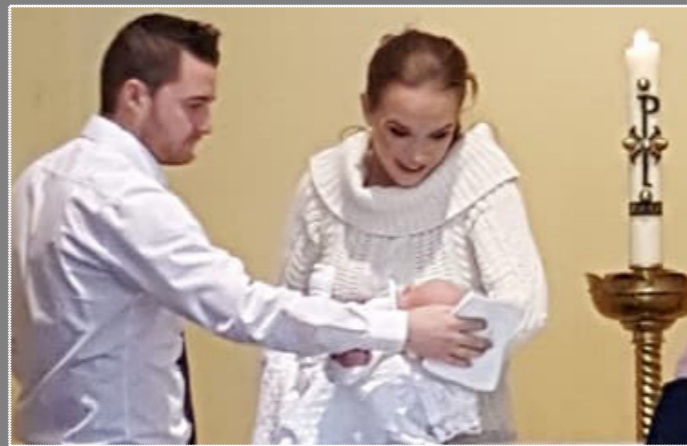


Baptisms and Weddings at Star of the Sea



ANGELO FINNEGAN – parents Brendan and Vilma.



CAMERON BOYD – parents James and Nikita.



EMER O'KANE – parents Micheál and Ursula



GABRIEL DOUGLAS – parents Richard and Carina.



SAMUEL & FINLAY TROLAN – parents Barry and Beth



PATRICK MANSON – parents Colin and Grainne (nee Broolly) with FIONN BROOLLY – parents Conor and Lucy.



Myriam Gistelinc & Paul Hagan – married 23rd September



Inside this issue

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O Come, Let us Adore Him!



Christmas Carols. I always had the opinion that hardened criminals should be subjected to a daily therapy of Christmas Carols sung by small children – all year round. Those carols could melt the hardest heart, with their powerful, prayerful words, familiar melodies and the memories they bring of a more innocent time when Christmases were bright. I read of one carol service where the choir entered the church singing a familiar carol. As they moved through the pews the people joined in the singing and became a congregation, at one with the choir. In our weekly Sunday liturgy there are many moments when we can allow ourselves to slip our moorings, join in the flow of a familiar hymn or response, and become a congregation. You know how it works. At first there's a feeling of reticence mingled with embarrassment "am I going to join in here, or not?" Gradually, the iceberg melts, the high horse is dismounted, the door is opened and some sort of singing emerges. There's something sabbatical, liberating, about leaving aside, for a moment, our concerns and preoccupations and joining in the singing. Gathered at Christmas Mass, when we sing "Silent Night" it's as if we are present at the very crib in Bethlehem. It's not just hardened criminals who need heart therapy. Life takes its toll on all of us and a change of heart, brought through God's grace, remembering the miracle of mercy, a Child is born for us, is a welcome relief. Enjoy the break! Enjoy the escape! Happy Christmas!

Fr Austin

A Happy Christmas to all our Readers

Seeking material for this Christmas edition of Stella Maris, I looked around me in the Chapel after Sunday Mass for inspiration. I had already noticed an exotic looking mother and child occupying the front seat and my curiosity was stirred. So I picked up courage and approached, to be met by the beautiful smiling face of Akino and a slightly suspicious little Onika. Akino is happy to share her story with all our readers. We caught Maurice McAleese at a very opportune time; when he had just polished off his story of Star of the Sea and how it brought prosperity to Rathlin island. This was fitting since a local woman, Bernie McGill had just published her novel, located on Rathlin island. We take this opportunity to say how we were impressed by the many events Dominican staff and students organized to commemorate their centenary year. And Fr Austin says it all in his tribute to Sally Andrew. We could not agree more.

To all our other contributors a very big thank you indeed from Eugene, Adrian, Aaron and myself. Our contacts are Eugehe at the Chapel Gates, Ruth, our parish secretary at secretary@portstewartparish.co.uk. Phone:70832534. My address is farrenpt@outlook.com. Phone 70833042.

Patricia Farren

ST. MARY'S STAR OF THE SEA, PORTSTEWART CHRISTMAS SERVICES 2017

Thursday 19 December	Reconciliation Service 7.30 pm	
Sunday 24 December Christmas Eve	Mass	11.00 am
	Carols	8.30 pm
	Vigil Mass	9.00 pm
Monday 25 December Christmas Day	Mass	9.00 am
	Mass	11.00 am
26 – 29 December	Mass	12.00 noon
Saturday 30 December	Mass	12.00 noon
	Sunday Vigil Mass	6.00 pm
Sunday 31 December	Mass	9.00 am
	Mass	11.00 am
Monday 1 January	New Year's Day Mass for Peace Mass 12.00 noon	
Sunday 7 January	Mass	9.00 am
	Travelling Ecumenical Service starts at the Methodist Church 11.30 am	

Saint Killian

On 1st July I set out once more on my motorbike on a Pilgrimage to Medjugorje. My route took me to Wurzburg in Central Germany. I was very surprised to discover that Wurzburg is a city where there is great devotion to an Irishman. A saint who lived and died there in the 7th century. Just two centuries after Saint Patrick spread the Gospel and converted Ireland to Christ, people left Ireland to share this faith with the rest of the known world. Because it was more important than anything else could possibly be.

I felt a tremendous sense of pride and gratitude within me. Because I'm from the land of Saint Killian and now I was in the fields where he laboured. Getting to know this hero of the Gospel became as important to me as my ultimate goal of motor biking to Medjugorje.

Saint Killian's feast day is the 8th of July and while the date is not highlighted in most towns in Ireland in contrast in the German city of Wurzburg they have 2 weeks of celebration for this Irish Saint with religious ceremonies, veneration of his relics and this year also invited an Archbishop from Ireland to talk to the people of Wurzburg about the state of the Church in Ireland. The Cathedral in Wurzburg is massive and is named in honour of Saint Killian. It was built on the land where Bishop Saint Killian was martyred by the sword. Artists and sculptures usually depict our Saint with a sword in his hands which can be confusing for the onlooker because Saint Killian was no warrior. The reason he is depicted with a sword is because this was the instrument of his martyrdom.

He embraces it as he embraced his martyrdom.

Along with Bishop Saint Killian two other Irishmen were martyred that day. His co-workers for Christ the Priest Saint Colman and the Deacon Saint Totnan were also martyred.

He was brutally killed by soldiers after saying the local Chief or Duke should not be married to his brother's widow. The Duke, who was a convert to Christianity was absent and his wife who did not convert took advantage of this to order the Duke's soldiers to go to the square where Killian, Colman and Totnan were preaching and execute them all. Obviously that wasn't to be the end of it as it is clearly evident today in Wurzburg just how great a Saint this Irish Bishop was and how great a debt the people of Wurzburg feel towards him for their Christian faith. "Saint Killian intercede for us in Heaven to help in God's plan for our conversion". Getting back to Medjugorje and the messages of Our Lady, I realize the primary message of Medjugorje is about conversion. Especially conversion of the heart. Very few are called to be Bishops or to embrace martyrdom but we are ALL called to conversion.

I for one need the example of others in my faith journey and I honestly feel a great sense of gratitude to the Saints. So I'll be reading more about the Lives of the Saints of our Church and I'll be listening ever more attentively to Father Austin and Father Raymond when they celebrate the life of a Saint at Holy Mass.

Damien O'Connor



SVP Christmas Lunch

Once again the Christmas lunch, hosted by St Vicent de Paul, on the 6th December in The Cromore Halt was a great success. Almost 50 parishioners and our special guests from Tullaghmurray Fold enjoyed the festive fare presented by the staff of the hotel. The entertainment after the dinner was provided by Father Austin on his guitar. Many thanks to all those who attended. It was a good start to the Christmas Season.



How Star Of The Sea Brought New Wave Of Prosperity To Rathlin Island

Today it's comparatively easy to get to and from Rathlin Island, which lies seven miles off the North Antrim coast, thanks to a modern car and passenger ferry service.

A century ago, making that short sea crossing was a very different story, so when a new ferry boat designed to carry not only passengers but also livestock and farm produce was being launched, it aroused a good deal of interest. On a good day, and with a fair wind and running tide, the Star of the Sea, would be able to make the crossing to and from Ballycastle in about half-an-hour or three-quarters of an hour if conditions were less favourable.

That historic launching on the morning of June 4, 1912, opened up a new era of prosperity for the inhabitants of Rathlin and provided a glimpse of just how much of a struggle it was in those days for the island farmers to transport their produce and animals to and from mainland markets.

"Up to the present," it was reported, "the farmers have had the greatest difficulty in getting across with their horses and cattle but now with a boat capable of carrying six horses, together with produce, the markets can be easily reached."

That was not the only benefit which the Star of the Sea would bring to the islanders: "Coal has been sometimes a scarce commodity on Rathlin; such will be the case no longer, as the new boat, with her large carrying capacity, can visit the cheapest ports, and keep the island well supplied with this commodity."

At the launching of the new vessel that day the clergy were much in evidence and that was entirely appropriate because two of the local priests, Father John McGowan and Father John Walsh, had played leading parts in the planning and building of the vessel. They had the support, financially and otherwise, of the then Bishop of Down and Connor, Most Rev Dr. Henry Henry and priests throughout the diocese. Father Walsh was a curate based on the island and Father McGowan, now in a mainland parish, had previously filled that role. Proudly it was pointed out that the Star of the Sea had been built, launched and paid for without any State aid whatsoever. Applications for financial assistance had been made to a body known as the Congested Districts Board and to the Department of Agriculture but for reasons not specified, these had been "sternly refused," one commentator simply noting that "red tape, as usual, had barred the way."

It was certainly a red letter day for the islanders when the boat, described in one report as "a thing of beauty and a joy forever," was officially launched and nearly all of them turned out for the ceremony at Church Bay. Thirty-two feet overall with a ten foot beam and a carrying capacity of 15 tons, the Star of the Sea was decked up to the mast and must have been an impressive sight. "Everything in connection with the boat is absolutely new, and the sails and rigging are of first-class material," Skipper Frank McCurdy was quoted as saying. The

gunwale and above the water-line were painted in a rich green and her name stood out in bold characters against a blue plate screwed to her side. Throughout the island there was "a general air of satisfaction, the people being fully assured that the boat will be of service to every family in the place." Another point highlighted was in relation to tourism – it was hoped that the new and improved facility would help to boost the island's tourist trade: "The public generally will be glad to know that the boat will be always at their service to cross from Ballycastle to Rathlin and enjoy a holiday. Small parties can cross with advantage, and be supplied with deck chairs and feel as comfortable as in a state cabin."

That might have been over-icing the cake somewhat but I'm sure many holidaymakers, whether or not they were supplied with deck chairs, would have enjoyed a trip to Rathlin. Today many people take advantage of the modern ferry service to visit the island and it is a most enjoyable experience. In those old days, on board the Star of the Sea, which relied on wind and sails to make the crossing, it must have been even more enjoyable and must have seemed like a great adventure. Day trips were popular but anyone who wished to stop over for a few days was advised to "engage apartments" with Mrs McKinley, Bay View, and they were assured that she would entertain them hospitably, "and give them a home away from home."

Maurice McAleese



Are you called to serve initiative

October saw the launch of a Pastoral Council initiative – "Are you called to serve?" where we asked parishioners to consider giving their time to the various ministries and groups in our parish. We are blessed with a vibrant and active Church with many groups who work to enrich the Liturgy, deepen personal faith and to improve the lives of others. However these groups would all be enhanced by the addition of a few more willing people to commit their time and energy to them – many hands make light work! Ministry and parish work is an expression of our gratitude to God, by sharing with others some of the time, talent and treasure God has given to us.

In Proverbs we are told, "Whoever brings blessings will be enriched, and one who waters will himself be watered." Proverbs 11:25. Time is a precious commodity in our busy lives, but all the evidence suggests that in addition to the positive impact giving our time in service can have for other

people, volunteering also has impressive personal benefits for volunteers themselves. A recent report stated that volunteering lowers stress, improves physical and mental health and enriches a volunteer's sense of purpose in life. Through volunteering we work to shape our Parish and community into the Are you called to Serve Initiative welcoming and mutually supportive place we would all like to see. As Marjorie Moore said: "volunteering is the ultimate exercise in democracy – you get to vote every day about the type of community you want to live in". In an era of reduced vocations we are all asked to become co-responsible with our clergy and give of our talents as and when we can, helping to ensure that our Parish continues to flourish for another hundred years and beyond!

There really is something for everyone in our church: from the social to the spiritual, you can raise your voice in song or spend time in quiet reflection, work with lots of types of people – from the very youngest to the more senior of our parishioners. There are lots of ways to contribute to the church liturgy, various jobs (big and small) which keep our church running smoothly, ways to explore your personal faith through prayer and adoration, opportunities to socialise or to work with social justice issues and the wider community. The Pastoral Council would like to thank all those who contributed to the parish display and who took the time to read about how much we already have going on in our parish. We would especially like to thank those who answered the call and volunteered for various groups and ministries and of course all those who already give of their time and talents. If you're still mulling over whether you'd like to join a group, give it a go in the New Year - a warm welcome awaits anyone who gets in contact or goes along to the next meeting.

Emer O'Keeffe



New to the Parish

Hello everyone

I hale from Guyana, in South America. One of the Caribbean countries that is not an island.

Guyana is a small country of 83,000 square miles, with neighbouring countries: Suriname on the east, Venezuela on the west, Brazil on the south and the Atlantic Ocean on the north. Its capital is Georgetown. The official language is English. The people are very hospitable. Guyanese people enjoy cricket and calypso music. The country was once governed by Britain before it gained independence in May 1966.

I migrated to Northern Ireland in 2005 to work as a registered nurse in the Montague Nursing Home in Portstewart, which closed five years ago. I worked there for seven years, and

am now working in the Madelayne Court Nursing Home. As well I have had the opportunity to render nursing care at many other Nursing Homes in Northern Ireland including the Causeway Hospital through Agency jobs.

My husband joined me here in 2010, and we got the gorgeous Akino in 2013. Akino got her name from my name Onika, spelled backwards. Akino and I love coming to church and we love to dance and sing in church. I guess you have noticed that.

We will not be with you for Christmas in Portstewart as we are travelling to Guyana to celebrate Akino's Great Grandmothers birthday. She will be 93 years old. This is why we are wearing out Santa hats.

Onika.



Portstewart schools scoop two awards at Rolls Royce Science Prize

When Portstewart Primary and St Colum's primary schools entered their joint STEM project called MARVELLOUS MOVERS, little did they think they'd be attending a gala event held in the Science Museum London, mixing with Lords, MPs, business people and their hosts Rolls Royce.

With an EC-focused, engineering based, project that shared expertise and resources between the two schools involving over 420 pupils, the Portstewart schools were shortlisted down from circa 2000 entries in the whole of the UK to the final 6. They attended the Science Prize Award ceremony held in the Science museum in Kensington, London to see what the judges thought in comparison to other 5 finalists.

There were 4 prizes, top prize of £15k, second of £5k, Rolls Royce Employee Award, and last but not least the Eden Award, presented by EDEN PROJECT CEO Tim Smit. The Marvellous Movers project won the EDEN Award and to top everything off, the project was placed second as well! This was the first time that a school has won 2 awards at the ceremony!

Project leader, Louise Gilmore was delighted by the result. 'We can't believe we're bringing back two such lauded awards

from this event,' she said.

'We can't wait to show the children and our colleagues the result of their hard work in school!'

Grainne McGoldrick, St Colums primary.



Dominican Mass for the Deceased

On Sunday 26th November Dominican sisters, staff, parents, governors, pupils and friends gathered as a school family in St Mary's Star of the Sea to remember those members of our school community who have passed away. In a beautiful and moving Mass, Fr. Raymond McCullagh, our school chaplain, reflected on the Feast of Christ the King in his homily and challenged us to think of all those who have inspired us the way that Jesus did via one solitary life. Fr. Raymond explained how as a thirty-year old man Christ did not have many of the attributes of a leader; he worked as a carpenter and had travelled less than two hundred miles from home and concluded with the reflection: All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that ever sat and all the kings that ever reigned, put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as that one solitary life. Fr. Raymond prayed for all those members of our school community and in particular those who have died in the past year and those dear dead departed members of our wider school family who we still continue to mourn and love. In a moving post-communion reflection

Mrs Kate Murphy read a poem by John O'Donohue entitled, On the Death of a Beloved, beginning with the lines:

*Though we need to weep your loss,
You dwell in that safe place in our hearts,
Where no storm or night or pain can reach you.
Your love was like the dawn
Brightening over our lives
Awakening beneath the dark
A further adventure of colour.....
May you continue to inspire us:
To enter each day with a generous heart.
To serve the call of courage and love
Until we see your beautiful face again
In that land where there is no separation,
Where all tears will be wiped from our mind,
And where we will never lose you again.*

The beautiful liturgy was accompanied by the usual high standards of singing from members of our senior choir with a beautiful rendition of The Cloud's Veil and On Eagles' Wings (Soloist Jasmine Gardiner) haunting highlights. Special mention must go to Amy North and Mollie Byrne for their superb playing on the harp and violin. The final hymn was the traditional Dominican Magnificat Following the Mass members of the

congregation returned to the school and we were delighted to welcome back to the school several of our distinguished sisters, Sr. Lucina Montagu, Sr. Bridghe O'Kane, Sr. Patricia St George and Sr. Liz Smyth. Our Mass for the deceased was the penultimate Centenary celebration and we will gather again as a school community on the evening of Wednesday 20th December to draw the year of Dominican College Centenary celebrations to a close in our Christmas Carol Service. Kevin Ramsay



The Watch House

THE WATCH HOUSE by Bernie McGill is the story of the modern world arriving on Rathlin, at the very end of the nineteenth century, with dramatic consequences for a young woman named Nuala. As the twentieth century dawns on the island, a place ravaged by storms and haunted by past tragedies, Nuala Byrne is faced with a difficult decision. Abandoned by her family for the new world, she receives a proposal from the island's ageing tailor. For the price of a roof over her head, she accepts.

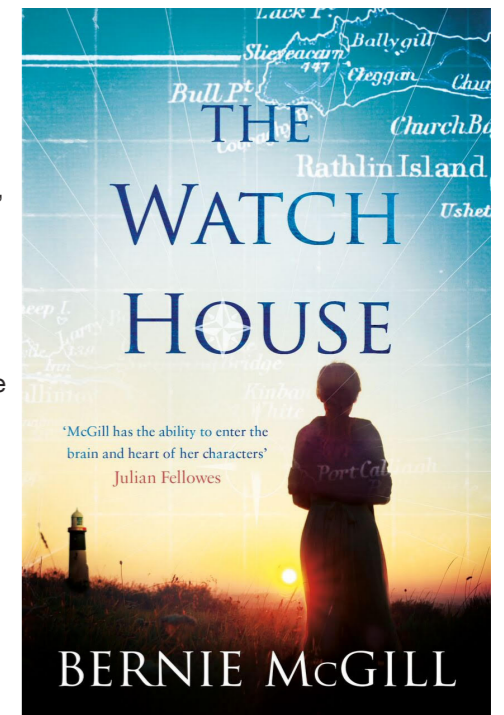
Meanwhile the island is alive with gossip about the strangers who have arrived from the mainland, armed with mysterious equipment which can reportedly steal a person's words and transmit them through thin air. When Nuala is sent to cook for these men - engineers, who have been sent to Rathlin by Marconi to conduct experiments in the use of wireless telegraphy - she encounters an Italian named Gabriel, who offers her the chance to equip herself with new skills and knowledge. As her friendship with Gabriel opens up horizons beyond the rocky and treacherous cliffs of her island home, Nuala begins to realise that her deal with the tailor was a bargain she should never have struck.

Praise for The Watch House:
'McGill writes about life, love and telegraphy with a poet's clarity' Sunday Times
'A novel to haunt you' Sunday Mirror
'Totally absorbing and full of unexpected twists' Sunday Business Post

'Endlessly intriguing and exhilarating' Dublin Review of Books
'A lyrical, wonderfully atmospheric novel' Sunday Express
'McGill proves once again she is a masterful storyteller . . . historical fiction at its absolute best' The Lady
'[McGill's] assured style and eye for detail make The Watch House a pleasure to read, a fast-paced tale that rarely flags, with a complex and beguiling heroine at the helm' Irish Times
'Hard to put down, this atmospheric book will stay with you long after the final heart-rending denouement, setting McGill firmly into the panoply of modern Irish writers' Irish Independent

Bernie McGill's first novel, The Butterfly Cabinet, was published by Headline Review in 2010 and was named by Downton Abbey creator Julian Fellowes as his novel of the year. Bernie is also the author of Sleepwalkers, a collection of short fiction (shortlisted for the Edge Hill Short Story Prize) and is a contributor to The Long Gaze Back, The Glass Shore and Female Lines (New Island Books), three acclaimed anthologies of Irish women writers spanning four centuries. She also has a number of theatre credits to her name. Bernie lives in Portstewart with her family. www.berniemcgill.com

'McGill has the ability to enter into the brain and heart of her characters' Julian Fellowes, creator of Downton Abbey, writing in The Guardian in 2012.



Santa Claus

It may be difficult at times to separate the Christmas season from the image of the rosy-cheeked, white-bearded man with a taste for carrots and bear, but it was actually a poem that offered us the jolly, plump version of Santa Claus we are familiar with today. On December 23, 1823, a poem called "A Visit from Saint Nicholas" was published anonymously in the Sentinel, the local newspaper of Troy, New York. This piece offered a different take on Santa Claus, a figure who was, until that time, traditionally depicted as a thinner, less jolly, horse-riding disciplinarian, a combination of mythologies about the British Father Christmas, the Dutch Sinterklaas, and the fourth-century bishop Saint Nicholas of Myra. But the poem in the newspaper painted a different picture: it gave Santa eight reindeer, and even named them; it described a Santa who could magically sneak in and out of homes via chimneys; and it created the venerated, cheerful, chubby icon that is everywhere today. It goes:



*He had a broad face and a little round belly
That shook, when he laughed, like a bowl full of jelly.
He was chubby and plump, a right jolly old elf,
And I laughed when I saw him, in spite of myself;
A wink of his eye and a twist of his head,
Soon gave me to know I had nothing to dread.*

The poem, of course, is now known as "Twas the Night before Christmas."

Christmas Poems from St Colum's Primary School

It's almost time

It's almost time
For the Advent clock to chime,
It's Christmas Day
So please, please stay.
A story I will now begin
So sit down to the sound of the violin.

There once were three kind and fabulous Kings,
Who were rich with plenty of robes and rings.
Also some shepherds who looked after sheep
Who looked after them on a hill quite steep.
When suddenly an angel appeared
Who got sweet baby Jesus near.
When they had travelled from a far
They had followed a bright and beautiful star.
When they found the manger
They didn't know that he'd become their saviour.
Then they presented him with a gift
But it was far too heavy for him to lift.
And now Jesus has freed us all from sin
We celebrate Christmas now because of him

Brianna Shaw P7

Christmas Joy

Christmas brings the hope for snow
As we decorate the halls with mistletoe.
On top of the tree there is a star
To welcome friends from afar.

Children with smiles upon their faces
Hoping to see presents in place.
Presents under the Christmas tree
For everyone including you and me.

Outside we hear the church bells ring
As we listen to carollers sing.
A time of peace, a time of joy
A time to celebrate a baby boy.

Noah McDaid P7

The First Christmas

One winter's night the star shone bright
To tell us all of a wonderful sight.
Baby Jesus lay in a manger,
He was protected from all danger

Out on the hills all was calm
While shepherds watched the baby lambs.
They saw a star and followed it from afar.
They came to a stable in great delight
Because of this star that shone so bright.

Don't forget the three Kings from far away
They came to see where Jesus lay.
Gold, frankincense and myrrh they bring,
Gifts for the new born King

Molly Kettyle P7

A King was Born

On the eve of Christmas day
Lay a new born baby in a manger full of hay.
He was called Jesus,
The new King who was going to save us.

T'was that night
That everyone hoped and prayed
For the little baby in the hay.
So many people came to see
If he really was the one to be.

Shepherds, kings and angels too
All came to see the new born King.
Wise men brought gifts from afar
And told stories of how they were guided by a star.

Soon Joseph and Mary and Jesus too
All returned home with work to do.
As Jesus grew older and smarter too
He travelled from town to town
Teaching the gospel to me and you.

Anna Smyth P7

Christmas

Christmas is a time of cheer,
It come round this time each year.
Houses lit by Christmas trees
That were once blowing in the breeze.

Families gather back together
Journeys travelled through all kinds of weather.
Remembering all the holidays past,
Hopes for future holidays cast

A time of fun, a time of joy
For every girl and every boy.
Children dream of Christmas day
And all the toys with which they'll play.

Tom Beddow P7



A Christmas Quiz

A parishioner, who wishes to remain anonymous, compiled this quiz on the subject of locations and events of local interest. The prize has not yet been decided, although we have decided that if there is more than one outright winner we shall rely on the Judgment of Solomon. Closing date: End of January. Please return your entries to Eugene at the chapel gates, or to Sheila in the Repository. Winner will be profiled in the Easter edition of Stella Maris.

Good Luck

Questions on Portstewart for Stella Maris

- 1 The ruins seen inside the grounds of the Montagu estate on Cromore corner are of what?
- 2 The Portstewart tram went from where to where?
- 3 Where and what is Hopley hill ?
- 4 Where does an explosion take place at the harbour on stormy days?
- 5 Where was Agherton Church originally situated?
- 6 After whom is Lever Road named?
- 7 What was the original purpose of the old building just below the Dominican College
- 8 Where is Port Diana?
- 9 Who wrote about a boat with red sails?
- 10 When was Portstewart golf Club formed?
- 11 During the famine what was the price of stones gathered to build a wall around the castle?
- 12 Why was the beach called the peasant's strand?
- 13 According to records an optical illusion of a magnificent castle was seen where?
- 14 Where is the supposedly illegitimate daughter of James 11 Dorothea Ross buried?
- 15 Where was the Castle Gate Hotel situated?
- 16 In 1882 the biggest ever cod was caught off Portstewart. What was its weight?
- 17 Where were the ice house and ice palace situated?
- 18 In the summer of 1911 every hotel, guest house and boarding house offered free weekend accommodation to all visitors. Why?
- 19 What was the connection between the Montagu Hotel and the Irish Government?
- 20 Where can you see a plaque connecting a Portstewart link with a famous author?

Good bye Sally

Only Fr Raymond knows the value of a transfer to Liverpool. That's FC. It's really hard to evaluate a player such as Sally Andrew now that she has left this parish to be near her daughter in Liverpool. This short article by a very grateful Parish Priest is an inadequate attempt to summarise her contribution to life here and only a nod in the direction of a tribute to a great Catholic woman. I first knew Sally as a choir member – the funny one with the English accent, who taught German and Latin in Dominican College. A couple of years after I arrived she retired from teaching and offered her skills to the parish. We both concluded that one area she would be most effective would be in helping to prepare for the Sacraments the small group of children who do not attend St Colum's. She trained for this by attending a Family Ministry course in Belfast and I thought that would be that. I didn't really know Sally then! Her energy and creativity quickly led to the reintroduction of the "Do This In Memory of Me" course which augmented her work with the small group to include ALL the children preparing for First Holy Communion, especially in working with their parents.

When Bishop Treanor launched the notion of Pastoral Communities in 2011, facilitation training was required for leaders and to this end Sally generously agreed to spend a week in the

Passionist Monastery in Crossgar. Once again her energy, wit, and creativity was a great part of our work as six parishes tried to achieve a shared vision of the mission of the church in North Connor, steadily working at the project for three years. I'll always treasure the conversations with the then Fr Alan McGuckian (now bishop of Raphoe) and Sally as we prepared for each training session. Sally was there once again when the new Pastoral Community Forum of eleven parishes and a university came to life last May with our first, facilitated meeting. For Portstewart Parish she was a leading light in the creation of our Parish Congress when about a hundred and fifty parishioners gathered in the Parish Centre one Saturday to engage in the renewal of our parish and the diocese (September 2014). About this time she became a very active member of the Parish Pastoral Council as secretary. Baptism support groups, youth projects (GIFT) and church services / paraliturgies for special purposes were some of the children of her fertile imagination and brought great life to the parish.

I haven't even touched on her years on the staff of Dominican College. That'll be a book rather than a half a page! On behalf of all who have benefited from her friendship and inspiration over the years – God bless you Sally in your new home.

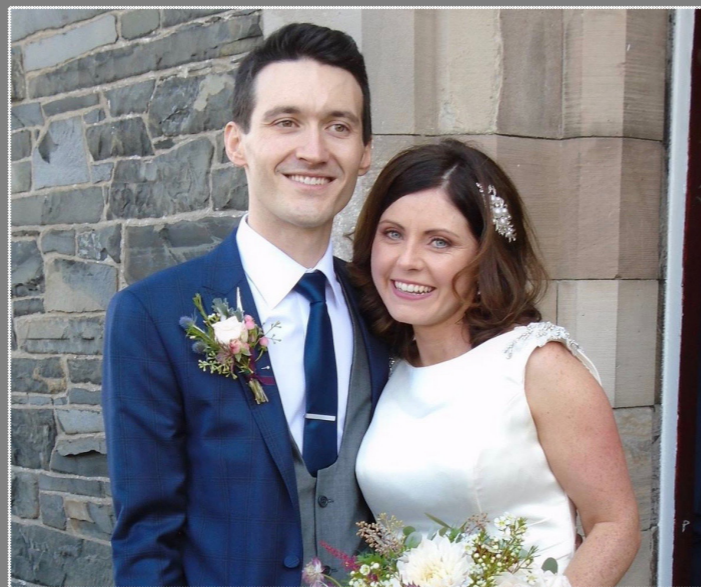
Some women see things as they are, and ask why. I dream of things that never were, and ask why not. (With acknowledgements to Robert Kennedy) Fr Austin



Weddings at Star of the Sea



Catherine Osborne & Andrew Gilchrist – married 9th September



Caroline Mulvenna & Philip Maxwell – married 2nd September 2017 St Comgall's Church, Bangor

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