



The Parish of St. Patrick and St. Brigid

Celbridge and Straffan

Special Christmas Mass Bouquets unique to our parish available from the sacristy

Hospitality



A word of thanks to all who work in the important parish ministry of hospitality.

We had a lovely Christmas Hospitality last Wednesday in St Patrick's. Thanks everyone!

Next Wednesday after 10am Mass is our last hospitality before Christmas.

We resume, Wednesday January 10th.

This Sunday after 11am Mass in St Brigid's we have our last Sunday Hospitality before Christmas. All welcome.



Advent Reconciliation Service

THURSDAY 21st DEC.

Gentle reflective music, short readings, whilst the Sacrament of Reconciliation / Confession takes place. Some brought him gold, frankincense and myrrh, others a lamb, we can bring him a truly contrite heart.

Crib Drop In

*Christmas Eve 2-5pm
in St Patrick's Church*

Members of the Parish Team and myself will be there. There'll be treats and maybe a few songs. Why not drop in and see the crib on this special day and get home early before that other VIP drops in? I hope to see you there.



Carol

Service

TUES. 19th DEC. 7.30pm

Our annual gathering for readings and carols. A great preparation for Christmas with our beautiful choirs. No sermon! That's a promise.



Midnight Mass at Midnight!

There's a lot of Christmas Masses to choose from, in both our beautiful churches, St Patrick's and St Brigid's, early morning and midday, but for me there's something special about Midnight Mass at Midnight! I am so looking forward to the music!

Dawn Mass on Christmas Morning!



And there's something special about this too! I'll try to remind myself that it's special when the alarm goes off! I am not expecting a crowd. It's not about that. It's about a small group of us.... everyone is welcome.... beginning our week at dawn to welcome the Risen Lord. A mini Easter. We pray for everyone who lives in our parish and indeed all who visit to worship in our churches. We pray especially for those who are sick in mind, body or soul.

It's a 6.30am start with Morning Prayer, Mass usually commencing around 7am. Cold, dark, incense, Mass, Jesus. Now that's special. Maybe see you there?

St Vincent de Paul - Big Thanks!

On a related matter, on behalf of St Vincent de Paul, can I express sincere gratitude for a wonderfully generous collection last week. Details in the New Year. For now thank you all so much.



Christmas and New Year Timetable

COPIES IN BOTH CHURCHES AND ON OUR WEBSITE.

A Very Happy, Peaceful and Blessed Christmas to you all!



RUMBLINGS FROM THE BUNKER

Christmas Recipe

Well the mince pie season is in full swing and I am delighted, though I must confess I find the mince pie is getting more and more like the sausage: it is quite difficult to get a really good one. Actually come to think of it the sausage is worse. Unfortunately more often than not I am disappointed in the sausage. Too much fat, too much water, way too much salt, poor quality and sadly often pretty tasteless. That's the sausage. Don't get me started on Carmel shortbread! I am more or less resigned now that no one will ever make it quite like Bridie! In fairness the mince pie is not so bad and in my experience they are generally at least passable. Whether it's heated with fresh cream or brandy butter or simply unheated with a cup of tea, it is an important little seasonal ritual. What else is a significant part of the season?

Well I love snow. I pray for snow. Like Bing I'm always dreaming of a White Christmas. I am smiling at that because it reminds me of when Bridie got old and I'd say I am praying for snow and she would say you're not thinking of people like me afraid to go out in it for fear of falling. Yea I am smiling but tears are not far away. Do you ever stop missing your Ma? I miss her all the time but I think I miss her more at Christmas. I like Andy Williams Christmas Songs. I really like Michael Buble singing 'It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas!' Surprise surprise I love the smell of the turkey and ham, especially the ham cooking in the oven, and it covered in brown sugar and cloves. I love a good Christmas movie. I always read some Dickens at Christmas, and usually some of John B. Keane's Christmas stories.

So there you are, that's Christmas for me! Have a good one! Happy Holiday!!

WAIT! HANG ON! Hold it right there! Just a minute! I am joking you know! Imagine if that is all there was to Christmas for me! When I start wishing you Happy Holiday, it will be time to ring the Archbishop and explain I seem to be slipping!

I'd be a right pagan. A PPP... A pagan parish priest! Actually if that is all there was to Christmas for me, it would be very sad. Now to what really makes Christmas for me:

Let me begin with the big 'no-no'. I wish people would stop saying: 'sure Christmas is just for the kids' It most certainly is not. What a tired and weary thing to say. I am sure it is not intentional but it has more than a little cynicism in it and in my view it is definitely a pagan statement. Is hope just for children? Is joy? Is the Christmas Story just for children? At what stage do we stop looking into the Crib? So let us, at least those of us trying to hang on to some semblance of faith, stop this negative cant.

Christmas for me is the beautiful passages of Sacred Scripture such as Isaiah, the Masses, the young children dropping into see the crib with their parents on Christmas Eve afternoon, Midnight Mass and the Christmas Day Mass. They all have their tone or tenor, unique to themselves, but they are all Mass. The greatest prayer on this earth, and to be celebrating it at Christmas recalling the Birth of Jesus. Wow! How Beautiful!

Christmas for me is O Holy Night and Adeste Fideles and above all Silent Night, and if we can sing at least a little of it in its original German then all the better. Christmas for me is the Crib. I put up a life size one in my front window. A real tree, smelling of pine and messily shedding needles for the month that it is up, much to the chagrin of Dutch's paws! I try to visit some cribs around the city, a direct result of the days my Dad brought the four of us children around many of the church cribs in Belfast.

At the very core of it for me will be the chance to do a little bit of soul work. I'll be very disappointed in myself if by the time I am on the altar for Mass on New Years Eve night at 11.30 pm that I have not, at least glimpsed, Jesus over Christmas and got to know him even a tiny bit better. Indeed that's my prayer for you.

Fraternally, JoeMcD 17.12.23