

# Christenings at Star of the Sea



AINE DONAGHY – parents Stephen and Davinia (grandparents Jim and Susan)



ALEXANDRA ARMSTRONG – parents Gary and Maura



MICHAELA LOGUE – parents Dermot and Roisin and brothers Joseph and Ryan



ARIA WARD – parents David and Laoise (grandparents Maura and Liam Hickey)



ELLEN McALARY – parents Darren and Catherine



NIAMH MULHERN – parents Keith and Maria



OISIN QUINN – parents Niall and Stephanie (baptised by Fr Andrew Black during Fr Austin's absence)



TESS DAVIDSON – parents Adrian and Natasha and grandmother Christine Loughran



Cover Photo by: Abigail Doherty

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This is the year and the season for the Synod of Bishops in Rome on topics related to the family and evangelization. The 4-25 Oct. synod will have the theme: "The vocation and mission of the family in the church and the modern world." Pope Francis has asked us to pray for the synod and suggested these words: Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendour of true love, to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic Churches. Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division: may all who have been hurt or scandalized find ready comfort and healing. Holy Family of Nazareth, may the approaching Synod of Bishops make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan. Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer.



The Pope is also visiting Central and North America finishing with the Festival of Families in Philadelphia 26 and 27 September. It will be worth attending to his wise and challenging words.

I was in Rome on 5th Sept with around 100 Irish people and 5000 others involved with Parish Cells throughout the world. You can watch it on YouTube – Fr John Forsythe and I are about 30 mins into a 40 min video – "Audience for Parish Evangelisation Cells". The Holy Father sees this movement as building a sense of family in parishes. He said "Meeting in homes to share the joys and expectations that are present in each person's heart, is a genuine experience of evangelization that is very similar to what happened in the early days of the Church." Every parish organisation builds the community of the Parish of Portstewart in different ways.

May God bless the work of us all in building up the Body of Christ during this new academic year.

Father Austin

## "Autumn...the year's last, loveliest smile."

In the past we have expressed our gratitude to all our contributors, and indeed without your valuable input Stella Maris would not make it into the homes of all parishioners three times a year. But, lest we forget, there is another group of supporters who play an equally important role in bringing the magazine to your letter boxes, and these are our advertisers, whose support goes a long way in defraying expenses. Yes, we may thank them, tell them they are in our prayers and such like, but would it not be a better idea if, alongside that, we were to make a genuine effort over the coming months to hike up our patronage in recognition of that contribution, with a few understandable exception, please God. A big thank you, therefore, to all our advertisers.

And a big thank you also to Abigail Doherty (age 13) who supplied the photograph featured on the cover of this issue of the magazine. We

would be delighted to hear from any other young amateur photographers out there. This time last year we featured a piece by Maurice McAleese which we dubbed A Golden Moment in one's Life. At the time we talked about making this a regular item. Now, the call is going out again, asking parishioners to take pen to paper and in approximately 500 to 700 words tell us of your own experience. To start the ball rolling I will write a piece for the next issue, knowing that I can always use editorial privilege and bin it should we receive a barrage of articles of superior literary quality.

The team, Eugene, Adrian, Aaron and I thank our contributors. We can be reached through Eugene, Outside the Chapel Gates, and the parish office, e.mail: portstewartparish.co.uk, telephone 70832534. Or contact me direct 70833042, e-mail: farren@myway.com.

Patricia Farren

## Into the History Books

Friday 4th June was a truly special occasion for the whole St Colum's community. Pupils, parents, grandparents & staff gathered together to celebrate the school football team's historic success in all three local soccer competitions - the 5 a-side Mullan Cup, the 7 a-side Killowen Cup and the 9 a-side Doherty Cup. The team have written themselves into St. Colum's history books with this tremendous achievement.

They marked the occasion with a meal in Morrelli's. As they left, the boys were surprised with an open-topped bus which paraded them around Portstewart, while the school community gathered

to give them endless rousing cheers. Afterwards they were taken back to the school and everyone was treated to a photographic record of the year's campaign.

Mr Shaw would like to thank Mrs McCullagh, school principal, for her support throughout the team's campaign, Seamus Reynolds, joint coach, for all his assistance and advice, all the staff who contributed to the team's success, the parents for all their support and flexibility in ensuring the boys were able to attend all training. Finally, he would like to thank all the players who have been part of this truly special team with a never say die attitude and a burning desire to win.



# South Africa – Distant Memories

Benoni ('son of my sorrow' in Hebrew), the place of my birth, is in South Africa at the southernmost tip of the continent of Africa. A small town then, it is now a city on the East Rand in the province of Gauteng. My parents had emigrated from Ireland in 1930. Dad, who was from Kerry, was going out to his uncle who had business interests in Johannesburg and my Mom had got a job as Matron in one of the hospitals. They met and married in Benoni and had an extremely happy marriage, as each had found the perfect soul mate. My beloved father's death at a young age was a tragedy for all of us and our small fractured family would never be whole again.

The political and social climate that I grew up in was a reflection of the Apartheid system. The Apartheid (one nation) machine was still in force. The Group Areas Act which was adopted in 1950 banned black people from living, operating businesses or owning land anywhere other than in their designate areas. There was labour, education and even religious segregation. We attended the Dominican Convent boarding school where only white children were educated. Black children, unfortunately, had little access to a good education. We knew nothing about the lives of these children as we were never in contact with them. The African had to carry passes at all times, failure to do so meant a fine or even a prison term. Dad often went to the police station armed with a bottle of whiskey or brandy in order to get one of his employees released. Most Europeans were hostage to this system but treated their servants very well, all be it in a paternal way.

Most Afrikaners supported apartheid and its philosophy. Their forefathers were the Voortrekkers (first walkers) who were involved in the 'Great Trek' in South Africa between 1835 and 1840. The main reason for this trek was the unrest on the eastern border. The government was unable to separate the Xhosas (tribes) from the whites and the two groups kept clashing. The Xhosas were killing the farmers' animals and the whites in turn occupying the black's territory. In 1835 twelve thousand Boers (farmers) left the Cape Colony and trekked into the interior by ox wagon in search of land where they could be free from British control. They endured great hardships and because of their harsh history these farmers built a unique identity calling themselves Afrikaners, a fiercely independent race.

Pretoria, named after the leader of the Voortrekkers Andrius Pretorius, is one of the country's three capitals. One of the points of interest there is the Voortrekkers Monument. The massive granite structure is prominently located on a hilltop and was built to commemorate the Voortrekkers who left the Cape. In the monument is one of the worlds' largest marble friezes which depicts the tribulations of the Voortrekkers. There is a wonderful tapestry of more than three million stitches that pictures the story of the women and children. Our family was present at the opening of the Monument. It was a great day but did not have the same meaning for us as it did for the Afrikaaners.

Fr Urban O'Sullivan, a Franciscan, was the Bishop's secretary in Pretoria. A great friend of my father, we were invited to lunch at Bishop's house when he was away. I was amazed at the size of the dining table. The nuns provided us with a lovely lunch. A glass bowl containing water with a delicate flower was placed at each setting. Mom informed us that they were not part of the meal! The bowls were for finger dipping after the meal, an etiquette of the time. My sister and I were given the run of the house and garden and chatted to the nuns or any other priests who were visiting. Sadly Fr Urban died at the age of 47 after mowing the lawn on a very hot day to get it ready for a special church event.

Johannesburg, or Joburg as the locals call it, is now the biggest city in the Gauteng province. Sandton, a Johannesburg business and shopping district is Africa's richest square mile. As a teenager it was a special treat to visit Joburg to buy something for a special event. In those days it was little more than a big town. Today it is known as the 'City of Gold', home to over 23000 millionaires.

Soweto, a cluster of townships spread across a vast area southwest of Johannesburg was from the start a product of segregationist planning. It was at the centre of campaigns to overthrow the apartheid state. In 1976 there was a student uprising and this spread to the rest of the country. When I was in South Africa whites were strictly forbidden to enter any African township. These were notorious areas at one time. There was, and still is, a very high crime rate as well as murders, especially at weekends. The problems of Soweto are poor housing, overcrowding, high unemployment and poor infrastructure. There are still homes there made of corrugated iron sheets. Africans like to frequent the numerous shebeens and drink their local beer. Some smoke dagga (a drug) and drink mooti, a concoction made up by witch doctors. This mixture causes mayhem in some lives.

Since Mandela and the coming of democracy the political, social and economic landscape has changed radically. Middle class Africans can

now afford luxury items but the majority of Africans have not benefited in regard to decent housing or a higher standard of living.

A few years ago Leo and I visited Soweto with some friends. There were encouraging changes but it was still a deprived area with evident poverty. Winnie Mandela's luxury bungalow sits uneasily among the tin shacks. We were taken to 'The Blue Fountain' a smart nightclub owned by a wealthy black man. After being given a free drink we were presented with a certificate making us Honorary Citizens of Soweto.

On a holiday to Ireland I met my Husband Leo at a dance in Bundoran over half a century ago. He was tall, dark and handsome and I was young and foolish and found the weather and isolation from family very difficult. We were blessed with five children and have survived our 50th anniversary so I have had the best of two worlds.

Teresa Dolan



# Papal Honour for Sheila

One of the highest accolades in the Catholic Church, the Benemerenti medal, has been awarded by Pope Francis to one of our parishioners, Sheila Conway.

At a very special ceremony in Star of the Sea, in the presence of Bishop Anthony Farquhar, Fr Austin McGirr, Fr Raymond and visiting dignitaries, Sheila was presented with her medal, an honour awarded to members of the clergy and laity for services to the Catholic Church. Only the fifth person to be honoured in this way by Pope Francis, Sheila was humble in her acceptance, speaking of her utter shock and disbelief that someone like her should be the recipient of such an esteemed award. However, for the congregation who were present to celebrate Bishop Tony's golden jubilee, it was no great surprise when Fr Austin revealed the best kept secret of the evening: one of our parishioners had been singled out for recognition, and that that person should be Sheila. Fr Austin spoke of her many acts of kindness in the parish, simple deeds, like a needy family finding some bottles of milk on their doorstep in the morning, or a student in distress finding a willing ear to listen to their

problems. Sheila's shop on the promenade, where she worked for 52 years before retiring, still bears her name. A tender reminder of the kind and gentle lady who never spared herself in the service of others. Sheila's dedicated work with the Legion of Mary brought her in contact with so many parishioners through caring visits. Her work with the Junior Legion in Portstewart prompted one young member to remark, 'We are so lucky to have Sheila. She has shaped the lives of so many young people over the past years, conducting every meeting with joy and freshness.' The words of Saint Thérèse of Lisieux, who believed that it was not necessary to accomplish heroic acts, or great deeds, in order to attain holiness, surely apply to Sheila.

'Love proves itself by deeds,' wrote The Little Flower, 'so how am I to show my love, since great deeds are forbidden me? The only way I can prove my love is by scattering flowers and these flowers are every little sacrifice, every glance and word, and the doing of the least actions for love.'

Patricia Farren



# Bishop Tony

It was with great enthusiasm that, in June, our parish marked the fiftieth anniversary of Bishop Anthony (Tony) Farquhar's ordination to the priesthood with a special Mass at which he presided followed by a reception in the Parochial Centre.

The evening was an occasion for prayerful thanksgiving for Bishop Tony's fifty years of priestly service as well as one that with anecdotes, music, song and dance celebrated his many years among us as chaplain at the University and at Dominican College.

Bishop Tony is a Belfast man from the Upper Ormeau Road area of the city. He was educated at St Malachy's College and at Queen's University where he read Classics, followed by four years of theology at the Pontifical University in Rome. He was ordained in the Basilica of St John Lateran on March 13th 1965.

Father Tony's first appointments were, as curate in Ardglass where he still has many friends, and as a member of the Hospital Chaplaincy. From 1966-1970 he taught Classics at St McNissi's College, Garron Tower, returning to Queen's University as Assistant Chaplain from 1970-1975. While in the Chaplaincy at Queen's he frequently celebrated Mass at Aquinas Hall, the Dominican Sisters' student hall of residence.

In 1975 Father Tony came to this area as Chaplain and Lecturer in Education at the then New University of Ulster, and as Chaplain to the Sisters and students at Dominican College, Portstewart. At NUU he formed a close working relationship and friendship with Dr John Greer, the Church of Ireland Chaplain, also a Lecturer in Religious Education. Together they developed the RE element of the education programme. He lived at and managed Cromore House, which had been purchased by the Diocese for use as a student hall of residence before the University halls were built. In Portstewart, as in his other placements, Father Tony found great personal and spiritual support from the local



parishioners and priests, as he made himself available to help out in whatever capacity he could. The friendships he made at that time with members of the University, Dominican College and the parish of Portstewart remain strong; he particularly cherished his friendship with the late Father Neil McCamphill and greatly appreciates the welcome he has always received from Father Neil's successors in Portstewart parish.

The announcement of Father Tony's appointment as Auxiliary Bishop of Down and Connor at the age of 42 came as quite a surprise. He was ordained on May 15th 1983. As the youngest member of the Bishops' Conference, he was given special responsibility for youth, in which role he accompanied the young people of the Diocese to World Youth Days in Czestochowa, Paris and Rome. His other major responsibility was in the area of ecumenism. He was appointed Catholic co-chair of the Dialogue between the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches and subsequently became a member of the International Anglican-Roman Catholic Commission for Unity and Mission, both very important fora in the field of inter-church dialogue. As far as we are concerned within the parish, one of his greatest strengths is his ability to communicate with both children and adults at the same time in his celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation. Bishop Tony's love of folk music is well known, particularly

in the persons of Tom Paxton and Eric Bogle as well as the Irish Rosemary Woods. But his great enthusiasm is for sport, particularly football and golf in both universities, in Garron Tower and DCP, as well as being an avid follower of Cliftonville and Dundee United football clubs. He has been President of Queen's Football Club for many years and still gets to many of their matches, as well as attending the Collingwood Cup (for Irish University football teams) and the Milk Cup here in the Triangle whenever he can. At the reception friends and former students recalled many incidents associated with these enthusiasms in what amounted to a 'this is your life' of a truly remarkable, humble and generous servant of God.

Sally Andrew



# Weddings in Portstewart

Luke Verhoeven & Alice Clark  
2nd May 2015



Darren O'Neill & Orianne Scullion  
24th April 2015



Adam McCullough & Neidin Connolly  
20th March 2015



Michael Burrows & Bronwyn Liddle  
27th June 2015



Conor Caldwell & Sarah Mooney  
9th July 2015



# Weddings overseas



Jon & Rachel Trolan  
Brisbane, 21st June 2015,  
Our Lady Of Victories Catholic Church



Jon Wilson &  
Sara Dempsey  
Sara Dempsey And Jon  
Wilson Pictured Here At  
Their Wedding In The  
Church Of St Barbato In  
Casalatico, Italy 26th  
May 2015.



Dennis Frizelle & Gillian McMullan  
Gillian Mc Mullan And Dennis Frizelle  
Were Married In Santa Maria Assuntia  
Church In Positano Italy On The  
1st July 2014.



Eugene & Susan Kelly  
1975 - 2015



## What is a Soul Mate?

*If you have found a smile that is the sweetest one you've known.*

*If you have heard, within a voice, the echoes of your own.*

*If you have felt a touch that stirs the longing of your heart,*

*And still can feel the closeness in the moment you're apart.*

*If you are filled with wonder at the way two lives can blend,*

*To weave a perfect pattern that is seamless end to end.*

*If you believe some things in life are simple meant to be,*

*Then you have found your sole-mate,*

*your hearts own destiny.*

Emily Matthews

# Anniversary

# Outside the Chapel Gates

With Eugene Kelly

## Summer

Do you remember the summer? "What Summer?" I hear you ask. Regardless of the weather families still flocked to Portstewart to enjoy all that the town has to offer. It was fortunate that the weather was clement for The Red Sails Festival at the end of July. Yet again the Festival committee excelled itself by providing a very wide and varied programme for all who attended. Well done.



## Big Steps

September is a very exciting time for all our young parishioners who are taking big steps as they venture out into the big wide world. Those first steps, be it to pre-school, primary, secondary or, further and higher education are daunting for all, including their parents. Two of our young people venturing on that road are Joseph Lundy

and Lauren Young, head boy and head girl of Dominican College last year. Seen here with Sally Andrew, Lauren leaves to take up a place at the University of Ulster, Coleraine, where she will study history. Joseph will be taking up his place at Queens University, Belfast, where he will study civil engineering. We wish them and all other students every success.



## Saint Vincent de Paul Appeal

As winter approaches, on behalf of SVP I appeal to you to bring to our attention people who you think might be in need of help. Any references you make to us will be treated in the strictest confidence. I would also make an appeal for new members. If you feel that you would like to help please talk to me or any member of the conference, or alternatively use the help line 07508549572.

## The Captain and the Bishop



**Oops!**  
(for the aging)  
Middle age is when your broad mind and narrow waist change places.

I'm going to retire and live off my savings. What I'll do on the second day I'm not sure.

## 1916 – 2016

### Star of the Sea Centenary

July 2016 will mark the centenary of the consecration and opening of our Parish Church. The event will be marked by a number of celebratory events, details of which will be announced in the New Year. But one event will take place, hopefully in November - the launch of a special commemorative book detailing the history of our Church and of our parish, the priests who served in Portstewart, and others closely involved in parish life, notable parochial events and the people associated with them. The book is bound to be of great interest to all parishioners and, indeed, to all who hail from Portstewart whether living at home or outside the area. It will make an ideal Christmas present. Watch out for details of the launch.

# Sing Hosanna!

When Patricia Farren asked me to write an article for Stella Maris my first thoughts were, "Where do I start? Do I talk about myself or do I talk about the junior choir?"

I always had a love for singing; unfortunately like most young boys I hated piano practice and would have done anything (and did) to avoid it. Football was much more important! When first given a test to sing at primary school, I ended up with the non-singers. When it came to the next class the teacher asked who had been in the previous choir and I put up my hand. The beginning of a journey, which, continues some sixty-eight years later!

I left St. Malachy's Primary school in Coleraine in 1955, and went to Garron Tower where my love for Gilbert and Sullivan, alongside other types of singing developed. In 1955 the late Fr McKavagh took the junior choir to sing in Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris together with choirs from all over the world. We were known as "Pueri Cantores" (Young Singers). We sang Gregorian chant each Sunday at High Mass, finishing night prayers with the Salve Regina, which I later came to intone (when an organist wasn't present). In 1960 Fr. McKavanagh took the senior members of the school choir to see our first opera, 'La Traviata' in the Opera House in Belfast. I fell in love with the art. Little did I think then that I would sing as a principal tenor accompanied by the Ulster Orchestra on that very same stage.

I went to St. Joseph's College of Education in Belfast to study teaching and there decided to take singing lessons. I approached Frank Capper who at that time was recognized as the foremost singing teacher in Ireland. I also had to learn to read music, the consequence of too much football and not enough piano practice. Under his guidance I developed a love for Leeder, Oratorio, Opera and other Art songs. It was then that I met Dr. Havelock Nelson, director of music with BBC N. I. I sang roles with Queens Opera, the Northern Ireland Opera Trust and Studio Opera. I taught during the day and sang throughout the province and the Republic of Ireland in the evenings. A programme might be exhausting, but the fun we shared and our love for the art compensated for the sometimes lack of sleep. My wife Maura was wig mistress for both NI Opera Trust and

Studio Opera and travelled with us. At that time she was known as Liam Hickey's wife. "What goes around comes around." I'm now known as Alderman Maura Hickey's husband!

While teaching in Belfast during that terrible period known as "The Troubles" I developed instrumental music in La Salle Boys School, a secondary school in Andersonstown where I became musical director of our school shows, resulting in many Christmas extravaganzas. I had many proud moments with the young people, but particularly when they performed the entire score of Bugsy Malone. On that occasion we did not need the assistance of any professional musicians.

We toured on the continent, playing in the market square in Bruges, on a passenger boat on the Rhine and on a bandstand in Valkenberg in the Netherlands. My enjoyment of my work and play was cut short with the onset of multiple sclerosis, but I had had a wonderful time and many wonderful experiences.

A few months ago, Maura my wife said that she was at nine o'clock Mass on Sunday and missed music. She suggested that I start a children's choir.

As she usually gets what she wants, I was 'persuaded' to attempt to start a youth choir. Brian Taylor, Mary his wife, and I were duly screened under child protection policy for the parish. So now, what you hear at nine on Sunday mornings is the start of that process. We practice on Wednesday evenings in the parish center from 7pm – 8pm and my hope is that this could be the start of something really big and beautiful for God. All I ask is, "Please God send more young people along."

The children love to sing and I am privileged to work with them. We really do have fun together, so important whatever age we are.

I thank the parents for their dedication in bringing the children to practice and again on Sunday mornings. When Brian Taylor our excellent accompanist is unavailable I frantically practice piano making up for the times when I didn't practice and just wish that I had had the foresight to enjoy a little less football and take those piano studies more seriously.

As they say, "What goes around comes around."

Liam Hickey



As Myles na Coppaleen with Fr. Tom (Billy McKenna) in Lilly of Killarney in the Arts theatre Belfast with the Ulster Orchestra (circa 1980)

