

Chairman:
Michael Goulding

Secretary:
Christina Concannon

Assistant Secretary:
Martina Gavin

Fr Stephen Farragher
Anne Carney
Clare Higgins
Emer Gallagher
Gabrielle Lyons
Laura Brogan
Majella Coffey
Martina Gavin
Mary Mulrennan
Michael Byrne
Mike Griffin
Orla Phillips
Orla Loftus-Moran
Willie Ryan
Anne Durkan
Siobhan Quinn
Marie Brennan



New Year's Day Mass. Concelebrants at New Year's Day Mass, January 1st 2014, L-r: Fr. Joe Feeney, Fr. Brendan McGuinness, Fr. Stephen Farragher, Fr. Patrick Burke and Fr. Richard Gibbons and a section of the congregation in St Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis.

JUNE 2014

Talk by Fr. Colm Kilcoyne

The Parochial Hall was the venue for a talk given by Fr. Colm Kilcoyne (pictured right) to Eucharistic Ministers on Thursday 5th June. It was particularly beneficial for those present who had recently volunteered to participate in this ministry in that they got a very good insight into what the duties of a Eucharistic Minister entails. On Sunday June 22nd, the feast of Corpus Christi they were commissioned in a brief ceremony during the 12 o'clock Mass.



Corpus Christi Procession

The annual Corpus Christi procession was held on Sunday, June 22nd continuing the age old tradition in our parish. This year's procession took on a new direction as a large number of participants processed up through Upper Main Street and into Aisling Drive, where Benediction was conducted by parish priest Fr. Stephen Farragher. As in former years, the sun shone brightly on the procession, making the occasion a glorious one filled with fervour and devotion. Full credit is due to the residents of Upper Main Street and indeed to the residents of Aisling Drive who kept the flag flying in style by having their respective areas looking splendid for the occasion and suitably adorned with altars and sacred images, adding greatly to the splendour of the occasion. Benediction hymns were performed by the combined Parish Choir and the Abbey Male Choir.



Corpus Christi Procession, June 22nd, 2014. Some of the children who made their First Holy Communion assemble in Aisling Drive for the Benediction at the end of the Corpus Christi procession.

"Sometimes we know what we have to do, but we lack the courage to do it. Let us learn from Mary how to make decisions, trusting in the Lord."

"Let the Church always be a place of mercy and hope, where everyone is welcomed, loved and forgiven."

– Pope Francis, (June 2013)



JANUARY 2014

Cluster Mass

Ballyhaunis Parish once again hosted the Cluster Mass at noon on New Year's day. The cluster encompasses the parishes of Aghamore, Ballinlough Ballyhaunis, Began and Knock. Fr. Stephen was the principal celebrant and the concelebrants were: Fr. Brendan McGuinness, Fr. Joe Feeney and Fr. Richard Gibbons. The choir was drawn from the cluster area as indeed were the participants who undertook readings, prayers of the faithful and the bringing up of the gifts to the altar. There was a large attendance with each area well represented. A sincere thanks to all involved in the organising and co-ordinating of such a memorable event.



New Year's Day Mass: Young People from the various parishes in the St Joseph Cluster carry banners from their respective Parish/Church area.

Enrolment Programme

The enrolment programme for those preparing for the Sacrament of Holy Communion commenced on Sunday, 26th January at 10 o'clock Mass. It was a most encouraging start with a large crowd present on a wet, windy and very cold January morning. Fr. Stephen thanked the teachers, parents and the seven transition year students from the community school who put such a huge effort into ensuring that the children be well prepared for this important step on their Christian journey. In addition, he encouraged the parents/guardians to lead by example and accompany the children to Mass in the lead up to their First Communion day on May 10th. The music, which greatly enriched the occasion was provided by the Scoil Iosa choir, under the guidance of Miriam Judge. This all coincided with the start of Catholic Schools Week.

Church Maintenance

Early in the new year hymnal holders were attached to each pew in the church to hold the laminated prayer leaflets for the those in the congregation

who wished to avail of them during Mass. A new microphone was also installed at the pulpit. The construction of the new toilet block adjacent to the church got underway on Monday 6th January. The work was carried out by R & N Sloyan Construction Ltd. The heating system in the church underwent essential maintenance, which resulted in one artery of the system, which had been blocked for a number of years, being cleared. The has resulted in a warmer church and a more efficient heating system.



New toilet block in the grounds of St. Patrick's Church, which was completed in time for First Holy Communion Day, May 10th, 2014.

FEBRUARY 2014

Feast days

The month commenced with the feast of St. Brigid. A very well attended Mass was followed by the blessing of crosses which also took place at the vigil mass. The blessing of candles to mark the feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas day) took place at the Sunday masses, while the blessing of the throats, which is synonymous with the feast of St. Blaise, got underway after the Monday morning Novena Mass.



Pastoral Council Meeting

The parochial hall was the venue for a meeting of the Pastoral council on Monday 24th February. Among the items on a busy agenda was the concern about the shortage of priests serving our parishes. In addition to their ever increasing workload, it was pointed out that there are about 70 active priests trying to look after 55 parishes within the Archdiocese of Tuam. Some dioceses around the country have introduced permanent deacons to serve as a back-up to priests. While this has not happened, as yet, in our Archdiocese it will surely merit serious consideration at cluster and pastoral council meetings. The meeting was informed that Frank McGuinness, who was recently appointed a deacon for the Elphin diocese, will address a meeting in Knock in April, on the role of a permanent deacon.



Spring Station Masses

The spring Station Masses got underway on Friday, 28th February at the home of Ger Donnellan, in Clare Street. Apart from it being a great honour to have Mass celebrated in the home, it also gives neighbours within the station area, an opportunity to come together and mingle. A group photograph is also taken of all present which in years to come will no doubt provide fond memories of this special occasion.



Residents of Clare Street, and members of the Donnellan Family gather for the Stations on Friday, February 28th, 2014.

MARCH 2014

Lent

The early days of March saw the start of Lent with Ash Wednesday on the 5th of the month. Masses were celebrated at 10 am and 7.30 pm. It was most gratifying to have consistently good crowds attending the 10 o'clock mass throughout the Lenten season..

Parish Pastoral Council

September heralds the start of another school year and Fr. Stephen celebrated Masses in both Scoil Iosa and the Community School. The Parish Council convened on the third Monday of the month after the summer recess. It was decided that an evening of music and song would be held on Sunday 3rd November to mark the refurbishment of the Church organ.

First Confession & Catholicism DVDs

Tuesday evening, March 11th was especially significant for the Communion class as they made their first confession. Later that evening, a series of DVD's on Catholicism and understanding our faith commenced in the Parochial hall and continued each Tuesday evening throughout lent. The series was narrated by Fr. Robert Barron of the Archdiocese of Chicago.

St. Patrick's Day Masses

The 10 o'clock Mass on St. Patrick's day was a memorable occasion as it embraced all things Irish from our native language and cultural identity, to music and song. Fr. Stephen



Dara Walsh with GAA All-Star and Mayo footballer, Keith Higgins, on the occasion of the Station Mass in the Higgins home in Ballinphull, March 29th, 2014.



Elma Walsh (mother of Dónal Walsh RIP) accepts a cheque from the Foróige Club for the Donal Walsh #Lifeline Foundation in March.

adopted a bilingual approach in his celebration of the mass. Soloist Oliver Jordan, with Ludmilla on the organ, further added to the occasion by singing a number of songs "as gaeilge". The harp more than any other instrument, symbolises our unique identity and Lisa McGuire of Brackloon, played it so beautifully throughout. The impressive display of shamrock in the church porch was arranged by Margie Phillips who was on hand to distribute it. The 12 o'clock Mass saw the Abbey and Parish choirs join forces to give an excellent performance. The live streaming in the Church is particularly important in reaching out to people of the parish and others living abroad at this time. The following links will permit access to the website:

<http://www.mcnmedia.tv/livecamdisplay.asp?CamID=131> or <http://ballyhaunisparish.ie/webcam/>

APRIL 2014

Permanent Diaconate

Three members of the Pastoral Council attended a meeting held under the auspices of St. Joseph's Cluster in Knock House Hotel on Wednesday 9th April. It was addressed by Frank McGuinness who spoke about the role of the permanent deacon. Mr. McGuinness was appointed a deacon for the diocese of Elphin in December 2012. He referred to the intensive four year training programme which he had to undergo and described it as very challenging. He went on to outline what the work of the permanent deacon entails, while also emphasising that it does not replace the work of the priest, but rather complements it, in full collaboration with the laity and in keeping with the expectations of the Church. The areas of ministry entrusted to the deacon can include assisting the priest at Mass, celebrating baptisms, presiding at funerals by saying the prayers, reading the Gospel and giving the homily if required to do so. With the shortage of priests,



there are increasing numbers of permanent deacons being appointed in diocese throughout the country. Consequently, this is an area which the Tuam archdiocese will have to look at sooner rather than later.

Frank McGuinness (permanent Deacon in the Diocese of Elphin) addresses members of the St Joseph Cluster of Parishes on the role of the permanent deacon in Knock House Hotel, April 2014.

Children's Liturgy

A children's liturgy was held in the sacristy at the 12 o'clock mass on the first Sunday in April. There were 22 children in attendance. A children's liturgy is a "Liturgy of the Word" which is adapted to make it relevant to the lives and experiences of



Children who helped prepare the altar for the Station Mass in the home of Gordon and Bernie Biesty, Carrowkeel, April 11th 2014.

young children aged 4 to 7 years. At each gathering a story or topic is introduced to the children, e.g. it could be about Easter or Our Lady. It is then discussed and the children draw and colour a picture on the subject. Their work is then displayed at the back of the church. The Liturgy begins and ends with a prayer. A second liturgy was held on Sunday 27th April which again proved very successful. It is hoped to hold this once a month, excluding the summer months during the 12 o'clock mass. Notice of such gatherings will appear on Facebook and the parish newsletter.

Remembering the words of Jesus "let the little children come to me – don't stop them! For the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to such as these". (Matthew 19:14)

Great credit is due to Pastoral council members, Emer Gallagher and Clare Higgins for the work they put into organising and co-ordinating the Children's Liturgy and also to the parents who assisted them. More parents are encouraged to become involved in this very worthwhile endeavour.



Erin takes the plunge! Erin Murray is first to take the plunge in the Swimming Pool following its blessing on its opening day of the Summer 2014 season.

Holy Week

A sub committee was formed to organise the Holy week ceremonies with Fr. Stephen. It was decided to liaise with the John Paul II transition year students from the community school and this contributed in no small way to its success. The students played a prominent role in the Good Friday liturgy. Midwest radio broadcast the Mass of the Lord's supper on Holy Saturday with station presenter, Gerry Glennon being the narrator. The Easter Triduum was considerably enhanced by

the presence of the Scoil Iosa, Parish and Abbey Male choirs on consecutive nights. Favourable comment was made about the attendance at the Stations of the Cross at 3 o'clock on Good Friday and positive feedback on the figures depicting the Resurrection of Christ, which were placed in front of the altar in the sanctuary. They certainly captured the true meaning of Easter. Well done to former pastoral council member, Patricia Plunkett, who came up with the suggestion and took responsibility for setting it up. A very sincere thanks to all who helped in any way to ensure the success of the Holy week ceremonies.

MAY 2014

Holy Communion

May 10th was a very special day for the 32 children from Scoil Iosa who made their First Holy Communion, Fr. Stephen after speaking to them expressed his gratitude to their teachers Stella McGrath and Michelle Flatley for the work they put into preparing the children for their special day. He also thanked Anne Durkan, who co-ordinated the parish programme and transition year students, Cathal Carney, Oisín Coffey, James Reynolds, Piaris Caulfield, Leanne Henry, Sarah Skeffington and Joseph Lyons who helped to make the programme such a success. The occasion was enhanced by the Scoil Iosa choir, under the guidance of Miriam Judge. Thanks was also expressed to all who helped in any way, from preparing the church to co-ordinating the parking.

Toilet block construction

The construction of the public toilet block was completed in time for the First Communion Ceremony on May 10th. It incorporates a toilet for the disabled in addition to baby changing facilities. It will be open for Masses, Weddings, Funerals and any other events held in the church.

Graduation Mass

The "Graduation Mass" for the 85 leaving certificate students took place in the community school on Thursday evening 22nd of May.

This was followed by a presentation of a certificate to each student and photographs were taken with parents, family members, teachers and class colleagues. This is always a very special evening for the students concerned.

Annagh Bluebells. Three TY students from Ballyhaunis Community School take a stroll through the bluebells in Annagh during the month of May.

