

OUR LADY AND ST. BRENDAN'S PARISH TRALEE



Parish 2020
NEWSLETTER

INTRODUCTION BY FR PADRAIG WALSH PP.

The new year began with much hope and expectation with many celebrations planned to mark the 50th anniversary of the dedication of the church. There were plans for a Parish Celebration at the Vigil Mass on May 16th. Discussions had taken place about a photo display as well as the publication of a souvenir book. Plans were well under way for our Parish Mission in October. Fr Seamus Enright, our Parish Mission Leader, was with us for one weekend in February to promote the Mission and to elicit topics from the congregation. It was novel, enjoyable and a fruitful exercise. We were fortunate to have confirmation ceremonies on March 5th & 6th for the pupils of Listollick, Holy Family and Balloonagh Schools.

Sadly, everything changed with the coronavirus. It was an unknown quantity for everyone, unsure about its high risk of contagion and to peoples health. All public Masses were suspended on Friday March 13th and there was complete lockdown on Friday March 27th, resulting in the complete closure of the churches until May 20th. There were no weddings or baptisms, and funerals were confined to ten people. It was a remarkable time for everyone. Every morning, Fr Niall and myself led the rosary and celebrated Mass. We developed a routine for ourselves, but there was no doubt, that the funerals with only ten people were probably the most difficult aspect of all.

The opening of the churches for private prayer was a welcome development, but more so, was the return to public Masses, even with restricted numbers. We were blessed with the initial preparations by the Parish Pastoral Council as

well as the many volunteers who generously gave of the time as ushers, collectors, eucharistic ministers and ministers of the Word. Our staff responded admirably to the new demands that were being presented.

Coronavirus COVID-19



Thankfully, our First Holy Communion ceremonies for Listollick, Holy Family, Educate Together and Balloonagh Schools took place before the schools re-opened in September. The First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies for St Ita's & St Joseph's took place in September. The school staff members in all schools were hugely co-operative to ensure all this happened in such an efficient and timely way.

In the midst of the return to public Masses, Fr Niall was appointed to Fossa Parish and Fr Amos was transferred from St John's to our parish. It is not an easy time for clergy to move from a parish or to move into a new one. We wish Fr Niall every fulfilment in his ministry in Fossa and wish Fr Amos every blessing and happiness in his time among us.

As we enter another difficult phase for the people of our country, let us remember all our faithful departed during this month of November. We pray too for all who have been bereaved during COVID-19. On behalf of Fr Amos, Sr de Lourdes and myself, I wish you and yours, every blessing of health, well-being and peace.

NOVEMBER MASSES

Due to current restrictions, it seems unlikely that we will be able to have our annual special Mass in November for those who died since November of last year. This is a great disappointment for the parish community and for families who have been bereaved. Instead, the Mass will be celebrated behind closed doors on **Friday November 13th at 7.30pm** and will be available on the webcam. In this month of November, we will continue to pray for those who have died and for those who are grieving. If a loved one died during the year in a different parish and you would like to have them included in the annual November Mass, please contact the Parish Office by Tuesday, Nov 10th.

ROSES MASS

One of the highlights of our year in the parish, is the attendance of the Roses at a Sunday Mass during the Rose Festival. It is with a sense of warmth and hospitality that we welcome the Roses, their Escorts and their families, as well as the committee members. The children enjoy the opportunity to meet the Roses after Mass in the Pastoral Centre for photographs and autographs. This year was a year with a difference as the Festival was cancelled due to COVID-19. It was a great loss for the town and a great disappointment for us that the Roses would not be with us for a Sunday Mass in August.

However, we felt that it was still important to mark the occasion and we heard that some of the previous winners were visiting Tralee for the weekend of the Festival. We extended an invitation and we were delighted that some were able to attend. The 1965 winner was Therese Gillespie, now Therese Collins and living in Tralee. The 1980 winner was Sheila O'Hanrahan who was representing Galway and the 1991 winner was Denise Murphy from Cork. Finally the 2019 winner and current Rose is Sinéad Flanagan who represented Limerick. Also in attendance were Anthony O'Gara, the executive chairman of the Festival and his wife Oonagh. At the end of the Mass, the Roses were presented with a fitting memento of the occasion, a green and gold face-mask!! The Roses were delighted with the welcome and the locally-made surprise gift of a mask in the Kerry colours!



From left to right: Anthony O'Gara, Therese Collins, Sinead Flanagan, Fr Padraig Walsh, Sheila O'Hanrahan and Denise Murphy.

YOUTH MINISTRY 2019-2020



The Youth Ministry programme is open to all Transition Year students from different schools in the town, no matter what parish they live in. The Trocaire Fast in Easter 2019 was a great success again. The young people fasted overnight in the Pastoral Centre Hall, dancing, singing and playing games while raising funds for the Trocaire Lenten campaign. Trocaire introduced an awards system in 2019. Two of the group - Lorcan Ryan and Christopher Egan - received a silver award while Rebecca Moroney received gold, in recognition of the amount of money they raised.

Once again during Advent last year, the Youth Group prepared symbols for the Jesse tree on the sanctuary. The young people placed different symbols on the tree, representing different aspects from the genealogy of Jesus as recorded in Scripture. They also read the explanation to accompany them.

In February, the Youth Group were in the process of preparing a banner to be included in the St. Brendan's Float in the St Patrick's Day Parade before it was cancelled!

During this very special year for the Parish the young people had hoped to contribute to the celebrations of the 50th anniversary of the church, bringing their energy and enthusiasm to enhance the different events taking place. Special thanks to the leaders for their energy and enthusiasm; Margaret Culloty and Theresa Elumelu.



TROCAIRE AWARDS



L-R: Lorcan Ryan, Theresa Elumelu, Rebecca Moroney, Margaret Culloty and Christopher Egan

FAREWELL TO FR NIALL

The Diocesan changes in July were greeted with disappointment in Tralee when the news broke that Fr Niall was being appointed as Parish Priest of Fossa parish, having spent only three years with us. Fr Niall returned to a farewell presentation in the church on September 6th after the 12.30pm Mass. He was delighted to be honoured despite the current restrictions.



Margaret Culloty, chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council spoke very highly about Fr Niall and how sad we are to lose him to Fossa. He received a number of presentations including some fun items. Fr Padraig had scripted a poem in his honour, including some memories of Fr Niall during the lockdown:

*He's proud of his hair and his moustache,
Plenty follicles and many a hair-lock.
Sure his hair was like thatch,
even plaiting his moustache.
While cocooning up here on the Rock.
Best wishes to you Niall in Fossa,
In the shadows of Aghadoe and of Torc.
They're blessed to have you,
May God bless all that you do.
All praying for you here on the Rock.*

TRANSITION YEAR DAY 2019

Over the past eleven years, the three parishes of Our Lady & St Brendan's, Spa/Fenit and St John's have sponsored a day of reflection for the Transition Year students of the Tralee schools. The day has been organised by our Parish Pastoral Council for the past five years. The event last year took place in the Ballyroe Heights Hotel on November 19th and 340 Transition Year students attended, the biggest number to date.

The first speaker was Kieran Donaghy. He spoke his boyhood years - from going to school and his struggles with learning. He also spoke about his friendships and family as well as the highs and the lows of his sporting career. His talk made a huge impression on the young people, by his honesty and his tips for healthy living.

The second speaker was Paddy Daly, the parish worker in St John's, Tralee. Paddy spoke about his remarkable experiences; his three years living in a halting site in Galway, his three years living in Brazil with his wife and two young children, his work in the prison service as well as the tragic death of his mother. All of these experiences have enriched his life and his ministry.

Then there was an input by the Tralee Youth Ministry Group. The topic was introduced by Theresa Elumelu who is one of the leaders. Two of the teenagers, Lorcan Ryan and Lucy Linnane spoke about the positive experiences of their involvement with their parish programmes. A number of teenagers accepted the invitation to become involved in the Youth Training programme, Ógra Beo or to become involved in some ministry in their own parish.

The final speaker was Elma Walsh, Donal's mother. Elma spoke very movingly about her son Donal, his illness, his death and his message. She emphasized the importance of SOS - Sleep, Outdoor interests and Spirituality, which help to give young people an important balance in life. Donal's message still makes a huge impression on our young people.

It was a most enjoyable day with the variety of topics and speakers. The students were also delighted with their treat - lunch in the hotel - only suggesting some desserts would have been appreciated too!! Many thanks to the staff in Ballyroe Hotel who accommodated such a huge number in such a professional and efficient manner. Unfortunately due to Covid-19, Transition Year Day won't take place this year.

ALTAR SERVERS



PARISH MISSION 2020

Many people remember the Parish Missions over the years. So often they were directed by the Redemptorist Fathers, who had a reputation of thumping the pulpit and preaching in a tone of condemnation. Sometimes the stories were far more exaggerated than the reality. In recent times we had a Mission in 2003 and more recently in 2012. The latter was a truly memorable experience and will be difficult to surpass.

There is a generation of younger people who may not even know what a Parish Mission really is. It is like a festival of faith. It is an opportunity for the community to gather each day for one week, to celebrate a different theme each day and to build up the bonds of friendship in this believing community. Each theme helps us to focus and reflect on different aspects of life and of faith.

On February last, Fr Seamus Enright who will be leading the Mission, spoke at all Masses about

the preparations and the possible topics. The congregation had an opportunity to endorse the different topics as well as suggesting their own. Sadly, preparations had to be put on ice due to the coronavirus. We have provisionally booked a new date in October 2021. It will be clearer in the New Year if this will be possible or not.

As St John's Parish are celebrating their 150th anniversary this year, they too have organised a Parish Mission for the same week in October. Naturally, they too have postponed their Mission until October 2021. It will be an exciting venture with both parishes having a Mission during the same week i.e. having the town of Tralee on Mission. Each parish will have their own Mission with a separate programme. However, there will be some shared activities during the week, to emphasis our shared mission in preaching the Good News of Jesus Christ. There will be updates during in the new year in the parish newsletter.



Fr Seamus Enright and Parish Pastoral Council members analyse the questionnaires for the parish mission

Special Diocesan Collections 2019

	2018	2019
Ardfert Retreat Centre	€ 1,260	€ 1,070
Diocesan Needs	€ 1,175	€ 1,360
Diocesan Youth Service	€ 990	€ 1,420
Education of Priests	€ 1,365	€ 1,935
Emigrant Services	€ 740	€ 1,390
Holy Land Collection	€ 1,265	€ 1,470
Irish Church Commissions & Agencies	€ 965	€ 985
Accord		€ 1,155
Lourdes Helpers	€ 2,835	€ 2,675
Peter's Pence	€ 1,465	€ 1,605
Propagation of the Faith	€ 1,370	€ 1,405
Sick & Retired Priests	€ 3,550	€ 4,165
Trocaire	€ 9,861	€ 10,067
World Meeting of Families	€ 5,745	€ 892
TOTAL	€ 32,586	€ 31,594

Making A Will

The parish has benefited over the years from donations received from the wills of parishioners who have died. Their generosity is very much appreciated.

To include your parish as a beneficiary in your will, the following is an example of a possible wording: 'I hereby bequeath to the Parish Priest of the time being of Our Lady and St Brendan's Catholic Church, Tralee, the sum of to be used for the benefit of the Parish.'

Tax Refund

The Revenue Commissioners have approved a scheme of tax relief for eligible charities. From 1st January 2013 all tax relief on contributions from parishioners over €250 regardless of their tax status i.e. (Self Assessed or PAYE) will now go to the Parish in all cases at a blended rate of 31%. These contributions need to be given in any of the envelope collections; the envelope collections for the priests and the Development Fund.

If you have contributed more than €250, we will send you the relevant form to complete. In 2019, the amount received from the Revenue Commissioners was €21,760.

DEVELOPMENT FUND INCOME	2018	2019
	€	€
Envelope Collection & Standing Orders	54,799	55,964
Silver Circle	32,852	31,764
TOTAL	€ 87,651	€ 87,728

CURRENT ACCOUNT INCOME	2018	2019
	€	€
Offertory Collections	158,921	158,300
Shrines /Cribs	23,628	24,305
Pastoral Centre	20,045	20,106
Booklets, Newspapers & Cards	3,175	3,180
Income Tax Refunds	21,358	21,760
TOTAL	€ 227,127	€ 227,651

TOTAL PARISH INCOME	€ 314,778	€ 315,379
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CURRENT ACCOUNT EXPENDITURE	2018	2019
	€	€
Wages, PAYE & PRSI	44,171	46,807
Service Charges & Fees	2,589	1,930
Insurance, Security & Webcam	9,834	8,806
Light & Heat	17,105	17,907
Repairs & Maintenance	29,771	40,591
Telephone	2,985	2,983
Printing/Postage/Stationery	10,300	6,465
Altar Requisites/Shrines & Crib	14,381	12,599
Missalettes/Booklets/Magazines	4,642	4,519
Education/Pastoral Programmes	6,130	7,373
Diocesan Levy* / Health Insurance / Rathmore Fund **	37,995	37,217
Courses/Hospitality	18,159	19,740
Bank Charges	1,955	1,975
Sundries	200	400

TOTAL PARISH EXPENDITURE	€ 200,217	€ 209,312
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* The Diocesan levy of 15% (€32,258) on Parish income goes towards the administration costs of the diocese.

** The Parish contributes to the Sick and Retired Priests Fund, which is called the Rathmore Fund.

PARISH COLLECTIONS AT SUNDAY MASS

1. Offertory Collection

The weekly offertory collection is taken up during weekend masses. It is used for the day-to-day expenses of the parish. These include: staff wages, insurance, light & heat, routine maintenance, telephone and printing.

The total contribution to the Offertory Collection in 2019 was €158,300.

2. Envelope Collection (Capital Development Fund)

This collection is taken up after Holy Communion as the weekly envelope collection. This fund is used to finance major works to parish property such as the re-upholstering of the kneelers last year. The total contribution to the Capital Development Fund in 2019 was €55,964. If you attend Mass in St John's Parish or in the Dominican Church, your envelopes are returned to Our Lady and St Brendan's Parish.

If you are not contributing to this collection, we ask you to consider supporting it in one of the following three ways.

1. Weekly envelope collection.
2. Annual Cheque.
3. Standing Order. This is a convenient method for parishioners. If you would like to contribute to the Capital Development Fund by Standing Order, please contact the Parish Office.

3. Priests Income.

The priests income comes from two sources:

Envelope Collections during the year.

- November Offerings
- Christmas Dues
- Easter Dues

Offerings given for:

- Baptisms
- Weddings
- Funerals

The household expenses of the presbytery are paid by the priests.

Priests are considered to be self-employed by the Revenue Commissioners and pay their own income tax and PRSI directly each year.

We would like to thank all who have contributed to the income of the priests. Your generous support is very much appreciated.

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Every parish is required to have a finance committee to assist the parish priest in the administration of the parish finances. The role of the finance committee includes the approval of spending on maintenance and capital projects, effective financial controls in the handling of all monies, approval and control of all fundraising activities, the formal review of parish accounts annually and the publication of parish financial reports to the parishioners. The committee meets four times each year and its members are Michael Hickey (chairman), Jacqui O'Brien (secretary), Fr Padraig Walsh, Sean Geary and Phil Luddy.

PARISH STATISTICS 2019

Baptisms:	88
Confirmations:	131
Weddings:	10
Funerals:	69

BENEMERENTI MEDAL HOLDERS RIP



The Benemerenti medal is a Papal medal awarded to people for their outstanding service to the church and their parish community. Two of our parishioners have been awarded a Benemerenti Medal in recent years – Paddy O'Connor and Paddy Brosnan.

Many people remember Paddy O'Connor as a dedicated collector at the 11.15am Mass every Sunday. He was a committed fundraiser for the parish, especially with the Race-Nights over the years. He was also a fantastic supporter of the work of Sr Concilio in Cuan Mhuire, supporting people struggling with addiction. In his own quiet way over the years, he raised over €1.5 million. During the past eight years he battled his cancer diagnosis, strengthen by his faith in St Therese. Sadly, Paddy died on January 2nd this year. It was a double loss for his family, as his wife Mary Anne died two months earlier on November 7th.

The second recipient in our parish of a Benemerenti medal was Paddy Brosnan. He was involved in the parish as a Minister of the Word, a member of the Legion of Mary, an active member of the fundraising committee, the leader of the active retired group (Club Ide) and most of all an altar server at daily Mass for 47 years! which must be a record in itself!

May God bless you dearest Paddy,

Unique, among our flock.

You are our light, to young and old,

Our saint upon the Rock.

His death brought a great sense of sadness to the parish as he was like a father-figure to so many. He was known to be such a remarkable man, driving to Mass until February 1st – two weeks before his death!! He was always so generous with his time in the parish, with the Dominican Church and in his community. He was so positive about life and the blessing of life each day. He was loved and respected by so many – he will be dearly missed. He died on February 17th after a short illness, aged 92. ***Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís.***



CHURCH COLLECTIONS DURING COVID

This has been an extraordinary year with the closure of churches for public Masses for 16 weeks from March 13th until June 29th. While the overheads were obviously lower during that time, so too has been the parish income. We have been blessed that so many people have continued to support the parish with their weekly envelope or donations. In 2019, the Offertory Collection from January 1st – September 30th was €106,836 while this year, in the same period, it was €45,184.



DONATE

Recently we have set up the facility for on-line donations. This can be accessed on the parish website: www.stbrendansparishtralee.org and use the **DONATE** button.

This gives people the opportunity to support the parish while they connect with parish Masses on the Webcam or with Sunday Mass on Radio Kerry.

The Easter Booklet and Dues Envelope were not distributed in March due to the lockdown. However, we are very grateful that so many people generously contributed to the Easter Dues clergy collection. We appreciate that the past six months have been very difficult for so many people with financial worries and employment concerns. We want to acknowledge the generous support of so many people to the parish and the priests during this time. *Much appreciated.*

FR AMOS RUTO SURUNGAI



Last July, Bishop Ray announced that Fr Niall would be the new Parish Priest of Fossa Parish and that he would be replaced by Fr Amos Ruto Surungai. Fr Amos is from the diocese of Kitale in Kenya in East Africa. He is the third eldest of a family of six, one sister and four brothers. His mother is still alive, but his father died many years ago. He was ordained to the priesthood in February 2018. Then last year his bishop, who is a native of County Cork, invited him to work in the diocese of Kerry for three years.

He arrived in Kerry in August 2019 and was appointed to St. John's Parish, Tralee. Then in August of this year he was appointed to our own parish.

He is grateful for the warm welcome and support he has received since arriving to our own parish. It is a difficult time to move into a new parish as it is so difficult to meet new people with all the current restrictions. He is eager to develop his knowledge of county Kerry and to learn a "cúpla focail". He is a keen supporter of Man Utd and is managing to cope with different renditions of "You'll Never Walk Alone!" around the presbytery. We are delighted to welcome Fr Amos to the "Top of the Rock!" and wish him well in his ministry.

PARISH OFFICE



Monday - Friday:
9.00am - 12.30pm.

Telephone: 066 7125932
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Web: www.stbrendansparishtralee.org

Many thanks to photographer John Cleary who provided many photographs for this year's booklet.