

# *ST. MARY OF THE VISITATION CHURCH, KILLYBEGGS.*



## *CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2017*



*Every year at this time we are asked to escape from the tumult of our hearts,  
to put aside our weighty cares, and leave our wearisome toil,  
to enter for a while into the inner chamber of our souls,  
to listen to God's **Word**.*

*The **Word**, calling us through the mist of ignorance and apathy  
to be silent, to listen to the sound of stillness,  
and to see in the Child born of Mary the **Word** who became flesh.*

***Beannachtaí na Nollag agus na Bliana Úire oraibh uilig***

## Dear Parishioners and Friends,

*Almost everyone was relieved when common sense prevailed and the daunting prospect of a General Election before Christmas was averted. The Government can now proceed with addressing serious issues which demand their full attention, in particular the crucial Brexit negotiations and tackling the scandal of homelessness in a more determined manner. Later in the year a referendum on the Eighth Amendment will demand our serious attention and, in casting our vote, we should do so from an informed conscience. We include in this Newsletter some thoughts for your consideration.*

*The World Meeting of Families in Dublin in August will, please God, bring our beloved Pope Francis to Ireland. Please find enclosed a beautifully produced Icon of the Holy Family. You are invited to place the icon on the Christmas Table or in another prominent place in your home and pray together the prayer for families which is printed on the back of the icon.*

*Since the last Papal Visit to this country in 1979 the fall from grace of the Catholic Church in Irish society has been spectacular. Yet Catholicism is deeply embedded in our consciousness. Something that took centuries to embed itself will not disappear overnight, such is its depth, resilience and complexity. The systemic failures in Irish Catholicism emanated from a church frozen in time and refusing to adapt to changing circumstances. Consequently her members grew up and began behaving as adults, attempting to live their faith more authentically. People welcome the space to think for themselves and welcome the challenge to shape society according to deeply-held Christian beliefs. With devotional Catholicism in rapid decline, a new Catholicism is emerging in this secularised society. We have to put in place a new way of being church. Interest in religion and spirituality is flourishing, with more focus on the quality of the present life rather than the life-to-come. Pope Francis is making great strides in helping us find our feet. And we welcome to the Diocese of Raphoe, our new spiritual and pastoral leader, Bishop Alan McGuckian.*

*On a more practical level, we are inviting those involved in different ministries in the parish to renew their commitment and we are inviting more people to be involved. Perhaps you would read page 5 and consider filling in the form! Our sincere thanks to everyone who was actively engaged in different ministries and tasks in the parish throughout the year. And we are grateful for all the financial support received for the general administration of the parish and for the Restoration Fund.*

*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 2018.*

**Fr Colm, 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2017**

# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS 2017

## Christmas Carol Service

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm.**

Young people from the local schools join the Parish Choir.  
*The collection will go to the Capuchin Day Care Centre in Dublin where Brother Kevin and his team provide 600 meals for people who are homeless each day and each week 1000 food parcels for those on the poverty threshold.*

## Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> & Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December

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

## Service of Reconciliation

**Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December at 7.00pm**

## Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> & Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December

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

## Christmas Masses

**Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Eve**

**7.00pm:** Children's Christmas Mass

**11.00pm:** Christmas 'Midnight' Mass

**Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December: Christmas Day**

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

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

Monday 18<sup>th</sup> December 5pm & Tuesday 19<sup>th</sup> December 5pm

## Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

In the Adoration Room every Sunday 6pm to Monday Midnight (except 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> December and 31<sup>st</sup> December & 1st January).

## Rosary & Divine Mercy

Every Tuesday in Adoration Room 6.30pm (Summertime 7.30pm)  
Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on last Tuesday of the month.



## Pope Francis' Six New Beatitudes

Offered at a Mass in Malmo, Sweden

**Blessed** are those who remain faithful while enduring evils inflicted on them by others and forgive them from their heart.

**Blessed** are those who look into the eyes of the abandoned and marginalised and show them their closeness.

**Blessed** are those who see God in every person and strive to make others also discover him.

**Blessed** are those who protect and care for our common home.

**Blessed** are those who renounce their own comfort in order to help others.

**Blessed** are those who pray and work for full communion between Christians.



## Advice Pope Francis gives to families

- Always remember to say Please, Thanks, Sorry.  
In good times learn how to be open and communicate, so that you will be able to continue to do so in times of difficulty.
- Celebrate happy moments, and individual successes and support each other in the difficult passages of life. Value everyone's achievements, however insignificant they may appear.
- Respect each other's freedom. Everyone needs space, some more than others. An awareness of individual needs gives people a sense of being trusted and valued.
- Give a kind look. Never underestimate the value of a gaze of love.
- Learn to forgive. Before we can forgive others we must learn to forgive ourselves. Be slow to point out the limitations of a loved one.
- Listen to the older members of the family tell their stories and, in particular, encourage children and adolescents to do so.
- Be slow to judge another whose situation you do not fully understand.
- Always find time for family prayer, even a few moments every day.

## Invitation to become involved in the Parish

- |                                    |                          |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Usher                              | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parish Senior Choir                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parish Junior Choir                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reader                             | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Collector                          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Liturgy of Word with Children      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Altar Server                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Offertory Procession               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Minister of the Eucharist          | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Baptism Preparation Team           | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Liturgy Planning                   | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bible Group                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| St Vincent de Paul Society         | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Legion of Mary                     | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Prayer Group                       | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Ministry of Hospitality            | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Finance Committee                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parish Deliveries (Christmas time) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Fundraising                        | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Liturgy Group                      | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| A Bereavement Group                | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 'World Family' Group               | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parish Task Force                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parish Pastoral Council            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

*If you are interested in becoming involved in the work of the parish, please tick your area of interest and return this page to the Parish Office.*

*This does not involve making a commitment now. It's purely making an expression of interest.*

*Name:*

*Address:*

*Tel No.:*

*Any other area of involvement you feel would benefit the Parish:*

*Practical Guidance will be available, to newcomers and to existing members.*

## Christmas Gifts from the Parish Office

As well as Christmas items & Christmas cards, there is a range of religious goods of devotion available. Mass Cards 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 €9738. The loan balance on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 was: €585,975. The loan balance on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2017 was: €483,769. We are grateful for your ongoing support.
- *Weekly or monthly or annual* contributions are very much appreciated. And 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](http://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 9189554 / 9189558)

Fr Colm will gladly advise couples on the above.

## The Eighth Amendment

In the Constitution the *Eighth Amendment*, the result of a Referendum held in 1983, states:

“The State acknowledges the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right”.

This seemed to be an emphatic constitutional prohibition on abortion.

*The Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act 2013* permitted termination if there was a risk of loss of life from physical illness, from physical illness in emergency, from suicide, provided specific requirements were in place.

The Constitution celebrates the equality of the mother and the unborn child in its Eighth Amendment.

The deletion or amendment of the Eighth Amendment would serve to withdraw the right to life from some categories of unborn children. The wording of the proposed referendum in 2018 has not yet been finalised.

The UN Convention on the Right of the Child states:

“The child, by reason of his physical and mental immaturity, needs special safeguards and care, including appropriate legal protection, before as well as after birth”.

The Catholic Church teaches that human life is sacred from conception until natural death and that every unborn child, irrespective of his or her medical condition or the circumstances of his or her birth, has the right to be treated equally before the law.

The Irish Bishops do acknowledge that whilst in Church teaching abortion is never morally justified, the question of how it is to be coped with in the law of the land is a question for the lawmaker and may be susceptible to more than one answer. In Catholic tradition there has always been an acknowledgement that legislators and citizens have a right and a responsibility to make up their own minds as what the law and public policy should be. It is important that issues, both moral and legal, are articulated in a truthful and respectful way and that those holding a particular moral position may need to explore the possibilities of various public policies.

There is a real dilemma for legislators and voters who wish to honour the legacy of Catholic tradition in these grave matters in deciding what human rights and the common good require at this time.

The Church is the face of Christ’s compassion and does not pass judgement on any woman who has had an abortion. Everyone needs and deserves understanding, care and support in difficult circumstances.

## 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 1<sup>st</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month at 12.30pm.

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## 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.

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## Dates for 2018

**Sacrament of Confirmation:** Sunday 22nd April at 11.00am

**First Holy Communion:** Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> May at 11.00am

**Mass Rock Mass at Drumanoo:** Wednesday 6th June at 7.00pm

**Graveyard Mass:** Friday 27th July at 7.00pm

**Blessing of the Fleet Mass:** Saturday 4th August at 7.00pm

**Mass at Croaghlin Mass Rock:** Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> August at 7.00pm

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**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*

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**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](mailto:info@killybegsparish.com)

**Website:** [killybegsparish.com](http://killybegsparish.com)

**Parish Secretary:** Ann O'Donnell

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Colm Ó Gallchóir: Tel: 074 9731013 / 9731030