



PARISH OF
KIRKINRIOLA

BALLYMENA PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

2020 ANNUAL REPORT

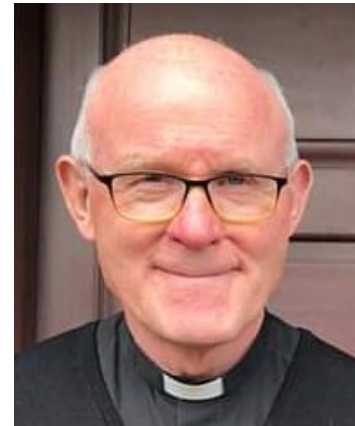
December 2020

We, the Parish Pastoral Council of Ballymena, inspired by the Holy Spirit, will nurture the gifts of all our people in order to grow as a vibrant, welcoming, joyful Christian community where everyone feels called to build the Kingdom of God.

Dear Parishioner

I am pleased to present the 2020 Report of the Ballymena Parish Pastoral Council.

The All Saints' Parish Pastoral Council was first established in 1998. It is a representative group of parishioners who advise me as Parish Priest on matters of pastoral ministry and who work in full collaboration with the priests of the Parish. The Pastoral Council is a consultative body, helping in the identification, implementation and evaluation of pastoral initiatives and policies best suited to spread the gospel in the Parish.



Monsignor Patrick Delargy

This report looks back on the work of the Parish pastoral Council and the life of our Parish in the past year. The Coronavirus has had a huge impact on our Parish and 2020 has been a period of great anxiety and sadness for many, intensified by the closure of our churches at a time when the solace and comfort of the Eucharist and the Church was needed so badly. It was especially sad to find our churches closed as we made our Lenten journey to Holy Week and the celebration of Easter, and again at the start of the season of Advent.

In what has been the most difficult of times, the selfless generosity and spirit of our Parish community has been remarkable, as this report records. We have seen much to give us hope, even in these darkest of days, and to believe that we will emerge from this pandemic renewed, re-energised and stronger. In the words of our Parish Pastoral Council's Mission, *inspired by the Holy Spirit, we will nurture the gifts of all our people in order to grow as a vibrant, welcoming, joyful Christian community where everyone feels called to build the Kingdom of God.*

I hope you enjoy reading this report.

Fr Patrick Delargy

MONSIGNOR P DELARGY

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Ballymena Parish Pastoral Council 2020 Annual Report to Parishioners

Introduction

Ballymena Pastoral Community

Ballymena Parish is one of ten parishes that form the Ballymena Pastoral Community within the Diocese of Down and Connor. The Ballymena Pastoral Community comprises the following ten parishes:

- Ahoghill
- Ballymena
- Braid
- Carnlough
- Cushendall
- Cushendun
- Glenariffe
- Glenarm
- Glenravel
- Larne



Pastoral Communities are reflective of the movement toward greater collaboration between parishes in planning and providing for spiritual, sacramental and pastoral needs within their respective communities.

Pastoral Communities enable neighbouring parishes to share personnel, resources and skills to enable parishes to do better together what they cannot do alone. Ballymena Parish is represented within the Pastoral Community by Monsignor Delargy and members of the Ballymena Parish Pastoral Council.

Ballymena Parish Pastoral Council

In accordance with the Norms for Parish Pastoral Councils in the Diocese of Down and Connor, the All Saints' Parish Pastoral Council has a **consultative role only**. Members of the Council serve a three-year term but can be re-appointed. The Parish Pastoral Council meets monthly between September and June each year.

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PPC Mission, Pastoral Priorities, and Membership

As the Pastoral Council for All Saints' Parish, our Mission is that:

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In pursuit of our Mission, our priorities or key themes for the work of the Pastoral Council and for the Parish are:

- Building a joyful Community;
- Nurturing the gifts of all the people;
- Understanding our faith; and
- Evangelising/Sharing the Good News.

Members of the Ballymena Parish Pastoral Council

The current members of the Parish Pastoral Council are:

- Very Rev Patrick Delargy PP (President)
- John Keenan (Chairperson)
- Mary Waide (Vice-Chairperson)
- Jackie Kerr (Secretary)
- Rev Aloysius Lumala
- Tracy Cassidy
- Bernie Ervine
- Hugh Killough
- Jeanne Martin
- Paul McAuley
- Sean O'Boyle
- Rosemary Quinn
- Danuta Smolinska

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Reflections on the 2019/20 Year

Building a joyful Community

The family became the focus of the celebration of our 10am Sunday morning Mass in All Saints. Our young people became actively involved in the celebration of the Mass through the formation of two new choirs: a children's choir for ages 4 to 10; and a youth choir for children and young people in Year 7 and post-primary education. As members of the Children's Liturgy team, our older teenagers helped our younger children to understand and celebrate the liturgy in a fun way through art, prayer and conversation.



Nurturing the gifts of all the people

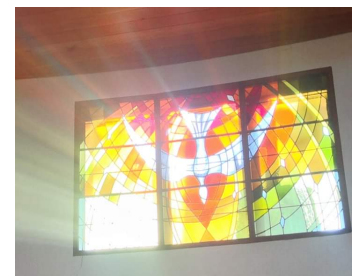
Lectio Divina is a method of prayerful reading, contemplation and reflection on scripture. A Lectio Divina group for Parish readers was formed in November 2019 and continues to meet monthly, and a second group will meet for the first time in January 2021. If you would be interested in joining a Lectio Divina group, please contact Jackie Kerr on 07483 875761.



Parish Readers perform a vital Ministry within the Parish, proclaiming the Word of God to our fellow parishioners at Mass, and to those joining the service from home by radio or webcam.

Training for current and new Ministers of the Word was held in November 2019 through a three-week programme delivered by **Kieran Downey**, Head of Religious Education in St Killian's College.

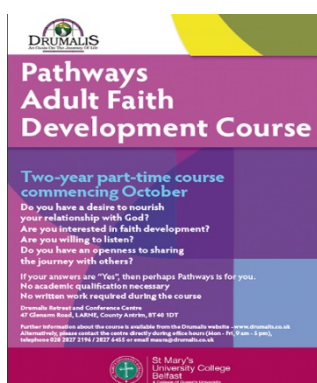
The laity can play an important role in the church and in the design and delivery of services. In November 2019, a lay-led *Walk of Light and Witness* took place when families from the Parish came together in All Saints Church to listen to a short reading from scripture before setting off on a walk wearing brightly coloured clothing and carrying glow sticks. The walkers were led by the Children's Choir. While the walk was taking place, the Luminous Mysteries were recited in the church.



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Understanding our faith

The Parish actively promotes the Pathways programme delivered by Drumalis each year. Pathways is a two-year Adult Faith Development programme suitable for men and women of all ages who wish to update their understanding of Church teaching, faith and ministry and to explore what this means in everyday life. Three parishioners commenced Year 1 and six parishioners commenced Year 2 of the programme in 2019.



The Pathways programme is currently suspended but the Council is keen to promote and sustain involvement in the programme when the current Covid-19 restrictions end.

A programme of talks, prayer and reflection entitled *Giving God Another Chance* and arranged by **Frank and Maeve Magee** commenced in January 2020. Guest speakers included **Deacon Terence Butcher**, **Rev Desi Maxwell** and former Tyrone football manager, **Mickey Harte**.



L to R: Maeve Magee, Micky Harte, Frank Magee, and Monsignor Delargy

Evangelising/Sharing the Good News

Communication and engagement are key priorities for the Parish Council. The Parish Facebook page and website have been critical in the sharing of key information and staying connected as a Parish during the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly when the churches have been closed. The Parish Facebook page has played a vital role in the broadcasting of Masses and services since March, enhanced further by the installation of webcam technology in the summer months. The Parish Pastoral Council wishes to record its thanks to **Phoebe McDonald** and **Dermot Crawford** for their management of the Parish Facebook page. December 2020 also saw the launch of the new, vibrant Parish website designed by **Brian Wilson**.



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Deacon Joseph Baxter visited the Parish in November 2020 and spoke about the Permanent Diaconate at each Mass on the Feast of Christ the King. The Permanent Diaconate responds to the call of Jesus and his Church in three specific ways. These are through the Ministry of Charity serving the poor, vulnerable and marginalised, the Ministry of the Word proclaiming the Gospel, and the Ministry of the Altar assisting the Bishop or priest at Mass, distributing Holy Communion, celebrating baptisms, officiating at weddings or assisting at funerals. Deacon Baxter encouraged men in the Parish to contemplate a vocation to the Permanent Diaconate as a third group of students will commence their studies in September 2021. Please speak to Monsignor Delargy if you would like further information, or visit the Diocesan website, www.downandconnor.org.



In February 2020, the Council welcomed **Roisin O'Hara**, Outreach Officer with Trocaire, who gave an overview of the Pope's Encyclical *Laudato Si, Care for our Common Home*. The Council has had a specific focus on eco-issues in 2020. The Parish has registered as an eco-Parish with the inter-denominational Eco-Congregation Ireland and is supporting the Crebilly Garden Project led by **Donna McCormick**.

The Crebilly Garden Project project involves planting and maintenance of the grounds of St Patrick's church in Crebilly. Donna will be seeking further volunteers to get involved in the Spring, so look out for details in the Parish bulletin, Facebook page and website.



St Patrick's Church, Crebilly

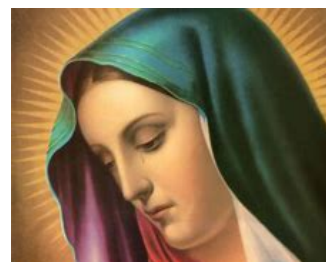
Covid-19



We could not reflect on the 2020 year without recognising the impact of Covid-19 on our Parish community. The celebration of the Easter Triduum in an empty church brought an intensity, simplicity and spiritual significance to Holy Week and Easter Sunday services that will be long remembered.

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While churches remained closed in early May, the annual May Novena was broadcast daily via Facebook with talks and recitation of the Rosary taking place each evening from 1 to 9 May 2020.



From the outset of this health emergency, our Parishioners and Parish Groups responded with compassion and generosity to support those in need and our front-line health care workers. The manager of the Old School Café in our Parish Centre, **Claire Law**, worked with SVP and All Saints GAC to prepare and distribute frozen meals to parishioners who were socially isolating. SVP also worked with the Carson Project in Harryville and Mid and East Antrim Council to distribute food parcels as part of a cross-community response to Covid-19. Parish groups and volunteers worked to make scrubs and masks for health care staff.



It was with great joy that we were able to re-open All Saints Church for private prayer on 24 May and public Mass in early July, and able to re-open St Patrick's Church, Crebilly in August. This again illustrated the incredible generosity and spirit of our parishioners with teams of volunteers acting as stewards to prepare the churches for re-opening, distributing passes, cleaning the church, and ensuring that social distancing measures were in place and observed. We also saw the re-opening of the Parish Centre, providing safe, socially distanced meeting spaces for Parish and community groups, and the re-opening of the Vincent's SVP charity shop.



Working with our Parish primary schools, the Sacrament of First Holy Communion was celebrated over three weekends in late September and early October, with around 150 children making their First Holy Communion.

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Special Moments from the 2019/20 Year



The Parish was privileged to receive **Bishop Noel Treanor** who joined us for the celebration of Mass on New Year's Day, the World Day of Peace.

Bishop Noel Treanor

Christian Unity Week 2020 concluded with an inter-church service in All Saints Church on 26 January, also the Sunday of the Word of God. The guest speaker was Methodist Minister **Reverend David Cooper** who spoke on St Paul's journey to Malta, with the theme of *Unusual Kindness*. An inter-church service was held in All Saints Church on 6 March 2020 to celebrate World Day of Prayer.



Musicians performing on World Day of Prayer 2020



On Saturday 29 February, **Jim Deeds** of the Living Church team and **Fr Brendan McManus SJ** led a day of prayer and reflection in our Parish Centre entitled *Finding God in the Mess*. The event was well attended by parishioners from across the Ballymena Pastoral Community and beyond.

Jim Deeds and Fr Brendan McManus

Weekly prayer evenings were held in All Saints Church in the final months of 2020. Prayers of devotion to Our Lady were held in October, prayers for the dead were held in November, and Advent prayers were held in December. Three Masses for deceased parishioners were also celebrated in November.



The Parish Pastoral Council was delighted to congratulate **Fr Aloysius Lumala** on being awarded his Doctorate in Theology and Council member **Mary Waide** on her appointment as the Northern Regional President of St Vincent de Paul. Fr Aloysius received his Doctorate from Maynooth University at a virtual ceremony in November 2020.



Fr Aloysius Lumala



Mary Waide

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Thank you

The Members of the Ballymena Parish Pastoral Council wish to thank the many volunteers who dedicate their time and gifts in the service of the Parish and community, especially so in the past year for their role in the Parish response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thank you also to Breda and Teresa in the Parish Office for their help in the production and distribution of this report, and for all the help and the support that they provide to the Parish Council throughout the year.



Finally, we thank you for reading this report and pray that you and your families may find peace, hope and joy in this Christmas season, and wish you God's blessings for the 2021 year.



John Keenan

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "John Keenan".

JOHN KEENAN

Chairman

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