

Christenings at Star of the Sea



SAOIRSE MADINE - parents Mark and Leona



ROWAN SWEENEY - parents Martin and Ashleen



AIDEN MERRON - parents Ethan and Amy



CALLUM MCMULLAN - parents Charlie and Aileen



RACHEL FASSIL KEENAN - parents Fassil and Maeve



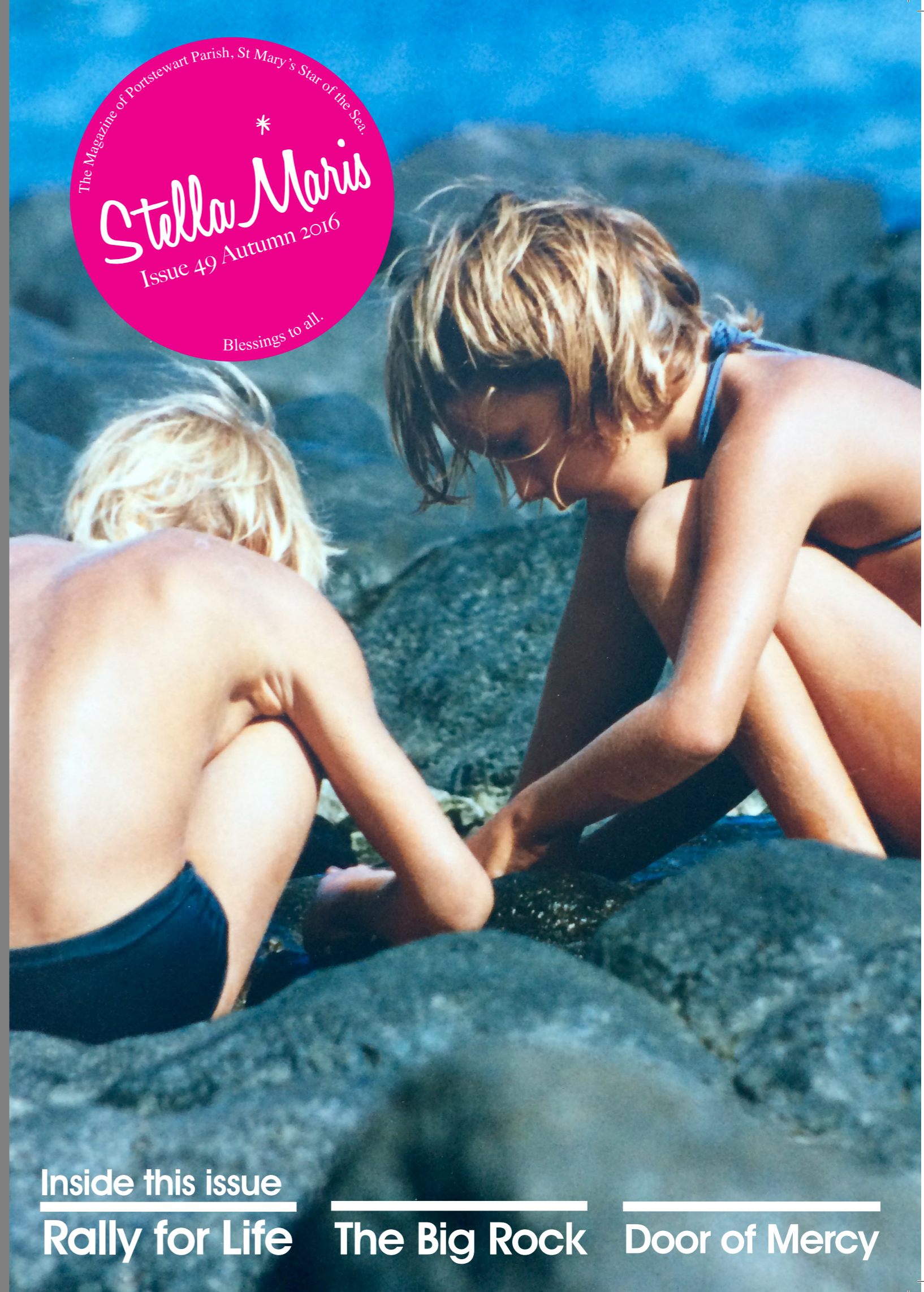
CECILIA BURNS - parents John and Alexandra



FELIX MULLAN - parents Ciaran and Helen



ANNA HUGHES - parents John and Orla



Cover Photo by: Abigail Doherty

Inside this issue
Rally for Life

The Big Rock

Door of Mercy

Our parish church's Centenary celebrations come to an end with the Parish Dinner Dance on October 21st. The

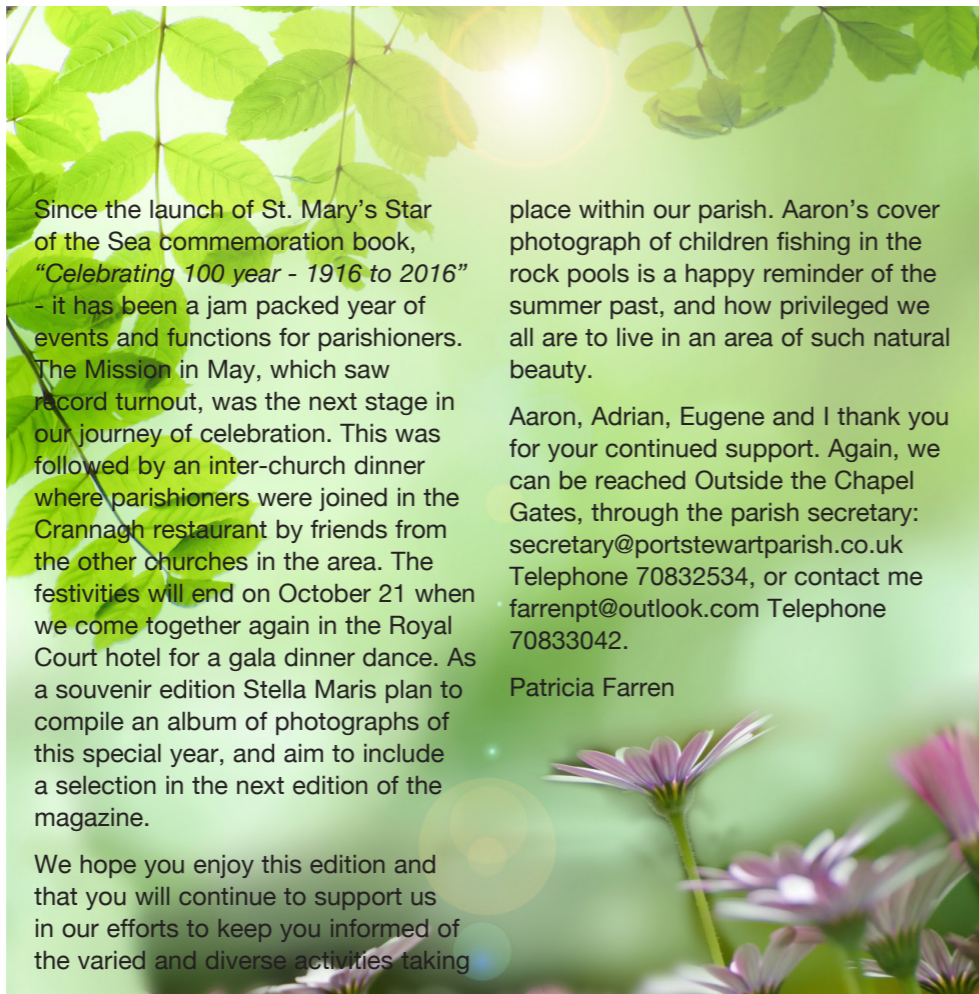


Centenary celebrations for the opening of the Dominican College start in January 2017 (full details can be found on the Dominican College website www.dcpni.net). Centenaries are not just about looking back, but about recognizing what we have become and moving forward on our strengths. The Star of the Sea centenary started last October with the launch of the Centenary Book. The team who compiled it, Margaret Campbell, Roisin McCaughan, Sean Farren and Maurice McAleese, dealt with stories and old photographs which told a heroic history of clergy and laity bravely facing the challenge of building a second church in the parish of St Malachy, Coleraine.

But that's not the whole story. In word and picture, the book charts the highs and lows in the life of the Portstewart Catholic community, through two world wars, up to the present day, witnessing to the Gospel of Christ in good works and prayer. As Bishop Noel Treanor said in his homily at our Centenary Mass on 10th June:

"For one hundred years, here in St Mary's Star of the Sea, earthly life has celebrated in personal prayer, devotion and liturgy the presence of God in human life, experience and history.

"As the sea meets the shore in view of the main doorway here in St Mary's Star of the Sea, for generations of parishioners and visitors, to use the words of the second reading from the Letter to the Colossians, in this parish Church the visible met the invisible (Col. 1.16). Here time, life, human experience were sanctified in worship and prayer; on the journey of life they were opened to the eternal and handed back at life's end to God, revealed on the pages of the New Testament in Jesus of Nazareth, as Saviour and Redeemer of all." (entire text available in www.portstewartparish.website) At the start of this new school year, today, we are history makers. Fr Austin



Since the launch of St. Mary's Star of the Sea commemoration book, "Celebrating 100 year - 1916 to 2016" - it has been a jam packed year of events and functions for parishioners. The Mission in May, which saw record turnout, was the next stage in our journey of celebration. This was followed by an inter-church dinner where parishioners were joined in the Crannagh restaurant by friends from the other churches in the area. The festivities will end on October 21 when we come together again in the Royal Court hotel for a gala dinner dance. As a souvenir edition Stella Maris plan to compile an album of photographs of this special year, and aim to include a selection in the next edition of the magazine.

We hope you enjoy this edition and that you will continue to support us in our efforts to keep you informed of the varied and diverse activities taking

place within our parish. Aaron's cover photograph of children fishing in the rock pools is a happy reminder of the summer past, and how privileged we all are to live in an area of such natural beauty.

Aaron, Adrian, Eugene and I thank you for your continued support. Again, we can be reached Outside the Chapel Gates, through the parish secretary: secretary@portstewartparish.co.uk Telephone 70832534, or contact me farrenpt@outlook.com Telephone 70833042.

Patricia Farren

The Parish Mission

Our centenary mission in May was a great occasion. The mission was led a Vincentian team consisting of Fr Aidan Galvin CM, Fr Sean Farrell CM, Thady O'connor and Kiersten Mahon. A blend of the traditional and the new, the mission called us to prayer, worship and reflection. The traditional approach was represented in daily Mass with its mission homily, followed by the evening services and the missionaries' visits to the sick in the parish. The new was the missionaries' ready availability to all who wanted to speak to them, at tea and coffee in the Marian Hall following the 9.30 Mass, and during the afternoon in the Church itself.

The mission emphasised Christ as our daily companion, one on whom we can

depend, who offers consolation in times of trouble and who is constantly at our side, inspiring and guiding us. Leading us in music and song throughout the week piano accordionist Thady O'Connor brought a wonderful sense of joy and companionship to all the mission's events. As a lasting memento of the week many of us took home the cd containing recordings of his many hymns, most sung to traditional Irish airs.

The Vincentian mission team demonstrated all that is joyful in spending time as a community in prayer and reflection. We are deeply grateful to them for their time with us and we pray success on their work wherever they deliver their missions.



Stella Maris profiles the late William and Rose McLaughlin

As St Mary's Star of the Sea celebrates its centenary, we remember a dedicated husband and wife team with a century of service between them to the parishes in which they lived.

When Willie and Rose Mc Laughlin arrived in Portstewart in the early 60s, they became involved in parish work straightaway. This was second nature to them having volunteered from their youth. Their daughter Rosaleen recalls stories of Willie's charitable work in post-war England, where he helped to house and provide furniture for those in need. Although they had a family of twelve, they found time to join the SVP and Apostolic Society in Star of the Sea and used their talents to the full. Ann Cahoon, another daughter, remembers with a smile that, although the family were never neglected in any way, they did think sometimes that their parents lived in the church and their youngest son Joseph says that when the couple went missing for hours they weren't lost but would be found safe and well in Star of the Sea!

Rose who had trained as a tailoress, made vestments and altar cloths and embroidered altar linens as well as washing and ironing them. Once Liam, another son, was given the task of making stencils for the words "Gloria in Excelsis Deo" for Rose to embroider on an altar cloth for Christmas. After much effort Liam produced the words only to be told to do them again (this time in italics) so that the thread would have a little bit of slack and wouldn't pucker when the cloth was washed; such was Rose's attention to detail. Other examples of her handiwork were embroidered stoles. Some years ago a young Belfast man was being ordained a Deacon in Rome and when the Pope reached the young man he touched the stole and admired the intricate handiwork and enquired where it came from. "It was made by a lady called Rose Mc Laughlin of Portstewart," answered the deacon. "It's beautiful," said the Holy Father, "Give my blessing to Rose and the people of Portstewart."

Rose frequently made numerous items for Apostolic sales. She also made the pall which covers coffins reposing in the church and, indeed, both she and Willy reposed under this pall when their earthly journeys were over. (Willie died on 2nd November, 2011 aged almost ninety eight and Rose died on 19th December, 2014). Maureen Loughry, a former Parish Secretary says: "If you gave Rose a metre of cloth she could have turned it into anything. Everything moved so smoothly with Rose. She was part of the workings of the place." She trained the altar servers and made their robes. To cut down noise, she insisted they wore plimsols which the servers called "skimmies" because they skimmed across the floor. Always thoughtful, she collected small bottles for months so that newly blessed Easter Water could be distributed to the sick.

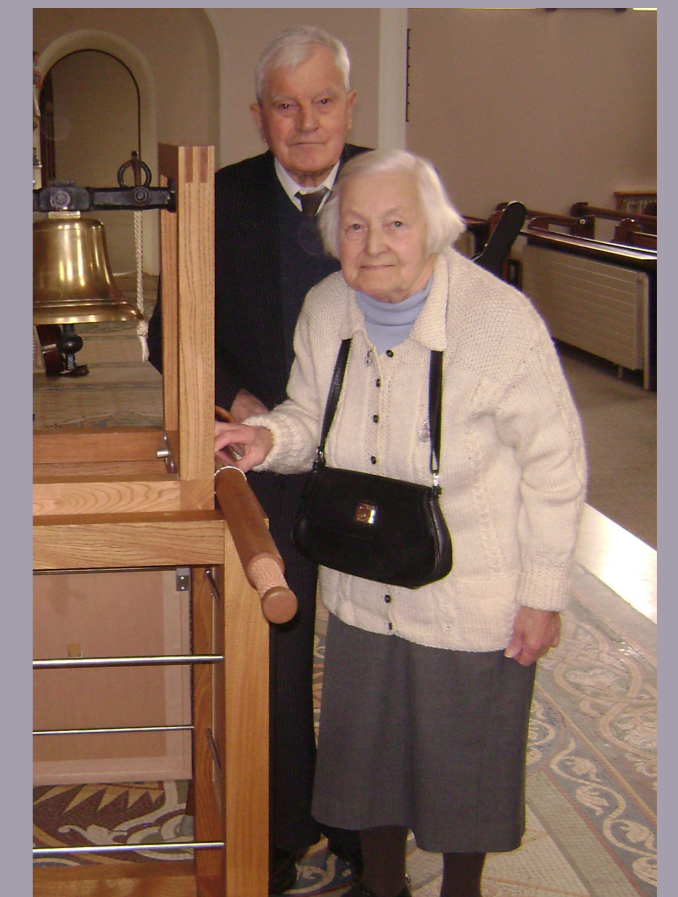
From 1st December, 1987 to 19th January, 1999 Rose served as President of the Apostolic Society. Marian Mc Kenna, a past President, said, "As President she proved to be a very organised and capable leader. She attended every Executive meeting in Xavier House, Belfast, even at the height of The Troubles. Her chauffeur was Willie who was her great support. He used his skills to make wooden display stands for vestments which are still in use today. He also made wooden nativity sets and crucifixes for Apostolic sales. Willie also made other items which they sold at car boot sales in aid of the parish. However, he and Rose weren't always appreciated by other vendors at these sales who didn't like having to compete with Willie's items which were brand new! Together he and Rose started

tea dances where all the patrons were able to sample Rose's delicious home baking. Their energy and good will had no limits and their son, Paul, now living in Hawaii, was often called upon to help his parents in the charity shop which they opened on Harbour Road in the early 70s to boost parish funds. Willie was a founding member of the bowling club. He also helped to run bingo sessions, all the while running his "Abbey Stores" furniture business.

Willie was a leading member of The St Vincent de Paul Society for over fifty years. He collected and stored all sorts of items for distribution to the needy. His son Liam had to insist that Willie stop climbing into his roof space for such items when he was over ninety. Donal Henry, Past President of the SVP says: "Nothing was too much bother for Willie. He was involved in all aspects of SVP work and was well known and respected throughout the triangle area. He never said no to heavy work such as providing and shifting furniture. Willie was a true example of a good neighbour, a caring, civil man."

Willie and Rose were volunteering in their own quiet, efficient way before the concept of volunteering was invented! The true extent of their contribution to our parish, both practically and financially will never be known. Their generous self giving knew no bounds. To sum up in the words of Rita Mc Laughlin, another generous parish worker, "Willie and Rose just got on with their work quietly. They were always totally reliable, thorough and loyal, above all."

Roisin McCaughan



Parish Outing to the Door of Mercy

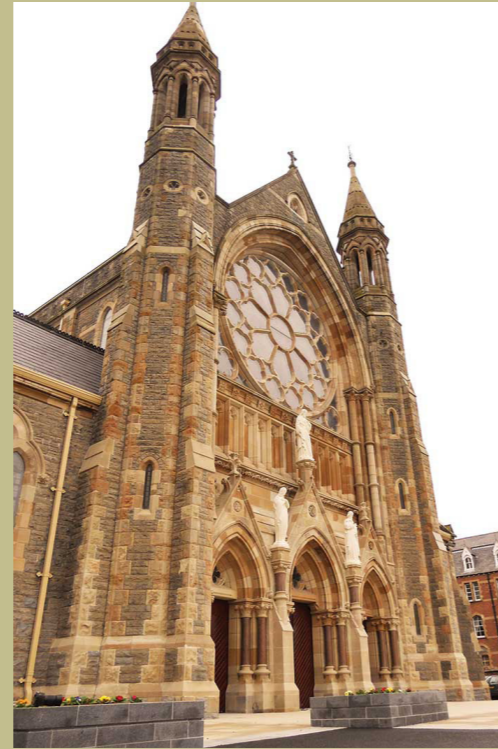
This year our annual parish outing took place on 29 June. It was earlier decided we should visit Clonard Monastery in Belfast and the "Door of Mercy," this being the Year of Mercy as decreed by our Holy Father, Pope Frances.

After morning tea and scones we left the parish centre and travelled to the monastery where we were met by Father Brendan Keane who welcomed us and explained the flowered portal Door of Mercy that led into the church, its meaning and spiritual significance. "For over 700 years the Church has celebrated Holy Years, commemorating special anniversaries or events. A major aspect of a Holy Year has been a pilgrimage to St Peter's in Rome to pass through the Holy Door. Christ identified Himself as the door and the way to salvation. Therefore, to pass through the Holy door is to pass from this world into the presence of God through Christ.

It is a moment of conversion, of forgiveness - a chance to start again. In addition, pilgrims can attain a special plenary indulgence for themselves or for loved ones who have died. In this Year of Mercy, the same pilgrimage can be done at Clonard."

It proved to be a very spiritual experience for us all. For some it was their first visit to Clonard, for others it brought back many memories. Thanking Father Keane for his kindness, we moved on from Clonard to enjoy a super lunch at Corr's Hotel. After our meal was over we all enjoyed a leisurely drive along the coast road to Ballycastle and then on home. I would like to thank all those who assisted in any way with ensuring that everything went so smoothly to make the day such a memorable occasion.

Teresa Fitzpatrick



Star of the Sea celebrates 100 Years with Inter-Church Dinner

Amongst the many events planned by Portstewart Catholic parish community to celebrate its centenary year was an inter-Church Dinner, held on 23rd June at The Crannagh.

Fr Austin McGirr has been instrumental in encouraging cross-community involvement in the local community, and was, no doubt looking forward to sharing the meal with representatives from all Christian communities in Portstewart as they joined together to celebrate this landmark date in Portstewart's history. At the event Fr Mc Girr said, "Here in Portstewart we are in the happy position of enjoying excellent relations with the various religious communities. This goes back 120 years to the fundraising for the Old Tin Church at Heathmount and the opening of St Mary's, Star of the Sea in 1916, when both events were associated with the generous good will of the entire community. Our Centenary Dinner celebrates this long collaboration and these relationships.

Invitees from all six Churches in Portstewart joined the Star of the Sea Community for this special occasion. Looking back 120 years to a quote taken from Coleraine Chronicle, 27th June 1896:

"A most creditable exemplification of the good will and harmony which exist between the various religious

communities which happily flourish in Coleraine and neighbourhood was afforded this week in the Town Hall, where from Tuesday until Friday night a fancy fair on a scale of unwonted magnificence was in progress."

And, long may the harmony continue

Clíodhna Rae



Rally for Life

"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you; before you were born I sanctified you."
Jeremiah 1:5

On Saturday 2nd July a small contingent of Pro-lifers from St Mary's Star of the Sea headed to Belfast, this years location for the Annual All Ireland Rally For Life. Thousands from all over Ireland processed through the City Centre brandishing signs to support this year theme "Personhood begins at Conception". The inclement weather didn't dampen spirits and the feeling of unity amongst like-minded supporters was palpable. We were there to celebrate life. For me, what stood out from all the speeches and entertainment that was part of the rally, was to see perfectly healthy children on the stage who's parents had been advised to abort on medical grounds, due to disability or quality of life expectations. All have defied the experts, and all were born pre-viability, meaning below 25 weeks gestation.

Approximately 45 million abortions are performed every year worldwide. That's approximately 125 thousand per day. Human life international recently estimated that in the last 40 years a staggering 1.72 billion abortions have been taken place worldwide. That's 289 Nazi holocausts or nearly the entire population of Africa and Europe combined. Two continents wiped out in the name of women's reproductive rights and choice. What we all need to remember is that half of those children who were never allowed to breath were in fact female. So abortion in itself is by no means liberating but is in fact a war on women. And of those females babies not one had any choice in their own demise.

So why attend the Rally for life? Many reasons, but above all because it is the right thing to do. It is right according to my morality as a human being because as Pope Benedict XVI has stated "The fundamental human right, the presupposition of every other right, is the right to life itself. It is right according to my faith in that there is more to being a Catholic than abiding by the Ten commandments. It is about not acting when I should, not saying something that needs to be said. My sins of omission are equally as important as my sins of commission. And it is certainly the right thing to do in the face of overwhelming scientific evidence that life does indeed begin at conception, that an unborn child reacts to

touch from 8 weeks and feels pain more intensely than an adult by 20 weeks. The latest research in fact suggests that they may actually feel pain between 8 and 14 weeks. These facts are in large part why the pro-life movement is gaining significant ground amongst non-religious people. They may not share our faith or indeed any faith but they still share in a common humanity. As St John Paul said in Evangelium Vitae "The Gospel of Life is not for believers alone: it is for everyone. The issue of life, and its defence and promotion, is not a concern of the Christian alone. Although faith provides special light and strength, this question arises in every human conscience which seeks the truth and which cares about the future of humanity."

It is a gross injustice to people and particularly expectant mothers on every level not to inform them of the facts. The abortion industry continues to dehumanise the unborn child by referring to him or her as a clump of cells, tissue or product of conception. Is it really acceptable that Ireland, a country with one of the lowest maternal mortality rates worldwide, not only accept but inevitably embrace abortion as a means to an end to destroy children who are considered "different" or a burden? Is it ethically acceptable that we end up with almost a quarter (22%) of pregnancies ending in abortion as in the USA? I pray we never de-value life at all much less to the extent that we as individuals are allowed to become judge, jury and executioner all in one.

I draw the same conclusions Saint Teresa of Calcutta, "I feel that the greatest destroyer of peace today is abortion, because it is a war against the child, a direct killing of the innocent child, murder by the mother herself. And if we accept that a mother can kill even her own child, how can we tell other people not to kill one another?"

If you are interested in getting involved in the Pro-Life Parish movement we hope to hold a meeting in September. Details will be published in the bulletin beforehand.

Khadiga Hassouna



Weddings in Portstewart

Elmear Mullan and Ritchie Nicholls 16
March 2016

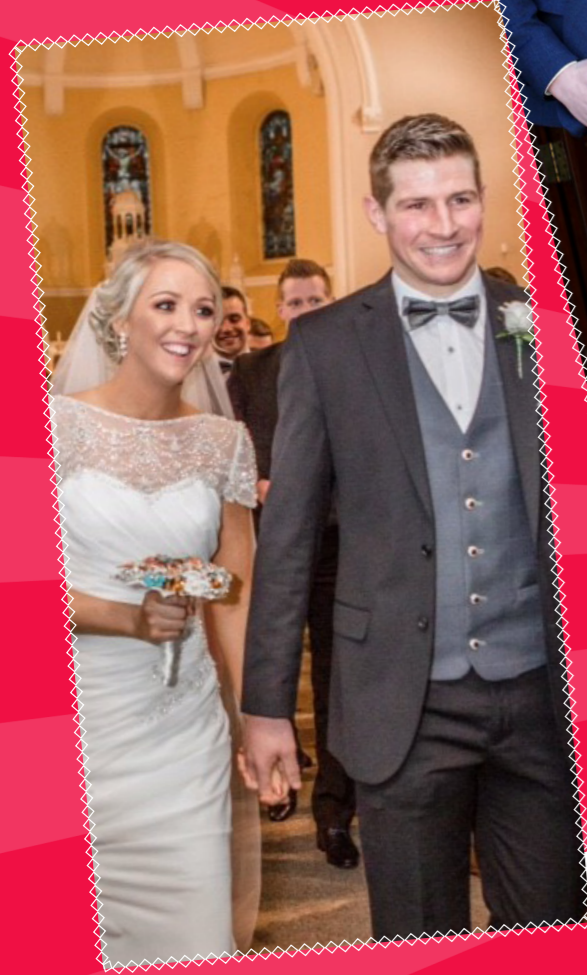


Carina Blackford and Richard Douglas
8 July 2016



Christina Loughrey and Gavin Young
21 May 2016

Niamh Mullan and Gerard McCloskey
5 March 2016



Orlagh Daly and Darren Hughes
12 Dec 2015

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh.

Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Genesis 2:18-24



Helen McLemon and Ronan Matthews
9 July 2016



Ursula Trolan and Michael O'Kane
9 April 2016 (celebrant Fr David Moore)



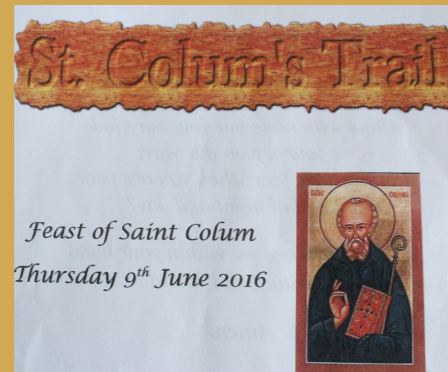
Mary Robinson and Sean Leo McGoldrick
1 April 2016

Outside the Chapel Gates

With Eugene Kelly

St Colum's Retreat

On June 9th, the Feast Day of St Colmcille, St Colum's, named after their patron, held a one day retreat for the entire school. Each classroom became a station and the different classes made their way around each station. Spending no longer than 15 minutes at each station the children moved prayerfully, quietly and respectfully around the school meditating on the theme at each station and completing the activities involved. This heightened the awareness of the life of service Colmcille lived, just as Jesus did.



Oops!
Mothers are right eleven times out of ten

My mother taught me about receiving; "You are going to get it when you get home!"

Celebrating Links

Dominican College History club celebrates links between the college and the parish. The History Club run by Mrs Gault were delighted to welcome Father Austin McGirr from Star of The Sea to a special presentation in the convent foyer at the end of June. The presentation celebrated the centenary of Star of the Sea in 2016 and the very close links between the school and its local

parish. Members of the history club have interviewed many people to produce a series of personal reflections on this special relationship, asking members of the staff, past and present, and pupils to reflect on this special relationship. The wider Dominican community would like to congratulate Fr Austin and all members of the local parish on this historic occasion.



Two Cathedrals Visited

In early summer I had occasion to visit two Cathedrals in America. The setting for each was completely different. Holy Name Cathedral in Chicago is well off and has become the tourist centre of the city, surrounded by a complex of schools, parish offices and community centre. It is a working church, serving the needs of the parish community. On the other hand St Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, the oldest working cathedral in the USA, is a place of beauty set right in the heart of a vibrant city. It is a very impressive building both inside and out. In the mad rush of the city that is New Orleans it is a haven of peace and tranquillity and well worth a visit. However outside its doors in Jackson Square you can find all sorts of psychics and fortune tellers. Strange bedfellows in juxtaposition! But then it is New Orleans.

Mayor

Congratulations to parishioner Maura Hickey on her elevation to Mayor of the Causeway Coast and Glens Council. We wish her well for her term in office.



The Big Rock

For a decade or so I contributed articles to The Stella Maris on aspects of the history of Portstewart. I've always had an interest in local history so a chance remark by a friend aroused my curiosity; she had been telling me of a letter she had discovered from years ago in which reference was made to Portstewart's "Big Rock" and a weather vane that stood on top of it. Hoping to uncover some more information, I called into Coleraine library one day and began a search through the archives of the local newspapers, thanks to the excellent microfiche facilities available in the library. In 1935 the Coleraine Constitution published a comprehensive history of Portstewart and sure enough there was a brief reference to the Big Rock and the weather vane on top. The location was just behind the War Memorial. Apparently it was a very tall weather vane, standing head and shoulders above anything else on the seafront. Many of the rocks and small inlets along the foreshore from the salmon fishery to the harbour had their own individual names. For example: Duncan's Rock, O'Hara's Pool, The Priest's Pool, Port-na-Happle, Wee

Ringan, Big Ringan, Ligbuoy and Yellow Rock at Castle Point. Anyway, I mentioned to a number of local people I thought might have heard of the Big Rock but to no avail. A friend, Will Browne said he would ask some of the older members of the Presbyterian congregation but this also drew a blank. Another friend who works at Cloonavin, the Council headquarters, said he would see if there was any reference in the Town Hall archives but nothing was found. Then I remembered that my late husband, John, who worked in the Montagu Hotel in the late 1960s or early 1970s, had retrieved a weather vane from a skip during renovations to the Town Hall. It was on its way to be dumped along with the rest of the rubble. He "rescued" it and arranged for the council workmen to deliver it to our house in Lever Road; ever since it has been a feature in the garden at the rear of the garage. It's probably not the weather vane that once stood on the Big Rock. But how's that for a coincidence?

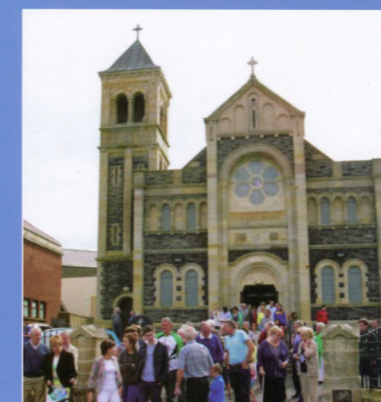
Margaret Campbell



Centenary Book

Packed with articles and photographs about our parish over the past 100 years

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Montagu Monument

Being laid up with a sore leg can be a blessing in disguise. In May 2015 I was reading Hugh O'Neill's excellent "Diary of a City Priest (1915)" a thing I wouldn't normally do, but the bad leg had me grounded. The "City Priest" was Fr John J MacLavery, later to be PP of St Malachy's Coleraine who is buried outside the walls of the church, with the title "Beloved Pastor". Fr John had been curate in St Patrick's, Donegall St Belfast, from 1907 until 1916 during which time he ministered to the soldiers of the nearby Girdwood Barracks. In the diary, Fr John mentions the tragic death of Alexander Montagu, Portstewart, resident at Cromore and parishioner in

Fr John's first parish after ordination. A Royal Navy Lieutenant, Alexander was killed as the result of an accident on board HMS Bulwark in Skegness harbour, shortly after the start of World War 1. In a footnote, the author gives a short account of another Montagu son who died shortly before the end of the same war. Walter was ordained a Jesuit priest at the age of 32 in 1918 and later that year volunteered as an army chaplain. He was injured 28th Oct 1918 and died 31st of his wounds - only 12 days before the end of WW1. He was buried in Avoingt British Cemetery in France, one of 653 British service personnel to be buried there. Oddly and interestingly,

the War Memorial on the Promenade in Portstewart had the two Montagu brothers listed but Walter's did not have a "Rev." before his name or an "S.J." after his name. When I was back on my feet I contacted the technical department of Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council with the result that, in March 2016, with the approval of the British Legion and the War Memorial Trust the completed work on the Memorial could be clearly seen. Full marks to CCGBC for a swift, collaborative and a very skilful adaptation.

Fr Austin



Christenings at Star of the Sea



EANNA GERARD RAFFERTY - parents Anton and Aisling



HARRIS WILSON - parents Sara and Jon (grandparents Jimmy and Barbara Dempsey)

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