

the Connection

Summer 2016



Mass Times

St Nicholas' Church, Carrickfergus
Vigil Mass Saturday 6:00pm, Sunday
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 1:00pm 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.



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Easter Message

I am delighted to introduce the Easter 2019 issue, the front cover of which powerfully captures the heart of the greatest of all the feasts in the Christian calendar: the wounded and crucified Jesus literally rises from the dead, leaves the tomb empty and inaugurates a New Age of divine life and grace - nothing will ever be the same again. As St Augustine said, "We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!". No matter how broken our spirits, minds and bodies may become, as individual persons or as a Church community, we can still find meaning and hope on account of the Easter Mystery. It is to communicate this message that the Church exists, dispensing through its pastoral ministry the light, joy and comfort offered by the Crucified and Risen Jesus.



Within our own parish family during Lent the Liturgy Committee hosted several evenings devoted to 'methods of prayer'; our parish continues to engage enthusiastically with other religious denominations, not least through the 'Carrickfergus Interchurch Forum'; and we are always eager to cooperate with other groups in civil society dedicated to the common good, such as 'Jubilee Farm' and 'Rosie's Trust'. As Parish Priest, I am indebted to our outstanding Parish Pastoral Council for all they do, including recent projects to establish a Communications Strategy, a Visitation Team and a Youth Group, all part of the unfolding of our 3 Year Pastoral Plan endorsed by Bishop Treanor. No Parish Priest could wish for more.

Our parish primary school goes from strength to strength, attracting pupils from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. I was very moved by all the children's contributions to the 'Prayer for Easter' competition.

I wish all of you Easter blessings - Christ is risen! Alleluia, Alleluia!

Fr P.J. Owens, P.P.

Lourdes Pastoral Centre



The parish craft group, Chatty Crafters, continues to meet monthly in Lourdes Pastoral Centre in Whitehead. We have been working on a variety of woolly wonders including Easter goodies and knitted items to donate to local charities.



In addition to this, some of our members have been collaborating with the ladies from Greenisland Knit and Knatter on Tuesdays mornings and have attended a series of 'Live Well' workshops delivered by Suzanne Duncan, a tutor from the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum in Cultra. Over the six weeks, we have had the opportunity to try out a range of heritage crafting activities including copper punching, decoupage, ceramics, brooch making and weaving as well as learning more about traditional Irish industries and early 20th century Irish life and customs.

Our short course culminated in a visit to the museum in Cultra where we were able to share in the living history of the Folk Park and observe local artisans demonstrating the use of traditional tools and crafts. Participation in this project has been a great way to make new friends and learn



new skills and we are grateful to the Greenland ladies for their warm welcome and fellowship.



We will continue our partnership with the Greenland group as we work on one of our next projects, contributing to the annual **Woollen Woods community event on the 1st of June 2019 in Jubilee Woods, Whitehead.**



Why don't you join us? Whether you are an experienced crafter, want to learn a new skill or even just come for a cuppa and a chat, come along and join in the craic – last Thursday of every month, 7-9pm, Lourdes Pastoral Centre, Whitehead.

Carrickfergus Interchurch Forum

The group had their February meeting in St Nicholas, where, demonstrating their aims of faith and friendship, the theme was St Brigid. Philomena Mc Quillan and Philip Orr facilitated the sharing of culture and joint heritage, with discussion of the role of women in the church, and the incorporation of old beliefs into Christianity. Everyone had a hands on experience of making a traditional St Brigid's Cross.



Details of further meetings are given in the Parish Bulletin, and everyone is welcome.

Article by Pauline Cowan

St Brigid's crosses are associated with St Brigid of Kildare, and are traditionally made on the 1st February, which was formerly celebrated as Imbolc, marking the beginning of Spring. The crosses have usually four arms, with a woven square in the middle, and are made from the rushes found growing in damp fields. Once made, the crosses were placed prominently in the home to ward off danger and evil.



The March meeting of the Forum , which was held in the Harbour Faith Community celebrated the heritage of St Patrick, with music and worship.

*Jesus said,
“Let the Little Children come to me
and do not hinder them For the
Kingdom of God belongs to them”
Mark 10:4*



In February 2019, Pope Francis called Bishops and Religious Superiors from around the world to Rome for a four day meeting to discuss the issue of the safeguarding of children in the Church.

An important part of the preparation for this conference was a focus on the Victims and Survivors of Abuse. Within our own Diocese this was marked by a Day of Prayer for Victims and Survivors in St Peter's Cathedral in Belfast on Friday 15 February 2019. At this Mass, the Bishop Treanor lit the diocesan Candle of Atonement and dedicated the Atonement Prayer for use in the parishes of Down and Connor. The prayer was based on the very moving Penitential Rite composed and prayed by Pope Francis at the final Mass of World Meeting of Families in Phoenix Park.

At all the Masses over the weekend 23rd – 24th February we reflected on the Church's mission of Safeguarding and also celebrated a rite of atonement for all those you have been so gravely hurt by the sin and crime of sexual abuse in the Church. As a parish, we also took this opportunity to update parishioners about the work that we do through the Safeguarding Committee to promote a culture of safeguarding.

What do the Parish Safeguarding Committee do?

- Vetting and safe recruitment for parish staff and volunteers;
- Develop Codes of Behaviour for volunteers and children involved in parish activities;
- Facilitate training and information sessions for parish staff and volunteers;
- Raise awareness of what safeguarding entails at parish level; and
- Complete an annual parish safeguarding audit.

Risk to children in our parishes is minimised within a culture of safeguarding, such as the one we have here in Carrickfergus and Whitehead. It is a culture where everyone plays their part; in promoting the welfare of children, encouraging their full participation in the life of the parish and in creating and nurturing a safe environment for all children taking part in Church activities.

Support for Survivors of Abuse

Towards Healing -counselling (Freephone 08000 963315)
Towards Peace - spiritual direction.
(Freephone 00353 867710533)

What type of prayer should we use?

Now that Lent is over does it mean that we no longer need to pray, or at least, not pray as much? The answer to that can only be decided by individuals as they continue their journey towards their final calling or Eternity. In a recent edition of the Connection magazine we looked at the history of the Rosary which is both an oral and meditative type of Prayer. The Rosary was originally and still is Scripture based. However, there are lots of other methods of prayer some of which include using Scripture and others that do not need Scripture at all, two of which are: 'Lectio Divina' and 'Centering Prayer'.



Centering Prayer is quite simply bringing oneself into silence with God and at the same time remaining in an upright position of stillness. It is essential to clear and dismiss thoughts as they enter one's mind. The easiest way to dismiss thoughts is by focusing on a 'word' which is pleasing to you. That word can be anything from your own name or Spirit, Jesus, God, Angel, a pet's name etc. The trick is to use the word a few times to dismiss the thoughts and then return to Centering on God. This is what's known as Centering oneself completely on God. People who practice mindfulness would call it 'Living in the moment'.

Lectio Divina has similar traits to Centering Prayer and uses Scripture readings from the Bible. Before beginning praying with Scriptures, one should take a few minutes and practice

Centering Prayer. This helps clear the mind and can also help one relax and prepare the whole body to receive the word of God.

Begin by reading a piece of Scripture from the Bible (perhaps 4 or 5 verses) and think about it for a few moments. Read it a second time and don't be afraid to read it out loud, as this enables you to hear the words. In Jesus' day nothing was read, everything was heard. Now, as you reflect on what you have just read, do any words or phrases jump out at you or do you question something in your mind? When this happens try and respond to it by examining what you would do if you were in that particular situation or scenario that you are reading about. Then just rest easy and continue to contemplate on that piece of Scripture for as long as it pleases you.

Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) once said, "Prayer is a longing in one's Soul....and an admission of one's weakness". Thomas Keating (1923-2018) said, "Prayer is the opening of mind and heart—our whole being—to God, the Ultimate Mystery, beyond thoughts, words, and emotions".

We all have a hope of reaching eternal life and according to John (17.3) eternal life is knowing God and His Son. Both Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina can be very beneficial to one's prayer life and can bring one into a closer relationship with God and His Son. Even though Scriptures from the Bible is used for Lectio Divina Prayer, one cannot be content in knowing our Bible only; more importantly, we must know the Person of the Bible, Jesus our Saviour, which can be achieved through prayer, meditation and contemplation.

Centering Prayer and Lectio Divina are more beneficial when practised in a group. Lectio Divina was practised on two evenings during Lent which was well received and can be easily organised in the future.

If interested: Contact any member of the Parish Council

Jubilee Farm

It has been a big year so far for all those involved with Jubilee Farm, the first community supported farm of its kind in Northern Ireland.



January saw the operation move from Drumalis in Larne, to a larger site above Glynn, overlooking Larne Lough, with stunning views in every direction. The purchase of the farmhouse and 13.5 acres of land was made possible by an innovative community share offer, where individuals or groups could invest from £50. Additional support came from various community funders.

Volunteer days are held regularly, and allow anyone interested to participate in the ongoing work at the farm, and to be part of something very special. It is a great opportunity for individuals and families to be out in the fresh air, building health and wellbeing, connecting with land and landscape, and being part of the Creation Care ethos.





The first livestock has arrived and the first polytunnel has been erected in time for the growing season, so it certainly is an exciting time for all involved.

Jubilee Farm is an inclusive Christian organisation, with clear aims regarding the responsibility given to us as stewards of God's creation.

For more information look for Jubilee in Facebook.

Article by Pauline Cowan

Rosie's Trust

A Northern Ireland charity, Rosie's Trust is providing a valuable service to animal lovers who, through age, disability, or illness are having difficulty caring for their much loved pets. The charity's founder Bronagh O'Neill, aims to enable owners and pets to stay together by matching them with local volunteers who are available to assist with dog walking, vet visits, or short term fostering.

Parishioners Clare and Eabha Cowan heard about Rosie's Trust through social media, where there was an appeal for volunteers in the Carrickfergus and East Antrim area. After the usual volunteer checks, they were paired with their pet owner, and their new friend Bess, a nine year old Cairn terrier. Together with another volunteer, they ensure that Bess gets two to three walks every week. Clare and Bess enjoy the walks, and new friendships, while Eabha is delighted to have a part time pet in Bess.



The benefits of having the company of a pet are well recognised, and if this little bit of support can help pets and owners stay together longer, then it is a good thing.

For information and details about volunteering go to rosiestrust.org

Article by Pauline Cowan



Prayer for Easter



The Communication Committee is very pleased to announce the Prayer for Easter competition was won by Cara Haveron from St. Nicholas' Primary School, with second and third places going to Ava Law and Grace Templeman respectfully, who each receive a book token. We would also like to thank all the children who entered the competition including a large number from some of our youngest members and decided that Natalie Sampson (P1), Isla Clarke (P2) and Dani Buta (P3) will all receive an Easter egg for their beautiful work.

My Easter Prayer by Cara Haveron (P5)

Dear Jesus

Thank you for all the things you did for us,
you loved others,
you forgave others,
you healed the sick,
you fed the hungry,
you gave water to the thirsty,
you helped the poor,
and that's why we celebrate you
and try to live like you.

Amen

My Easter Prayer by Ava Law (P7)

Dear God

Thank you for my family and friends.
Thank you for dying on the cross for all of our sins.
You suffered pain for us.
I am sorry for all those people in the world who don't
have the things that we have now and the people who
have lost family and friends in their lives.
Lord help me make good decisions and choices.
Please help me go in the right path in my life.
I will carry out the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit as I
go through the life and through Lent for 40 days as you
did for 40 days in the desert with no food or water.

Amen

My Easter Prayer by Grace Templeman (P6)

Jesus loves us and takes care of us.

Jesus died for us.

Never be afraid because Jesus is always with you.

We are very lucky people.

There are some people in the world who don't get what we do.

So always be grateful.

If you are going through a rough time say a prayer and tell Jesus what has happened.

He will listen to you no matter what.

Amen

The first Cardinal in Ireland

The first Cardinal in Ireland namely, Paul Cullen, (1808-87) was commissioned in 1866 by Pope Pius IX. Cullen had been the Archbishop of Armagh and previously held several posts of importance throughout his career within the Holy See. He is described as the most influential and powerful Irish Ecclesiastical figure of the 19th century and was at the forefront in the fight against losing the Irish identity and Catholic faith.

Between 1801 and 1921 it's believed that over 8,000,000 people emigrated to ---America, Australia, England, Scotland and European countries. This resulted in a demand for Irish foreign missionaries. Through the support of Cullen in Rome, a seminary in Dublin, named All Hallows College, opened in November 1842 with hundreds of young men availing themselves for the for-eign missions. Of course with the Emancipation Act and the lifting of the Penal Laws there was less fear in becoming a Priest. The famine in Ireland played its part as well. There is no doubt that Priests would get well fed as they had an extremely important job to do.

It's believed that in 1841 the population in Ireland was still 8.2 million and by 1851 was reduced to 6.5 million. Death and emigration was taking its toll on the Irish peo-ple. However, Archbishop Paul Cullen had a mission to strengthen the Catholic Church and faith in Ireland. As Cullen travelled throughout the Diocese of Armagh and Dublin, he soon realised how great the poverty was amongst the people. He fully understood that outbreaks of violence were inevitable unless the poverty and hardships people were living under were alleviated. As Governments failed to see the consequences of a frustrated people, Cullen believed that the poor were easy prey for recruitment into secret societies with violent tendencies and Proselytism. Therefore, he took it upon himself to form his own relief committee which would work for the poor. As the missionaries made headway in bringing people back to the Church, they also en-couraged the building of Churches and schools, wherever necessary. In large towns, people were encouraged to invite Brothers and Nuns to stay and establish schools and convents.



Mass attendance rose from 40% in 1850 to over 90% by the year 1880. Also, Priests, Nuns, Brothers and Seminarians increased from 4,700 in 1847 to 10,200 in 1880. It's worth noting here that, before the Penal Laws were lifted, Sacramental practices were not available to most people in Ireland. Morality was at low ebb as drunkenness, sexual relations outside marriage, all night parties at

wakes, and gambling became a normal way of living. Cullen's missionary work brought the morality of the people back to normal as people re-gained their sense of purpose and dignity.

When Cardinal Cullen was asked, in 1869, if the moral improvement in recent years in Ireland was due to the work of the National Board of Education, which was established in 1831, he replied, "The Catholics themselves had done a great deal by building Convents, Orphanages, Schools and Churches. The Catholic clergy greatly improved the morals of the country and were of the utmost benefit to society".

Cardinal Cullen's Legacy



Cardinal Paul Cullen re-established a falling Church in Ireland by building schools, hospitals and missionary work. The provision of Secondary education was established through the religious orders and eventually Catholic University Education developed. He established religious practices which continue in Ireland to this very day. Also, his relationship and backing from the Holy See ensured a strict allegiance to the Roman Church.

Produced by the Parish Communications Committee:

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