

Advent

The last Sunday in November, was the last day of the month and coincided with the start of Advent. Fr. Stephen invited one of the servers to light the first of four candles before the start of Mass. The preparation for Christmas and the coming of the Infant Jesus had begun in earnest.

DECEMBER 2014

The 8th December

In the popular imagination "The Feast of the Immaculate Conception", is a reminder that the great feast of Christmas is drawing near. Jim Donnelly and Pat Regan erected the "Crib" at the rear of the Church. It looked very impressive and really caught one's attention when it was lit up.

A considerable number of parishioners came to visit it and pray both prior to and during Christmas.

History of the Parish and Church

Fr. Kieran Waldron gave an excellent and most stimulating talk titled: "The Parish of Annagh: A new Parish, a new Parish Church 1893-1918" on Monday evening, the 8th of December. It was held under the auspices of Ballyhaunis Heritage Society.

Senior Citizens Party

On Sunday, December 14th, the senior citizens of our parish gathered for their annual Christmas Dinner in the Communal House, Clare Court. Much of the organising for the event was done by Helen Meehan, ably assisted by Irene Healy, Eileen Rattigan and Teresa Healy. The local Foróige club donated the proceeds of their Halloween Disco/Fancy Dress towards the cost of the Party. The food was cooked and prepared by Maureen Hunt and the food was served by the Foróige Adult Leaders: Ashling Caulfield, Fionnuala Nolan, Tina McGoldrick and Ann Lenehan. Music was provided by Martin Fitzmaurice and friends.



Senior Citizens Party Organisers: Irene Healy, Eileen Rattigan, Teresa Healy, Helen Meehan.

The Nativity Story

On the last Sunday before Christmas a special "Children's Liturgy" took place after the 12 o'clock mass with the reading of the "Nativity Story". The Narrator was Fr. Stephen. It was very gratifying to see over 50 children in attendance, a number of whom further enhanced the occasion by dressing up as a character from the story. Great credit is due to the many parents present who were a great source of encouragement to the children. All involved contributed greatly towards ensuring that the last children's liturgy of the year was a resounding success. Later that evening a "Penitential Service" was held in which a number of priests were present to administer the sacrament.



Children's Liturgy, Sunday, December 21st, 2014.
Children and parents who gathered round the crib to listen to Fr Stephen tell the story of the Birth of Jesus.

Christmas Masses

Christmas Eve Mass got underway at 9pm on the Wednesday evening with the Church packed to capacity. Fr. Stephen proceeded to the back of the Church to the "Crib" where he blessed the manger prior to inviting Margaret and Eamon Monaghan and their children to place the baby Jesus in it. The Church looked beautiful with the lights dimmed and the Parish Choir were joined by soloist Kaitlyn Clarke who gave a beautiful rendition of 'O Holy Night'.

It was the turn of the Abbey Male Choir for the 10 o'clock broadcast Mass on Christmas Day. This Mass was broadcast on MWR. Needless to say, they put in a very fine performance worthy of the occasion and certainly got the attention of the many listeners on Christmas morning. The church was packed for the 12 o'clock Mass as soloist Kaitlyn Clarke, on this occasion, joined with the children's choir as they put in an excellent performance to ensure that it was a memorable conclusion to the festive religious programme. Well done to all involved over the two days. There were very positive comments from many parishioners and those home for Christmas about how well the Church was prepared for the Christmas Masses.

Great credit is due to Margie Phillips and her team for their creative and innovative approach and to Frances May, who left no stone unturned to ensure that the sanctuary was looking beautiful for the Christmas Masses.

Sunday 28th December was the last Sunday of the year and was marked by the "Feast of the Holy Family". The family epitomises what Christmas is all about. We think of the many families who gather around the crib to see the baby Jesus and reflect on the wonderful story of the Nativity.

Pictured below: Eamonn and Margaret Monaghan and their children Seán, Kate, Eamonn Óg, representing young families in our parish, in the sacristy prior to placing the image of the Infant Jesus in the manger at the rear of the Church at the 9pm Mass on Christmas Eve.



JULY 2014

Cemetery Mass

The celebration of the annual Mass in the cemetery took place on the third Sunday in July. On a beautiful balmy day, a very large crowd attended. On what is always a very poignant and solemn occasion, this Mass gives some degree of consolation and solace to all present.

The Mass was celebrated by Fr. Stephen and the readings were done by John Halpin, chairperson of the cemetery committee. Thanks was expressed to Joe Hosty for providing the amplification and to Martin Gavin for erecting the platform. The cemetery committee and its caretaker, Des Folan were commended for maintaining the cemetery in such an excellent condition.

Croagh Patrick – Reek Sunday.

The following Sunday saw many of our parishioners along with Fr. Stephen make the ascent up Croagh Patrick. They were among the 20,000 pilgrims from all over Ireland.



Church Remedial works

The last week of the month saw the installation of a gas heating system in the gallery and the sanctuary of the church. In addition a new seating arrangement was put in place in the gallery. The parish is very fortunate to have such wonderful choirs. The new heating system and seating arrangement should be of particular benefit to the members of the choir, especially for rehearsals during winter.

Newsletter

AUGUST 2014

Fr. John Peyton Mass

Fr. John Peyton, a native of Island and a priest of the Archdiocese of Birmingham, celebrated Mass on Sunday 24th August. Fr. Peyton usually spends a few weeks in Ballyhaunis on his annual holidays. In his homily he spoke on the importance of Our Lady and her meaningful role in our lives. He referred to the recent Knock Novena in her honour and the thousands of people from all over the country who were present throughout the nine days.

Mass on Midwest Radio with Fr. Pat Farragher

Fr. Pat Farragher was the celebrant at the Masses on the following weekend, with the 10 am Mass being broadcast on Mid-west radio. In his homily he said, "though many obstacles can be put in our path, we must rise above them and be governed by our conscience to show that we are true disciples".

Annual Mass in the Abbey with Canon J.J. Cribbin.

Later that afternoon, Canon J.J. Cribbin, P.P. Milltown and a native of Ballyhaunis, celebrated Mass in the Augustinian Abbey to coincide with the annual pattern. Canon J.J. recalled fond memories of the pattern from his younger days. This day holds special memories and a degree of nostalgia for people who have a great affinity towards the Abbey. The Pattern followed where the younger members of the community took part in a wide range of events. Great credit is due to the hardworking committee, who organised another very successful day.

SEPTEMBER 2014

Tostal Brackloon and Killinaugher.

The highlight of the month was undoubtedly 'Tostal Brackloon and Killinaugher' which took place on the 12th and 13th respectively. A great community spirit was engendered by the Gathering of 2014 and this was very much in evidence as the local community put in a strong effort to make it such a resounding success.

On the Saturday afternoon, Fr. Stephen celebrated Mass on the site of the ancient church of Killinaugher and also blessed its commemorative stone and ancient burial ground. In addition, he also blessed the commemorative stone in Forthill.





Tostal Brackloon, Saturday, September 13th, 2014. The large congregation that gathered on the sight of the old church in Killinaugher for the celebration of an open-air Mass, with Fr Stephen as celebrant.

The communities of Killinaugher and Brackloon participated actively in the Mass doing the readings, prayers of the faithful and bringing gifts to the altar. The occasion was further enhanced by the excellent choir under the direction of Martin Fitzmaurice and accompanying musicians, Lisa McGuire, Emer Finan, Evan Fitzmaurice, Terry McGowan and Richard Waldron. The Mass concluded with a very moving reflection being recited by Gretta Henry with musical accompaniment by Lisa McGuire on the harp and Terry McGowan on the flute. Finally, Richard Waldron gave a memorable performance of "Faith of our Fathers" on the uilleann pipes. Well done to all for making it such a fantastic occasion.

School Masses

The new school year go underway with Mass being celebrated in Scoil Íosa and the Community school respectively. Both Masses were characterised by a high level of participation from the students.

New Mass Servers

September is also the month when the new "servers" take up their responsibilities within the church. They join on entering fourth class and give a three year commitment, which ends when they leave National School to go on to second level. Gratitude was expressed to the servers who were moving onto secondary school for their commitment.

Parish Pastoral Council

The Parish Council reconvened on the 15th September. The meeting discussed a wide range of church matters and made a number of decisions on what needed to be done in the coming months.

OCTOBER 2014

Station Masses

The first of the autumn station Masses was held in the home of Helen Healy of Doctors' Road on the first Friday of the month. This was the first of eight such Masses celebrated during autumn, all of them well attended. The tradition of the Station Mass is still very strong in our parish and provides a lovely opportunity for neighbours to come together on a joyful occasion and keep a sense of community alive. A photograph is also taken of all present for inclusion in the Annagh Magazine.



Stations in the home of Helen Healy, Doctors' Road. L-R: Shane and Dara Healy, Fr Stephen, Helen and Sinéad Healy.

Day for Life Sunday

The 10 o'clock Mass was broadcast on Mid West Radio on the 5th and 19th October respectively. This coincided with the Day for Life and Mission Sunday. The Day for Life Sunday emphasised the importance of cherishing human life at all stages and paying attention to the significance of faith, hope and love in our lives, whilst also appreciating that we all have special gifts and talents.

Mission Sunday and Children's Liturgy

Mr. David Barbieri addressed the congregation at all masses on Mission Sunday. He spoke about the mission of 'Aid to the Church in Need', a charity which supports the poor, persecuted and suffering Christians around the world.



The children's liturgy also took place on Mission Sunday at the 12 o'clock Mass.

Afterwards the artwork of the children was exhibited at the back of the Church.

Wedding Anniversaries Ceremony.

A special Mass to celebrate significant Wedding Anniversaries, celebrated by Archbishop Michael Neary took place in Tuam Cathedral. Ballyhaunis parish was well represented for this joyous occasion.

NOVEMBER 2014

Memorial Mass for Deceased Parishioners

November is a very significant month in the Church year because it is a time when we remember and honour our deceased loved ones in a special way. A remembrance Mass was celebrated at 7.30 pm on Saturday 1st November. Our church was packed to capacity for this solemn occasion. The November lists of the deceased were placed on the main altar and many of those present lit candles before the Mass, placing them on a cross in front of the altar. The lights were dimmed and apart from the cross and the candles down the centre aisle, the church was in darkness adding to the solemnity of the evening. The ceremony commenced with the reading out of names of all those from the parish who died during the past year. Well done to Margie and Orla Phillips and their team of helpers, who prepared the church. Oliver Jordan was the soloist for the occasion accompanied by Ludmila on the organ. Refreshments were served afterwards.

Francis May's Birthday and Presentation

On November 1st, the Parish Pastoral Council honoured Frances May, the Sacristan at St Patrick's church, by making a presentation to her on the occasion of her 80th birthday. Frances has been sacristan for the past 14 years and during that time has given, and continues to give, very loyal and devoted service to our parish. Her father, William Kelly, was sacristan in Began church for 66 years. Frances takes her responsibilities as sacristan very seriously and goes about her work with a minimum of fuss. She takes great care of the Mass servers and is always very welcoming to visitors, especially on the occasion of weddings and funerals. The church is always immaculately clean and the altar linen, vestments etc. are always well laundered and clean. We wish her many more years of good health and as a parish we express our gratitude to her for her commitment and service.



Members of the Parish Pastoral Council who organised the special Mass for deceased loved ones on Saturday, November 1st and who presented our sacristan with a birthday cake to celebrate her 80th birthday. Standing L-R: Martina Gavin, Christina Concannon, Mary Mulrennan, Laura Brogan, Orla Loftus-Moran, Marie Brennan, Frances Maye, Ann Carney, Gabrielle Lyons, Emer Gallagher, Claire Higgins, Orla Phillips, Mike Griffin. Kneeling: Fr Stephen Farragher, Michael Goulding.

Mass at Brookvale Nursing Home

A remembrance Mass was celebrated at Brookvale Nursing Home on Wednesday evening, 5th November. It was great to witness the high level of participation by both staff and residents in the readings, prayers of the faithful and singing at the conclusion of Mass. The names of all the residents who passed away over the past year were read out by Fr. Stephen at the start of the Mass. Well done to all concerned for the preparation for the evening.

The cemetery prayers for the faithful departed were recited in both the Friary and the Parish cemeteries on Sunday 9th November.

It was very encouraging to see large attendances at the 10am morning Mass throughout the month as people made a special effort to remember and pray for their loved ones.

John Paul II Awards

Tuam Cathedral was the venue for the presentation of the John Paul II Merit Awards on Thursday 13th November. These awards are in recognition of their involvement in parish activities during the last twelve months. The recipients from Ballyhaunis were: Oisín Coffey, Matthew Grogan, James Reynolds, John Cunnane, Oisín Henry, Aoife Nolan, Catherine Quinn, Sarah Skeffington and Róisín Ní Shúileabháin.



John Paul II Merit Awards, Cathedral of the Assumption, Tuam. Ballyhaunis Community School pupils with their mentors Orla Macken (Chaplain BCS) on left of photo and Laura Brogan (Parish Pastoral Council) on right of photo.

Children's Liturgy

The Children's Liturgy took place on the following Sunday at 12 o'clock Mass. There were 22 children in attendance with more parents becoming involved, which is contributing greatly to its success. Great credit is due to Emer Gallagher, Clare Higgins and Margaret Monaghan for the work they have put into it and for encouraging many children and their parents to become involved.

Confirmation Enrolment Ceremony

On Saturday evening 22nd November the enrolment ceremony for children preparing for their Confirmation went ahead at the vigil mass. It was very well attended by both children, parents and guardians. The Confirmation programme "You shall be my Witnesses" got underway on Tues 25th November at 8 p.m. in Scoil Íosa. All parents/guardians of children preparing for Confirmation were requested to attend the programme.

