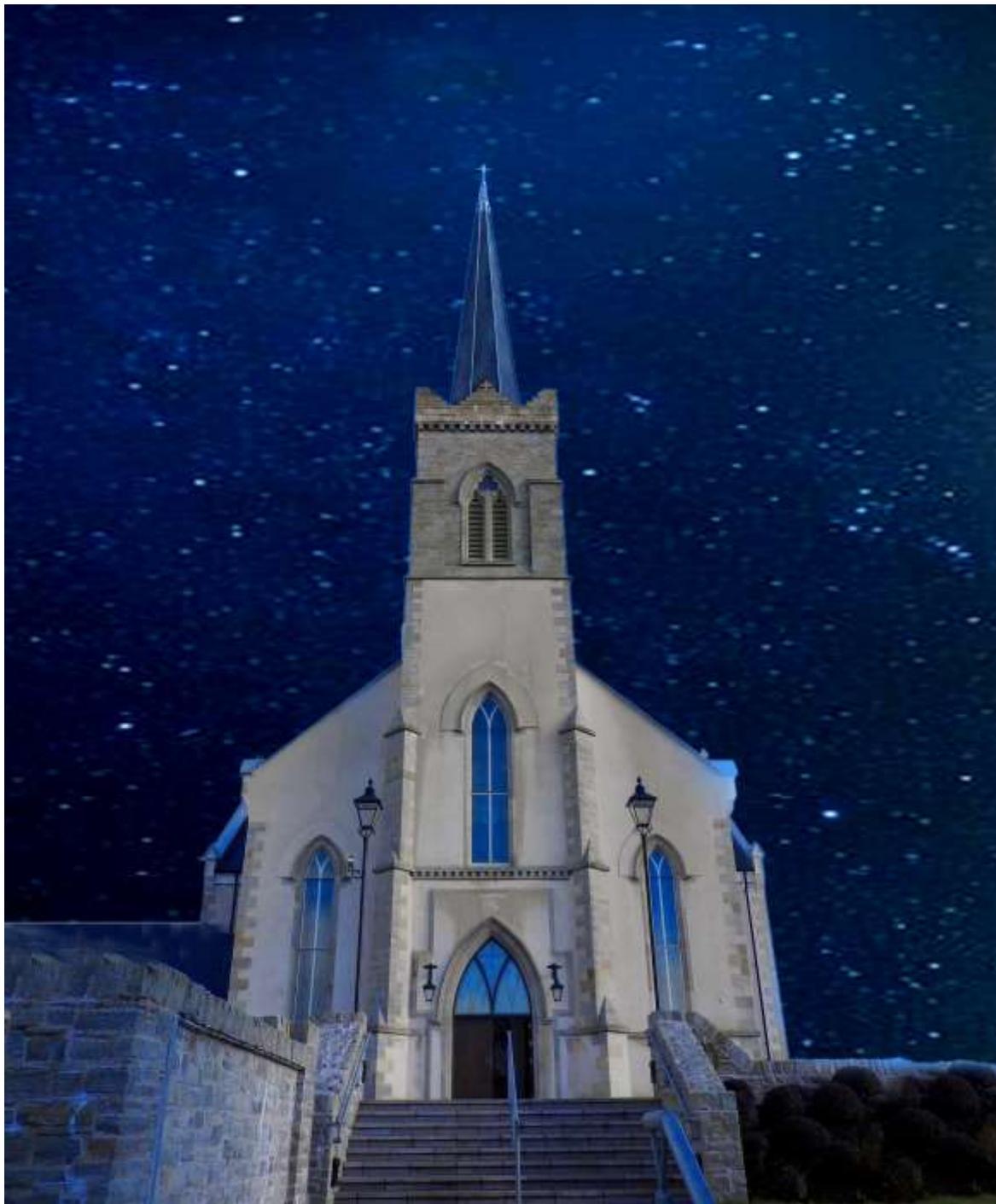


*ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION CHURCH, KILLYBEGS.
CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2019*



*Beannachtaí na Nollag agus
na Bliana Úire oraibh uilig*

*Wishing you a Christmas
and New Year of love and joy*

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

During the Advent Season, we listen with our hearts to the stirrings of hope and joy in the world. While nature reveals God to us and allows us to experience God's presence, we are well aware of the major challenges facing the planet. In his Encyclical, Laudato Sí, Care of Our Common Home, Pope Francis doesn't mince his words when he says: 'the earth, our home, is beginning to look more and more like an immense pile of filth'. The title of his masterful piece is attributed to the words of St. Francis, 'Praise be to you, My Lord', who reminds us that 'our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life, and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us'.

Pope Francis highlights the fact that our environmental crises unequally affect the most vulnerable peoples throughout the world. And we know that the climate change solutions that are urgently needed are slow in coming because vested interests are too powerful and Governments are too inadequate or too corrupt. Exceptional initiatives have been undertaken: Ethiopia planted 350 million trees in one day; in India 220 million trees were planted in a single day. Trees clean the air. Radical steps are also needed to stop polluting the air. Controlling carbon emissions from cars is a major climate change solution. Car-free days are becoming popular all over the world. What a different world we would have if we became less car-centric. Global health would be greatly enhanced. Electric public transport seems to be the solution but the infrastructure for that just isn't there. These are a few random thoughts inspired by the great prophet of our age, Pope Francis, who says: 'may our struggles and our concern for this planet never take away the joy of our hope'.

This time last year we invited all in ministries to renew their commitment and we encouraged more people to be involved. Our Parish Ministry Course during Lent was fruitful. We are very grateful to all who are involved in parish ministries throughout the year. I would like to mention three groups who engage in ministry every single week of the year: our money counters, those who open and close the church and the Parish Choir; and Maureen Cunningham who looks after the candles every single day of the year. Our sincere thanks to everyone concerned. And we are grateful for all the financial support received for the general administration of the parish and for the Restoration Fund.

Christmas can be a lonely time for many families as the loss of a loved one during the year is sorely felt and many people will be far from home at Christmas-time. We keep them all in mind and in our prayers at this time.

Wishing you a reflective Advent and may the love and joy of Christ be with you and your family, be they at home or away from home, this Christmas and throughout the New Year.

Wishing you every blessing this Christmas and throughout 2020

Fr Colm, 1st December 2019

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS 2019

Christmas Carol Service at St John's Church

Wednesday 11th December 8.00pm

All are welcome to join the Church of Ireland Congregation.

Christmas Carol Service at St Mary's Church

Thursday 12th December at 7.00pm.

Young people from the local schools join the Parish Choir.
*The Collection will go to St. Gabriel's Homeless Centre in North London
(which reaches out to many Irish emigrants)*

Saturday 14th & Sunday 15th December

Masses at 7.00pm (Vigil), 9.00am & 11.00am

Advent Service of Reconciliation

Monday 16th December at 7.00pm

Saturday 21st & Sunday 22nd December

Masses at 7.00pm (Vigil), 9.00am & 11.00am

Christmas Masses

Tuesday 24th December: Christmas Eve

7.00pm: Children's Christmas Mass

11.00pm: Christmas 'Midnight' Mass

Wednesday 25th December: Christmas Day

Masses at **9.00am** and **11.00am**

Practices for Children's Mass (Christmas Eve 7pm):

Monday 16th December 4.30pm & Tuesday 17th December at 4.30pm

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

In the Adoration Room every Sunday 6pm to Monday Midnight
(except 22nd & 23rd December and 29th & 30th December).

Rosary & Divine Mercy

Every Tuesday in Adoration Room 5.45pm (Summertime 6.45pm)
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on last Tuesday of the month.



*All powerful God,
you are present in the whole universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness all that exists.
Pour upon us the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.
Fill us with your peace, that we may live
as brothers and sisters, harming no one.
Teach us to discover the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognise that we are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards your infinite light.
We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray, in our struggle
for justice, love and peace.*



God Is With Us

by Donal Neary SJ

*This is the true and deepest meaning of Christmas;
well worth our preparation.*

*The baby in the manger, the child in his mother's womb,
the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on Mary,
is 'God-is-with-us'.*

*Christmas offers the gift of faith;
offers this gift with the very human realities
of birth, joy, struggle, confusion and peace.
Christmas is a gift given and a gift to be shared
and sometimes a gift to be worked at.
Gratitude is so important.*



*In prayer we receive the peace and joy of the feast;
in our kindness to others at Christmas we share his coming;
and in our working in the world,
or in the family and communities,
for peace, reconciliation, forgiveness
and other qualities of the message of the gospel,
we bring Christmas alive.*

*In many ways God is with us;
his birth was in the ordinary locality, not just in the temple,
so it is great to see the crib in the street,
the shop window and in the home.*

*We need this message badly in a world of war and terror;
we need it too in the ordinary days of our lives.
And we can be truly grateful that the real Christmas gift
is wrapped in a human body and lasts forever,
for this life and the next.*

Christmas Gifts from the Parish Office

As well as Christmas items & Christmas cards, there is a range of religious goods of devotion available. Christmas Mass Bouquets are also available. In the spring we will have special items for Confirmation & First Communion.

Money Matters

We are sincerely grateful to everyone who supports the parish financially, contributing to the general administration of the parish and contributing to the Restoration Fund.

- The upkeep and maintenance of the parish, in terms of buildings, programmes and personnel, are carried out in a cost-efficient manner. The restoration work involved obtaining a 10 year bank loan in October 2012 of €950,000. Our current monthly repayments are €9,738.00
The loan balance on 1st December 2018 was: €375,599.00
The loan balance on 2nd December 2019 was: €268,114.63
We are grateful for your ongoing support.
- *Weekly or monthly or annual* contributions are very much appreciated. A number of fundraising efforts are necessary during the year.
- Many people use the weekly envelopes for their contributions. We are delivering two sets of envelopes (Parish Envelopes and Restoration Envelopes) to each household which has been in receipt of envelopes. If you do not intend to use both, discard what you do not need. It makes it much easier, for administration purposes, to do it this way. It means just one delivery of envelopes, with matching numbers.
- If you wish to receive a set of envelopes or if you have any queries, please contact Fr Colm or Ann at the Parish Office: 074 9731013.

Guidelines for Getting Married

Each partner must complete the **Pre-Nuptial Enquiry Form**.

The following documents are required to complete this form:

1. Baptismal Certificate
2. Confirmation Certificate
3. Pre-Marriage Course Certificate. (Pre-Marriage Courses: www.accord.ie)
4. Letter of Freedom (a declaration from a priest or a parent or sibling that you have never been married either civilly or religiously).
Both parties must be free to marry in the Catholic Church.
5. Receipt of three month notification from the Civil Registrar of Marriages.
(Stranorlar Registrar: Marie Greene on 074 9191729 / 9191730
Letterkenny Registrar: 074 9123771 / 9123772)

Fr Colm will gladly advise couples on the above.

The Garment of Suffering

*a symbol of our solidarity in suffering and prayer
during the season of Lent and Easter.*

St. Joseph The Worker, Ltd

P.O. Box 9
88266 Medugorje
Bosnia/Hercegovina
Tel/Fax 011-387-39-833-728

Dear Fr. Colm:

October 2019

Praise Jesus and Mary!

Greetings from Medugorje. Patricia O'Boyle brought over two more lovely quilts for the poor elderly or families. Many of them live in stone houses, and in the winter, the houses are cold. A quilt is always welcomed. We gave a quilt to Milica Vuksic.



Here is a picture of Milica Vuksic from a small village called Otok. She is in her 80's, never married, lives in the same house where she was born. It does not have many modern fixtures. She takes care of a special needs nephew. She is very poor. We deliver food packages to her every month. We also deliver wood to her as you

can see in the background. How these women survive, I do not know. They really suffer a lot.

Thank you again for allowing your parishioners to have a quilt ceremony. The quilts really help the elderly here in B/H.

I will put your name on my prayer list and will pray for you before the Blessed Sacrament. May Our Lady always protect you and guide you in your work.

Prayerfully in Our Lady,

The Sacrament of Baptism:

Parents may arrange the baptism of their child with Fr Colm or Ann in the Parish Office. Two members of the Parish Baptism Team will arrange to visit the family, one half-hour visit, to arrange readings, prayers and go through the ceremony. If a home visit doesn't suit, this can be done in the Parish Office. The usual times of Baptism are the 1st & 3rd Sunday of each month at 12.30pm.

Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Raphoe

St Mary's Parish in Killybegs has adopted the Diocese of Raphoe Policy Statement and everyone working with children in the parish is required to comply with it. The two Parish Safeguarding Representatives are: Kathleen O'Donnell, Fintra Rd and Pat McGee, The Glebe.

Dates for 2020

Sacrament of Confirmation: Sunday 22nd March at 11.00am

First Holy Communion: Saturday 16th May at 11.00am

Mass at Lisnaclaya Scalan: Wednesday 3rd June at 7.00pm

Graveyard Mass: Friday 31st July at 7.00pm

Blessing of the Fleet Mass: Saturday 1st August at 7.00pm

Mass at Croaghlin Mass Rock: Friday 14th August at 7.00pm

Sunday Masses: 7.00pm (Vigil), 9.00am & 11.00am.

Weekdays: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday, 10.00am.

Weekday Masses subject to change. Consult weekly Newsletter.

mcnmedia.tv: All Masses and all Church Services from St Mary's are streamed live on the internet. Go to **mcnmedia.tv** and then *St Mary's, Killybegs* or, easier still, go to our website and click on *Live Webcamera* Marriages and Funerals can be recorded, on request, free of charge, and can also be downloaded from our site.

Induction Loop is available for hearing-aid users, switch to T position.

Gluten-free Bread for Holy Communion is available on request.

Website: The Parish Weekly Newsletter is posted every Saturday evening on our website: *killybegsparish.com*

The Parish Office is located on church grounds, opposite main door of the church

Hours of Opening: Monday to Friday 9.15am - 2.45pm. **Tel:** 074 9731013

Email: info@killybegsparish.com

Website: killybegsparish.com

Parish Secretary: Ann O'Donnell

Parish Priest: Fr. Colm Ó Gallchóir: Tel: 074 9731013 (9731030)