

*St. Aidan's Parish, Ferns  
Christmas Newsletter 2020*



*Wishing all in the Parish  
A very Happy and Peaceful Christmas  
and every Blessing in 2021*

*Parochial House,*

*Ferns.*

*25th Dec. 2020*

Dear Parishioner,

Once again it is Christmas and it is lovely to be able to celebrate the Birthday of the Son of God - The Incarnation. Thank God for this opportunity to send greetings and good wishes to you in this strange year. This is the day we have been preparing for both spiritually and materially, and the day children have been looking forward to and are full of joy that it has arrived.

We gather in faith today in our Churches as our ancestors did, or on live stream in our homes, to thank God. They passed on the faith to us and now it is our responsibility to live it and pass it on to the younger members of our community, because it is the message that gives real meaning to our lives. Our faith gives us hope especially in these times of anxiety and fear because of the Corona Virus, Covid 19, for a better future.

The message of Christmas gives us great encouragement in these challenging times. When the Saviour was born we are told of 'Strange things happening in Bethlehem,' they were happenings of Joy and Peace for the world. This year, strange things, have brought anxiety and fear to many people. As scripture tells us 'Do not be afraid, for I am with you' and those are my words of encouragement to you. As I regularly quote the words of St. Theresa of Avila "Let nothing disturb you, let nothing frighten you, all things are passing, God alone is permanent. Worry and anxiety will not change a thing but cause problems. Confidence in God will bring us **peace**, he is in charge.

On the first Christmas in Bethlehem, the Son of God came and was welcomed into the family of Mary and Joseph. My wish is that He will be welcomed into our homes and hearts this Christmas and His love will be celebrated and evident in our lives and homes. If the manger is empty at Christ in our lives, then our lives will be full of anxiety, fear and emptiness

This Christmas we remember the babies that brought great joy to families and we remember in a special way our departed loved ones, family members and friends who meant so much to us, they have left us with great memories of people who reflected for us the love of the Saviour and the peace and friendship they brought. We are especially conscious of those who have been bereaved in the past year, it is not easy to face the first Christmas without a loved one, be mindful they are shining down on you.

In August Fr. Richard Redmond left us after 12 years to go to Ramsgrange as P.P., and we welcomed Fr. Ricky O'Connor, we wish them both every happiness.

On the Financial front, it was a difficult year and all our fundraising was knocked out, but people were still generous, for which we are most grateful.

As we look forward to the new year, we do so with renewed **hope** and **confidence**, especially with vaccines coming on stream. This will help for a more caring, kind, peaceful and Christ-like Church and world. With Live Streaming for the past year people were able to avail of Mass and other services. I thank you for your continued loyal support to the Parish through your strong faith and practise of it, your generosity to the Church through the Sunday Envelopes and your support to me and Fr. Ricky through the Basket Collection each weekend and the different envelope collections. Grateful thanks is extended to all involved in various ministries in the parish. Your generosity and support is something Fr. Ricky and I greatly value and appreciate.

Wishing all, a very Happy, Holy and Peaceful Christmas and New Year.

Yours sincerely,

*Fr. Paddy*

*Patrick B. Cushen P.P.*

## One Life.

He was born in a stable, in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman. From there He travelled less than 200 miles. He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He did none of the things one usually associates with greatness. He became a nomadic preacher. Popular opinion turned against Him. He was betrayed by a close friend and his other friends ran away. He was unjustly condemned to death. Crucified on a cross among common thieves on a hill overlooking the town dump and when he died, he was laid in a borrowed grave.

Twenty centuries have come and gone. Empires have risen and fallen. Mighty armies have marched and powerful rulers have reigned. Yet no one has affected people as much as He. He is the central figure on the human race. He is the Messiah, the Son of God, Jesus Christ, born today.



### A PRAYER IN THE TIME OF THE CORONAVIRUS

By Fr. Brian Grogan S.J.

Dear God, in 1879 the Apparition at Knock gave hope and courage to the people of Ireland in difficult times. We ask that Our Lady may now protect your beloved people from the Corona Virus. May its victims be strengthened by the spiritual support of the Christian community and restored soon to full health.

We also pray for the medical personnel who deal with the virus.

This we ask in confidence through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

*Our Lady of Knock, pray for us.*

*St. Joseph, pray for us.*

*St. John the Evangelist, pray for us.*

*St. Patrick, pray for us.*

*St. Brigid, pray for us.*

*St. Aidan, Pray for us.*

*St.. Corona, pray for us. Amen.*



### *Our Church, Crib & Dead*

I thank all who worked so hard in preparing the Churches so splendidly for Christmas and the Cribs.

When you visit the Crib pray in thanksgiving to God for the gift of **Life** and **Faith** and remember those who have guided us in the ways of faith and left us with precious memories, they are now enjoying their eternal reward and have left us very precious gifts. Especially remember those who died since last Christmas. May they enjoy the rewards of the Resurrection and may their families be consoled at Christmas time.

### **Welcome Home - Our Emigrants - Our Sick - Our Living Alone**

This is a very special time for all family members. Over the past days a limited number of family members have been travelling home to be with family and friends. We welcome our visitors and pray that those away will be happy. Please remember in your prayers those from our Parish who are sick both at home and in Hospital. Be mindful also of those living alone and call to visit them. May the child of Bethlehem comfort them and all the sick.

### **St. Stephen's Day Mass**

Mass in Ferns Church at 10.00a.m.

Weekend Mass at usual times.

Have a lovely Safe & Peaceful  
Christmas and New year 2021



**Christmas Day**  
**Grace before meals.**

Loving God,  
On this Christmas Day we  
give thanks that Jesus, your  
Son, has come into our world  
bringing us gifts of peace and  
joy.

Bless us as we sit down  
together at this table for our  
Christmas meal.

Bless the food we share and  
help us to remember those who  
are hungry. Be with our  
neighbours and our friends,  
those who are lonely, sick or  
away from home.

We pray that our departed loved  
ones may sit now at your table  
in heaven.

May the joy of this feast give us  
strength and light, now and in  
the days ahead. We make this  
prayer through Christ Our Lord.

**Christmas Day**  
**Prayer for the Family**

Dear God,  
On this special day when we celebrate the  
birth of Jesus, we come together as a  
family with thanksgiving and praise. We  
praise you for the gift of salvation, for  
loving us as we are. We thank you for our  
family and friends who love and care for  
us.

Forgive us for all our sins, for hurting you  
and hurting people around us. Give us a  
forgiving heart to forgive those who hurt  
us in the past. May your Holy Spirit  
reconcile and unite our family from this  
day forward.

We pray for healing of our bodies, our  
minds, emotions and relationships. We  
pray for each member of our family, for  
your love and peace to surround us, for  
your Holy Spirit to guide us, for your  
loving arms to comfort us.

We pray for families who are suffering and  
in need. Give us loving hearts to reach out  
to love them. We dedicate this day to you.  
We pray for your blessings upon our  
home. Through Christ our Lord.

**Family Prayer**

We give you thanks Lord God,  
who has blessed us with life and love.

You have given us the gift of the family.  
Help us to nurture and protect, to guide and to love each other.

Through the intercession of the Holy Family,  
Jesus, Mary and Joseph, protect us.

Give us wisdom and courage, joy and faithfulness  
in responding to our special vocation as a Christian family,  
so that we may help each other to grow in grace and love  
to the Glory of God.

Amen.

