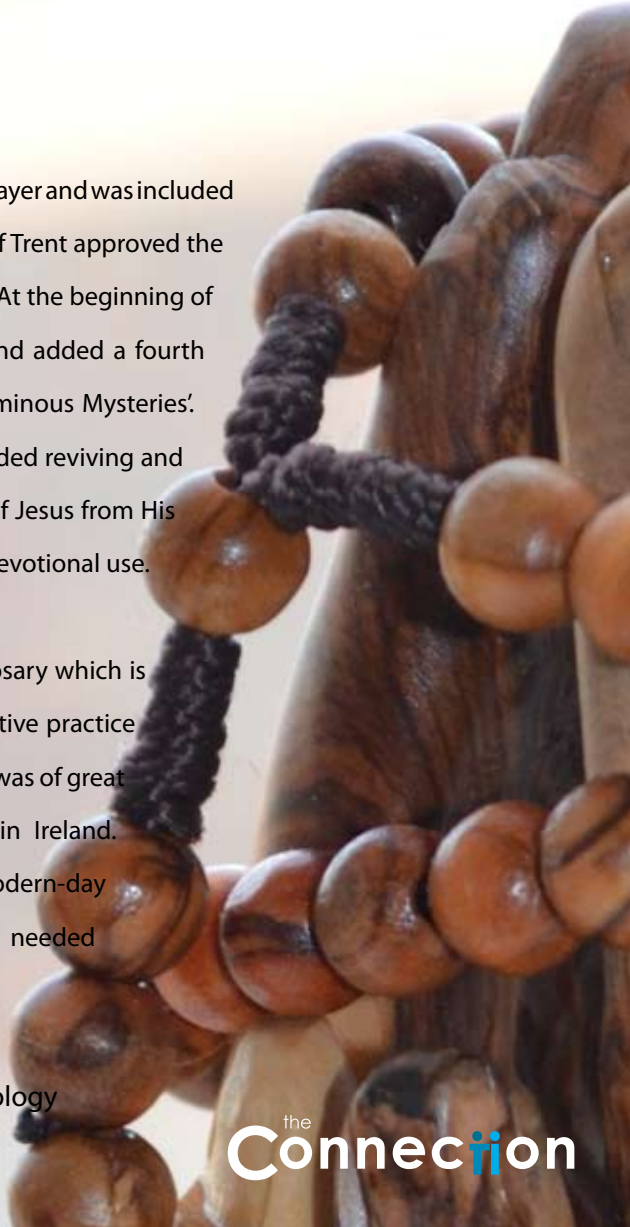
separating every decade which finally ended up as three sets of 50 which became known as a 'Rosarium'. In 1409 another Carthusian Monk, Dominic of Prussian, wrote a book which consisted of praises of Jesus and Mary and attached them to the of Hail Marys, as thoughts for each bead. This was the first time thoughts were used as part of the repetitive prayers. Over the next 60 years, 150 praises developed for the Hail Marys and the Lord's Prayer depicting the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus. Eventually these praises became known as the 'Mysteries of the Rosary'.

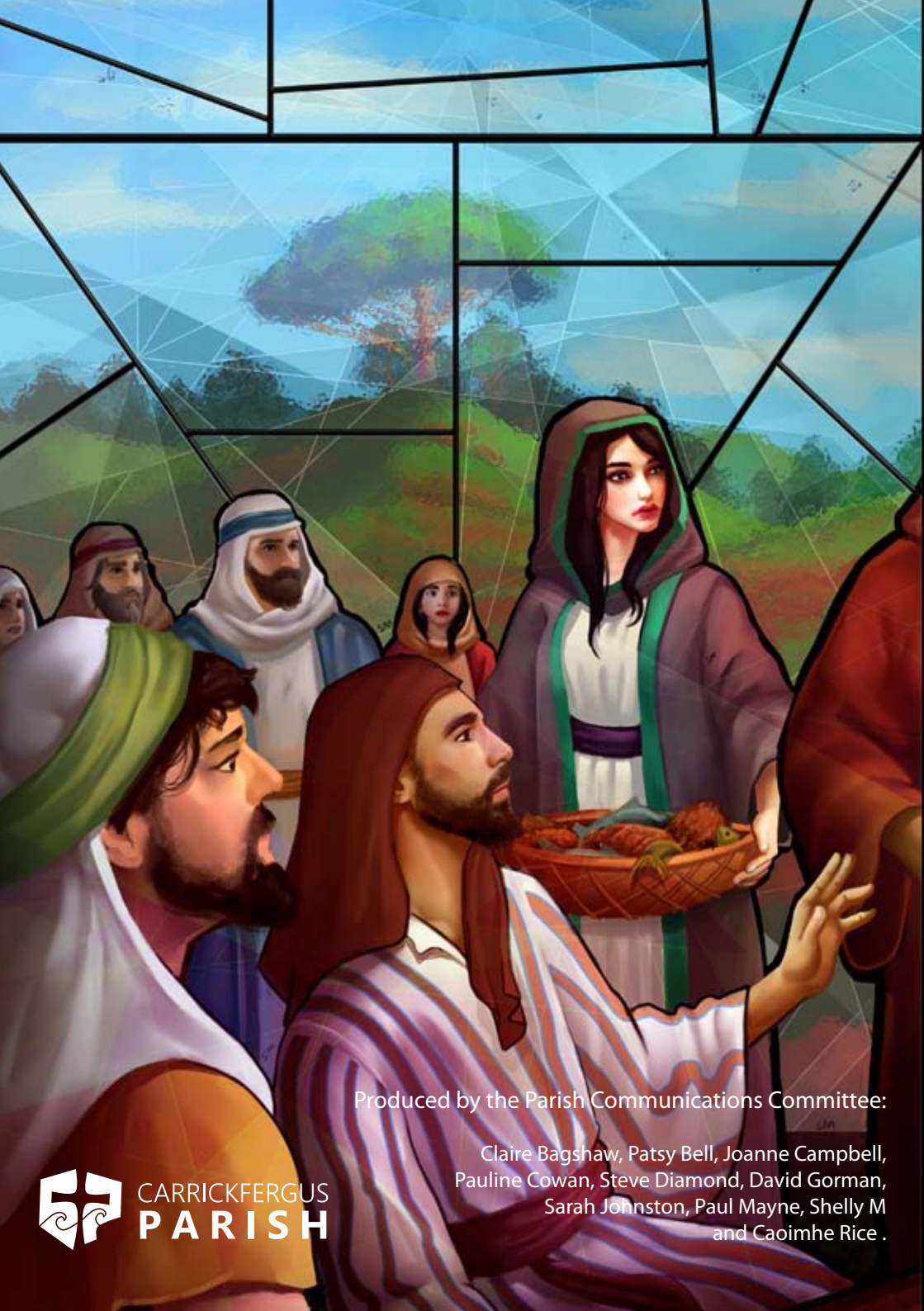
The Modern day Rosary

The Hail Mary developed into a longer prayer and was included in the Catechism in 1555. The Council of Trent approved the Hail Mary in the format we have today. At the beginning of the 3rd Millennium, Pope John Paul 2nd added a fourth set of mysteries to the Rosary, 'The Luminous Mysteries'. He believed that the Rosary Prayer needed reviving and he hoped that by focusing on the life of Jesus from His Baptism to His Death would revive its devotional use.

It takes about 15 minutes to say the Rosary which is a very rewarding, Spiritual, and meditative practice for both men and women of any age. It was of great comfort to Catholics in Penal times in Ireland. There's no doubt that given the modern-day Ireland we now live in, the Rosary is needed more than ever.

Article by Patsy Bell. BA (Hons.) Theology





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