

Baptisms at Star of the Sea



Evelyn Cowan - Parents Gerrard and Sarah



Lochlan Devlin - Parents Conall and Sian



Maggie Anne Lafferty - Parents Aine and Derek



Phoebe Pinkerton - Parents Adam and Sarah



Thomas Jacob Fenn - Parents Thomas and Catherine

Attending the St Vincent de Paul Senior Citizen's lunch in the Cromore Halt



Jean O'Connell, Mary Deighan Rosina and Sean McGahon

The Magazine of Portstewart Parish, St Mary's Star of the Sea. Issue 50



Centenary Celebrations Issue Winter 2016

At the heart of Christmas is a person. A unique person who saw things in a new way; who cut through pretence and sham to tell the truth in the most refreshing and liberating way. All he had was his personality and his words. Some saw him as powerless and poor – one of the “ordinary people” from an ordinary place who would never amount to much. Uneducated. A low achiever. His birth was in poverty; in a place where he was a stranger, in a small village in a backward, conquered country. The odds were against him making anything of himself. Yet he was, as the scriptures say “a light shining in the darkness” (Jn 1:5). How deep that darkness was. All his life he would be surrounded by desperate, grasping, violent, power-hungry quarter-kings (Herod was a tetrarch; literally a king of quarter of a kingdom) and their hangers-on, living with the effects of unscrupulous merchants and dealers in human misery who knew how to get more for less from the day labourers. Putting up with stubborn religious teachers who refused to see a kindly, compassionate, loving God. “Blind guides” he called them (Mt 15:14) A truly dark society. But “he let his glory be seen” (Jn 1:14) as the only Son of God and to those who believed in him he gave power to become children of God (Jn 1: 12). And that is why we celebrate his birth at Christmas. Because his birth is our birth.



At the heart of this Christmas is a person. You. You might think you have not much to offer. The odds are against you amounting to anything. You might see yourself as un-cool, unpopular, on the outside of things. Throughout this Portstewart Parish Magazine are stories about people making a difference just by saying and doing something that needs said or done. All they have is their personality and their words – just like you. They haven’t got it all sorted out. They are on a path, a journey, a way, a pilgrimage, a camino, a voyage of discovery – whatever you want to call it. You are the gift. We have this in common – we are offered the friendship and the Spirit, and the grace of One who has let his light shine in the darkness of rejection and powerlessness. He was the original Christmas gift. We follow. Happy Christmas!

Fr Austin

Seasons Blessings

Our year has been one of celebrations. Commemorating a year that marks, in the words of Bishop Noel, “A courageous spiritual and religious venture, the building of St. Mary’s Star of the Sea Church, a historic chapter in the history of the parish of Portstewart.”

It has been a very busy time indeed for Fr Austin and for the many parishioners who participated in the arrangements, and events throughout the year, starting with the book launch: Celebrating 100 Years 1916 - 2016. In May we had our Parish Mission, followed in July by the Centenary Mass. Then in November, everyone let their hair down at a Gala Dinner in the Royal Court, not forgetting the earlier Interchurch Dinner in the Crannagh. To remind us of these many happy occasions a photographic record graces the pages of this edition of Stella Maris.

And now our year moves through Advent towards Christmas. I came across this little ditty when leafing through some verse recently and, with apologies for its sexism, I thought, yes, these lines do convey something of the human condition as we edge towards all the joys of Christmas.

At Christmas

A man is at his finest towards the finish of the year;

He is almost what he should be when the Christmas seasons here;

Then he’s thinking more of others than he’s thought the months before,

And the laughter of his children is a joy worth toiling for.

He is less a selfish creature than at any other time;

When the Christmas spirit rules him he comes close to the sublime.

Edgar Guest

Let none of us forget however, that for many people, Christmas is a time of sorrow. They don’t have the extra money to buy presents for their children, family, and friends. Turkey dinners may be only a wish and not a reality for others. Many are saddened at Christmastime when they think of their loved ones who will not be able to come home for various reasons. And of relatives and friends who have gone to their eternal rest. Above all there are those who will live Christmas in refugee camps and, worse, under siege in cities like Aleppo.

And with these thoughts in mind, from the team, Adrian, Aaron, Eugene and I, may we wish all parishioners a very Joyous Christmas and a Happy New Year. A very special ‘thank you’ to all those who contributed photographs and articles to this special edition of Stella Maris. We can be reached Outside the Chapel Gates, through the parish secretary: secretary@portstewartparish.co.uk. Telephone 70832534, or contact me direct: farrenpt@outlook.com. Telephone 70833042.

Patricia Farren

ST. MARY’S STAR OF THE SEA, PORTSTEWART CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2016

Thursday 22 December	Reconciliation	7.30pm
Saturday 24 December Christmas Eve	Carols Mass	8.30pm 9.00pm
Sunday 25 December Christmas Day	Mass Mass	9.00am 11.00am
26 – 30 December	Mass	12.00 noon
Saturday 31 December	Mass Sunday Vigil Mass	12.00 noon 6.00pm
Sunday 1 January	Mass Travelling Service	9.00am 11.30am

Travelling Ecumenical Service starts at the Methodist Church

Site of Dominicans in Coleraine



22nd December marks the 800th anniversary of the foundation of the Order of Preachers (Dominicans) by Pope Honorius III in 1216. St Dominic realised that the Church needed competent

preachers. At the first convention of the members of the order, gathered with St Dominic, they agreed their aim: “Our Order was especially founded from the beginning for preaching and the salvation of souls. Our study ought to tend principally, ardently, and with the highest endeavour to the end that we might be useful to the souls of our neighbours.”

Dominic knew from experience that the scriptures can be proclaimed rightly only when they have been prayerfully pondered before God. Though he prescribed systematic study of the Scriptures, he understood that God’s word is a heavenly reality that cannot be fathomed by a purely intellectual process; its proclamation must be the fruit of prayerful savouring. The Dominican motto is “Veritas” – truth which is the fruit of prayer and study. Dominic died on the feast of the Transfiguration, 6th August, 1221 and was canonized on July 3, 1234 by Pope Gregory IX. Henry III’s confessors were drawn from the Dominican Friars and it was he who provided for the establishment of a priory in 1244 at Coleraine, within 25 years of the death of St Dominic. In the map opposite, drawn in 1611, the priory can be clearly seen on the banks of the Bann at a spot where now the bridge intersects with Hanover Place at Heatons. The original map is preserved in the Manuscripts of Trinity College, Dublin. For over five hundred years the Black Friars, as they were known, celebrated Mass and preached throughout our area. This gradually came to an end with the increasing restrictions imposed by the Penal Laws and the consequent reduction in the number and means of Catholics. At the dissolution of the monasteries in 1543, Shane O’Boyle, the Prior, as well as the other friars are said to have given up of their own free will but some sixteen years later in 1559 were massacred at Duneron (possibly Dunluce) in Antrim.

By 1604 Coleraine was referred to as a stronghold featuring a thirteenth-century Dominican Friary and an English garrison. Three years later Sir Thomas Philips, a retired English Army Officer,

bought the Abbey and turned it into a defended residence - a common practice throughout post-reformation Ireland. It was by far the strongest and most important building in Coleraine consisting of buildings around a square. The northern side of the square was the old abbey church and buildings, the eastern and western ends were houses, one of which was occupied by Philips himself, and the southern side a wall pierced by a door. Another rectangle to the south of this wall was enclosed by what appears to be a palisade. The abbey grounds were large and seen as a fertile area with good turf where all kinds of livestock could be reared and grain produced. However in 1610 Philips was compelled to surrender his lands and rights to the Crown for £1000 and they were given to the Irish Society of London.

The Dominicans appear to have resettled in Coleraine, shortly before or at the period of the war of 1641 although in 1670 when the Venerable Oliver Plunket visited, he reported that “the Dominicans have a convent in Culrahan, in which there are only four

friars, one of whom, James Crolly, is a good preacher.” By the middle of the eighteenth century, there were only two friars remaining in Coleraine, and in 1767 there was only one, who was the parish priest. The last of the Dominicans of Coleraine, Father J D Cunningham, died in 1843. Archaeological investigations have yielded traces of the Friary and of the late medieval town ditch.

One hundred years ago the Dominican sisters arrived in Portstewart to found Dominican College and to continue being “useful to the souls of our neighbours” for all of which we are mightily grateful.

Frances A. Wilson and Fr Austin McGirr

SOURCES

Ireland in the Virginian Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic Audrey Horning

Coleraine in Bygone Centuries Rev T H Mullin DD Century Services Ltd 1976

Diocese of Down and Connor Rev. J. O’Lavery P.P. M.R.I.A. 1897



Map Of Coleraine 1611

Our Centenary Mass



Bishop Noel Treanor with James and Celine Harley



Gala Dinner



Jill and Dermot Mullan



Helen O'Connor, Karen Kelly, Julie Roantree, Tracy McMorrough



Fr Austin cuts the cake



Bishop Treanor, Fr Sean McCartney and Fr Raymond McCullagh with parishioners after the Mass



A full house on the night



Margaret Lynch, Edel Mooney, Monica Hughes, Teasie Mc Donnell, Sally Andrew and Margaret Conway clear up after the Centenary Mass



Musicians performing in the parish centre after the Centenary Mass



Cariosa O'Harte wins a prize



Seamus O'Hara with his prize

100 Years of History



Kieran Mc Aleese with then fiancée Sara Mc Elhill



Roisin Mc Caughan, Maurice McAleese, Margaret Campbell, and Sean Farren



Thady and Fr Austin jamming on the lawn



Helen and Monica swing to the music after the Mission



Fr Eugene O'Hagan with Rev Stephen Fielding and Fr Austin



Parish workers Monica, Ruth, Kathleen and Sheila



Peter McCaughan (Impact Printers), Roisin McCaughan, Hugh Mullan and Fr Eugene O'Hagan



Maurice, Kieran and Ann Marie McAleese with Fr Martin O'Hagan



At the Mission stall

ST. MARY'S NEW CHURCH, STAR-THE SEA PORTSTEWART.

SOLEMN DEDICATION

By His Lordship Most Rev. Dr. MacRORY,
BISHOP OF DERRY AND CULMEE.

ON SUNDAY, 9TH JULY, 1916

Solemn High Mass (Oration, Sanctifics) at Twelve o'clock.

SPECIAL CHOIR.

Sermon by Very Rev. P. BEECHER, M.A., D.D.
Professor of Theology, Maynooth College.

Evening Devotions at Eight o'clock.

Sermon by Very Rev. J. P. COLLIER, C.S.S.R.
Most Rev. Dr. MacRory will preside.

A Collection will be taken up at both Services to assist in paying off the heavy obligations incurred in erection of Church.

Reserved Seats (Morning), 10s. Admission, 5s.
Admission Evening Devotions:

Reserved Seats, 2s. Unreserved Seats, 1s.

A Special Train from Coleraine Station at 6 p.m. to Portstewart with Tram connection. Late Train at 10-15 p.m. from Portstewart Station for Coleraine, with Late Tram at 10.



Rita McLoughlin and Eileen Kelly with Fr Aidan



Susan Donaghy, Margaret Conway, Teresa Fitzpatrick, Fiona Fitzpatrick and Maureen McGowan



Altar servers Molly and Daniel



Helen Conway, Mary Gordon and friend

Dominican College Portstewart prepares to Celebrate its Centenary in 2017

Dominican College are delighted to announce plans for the upcoming school centenary.

To celebrate this Centenary of Dominican Education in Portstewart, a series of events will be held throughout the 2017 calendar year to mark this great Dominican milestone and achievement, as the school both looks to its proud past and its exciting future. As well as reflecting on its first hundred years, the school will also be looking forward to future success by increasing its Year 8 intake to 100 places; for the first time 31 of these places will be allocated by non-academic criteria.

We have produced a current list of events below. Our aim is to mark each calendar month with a specific event throughout the 2017 year. We hope the events are varied, inclusive to all and reflect the ethos, success, history and future of Dominican College. It is hoped to plan other events throughout the year and to provide updates on our centenary celebrations.

Over the course of the year of centenary celebrations we hope to see as many past pupils from all eras of the school as possible and to involve the local parish and community in our calendar of events.

January 2017: Book of reflection The centenary year of celebrations will commence with a specially produced book of reflections, prayers and photos highlighting the distinctive Dominican ethos and traditions in Portstewart.

February 2017: Establishment of a Friends of Dominican Association

March 2017: Musical Celebration at Riverside Theatre. On Wednesday 8th and Thursday 9th Dominican College, Portstewart will proudly present a unique evening of music to celebrate with our local community the centenary of the college. As in previous years, these concerts will offer a wonderful opportunity for family and friends to experience our proud musical legacy and enjoy a wide variety of musical styles reflecting the rich and diverse talents of our pupils past, present and future. Please contact the school if you are interested in being involved on either of the nights of the concerts, Wednesday 8th or Thursday 9th March.

April 2017: Centenary Dinner Celebrating 100 years of Dominican Education in Portstewart Gala Dinner – Friday 21 April 2017 at Tullyglass Hotel, Ballymena. The Tullyglass will host a gala evening to celebrate 100 years of Dominican education in Portstewart. £50 per person or £500 per table of ten, available from the school office on 02870832715 or email mmcivor864@c2kni.net (Selected seating cannot be guaranteed except when tickets are bought as a table of ten. We therefore encourage you to group together and buy a table to guarantee selected seating). The Evening includes a champagne reception, a five course meal, live band (The Groove Robbers), old photographs throughout the decades, chat, craic and reminiscing with friends and many fellow Dominicans. All past and present Trustees, Governors, staff, past students and anyone associated with Dominican College, Portstewart and the Portstewart/ North Coast community in general and beyond are very welcome to attend and we very much look forward to seeing you there! Early booking for this event is highly recommended as it will be one of the main events of the centenary calendar.

May 2017: Dominican Sporting Tournament The school plans to host an inter – schools sports tournament with the other Irish Dominican schools
June 2017: Mass and Open Day – Saturday 24 June The centenary mass will be in The Star of The Sea at 3.00 PM and the school will host a special Open Day for visitors, members of the local community and past pupils.

July 2017: Art Exhibition – Flowerfield Arts Centre This exhibition will showcase the art and photography of Dominican pupils past and present

August 2017: Day of staff reflection Dominican Staff Day with invited guests to reflect on the uniqueness of the Dominican Way in education.

September 2017: Start of year Mass and Beach walk. In late September it is hoped to open up the annual Charity Walk to past pupils and members of the parish and community.

October 2017: School Musical Show Dominican College has a proud tradition of staging wonderful school shows uniting the talents of pupils and staff to thrill local audiences. The show chosen for 2017 has yet to be unveiled and, again, it is hoped to invite past pupils back to participate in the chorus of the musical. The show will be in The Riverside Theatre from Wednesday 25th to Friday 27th October inclusive.

November 2017: Mass for the Deceased Dominicans and Relatives. The school will be at the heart of the local parish community within a mass for deceased Dominicans, relatives and local members Star of the Sea parish.

December 2017: Carol Service and Commemorative Christmas Card School publication collating the centenary celebrations.

As a school community we are delighted and proud to be hosting these centenary events within our local community and we look forward to seeing as many past pupils and members of the Dominican family back here as possible. Let the centenary celebrations begin!

Kevin Ramsey



Medjugorje with a Difference

Last July I decided once more to go on pilgrimage to Medjugorje as I have done many times before. This time it was slightly different as I was going to do the whole journey on a motorcycle. So I set out on what would be 4,000 Miles through 10 countries, with a tent, sleeping bag, a bag of porridge my mum gave me, coffee and a few Euros. I was on the road and on my own having one long conversation with God. There were many renunciations along the way. Cooking was mostly very basic food cooked on a very small gas stove. Crossing over to Scotland I slowly made my way through England, then France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Germany and Austria. The July heat especially in Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina could be blistering but made me all the more grateful for the cool breezes the Lord sent to cool me down. I also used my intelligence and rolled on the motorcycle's power generating enough wind to cool both me and the motorcycle. It turned out to be a super pilgrimage, holiday and adventure rolled into one.

When I started the journey it felt really special sitting on the motorbike, at home in Portstewart and thinking, this is it! I'm really going to do this! I'm driving my motorbike all the way to Medjugorje! I finally arrived after more than a week of travelling and drove the bike down the main street of Medjugorje past the Parish Church of St James. This was my seventh time on pilgrimage to Medjugorje but the first time I ever arrived on a motorbike. I quickly made friends with other pilgrims. There are plenty of other pilgrims who fly in from Ireland, and it is very easy to strike up a conversation with them especially when they see the motorcycle. One of the Irish pilgrims celebrated his 80th birthday and we had a great party for him at which I was asked to sing some songs from the North. I obliged with "the Star of the County Down" and "I'll tell Me Ma." They loved it and people asked "Why didn't you bring your guitar?" I wish I had.

My favourite place in Medjugorje is the hill where Our Lady First appeared. Many pilgrims talk about the special feeling of peace they get here. It has been described as a place where a door of Heaven opens to earth. Pilgrims often stay there day and night, it is very special. Pilgrims pray the joyful mysteries as they climb this hill usually led by a Priest. Our Lady has said that none of this would be possible without the Priests and we must pray for them. Our Lady's apparitions have been taking place every day for more than 35 years and messages have been given to the whole world imploring people to return to God and to open their hearts to God's love. Medjugorje has been likened to a school where people are being re-educated about peace and prayer. I have met some of the Visionaries. I have heard Vicka speak a number of times and shook hands with her. She brims over with joy. Vicka often recounts to pilgrims how Our Lady took her and another visionary, Jakov, by the hand and showed them Heaven, Hell and Purgatory. Our Lady said that you must believe that these places exist. I have also heard the visionary Ivan, speak a number of times and was present at one of the apparitions he had. As well as this I have met Ivan's Mum and Dad both very kind hearted people who must have suffered greatly under the communist regime that was enforced in the earlier days of the country. There is no doubting the importance of the message of Medjugorje: to "Pray, Pray, Pray" with the heart, and that our prayers can stop wars.

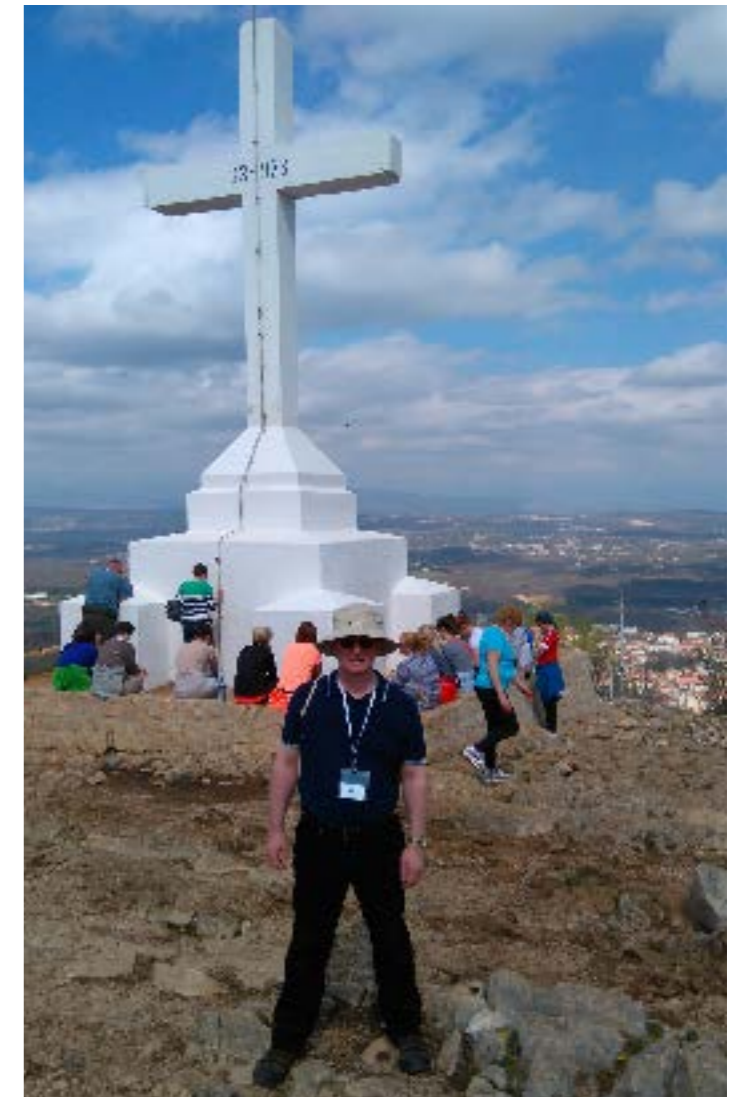
One of the mountains in Medjugorje had a cross built at the top of it in 1933. This too was in God's plan for the parish. There are stations of the cross placed along the climb and pilgrims climb this "Cross Mountain" meditating and praying the Stations of the Cross. It is a tough two hour climb to get

to the top and many conversions have taken place here.

The number of pilgrims to Medjugorje is counted in the millions and although in the early days people would often have to sleep under trees or in other people's houses, today, most of the time, there is ample accommodation, and restaurants are open for business. The fruits of Medjugorje include the very large number of pilgrims who go to Confessions and I understand that this is more than anywhere else in the world. There are huge gatherings at Mass which has to be held outdoors because of the large numbers and there is the most reverent evening Eucharistic adoration. As a direct result of prayer there have been many vocations to the Priesthood and religious life. Many people arrive in Medjugorje looking for the grace to bear sometimes unbearable heartaches and problems. Sometimes God makes the problems vanish but more often what seem to happen is pilgrims receive the grace from God to easily cope with what seemed impossible. The message of Our lady is for conversion by prayer with the heart. There were five stones with which David defeated Goliath. Our five stones are: Daily Rosary. Mass. Confession once a month. Daily reading of the Bible. Fasting every Wednesday and Friday.

Not everyone can make it to Medjugorje and even fewer by motorcycle, but everyone can Pray with the heart and that's what our Mother asks us to do.

Damien O'Connor



Oops!
 Mummy, can I have a cat for Christmas?
 No son, you can have turkey like the rest of us

Sign in a butcher's window:
 Turkeys 90p a pound
 Man: Did you raise them yourself?
 Of course I did. They were only 50p a pound this morning.

Checking it out



Recently the P1 pupils made the short journey across the road to the fire station. The teachers said it fitted into the curriculum under the theme of "People who work to help us". If the truth be told, they were really there to check that the engine was working well so that it could carry Santa to the switching on of the Christmas lights at the Crescent. Apparently, it got the thumbs up!

Door of Mercy



Earlier in the year a group of parishioners visited the Door of Mercy in Clonard Monastery.

New to the Parish



Ania and Krzysztof Kapsch and Katarzyna and Krzysztof Kopii, two sisters and their husbands from Poland, were amongst those who attended a Meet & Greet reception in the Marion Hall for those New to the Parish

New to the Parish

Returning to live on the North Coast

My name is Maggie Browne and I joined the Parish some three years ago after being out of the Province for over forty years. My profession as a nurse took me to Sussex, London, Belgium and finally Warwickshire, where my husband and I brought up our three sons. We lived for over twenty five years in Royal (thanks to Queen Victoria) Leamington Spa which is a very attractive Regency town with beautiful squares which have been used as locations for 'Upstairs, Downstairs'. However, it is a long way from the seaside! My local church was St Peter Apostle, at the bottom of The Parade in Leamington and rather unfortunately adjacent to the River Leam. The church opened in 1864 and has suffered at least three calamities since then: firstly it was burnt to the ground in 1883 and then two major floods in 1901 and more recently one that I witnessed in 1998. I am pleased to say that much remedial work was undertaken by the river authorities so hopefully that will not happen again. If you are in the vicinity, I would encourage you to visit St Peter's as it has a beautiful interior. The church had a large congregation, many of whom had strong Irish or Italian connections, having worked in the local automotive companies or their suppliers. There were several active groups in the church plus a full time mixed voice choir, in which I was an alto. The choir's repertoire included at least twenty different mass settings in English and Latin, mostly modern and traditional. Every December the choir also presented Carol Concerts raising much needed funds for local worthy causes. In addition, the choir was often asked to sing at funerals and weddings. As well as the choir I became actively involved for many years in St. Peter's Aid for the Needy (or SPAN as we knew it). This charity was founded by the parishioners in 1974 and raised substantial funds for both local and overseas worthy causes. For example, food parcels and toys were distributed every Christmas to needy families within the parish and overseas projects included supporting the Leprosy Centre in Uganda and of course regular donations to CAFOD. Just over three years ago we decided to return to the North Coast following our retirement. This was big step as it meant not only leaving my extensive network of friends within St. Peter's, my social network and of course our three sons.

We found a property outside of Portrush and have thrown ourselves into building a new garden and getting involved with the local community. As part of this integration I joined Star of The Sea, which was a Church well known to me due to many holidays spent at my mother-in-law's house in Portstewart. Here the Parish is far from land locked with a magnificent location and a very pleasant drive from Portrush for me. In addition, I have become involved as a volunteer with The Red Cross, an opportunity that I spotted in reading the Sunday Message! This requires me to befriend lonely or isolated individuals who perhaps are house bound or need respite from looking after a family member. I have also found that the local branch of the U3A offers a great way of becoming involved in a range of activities at very modest cost. In conclusion, a big move such as this can be a real challenge for people of my age, but if you approach it with a positive attitude and are prepared to explore new avenues then the transition can certainly be made a lot easier.

Maggie Brown



Superb success for local Dominican pupils at GCSE last year

Last year's GCSE results at Dominican College were excellent and the school was especially delighted to congratulate four of our local parish pupils, Lauren McKenna, Rosie McClelland, Orla Stanton and Orla Tracey, all past pupils of St Colum's, who have each attained an exemplary ten Grade A*/ A grades at GCSE. All thirteen of our St Colum's pupils have returned to Dominican to commence their AS Studies within our biggest Lower Sixth group to date. So, every best wish for the future, girls.



Dominican College Retirees

June 30th 2016 marked the final day for four key members of the Dominican Staff as they begin their well-earned retirement.

Mr Keith Gilmore left Dominican after more than 30 years of service, firstly as a Biology teacher, and more recent years as head of Science.

Mr Dermot Bannon joined the Dominican staff on September 3rd 1979 as a Chemistry teacher and continued to pioneer the idea of the outdoor classroom. He leaves behind a strong environmental legacy which will continue in the work of the eco club.

Mr Hugh Doone joined the Dominican

staff on the very same day, as a teacher of Geography and RE and would go on to lead the Geography Department.

Mr Declan Brolly, our longest serving member of staff, joined the school in September 1976 as a History teacher. He would go on to lead the History department and help lead the school as a senior teacher.

All these men have, in their collective given 153 years of service to the Dominican Community, instilled the values of the Dominican ethos, inspired and enriched young people, contributed to the education in its academic, pastoral, spiritual and extra-curricular

sense, and led by example.

As a school community of staff, parents and governors we salute the work done by these Dominican men and wish each of them and their families a long and happy retirement as we endeavour to continue to build on their legacy throughout our centenary celebrations and beyond.

Thank you Declan, Dermot, Hugh and Keith for the wonderful years of service, loyalty and friendship- we wish each of you a long and happy retirement.

Their Colleagues



Keith Gilmore, Declan Brolly, Dermot Bannon and Hugh Doone

Strangers In Our Midst

In early November this year Cardinal Vincent Nichols spoke out against the rising tide of hatred directed at foreigners, migrants and strangers by politicians and the media, "People have begun to express themselves and their distaste, their hatred of people they see as different" Yet the Book of Deuteronomy (10,19) is clear: 'Love the stranger then for you were strangers in the land of Egypt'. The Psalms praise God 'for He protects the stranger and looks out for the orphan and the widow'. And Jesus in the Gospel of Matthew (25,35) insists that feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, taking in the stranger is a religious obligation: 'I was a stranger and you welcomed me'.

Indeed it is interesting to think of the use Jesus makes of one of the minority groups in the Judaea of his time – the Samaritans. They were both living in the Roman province of Judaea and Samaria. There was mutual antagonism between them and, as John's Gospel notes (4,9), 'Jews do not associate with Samaritans' The Samaritans claimed to be the true religion of ancient Israel from before the exile in Babylon. They had their own Law or Torah and the ruins of their own Temple on Mount Gerizim in northern Judaea, destroyed in 129bc' during the Jewish revolt of the Maccabees.

Jesus frames several stories and miracles making use of the despised Samaritans. Luke's Gospel contains the well-known story of the traveller on the Jerusalem to Jericho road who was beaten and left for dead (Luke,10,26f). In what must have been seen as a shocking attack on the pillars of orthodox Judaism - the Temple priests and levites – pass by the wounded man, leaving the Good Samaritan to come to his aid. Since contact with a corpse would lead to ritual impurity, the story can be read as the priests and levites setting ritual purity over human need in contrast to the reaction of the traveller from the minority group.

The same imagery is at work in the story of the curing of the ten lepers (Luke 17,11f). 10 lepers seek Jesus' intervention in their illness, which he readily gives. All find themselves cured but only one returns to thank Jesus. The Gospel writer adds a clear statement 'the man was a Samaritan'. Jesus himself underlines the message; 'were ten not made clean? The other nine, where are they? It seems that no-one has returned to give thanks to God except this foreigner'. Once again the image of the foreigner, the stranger, the outsider is used to criticise orthodoxy.

John's Gospel records a different encounter with Samaritans (4,5f). Jesus is crossing Samaria and at noon, he rests at a well while his disciples seek food from the village of Sychar. A Samaritan woman approaches and Jesus asks her for a drink. She is astounded. 'What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?' There follows a dialogue between them as she seeks to turn the conversation away from herself to more general issues which divide Jews and Samaritans – 'our fathers worshipped on this mountain while you say that Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship'. Finally Jesus reveals himself as the Messiah and she hastens back to the village with this news. The disciples return to the well to be amazed to see Jesus speaking with a woman and a Samaritan but didn't dare ask why. The Gospel records that many Samaritans came to believe, asking Jesus to spend two days with them. Her testimony comes to be confirmed by their encounter with Jesus himself.

Terry O'Keeffe



Causeway Coast & Glens Mayor's Centenary Reception



Mayor Maura Hickey with Fr Austin and parishioners

Interchurch Celebration



Rev Stephen Fielding on left (C of I), Pastor John Lewis (Baptist) Pastor, Billy Wilson (Portstewart Presbyterian)

YOU ARE INVITED

DATE: 9 JANUARY 2017

TIME: 7PM

FOOD, LIVE MUSIC & SHORT TALK

Alpha Launch Night

VENUE: THE ANCHOR (UPSTAIRS), PORTSTEWART

Join us on Monday 9 January 2017 for the launch of Alpha, a course designed for anyone wanting to explore the Christian faith, ask questions and share their point of view; whatever their background. Over 20 million people have experienced Alpha around the world.

There is no obligation to attend the course itself but if you are interested in finding out more then please join us for the launch. There will be no follow up, no charge and no pressure.

The course is being run by Portstewart Parish and is open to anyone from any background. Please come as you are.

Contact: Claire McKeever
Email: cmck7@hotmail.com

Weddings at Star of the Sea



Barry Dempsey & Lauren Rankin 6 August 2016



Kieran McAleese and Sarah McElhill 30 August 2016

Masons, when they start upon a building,
Are careful to test out the scaffolding;
Make sure that planks won't slip at busy points,
Secure all ladders, tighten bolted joints.
And yet all this comes down when the job's done
Showing off walls of sure and solid stone.

So if, my dear, there sometimes seem to be
Old bridges breaking between you and me
Never fear. We may let the scaffolds fall
Confident that we have built our wall.

"Scaffolding" Seamus Heaney 1939 - 2013



Michael O'Neill and Linden Bicket 3 September 2016



Tony McGowan and Linda Kelly 4 August 2016

Dempseys of Portstewart

36/37 The Promenade, Portstewart
Tel: 028 7083 6457 www.dempseys.co.uk
Washing Machines • Microwaves
Fridges • T.V.'s • Hi-Fi's
FREE DELIVERY

HOMEMAKERS DISCOUNTS

THE HOME FURNISHING AND
CARPET SUPERSTORE
for personal service that only a
family business can offer . . .
40,000 sq. ft. of furniture & carpet
SHOWROOMS - OPPOSITE TESCO'S COLERAINE

PORTSTEWART MEDICAL CENTRE

Dr Paul Carlin, Dr Philip O'Loan &
Dr Barbara Boston
32 Mill Road, Portstewart
Tel: 028 7083 2600
Prescription requests
(available 24 hours): 028 7083 5419

Portstewart Family Practice
Tel: 028 7083 2222 • Fax: 028 7083 2222
5 Lever Road • Portstewart • BT57 2FF
www.portstewartfamilypractice.co.uk
Dr. James B Harley MB BCh BAO (1981) MRCP (1984) MRCP (1985) MRCP (1986)
Dr Dearbhla Harley MB BCh BAO (1987) MRCP (1988) MRCP (1989)

Hutton's Fashion

47 THE PROMENADE
PORTSTEWART
TEL: 7083 2960

BABY WEAR • LADIES FASHIONS include
Aria, Tulchan, Emreco, Paul Separates, Silken Ladder,
Chlanli, Fosby, Blast, Lady Laird, Slimma, Peter Gribby

ARMSTRONG GORDON

THE PROFESSIONAL PROPERTY AGENT (1911-1912)

Armstrong Gordon & Co
64 The Promenade
Portstewart BT57 7AF
Phone: 028 7083 2000
Fax: 028 7083 2950
Email: info@armstronggordon.com

GRIDDLE BAKERY

STRAND ROAD, PORTSTEWART

Famous for its home-baked
bread and pastries

Tel. Shop 028 - 7083 6939
Bakery 028 - 7083 3334

Morelli's of Portstewart Ltd

OPEN EVERY DAY!!

Hugh Wade & Son

Funeral Directors and Memorial Masons

Turn to a friend...
Arranging a funeral is a time when you should
turn to a friend we are here to help you

3 Upper Abbey St., Coleraine BT52 1EZ
Tel: 028 7034 3438 / 7035 2825 Fax: 028 7035 5212

Ivan Murdock & Sons

Funeral Directors Tel/Fax: 028 7034 3350

A family business providing quiet,
dignified & personal 24 Hour Service

31 Bushmills Road, Coleraine

Funeral Home:
2a Windsor Avenue
Coleraine

DEMPSEY'S

Funeral Directors

(Day & night service) Family Run Business
11 Coleraine St, Kilrea Co. Derry
Tel: (028) 2954 0226

H.E. Wilson

First Ireland Giftware

33 to 35 The Promenade, Portstewart, N. Ireland, BT57 7AE

Tel: (028) 7083 2239
International Fax: (028) 7082 5491
or (028) 7083 3378

Internet Shopping: <http://www.firstireland.com>
E-mail: sales@firstireland.com

SCOTT'S

MARK SCOTT OPTICIANS
61 THE PROMENADE
PORTSTEWART
BT57 7AF

TEL: (028) 7083 3302

We Value Your Eyes

Impulse Hair Design

2 Ashfield Drive, Portstewart
Ladies and Gents Salon

Indian Head Massage, Head and Neck Massage
Stockists of Tigi, Fudge, Matrix & G.H.D.

Open 9.00am - 5.30pm
Late Night Friday
Prop: Ann Cahoon
Tel: 028 7083 2170

Strand House

105 Strand Road, Portstewart

Select Bed and Breakfast - Family run
with all rooms en-suite plus television
Internet Access - Most Rooms with Sea View
Beside Golf Course - Breakfast a Speciality

Tel: 028 7083 4860

Carpet & Couch Cleaning

THE CARPET & UPHOLSTERY CLEANING SPECIALISTS

Get it done right 1st time

DOMESTIC / COMMERCIAL ENQUIRIES WELCOME
Call Portstewart 70 832814

NITB Approved ★★
Disabled Facilities
12 Luxury Bedrooms
Children Welcome
NI Tourist Board Award 2004

Cromore Hall

QUALITY FOOD SERVED DAILY IN OUR RESTAURANT
PLUS BISTRO MENU AVAILABLE

158 Station Road, Portstewart
Tel: 028 7083 1919 or 7083 6888
E-mail: info@cromore.com

HASLETT

MONUMENTAL SCULPTOR Since 1745

NEW HEADSTONES • ADDITIONAL INSCRIPTIONS
RESTORATIONS • PROMPT NATIONWIDE SERVICE

86 BANDOORAGH ROAD BALLYMONEY BT53 7NJ
TELL/ FAX: (028) 276 67333
Branch at Londonderry Tel/Fax: (028)71 345 333
Web: www.haslettgroup.co.uk Email: haslett.group@talk21.com

McELHONES PHARMACY

22A The Promenade, Portstewart
Pharmacist:
PAUL McELHONE
B.Sc. (Pharmacy), M.P.S.N.I.

Telephone
028 7083 2014

THE HARBOUR STUDIO

ARCHITECTURE • INTERIOR DESIGN
PLANNING SUPERVISION

52 Millbank Avenue,
Portstewart, BT557DQ.
TELEPHONE: 028 7083 3332
FAX: 028 7083 3360

McKiernan & Sons

Funeral Directors
Established 1852

45, 47 Magnera Street, Kilrea
Tel: 028 295 4998

24 Hour Service
Funeral Home Facilities and
Funeral Planning advice available