

MAY

First Holy Communion

On Saturday, 16th of May, twenty-two children from Scoil Íosa received their First Holy Communion. There was a palpable sense of joy and a great mood of celebration on such a wonderful occasion among the children and their parents during and after the ceremony. Fr. Stephen thanked Ms. McGrath for her work in preparing the children for this important sacrament; Anne Durkan for co-ordinating the Parish Programme; John Paul II Merit Award Students – Aoife Mulrennan, Michelle Lyons, Chloe Naughton, Claire Fahy and Jessica Carroll, who assisted with the programme; Miriam Judge and Scoil Íosa choir for the beautiful music and singing; Mike Griffin and Jim Donnelly for organising the bunting and those members of the Parish Council who liaised so effectively with all involved in making the occasion such a memorable one.



First Holy Communion, May 2015

Graduation Mass

A Graduation Mass was held on Thursday evening 21st May for all students about to sit their Leaving Certificate examination in June. Fr. Stephen celebrated the Mass in the Community School. Photographs were taken afterwards of the students with their parents, teachers and class colleagues on what was a great evening for all involved.

Pentecost and Holy Trinity

On Pentecost Sunday, Fr. Conal O'Connell, a member of the Columban Order and a native of Tuam, celebrated the 12 o'clock Mass with the Abbey Male Choir in attendance.

Fr. Conal, in his homily on the Feast of the Holy Trinity, emphasised the importance of "caring and compassion". When at times we are not feeling well or are down in ourselves and have worries or concerns, we long for someone to be there, someone who cares by listening to us and supporting us in different ways. This means so much to us. Fr. Conal said that we should remember that God is always present with us throughout our successes and failures.

JUNE

Procession

The Corpus Christi Procession was held on Sunday, June 7th. Once again it was a great occasion when hundreds of parishioners joined for the Procession, which this year processed down Main Street, into Clare Street and onto Clare Court Estate, where Benediction was held. Well done to the residents of Clare Court who pulled out all the stops to have their estate in sparkling condition for the event. The Rosary this year was jointly led by Joe Hosty and Freddie O'Brien. Amplification was once again taken care of by Joe Hosty, and



Corpus Christi Procession



Mike Griffin was Cross Bearer. Benediction was conducted by Fr. Conal O'Connell, who has been deputising for parish priest Fr. Stephen Farragher for the past number of weeks. The Benediction ceremony at Clare Court was greatly enhanced by the singing of the combined voices of the Parish Choir and the Abbey Male Choir.

Mass in Scoil Íosa

As the school year was drawing to a close, a special Mass was celebrated in Scoil Íosa on Tuesday, June 16th. The celebrant was Fr. Conal O'Connell. The choir for the occasion was the Scoil Íosa choir under the watchful eye of Miriam Judge. Their singing and musical choice certainly enriched the Mass and contributed in large measure to making the ceremony a resounding success. For the students of sixth class, it marked the end of eight years in primary school.

Pastoral Council Newsletter

St. Patrick's Church Ballyhaunis

Vol. 5 JANUARY - JUNE 2015

JANUARY 2015

The Feast of the Epiphany

The Feast of the Epiphany on 6th January marked the twelfth and final day of Christmas. Masses for the Holy Day of Obligation were celebrated at 10am and 7.30pm respectively.

Confirmation Programme

The Confirmation Programme "*You will be my Witnesses*" resumed in Scoil Íosa on Tuesday, 13th January and continued on 20th and 27th of the month. It was most gratifying to see so many parents and guardians of the children preparing for Confirmation present for the programme, which commenced at the end of November 2014.

Holy Communion Preparation

On the previous evening, Scoil Íosa was again the venue for parents of children who would be making their First Communion in May. The large turnout was informed about the preparations for this very important day in their children's lives. It was also decided that the Enrolment Ceremony for the children would take place at the Vigil Mass on 7th March.

Pastoral Council

On the same evening, a meeting of the Pastoral Council took place in the Parochial Hall. The busy agenda made for an interesting exchange of views among the members. Following this, a discussion took place about the organising of the Confirmation ceremony, which was only a few weeks away. Consequently, a number of decisions were made as to the role of members on the day and how they could liaise with the children, parents and teachers to ensure that the ceremony went off smoothly.

Catholic Schools Week

Catholic Schools Week commenced on Sunday, 25th January. This is an All-Ireland annual event involving Catholic schools to give expression in a special way to the ethos of Catholic education. The theme for the week was "*Catholic Schools Called to Serve*".

Children's Liturgy

Following that, the Children's Liturgy took place at the 12 o'clock Mass. A very large number of parents and children were in attendance to enhance the occasion. There is a great expression of interest in it as it continues to grow following the outstanding success of the previous gathering on the Sunday before Christmas. Well done to all involved.

FEBRUARY

Feast of St. Brigid

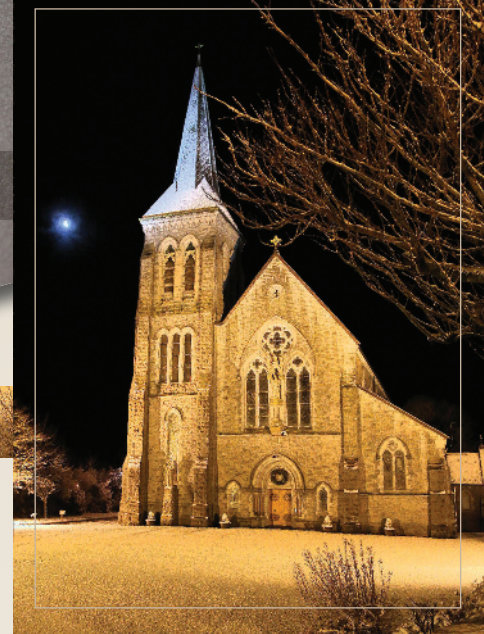
Sunday marked the opening day of the month which coincided with the feast of St. Brigid. It was also the start of spring, but it was more like the harshest day of the winter as heavy snow came down throughout the morning on what was a very cold and raw day. In spite of this, however, there was a good turnout for both Masses at which Fr. Stephen blessed the St. Brigid crosses. The blessing of candles to mark the feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas Day) took place at the Monday morning Novena Mass. This was followed a day later by the blessing of throats, which is synonymous with the feast of St. Blaise. As always, on this day there was a very large crowd present. Later that evening the spotlight switched back to the children preparing for their Confirmation with a Service of Light and Confessions taking place at 7.00pm. On the following day they attended a special Confirmation retreat in Knock.

Confirmation

Ten days later, on Saturday, 14th February 38 students from 5th and 6th classes and one adult, made their Confirmation. The Sacrament was administered by the Archbishop of Tuam, Dr. Michael Neary. The Parish Choir gave an excellent performance which truly embellished a very beautiful ceremony. Fr. Stephen thanked the children, parents, guardians and teachers for the hard work they put in to make the occasion such a resounding success. He also thanked the parents who were involved in the "*You shall be my Witnesses*" programme and the members of the Pastoral Council not only for their efforts on the day, but throughout the week.



Confirmation Retreat with members of Youth Ministry at Knock



Ash Wednesday

A large crowd was present for the 10 o'clock Mass on Ash Wednesday, which coincided with the start of Lent. Ashes were distributed at this and the 7.30 evening Mass.

Sunday, 22nd February marked the first Sunday of Lent. The homily at all Masses referred to its significance – Lent is a time of prayer and reflection as we strive to live our lives in accordance with the Gospel.

Scout Movement Ceremony

Meanwhile in the afternoon an Investiture Ceremony for the scouts took place in the Friary following an earlier decision to revive the movement. Photographs were taken afterwards and a most enjoyable day was had by all involved.



Ballyhaunis Scouts Investiture Ceremony



Stations in the home of Pat and Frances Gaffney

Spring Stations

The Spring Stations got underway on Saturday, 28th February at the residence of Pat and Frances Gaffney in the Ballinphuill, Skegherd and Knockbrack station area.

Aside from it being a great honour to have Mass celebrated within the home, it also affords neighbours from the station areas an opportunity to come together and mingle socially. A group photograph is also taken of all present, with the host family.

MARCH

Enrolment Ceremony

With the Confirmation Ceremony now over, attention turned to the children preparing to make their First Holy Communion on 16th May next. Preparations commenced with an Enrolment Mass on Saturday evening, 7th March.

Three days later, they made their First Confession.

Parochial Hall Development

The Parochial Hall was the venue for a meeting of the Pastoral Council on the second Monday of the month. The main item on the agenda was the organising and planning of the Easter Ceremonies. This was followed by a discussion on the repairing of the roof and refurbishment of the Parochial Hall. It was decided that an assessment needed to be carried out on what needed to be done and a report prepared. Further research needs to be done to ascertain what type of funding is available and could be accessed from government departments or agencies under it's aegis, that are involved in development projects.

St. Patrick's Day

St. Patrick's Day was once again celebrated with great enthusiasm as befits the day of our national saint. Shamrock was distributed at the church porch by Margie Phillips, prior to the commencement of the Masses and was subsequently blessed during them. A very well attended 12 o'clock Mass was enriched by the beautiful singing of soloist, Kaitlyn Clarke. The use of our native language also contributed significantly to the occasion.



Station Masses

Two Station Masses were held during the month – Maureen Nolan hosting the first in Clare Court on the 25th, followed by May and the late Ned Carroll at their residence in Drimbane on the last Saturday of the month.

Palm Sunday

The following day was Palm Sunday, coinciding with the beginning of the Easter Week, the most solemn week in the Church's year. Palms were blessed by Fr. Stephen at the beginning of all three Masses. The 10 o'clock Mass was broadcast on Mid-West Radio with the Parish Choir in attendance, Oliver Jordan was the soloist at the mid-day Mass with Ludmila on the organ. The Children's Liturgy also got underway at this time.

APRIL

Easter Ceremonies

The Easter Triduum began with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday. Fr. Stephen washed the feet of six couples who were celebrating significant wedding anniversaries. The Scoil Íosa Choir were present and put in a very fine performance. Gerry Glennon was the narrator for the ceremonies that were broadcast on Mid-West Radio.

While the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, are always very well attended, there was general agreement that this year's attendance was probably the best yet. Later that evening the celebration of the Lord's Passion and the Veneration of the Cross took place with the students of Ballyhaunis Community School, once again, participating significantly in it – indeed the John Paul II Merit Award Students of the school liaised very effectively with Fr. Stephen in planning and organising the ceremony. The Parish Choir, once again, put in another excellent performance.

The Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night commenced with the lighting of the Paschal Fire. Fr. Stephen, assisted by Fr. Kieran Waldron, lit the Paschal Candle from the Easter fire at the entrance to the church. The candle was then carried in procession through a darkened church and placed it in it's customary position beside the altar. The Abbey Male Choir was in full voice contributing significantly to the success of the ceremony. Members of the Pastoral Council were very involved on the night in the various activities associated with the ceremony. On Easter Sunday, the Church was filled to capacity for the 12 o'clock Mass. The congregation renewed their baptismal vows. The soloist was Oliver Jordan, accompanied by Ludmila on the organ. Oliver gave a beautiful rendition of "Jerusalem" after Communion. The earlier 10 o'clock Mass was once again broadcast on Mid-West Radio



Members of the John Paul 2 Merit Award Students who filled the Holy Water bottles that were blessed on Holy Saturday night and distributed at all Masses on Easter Sunday.



Easter Parade

with the Parish Choir performing admirably on this most joyous of days.

The Easter Parade on the streets of our town was revived this year, and great crowds attended on a beautiful Easter Sunday afternoon. Well done to all involved.

Parish Council

At a meeting of the Parish Council on Monday, 20th April, members spoke of the very positive reaction from parishioners to the Holy Week ceremonies. This was further endorsed by the very favourable comments from the many listeners to Mid-West Radio, who really enjoyed the broadcasts from our Parish. Well done to all involved.

The meeting then focussed it's attention on the Corpus Christi Procession in June. It was decided that it would go down Main Street, turn onto Clare Street and conclude with Benediction in Clare Court. The question of trying to recruit new members to the Baptismal team was also mentioned as some members of the present team have indicated that they wish to stand down.

Vocations Sunday

Sunday, 26th of the month was Vocations Sunday. Fr. Stephen, in his homily, exhorted all parishioners to foster, support and encourage vocations to the Priesthood and religious life. For those interested, much can be learned by attending "Open Days" on Vocations organised each year by the Archdiocese. He added, that he, himself, had experienced a great sense of fulfilment as he approaches his 30th year as a Priest this year. At present, there are five students from the Archdiocese of Tuam studying for the Priesthood.



Easter Parade