Twenty Third Sunday in Ordinary Time – Cycle A

6th September 2026

# Parish of Abbeyside, Ballinroad & Garranbane

## Community Monument Fund – Abbeyside Cloghás Restoration

Following on from last week the three buttresses facing the sea wall have been repointed and some missing stones have been replaced to strengthen the structure.

The two buttresses on the Eastern gable have also been pointed as well as sections below the large window. Vegetation is being removed as this piece is written.

Works will continue next week.

Please respect all health & safety warnings.

Thank you all for your cooperation as we try and secure this structure for the future.

## Fr James reflects on his first year here with us in Abbeyside, Ballinroad & Garranbane Parish.

**Could you tell us a little bit about where you grew up in Nigeria and your early life?**

My father was a military man; I was born and reared in the barracks (now Old Army Barracks as there is no active military base there) alongside my siblings. The barracks are where I spent all my life up to the time, I was ordained and after my ordination we continued staying there. Nigeria is a country with multi-cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, and so the barracks reflects what constitutes the country – a mini-Nigeria. People from the North, East, West and South, Christians, Muslims and African traditional region adherents make up the barracks community. Amidst these differences we live and work together looking after one another. The barracks kind of community is what shaped my worldview and how I relate with people.

**When did you first feel called to the priesthood?**

From primary school, I went to a minor seminary, but my reason was not because I wanted to be a priest but to escape from primary school. After the minor seminary (which is like a secondary school) I just continued into the major seminary for the formation to the priesthood. I was there up until my final year I didn't feel anything like being called. I was just going to school waiting to graduate. Moreover, the practice in my diocese then was no ordination until one year after graduation. However, one fateful afternoon during my meditation before the school's general prayer, I fell asleep for few minutes, and it was in this circumstance I heard a voice telling me James you are going to be a priest, and you will be ordained this year. That was when I felt and was convinced that I was called to the priesthood because I had always prayed to God to reveal to me if this was my vocation. Eventually in that short dream I had the call and it turned out to be so.

**What differences have you noticed between parish life in Nigeria and parish life in Ireland**

In Nigeria we visited one another and spend days, eating, drinking and celebrating during the time of visit, but in Ireland it is not like that. Of course, cultural differences and experience contribute to the different ways parish life is lived in these two countries. Each is based on its experience and culture.

**Have you been able to bring anything from your Nigerian background into your ministry?**

There is this adage that says, "when you go to Rome, behave like the Romans". The church is one, but culture differs. It's of no use trying to bring something into a different culture when it is the same faith. I feel adapting to the culture and practice of your new environment will make everyone happy and one can even learn more.

**Looking back on your first year in Abbeyside, Ballinroad, and Garranbane, what has the experience been like for you?**

These are communities different and unique in their different ways. However, central to all of them is their strong

Congratulations

*Wishing you a lifetime of love and happiness!*

Married Recently:

Michael Daly & Ciara Hannigan

Shane Nolan & Trisha Loughman

Conor Hennebry & Niamh O Mahony

**Planning a wedding?**

Please contact the Parish Office to inquire about available dates. As a reminder, couples must give at least 6 months' notice to the parish to complete marriage preparations and give at least 3 months' notice to the Civil Registrar before the wedding date.

Only the Accord pre-marriage course is accepted in our Parish.

Please visit **www.accord.ie** to book.

## SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Our Parish community extends its warmest congratulations and blessing to the families of:

*Ruby Róisín Nic Conmara Fennell*

*Sadie O Connor*

*Ellie & Leah Hayden*

*Róise Angie Hally*

*Ollie Finn Whelan*

who will receive the Sacrament of Baptism in our Parish over the weekend.

***May the light of Christ shine brightly in their hearts and may our Parish be a source of faith, love, and support for their journey ahead.***

If you wish for your child to receive the Sacrament of Baptism, we have the following dates available.

**October 3rd**

**October 17th**

Please note baptism dates are offered on a first come first served basis and forms are now available online. Please contact the office with your preferred date and a baptism application link will be emailed to you.

Fully completed forms should be submitted online to guarantee your spot.

Application forms can also be dealt with at the office.

and resilient community spirit and genuine faith expressed in the way they work, pray and support one another.

**What was your first impression of the parish when you arrived?**

The welcome I received from both the parish priest Fr Ned, who in turn introduced me to Lucinda in the office and Eileen the sacristan in St Augustine's church was fabulous. It calmed my fears as I felt welcomed. It is a big township and an organised parish with everyone playing their roles actively without disturbing another.

**Was there anything about the parish or the local community that surprised you?**

I had not finished parking my things when my car engine locked and I had no car; a parishioner offered her car to me until my car was fixed. This was somebody that didn't know me as I had barely reported to the parish before the incident, yet this person was kind enough to give me her car for almost one month. In fact, that experience made an indelible impression on me. I am pretty sure many others would have been ready to do so given the opportunity. This singular act of kindness when someone had barely known me surprised me.

**What have you enjoyed most about your first year here?**

The way I was accepted and giving the opportunity to integrate into the parish life speaks volume, of course thanks to the parish priest Fr Ned. The parish is organised with every committee knowing their roles and executing it effectively – in the office we have efficient staff, in the churches the sacristans are wonderful, the parish pastoral council are top-notch. Similarly, the lectors, ministers of the eucharist, ushers etc. in fact, the synergy among the different ministries is what I enjoy the most.

**How would you describe the people of the parish to someone who has never visited here?**

The parishioners are simple, humble, and hospitable. They have a strong sense of community spirit. They are people of strong faith.

**What have the people of the Parish taught you during your first year?**

Teamwork, cooperation, community spirit and caring for one another.

**How important do you think community is to parish life today?**

The church is a product of the community because it is the people of the community that make up the church. Without the community there can never be a sustainable parish. The parish on the other hand helps to form, encourage and enrich the community's faith through shared lived faith and practice. Both community and parish life need each other for strength, growth, development and rooted human and spiritual growth.

**What has your experience of meeting families, older parishioners and young people in the parish?**

Meeting families that make up the parish was one of the most beautiful things that happened to me as everyone welcomed me with open arms, and they expressed their appreciation. While most of the older people seem more settled and ready to listen to you, your stories, and experience with rapt attention, a good number of the young people are happy to meet with you, ready to share their challenges as regards their faith which centers on how to fend for their young families and enjoy life. At the moment, for the young people the church life is limited to Christenings, weddings and funerals or anniversaries.

**What part of your ministry gives you the greatest sense of fulfilment?**

Being able to serve the people well by relating to them in a way that we understand one another, appreciate and encourage one another. Also, when I receive honest and genuine feedback either in appreciation or meant to correct me.

**As you begin your second year here, what hopes do you have for the parish?**

My hope for the parish is for it to consolidate on its already established good practices and programs for better growth and development of both spiritual and communal life of the parish.

**If you could give one message to the people of the parish as you celebrate this first anniversary, what would it be?**

Continue to be the people of faith that you are, loving, caring, supporting and encouraging one another for that is the basis of every parish and community life. Continue your support for the parish pastoral team.

**Is there anything about the Irish culture that you still find amusing or unusual?**

One thing I find unusual about the Irish culture is the way people accept death and death's situation. When someone is at the point of death, family members and relations gather to be with the person as he or she prepares to journey out of this life. People are often surrounded by their loved ones, which is a very good thing I reckon. The other side of it is how the person lying down on the sick bed battling with his life is being discussed by family members about his or her intended passing away even while still alive. In my culture we hardly accept a death situation, no matter what the doctor or the situation may be, we still believe that the situation can be reverted through prayers rather than discussing how the dying person will meet with our late parents, siblings and relations at the other side. Again, this goes to tell how matured you are in accepting death which for me is really unusual.

**What is one thing about Nigeria that you would love your parishioners to here to experience?**

Our liturgy – consisting of music and dancing, and our cuisines.

## Anniversary Mass Bookings

Please contact the sacristan of the Church you wish for the mass to be said.

### Abbeyside Church:

Eileen O Donovan

087-7565605

### Ballinroad Church:

Ann Crowther

087-7606941

### Garranbane Church:

Liam Carroll

086-8552595

Geraldine Carroll

087-6742191

### Best Wishes

To John Moran, Pat Power and Mossy McNamara (Team ABG Parish) and all our Parishioners who are representing our Parish in the Waterford & Lismore Diocesan Youth Fundraiser Golf Classic on Monday in Faithlegg.

# TOM BRETT
# Voices From Abbeyside's Past
# WEEK 1

*Power's Brewery Float in the Saint Patrick's Day Parade, driven by Joe Foley, Saint Patrick's Crescent, Dungarvan with Tom Brett, Abbeyside, circa 1980.*

*Photo: Waterford County Museum.*

It was around November 1983 when the Abbeyside Parish Curate, Fr P. Ahearne, came up with the idea of producing a monthly parish newsletter, priced at 20p. The original committee consisted of Fr P. Ahearne C.C., Seamus O'Brien, Finbarr Keohan, Angela Keohan, Phil Duggan, Ann Cartwright, Pat Breen, Theresa Breen, Donal Power and Fintan Strain.

Abbeyside is a much-changed parish today, but the weekly Parish Newsletter is still going strong. In the pre-Facebook and mobile phone era, much of its content during the 1980s was devoted to local news, notices and forthcoming events. Before long, however, the committee recognised the wider potential of a regular publication. One of its most popular features was a series of interviews with prominent and well-known people from around the village. Looking back today, these interviews provide a fascinating window into the recent past of Abbeyside and the lives and memories of the people who helped shape the parish. To celebrate these parishioners and our parish we are going to run a series of reprints of these interviews over the coming months. First up is Tom Brett, Tom was one of the last people to operate a working horse and cart in Abbeyside.

**Tom Brett – In Profile**

Tom lives at Upper Sarsfield Street and has been there since the age of six when he moved with his family from Coolagh Road, where he was born on January 3rd, 1908. He lives alone here now that the other members of the family have passed on. He had two sisters, Kitty and Molly, and brothers Pierrie and Paddy.

He is invariably in very good form and that is how we found him when we asked him to talk to us one night last week. Having talked about his family we asked about his schooldays.

"Like all my pals of the time, I didn't like school. For a long time, my teacher was Jack McHugh who was substituting for James Croke, who was ill in hospital. They spent a lot of their time teaching us religion."

**Was school much different from what it is now?** "What do you mean?"

**Don't know really, but, for instance, did they teach you about things like the "birds and the bees" and so on…Stop laughing and answer the question.** "You must be joking. They'd talking about them things in my young days, let alone in school."

**What games did you play as a child?**

"Hiding holes, four corner fool, tig and other simple games."

**How old were you when you first wore long trousers?** "About fifteen or sixteen.

**Was it fashionable to wait until you were that old at the time?** "You had to wait whether you liked it or not. Work was very scarce, money was scarce with everyone and that's why long trousers were scarce."

**You have a reputation of being a very hard worker. Did you work a lot during your life?** "I worked all my life since I left school in the Pond. I worked with my father's horse and cart since I was about fourteen. I worked with farmers - - some very good ones and some very bad. It was hard to earn a living then, but you could always find work if you tried hard enough. I spent many years down on my knees thinning mangolds, turnips and beet. A friend of mine reckoned that one year I travelled over 55 acres on my knees thinning the crops around Ballinacourty. Of course, the place I loved working most of all was out the "Black Strand" pickings winkles."

**What do you mean that you loved working out there. What about the hardship?**

"There's no hardship there you get "hooked" on it. It's like a "calling" and you can never give it up."

**How long have you been picking winkles?** "All my life you could say - - and for a long time to come."

**You must be expecting to live for ever. Tom greeted this question with a characteristic,** Yeah, Yeah, Yeah……

**You had the name of being a beautiful ballroom dancer. Did you like dancing?** "I loved dancing and as you say I was good at it. I used to go to all the "fourpenny" hops in the Town Hall, and I was always being asked not to forget so-and-so for a dance, so I got little time to rest at dances. A crowd of us from Abbeyside used to go around to the stages for the cross-road and open-air dancing. I loved going to Stradbally and we used to go a couple of times a week, but one night we were dancing while the Rosary was on and didn't Fr. Paddy Farrell, who was a curate there at the time, hunt us and called us foreigners. We were afraid to go and started going to Faha instead."

**Being in such demand at dances, there must have been some romance in your life?** "There is romance in everyone's life, and we'll leave it at that."

**You were a great lover of good music**

**and a bandsman with the Dungarvan Brass Band.** "Very true. I loved it. I was 45 years with the band and all the time I played the Tuba (Base)."

**What was the nicest thing that happened to you during your life?** "In the mid-thirties when the film "The Desert Song" was all the rage, the band were at the Cork Exhibition, and we played a selection from "The Desert Song" to a big crowd down in Cobh. The way the people there clapped and cheered and shouted for an encore was very moving and emotional. It was our finest hour. Also, on the Square of Dungarvan we played a special selection to a very big crowd to mark the start of the Eucharistic Congress in 1932. I'll never forget that and I'm glad the band is as good as ever."

**Were you interested in Sport?** "Yes, I loved hurling and I followed Waterford to Limerick, Clonmel and Dublin and I went everywhere with Abbeyside when they were

**You haven't a horse now, why?** "You couldn't keep a horse on the road now with so much traffic. You could get killed going to town. I was sorry to have to give it up as I loved working with a horse."

**Do you sing?** "You often heard me. What do you think? I don't think I'm any good! I suppose it's just as well that you're not depending on it for a living.

**Do you socialise much now?** "Very little. Only about once a week. I go out for a couple. A few of my cronies and myself meet in the old bar at Alice O'Connors.

The crack is very good, and we call it "Dun Abbey".

**You seem a very happy man – always in the best of humour. How do you do it?** "I had a happy life and there's no use in worrying anyway. I always had wonderful neighbours. Long ago when the weather was so bad that you couldn't go out, Nanny Waters and myself used to wave across to tell each other that everything was fine. Our windows are opposite. Another thing I'd like to say is that the people looking after the socials and excursions for the senior citizens are great people and they make a lot of people happy. I'll have to say as well that a lot of the new people who have come to live here, are great for the community, the church, the scouts and the school and they do a lot of work. It's not fair to call people "blow-ins". Some of them are better that a lot of us. Everyone should be happy"

On that note we ended a very enjoyable meeting with Abbeyside's one and only **TOM BRETT**.

This interview originally appeared in the Abbeyside Parish Newsletter in November 1984.

This series was compiled by Shane Tutty.

Thanks are due to Waterford City & County Archivist Joanne Rothwell for her support with this project.

**Who will be up next?**

**Grab your copy next to see!!!**

| **Mass Times** | **Mass Intentions** |
|---|---|
| **Abbeyside Church** | |
| **Saturday 7.00pm** | **Noel Looby**<br>**Thomas O Mahony** |
| **Sunday 9.30am** | **Danny & Helen Lenihan** |
| **Sunday 12.00pm** | **Eddie Moore 1st Anniversary** |
| **Ballinroad Church** | |
| **Sunday 10.00am** | **Tom Troy & Bridie Power**<br>**Josephine Cunningham & her daughter Theresa Rafferty** |
| **Garranbane Church** | |
| **Sunday 11.00am** | **Fr James Power & family** |
| **Anniversaries** | **Mossie Healy**<br>**Paudie Maher** |
| **Died Recently** | **Margaret Foley (née Healy)**<br>**Helen (Nellie) Moloney (née Phelan)** |

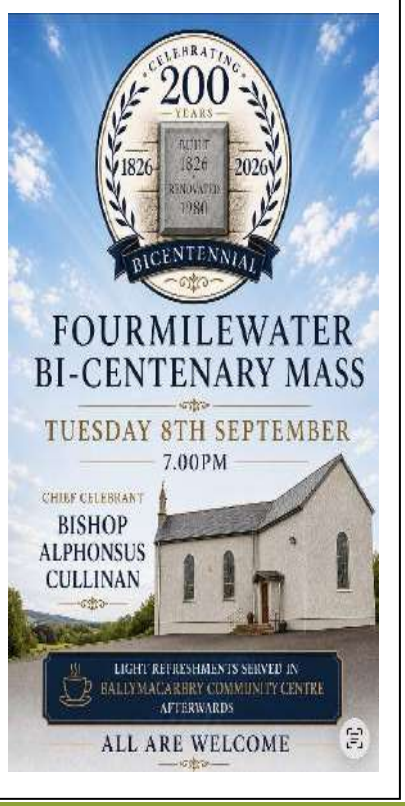
**Weekday Masses: Monday – Friday 10am Abbeyside Church. (Subject to change due to Funerals in the Parish).**

**There will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacraments on Tuesday after 10am mass.**

One Club, One Community. All are welcome.

Grand Draw: Saturday 5th 8pm Minnies Bar.

Please Park in designated areas only. Thank you for your cooperation.



**ABG Office Opening Hours:**

**Monday to Friday**

**9am - 1pm**

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**www.abgparish.ie**

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**Mobile: 087 746 04**

**Email:**
**abgparish@gmail.com**

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