



PARISH OF ABBEYSIDE, BALLINROAD & GARRANBANE

EASTER BULLETIN 2024

They did it again, as they should. Just leaving the Parish Office yesterday, 'Ned, while I have you...the Easter Bulletin...!' In other words, take the pen out of your pocket and start writing! It is Friday, 8th March. I got out for my first cycle in weeks, anxious about the cold wind and wanting to be home before dark. Aiming first for Ardmore, then as time passed, I settled for Helvick. Friday evening traffic kept me alert. Heading for Rinn Ua gCuanach, I noticed the choppy waves and white horses outside the Cunnigar and the calm water sheltered inside it. Nervous between the toilets and the cove in Helvick, the wind coming in gusts from Ballinacourty lighthouse threatened to blow me to the right, my feet clipped in. The marine blue/green surging waves crashed on the rocks and spitted up spray on the stony little beach. Comeraghs and Knockmealdowns hidden in grey cloud, Cruachán visible but not clear. Brightness breaking through in various shades of bronze or pale gold in small shapes to the west, a little like the alabaster pentecost window behind the altar in St. Peter's, Rome.

These have been a tumultuous few weeks. Bishop Cullinan's letter touched a nerve, and people, particularly from Garranbane and to a lesser extent Ballinroad, came out in force to our public meeting, determined that no church would close. At every possible opportunity over the past decade when I've publicly thanked retired priests for their ministry, I've said that without them we couldn't maintain our present Mass schedule. This remains the case, and conversely it makes no sense to reduce our schedule while they are willing and able to minister. Perhaps the first change could be the reduction of Masses during holiday or sick leave. People who attended the public meeting or responded in writing, expressed a great love for Church, faith and Mass. Everyone accepts that change will happen at some point in the future, and most lament the decline in worship, and consequent dearth of people choosing to be priests. People see Mass as community coming together to worship, that it is not a private devotion. In the absence of Mass, many would be open to a lay led liturgy, or even to utilising technology as in live streaming Mass from another church in the parish. The community gathering in their local church was seen as important. The pastoral council meeting was fascinating, with everyone realising that many suggestions are not as straightforward as they may first seem. The financial implication, and basis, of change was noted, and of course the numbers of people regularly attending each Mass need to be factored in. I'm keenly conscious that while my workload could change, it can't increase if it is to be sustainable. Often, people wanted to keep the service which they frequented, and perhaps unconsciously suggested rationalising other services which wouldn't affect them. The pastoral council believe that we need to have in place a Plan B (a lay led liturgy) if a congregation is gathered in church and a priest unexpectedly fails to turn up.

My mind wandered as I pedalled back from Helvick, reminded of a story where parents who didn't wish their child to have a phone, campaigned that no child would have a phone rather than being the odd ones out. How hard to say no, or at least be the only one. Priests, wanting to please parishioners yet aware of their limited energy, similarly struggle. This is exacerbated as clergy become older and scarcer, often asked to do what two, three or four priests did in the past. There can be the double whammy of being the providers of extra services per priest, but also criticised because what they can sustain is less than what was offered before. People of my generation and older found it hard to assert themselves. We put up with things, not always getting our way. We generally listened to and obeyed our elders and leaders. Education meant the teacher was the expert who poured knowledge into the students, from jug to mug. Now, thanks to Google, we know it all. Perhaps the pendulum has swung to the far side. We can articulate and agitate, and rightly so. But can we recognise that sometimes we need to let go and admit there are other perspectives, and accept that we won't always get what we want. Can we see that there may be another way? A no can sometimes open a door to deeper suggestions, possibilities. All this is running around my head on a day we're asked to say yes or no to two changes to our Constitution; first, the family based on marriage changing instead to a 'durable relationship' which nobody can define; second, removing the reference to the uniquely influential role of mother. And this latter change, in a week when I have been handing or posting out my deceased Mam's Mortuary Cards. Never more than now could I be more conscious of the irreplaceable and all-encompassing role of mother.



The last two nights were great. First confessions in Garranbane and Abbeyside. Teachers did great work. Visiting their classrooms, I get such a lift from children's exuberance and honesty. They loved it, the freedom of confessing and being forgiven. While chatting as part of the homily one child began to publicly confess, before I had to hush him up! They're showing me that the Good News is good, and we should share it. Their joy and interest, with no baggage of the past. Sometimes, I feel a tiny tinge of envy at their unfettered trust in a great God of limitless love and forgiveness.

This morning, I was mesmerised by a man I met for a few minutes before a funeral. A Columban colleague of Fr. Sheehy, he taught western philosophy in the national seminary in China up until Covid. I asked about the underground Church. 'Yes', he said 'they're there, the unofficial ones. But the state pays priests, you don't hear that very often. They're great for getting around laws, the Chinese. There is a law that you can't teach religion in church on a Sunday morning. But as one priest said to me, "there is no law that you can't teach religion in a clinic on a Saturday morning!"'

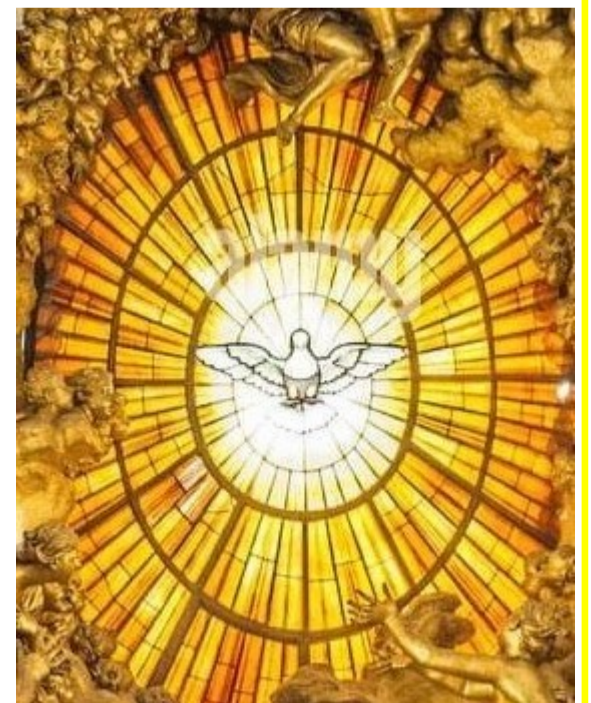
Saying yes and no have been percolating in my head and heart. How to pace oneself. At the swim session on Wednesday morning, Nathalie told us ahead of the 100m time trial to go fast from the beginning, not to be holding an energy reserve for a burst at the end. Like a fool I took off as fast as I could, shocking even myself. After the 60m mark my chest nearly exploded for lack of oxygen, and I had to stop and stand up to gulp in air! Church, collectively and each member, too needs to pace itself and take stock as to what is sustainable given the energy of those involved, forever finding a balance between contemplation and action, giving and receiving, serving and being served.

It is 8.30pm. I've just brought in the washing, having only hung them out two hours ago. The east wind directly against me as I came in the Youghal road meant I needed to choose an easier gear, bend my elbows and lean low near the handlebars to make progress. At least my laundry dried! This time last night the rescue helicopter hovered directly overhead and ominously shone its powerful search light left and right, looking for a lost soul who had entered the water. How hard to experience and contain powerful and painful emotions. Being powerless, rejected, defeated must be the worst.

It is Thursday 21st March, and I'm desperate to wrap up this piece, before hosting our final Confirmation ceremony and roasting a leg of lamb for the bishop and teachers. Christmas cards in a pile on the sitting room floor must be shredded, dust hoovered, chaos of tiny decisions unmade to be tidied. What's past its use by date and needs to be dumped? What's real and relevant and to be held on to but where to store? All surely a metaphor for a Church in transition. Literally as I typed the previous sentence, my eye, and heart, was uplifted by a beautiful auburn fox skipping diagonally across my back lawn, my first glimpse in a year. It was in Fenor church carpark yesterday, before my nephew's Confirmation, that I like everyone else, got a shock to read that Taoiseach Leo Varadkar, baptised in Abbeyside, was stepping down as Fine Gael leader immediately, and as Taoiseach once a new party leader is chosen.

Change is constant. We once were taught, incorrectly, that God and Church were immutable. Of course, in essence, God as creative, redeeming and sanctifying love doesn't change, but this actually means endless cycles of conversion, transformation, overcoming for all involved with God, which Christians believe is everyone and everything, either implicit or explicit. Far from static, God is utterly dynamic, effusive in loving. As Church, we must navigate this constant change and reconnect or else stagnate and continue to be less and less relevant. I sense people are open to the spiritual, to deeper aspects of life, searching for meaning and belonging. The challenge for Church is to tune in to God's presence in people's lives, to welcome and include. All this takes energy, openness, huge cooperation, and imagination.

I repeat, that as I left Helvick two weeks ago, the fiery colour barely breaking through the clouds, instinctively gave me hope, drew me to Rome's alabaster window above the Chair of Peter, showing the Spirit as dove, symbol of presence, perspective and courage amidst epochal change. Taoisigh, priests and parish structures come and go, but Father, Son and Spirit continue to create, lead and inspire. Jesus ushered in a new way of reaching out, as God's voice for everyone, especially those on the edge, raising the hackles of the powerful. They tried to silence him, but he rose, returned and continues to engage with us. He promises to enable us to do the same, both while here on earth, and to have a bright future hereafter.



Happy Easter

Fr Ned

EASTER WORD SEARCH COMPETITION.

S	E	A	Y	A	D	N	U	S	R	E	T	S	A	E	S	Y	T	E	L
E	K	H	O	L	Y	W	E	E	K	R	U	R	Y	U	L	O	P	R	S
L	A	O	S	A	C	R	I	F	I	C	E	C	E	S	R	T	D	X	O
T	G	T	A	X	C	R	U	C	I	F	I	X	I	O	N	U	I	U	U
S	S	C	Y	U	P	S	E	A	S	T	E	R	T	R	I	D	U	U	M
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S	L	I	R	I	T	S	I	R	H	C	S	U	S	E	J	O	G	T	O

Abstinence

Easter Bunny

Fasting

Hot Cross Buns

Lilies

Spring

Basket

Easter Egg Hunt

Good Friday

Jesus Christ

Maundy Thursday

Stations

Children

Easter Sunday

Holy Hour

Lamb of God

Resurrection

The Last Supper

Crucifixion

Easter Triduum

Holy Week

Lent

Sacrifice

The Passion

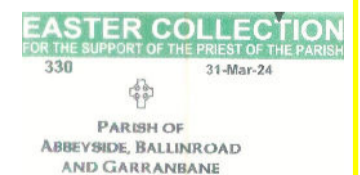
There is one word missing from the Easter Word Search. Please email or drop your answer into the Parish Office before April 12th and winner will be announced shortly after. Best of luck to all. Winner will receive €50.

Thank You

A very special thank you to everyone who helped with the Holy Week ceremonies and with the decoration of the churches for Lent and Easter. A lot of thought and effort went into it, so well done to all involved.

Easter Collection

The Easter Collection for the support of the Priests of the Parish will be taken up at Easter Masses. It is the Green & White coloured envelope in your box of envelopes or please use the accompanying Easter envelope. We will have a 2nd collection after Holy Communion for this purpose. Online donations accepted also through our website abgparish.ie and clicking on the Donations button. We thank you in advance for your generosity.



The Holy Places

We invite you to contribute to a collection for the support of the Holy Places in the Holy Land at all services on Good Friday. A reminder that Good Friday is a day of fast and abstinence.



PLEASE COME AND CELEBRATE HOLY WEEK & EASTER WITH US IN ANY OF OUR THREE CHURCHES

ABBEYSIDE



<u>HOLY THURSDAY</u>	7.00p.m.	Mass of the Lord's Supper
	9.00p.m-10.00p.m	Holy Hour
<u>GOOD FRIDAY</u>	12.00p.m.	Stations of the Cross
	3.00p.m.	Passion Liturgy
<u>HOLY SATURDAY</u>	7.00p.m.	Easter Vigil
<u>EASTER SUNDAY</u>	9.30a.m.	Easter Sunday
	12.00p.m.	Easter Sunday



BALLINROAD

<u>HOLY THURSDAY</u>	7.00 p.m.	Mass of the Lord's Supper
<u>GOOD FRIDAY</u>	3.00 p.m.	Passion Liturgy
<u>HOLY SATURDAY</u>	7.00 p.m.	Easter Vigil
<u>EASTER SUNDAY</u>	10.00a.m.	Easter Sunday



GARRANBANE

<u>HOLY THURSDAY</u>	7.00 p.m.	Mass of the Lord's Supper
<u>GOOD FRIDAY</u>	7.00 p.m.	Stations of the Cross
<u>EASTER SUNDAY</u>	11.00a.m.	Easter Sunday

Booking of Masses (Please contact the sacristan in your local church.)

Abbeyside:

Eileen O Donovan 087 7565605

Ballinroad:

Ann Crowther 087 7606941

Garranbane:

Liam Carroll 086 8552595

Geraldine Carroll 087 6742191

What is the Abbeyside, Ballinroad, Garranbane Pastoral Council?

The ABG pastoral council is a representative body of the people of the Parish. The council work with Fr Ned about pastoral issues, i.e. everything to do with the mission of the Parish. All issues in relation to finance, physical buildings, graveyards are dealt with by the Finance Council. The council's main purpose is to investigate, reflect and reach conclusions about pastoral matters. The Vision for the Parish of Abbeyside, Ballinroad and Garranbane is one of a faith-filled, welcoming community, that is vibrant, alive, energetic, involving all age groups and cultures, who are reaching out in the service of others, celebrating the living and keeping in touch, while creating awareness and visibility through two way communication.

Our current Pastoral Council is coming to the end of it's three year term and what a term they have served. They were involved in Covid the introduction and the easing of restrictions, in Pope Francis's Synodal process that involved surveying Parishioners and collating all responses to send to the Bishop, they embarked on a trip to the Parable Garden in Curracloe on a faith finding mission and came back invigorated and with a sense of purpose. They recently ran a successful Alpha program in the Gold Coast Hotel that saw good numbers attend. The Pastoral Council was instrumental in publicising Bishop Cullinan's letter and held a public meeting in Abbeyside Church so you could all air your views. So have you got what it takes to be a representative on our Pastoral Council?

We will be seeking nominations for Abbeyside, Ballinroad and Garranbane over the coming weeks, please keep an eye on our newsletter to find out how to be nominated or to nominate someone.

