

*St. Aidan's Parish, Ferns
Christmas Newsletter 2021*



*Wishing all in the Parish
A very Happy and Peaceful Christmas
and every Blessing in 2022*

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.
AMEN.

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.





*Parochial House,
Ferns.
25th Dec. 2021*



Dear Parishioner,

All our preparations of the last few weeks and days will culminate today as we celebrate the Birthday of the Son of God - **The Incarnation**. Thank God for this opportunity to write to you once again in these strange and restricted times, as many have done to friends recently, sending cards, greetings and good wishes. This is the day we have been preparing for both spiritually and materially, and the day your children have been looking forward to and are full of joy and excitement 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 family and community, because it is the message that gives real meaning to our lives. Our faith gives us **hope**, especially in these challenging times of the Corona Virus, Covid 19, and the Omicron variant, for a better future.

Before the saviour was born people waited expectantly before he came, we too wait expectantly to say farewell to the present pandemic. Yes it will go, just like the saviour eventually came. On the first Christmas 'Strange things happening in Bethlehem,' they were happenings of Joy and Peace for the world. This year again, 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, reflect on his goodness.

My wish is that **Jesus Christ** 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 Christmas in our lives, then our lives will be full of anxiety, fear and emptiness

Our gift of memory is a great gift and it can be most helpful and reassuring if used properly. 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 were blessed to have them, thank God, and now they are safe with Him. 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. We really loved them and they us.

In September I celebrated my Golden Jubilee of Ordination, a blessing from God. The celebrations were curtailed, but yet glorious and I am most thankful to all who helped in any way. Another great joy for me is the completion of the Pastoral Centre which will be a great asset to the parish for many years to come, it will be officially opened when Bishop Ger will visit our parish on 22nd/23rd January.

On the Financial front, it was a difficult year and all our fundraising was again knocked out, but people were still generous, for which I am most grateful. The Sunday Envelope contributions were the best on record. Many thank to all contributors.

As we look forward to the new year, we do so with renewed **hope** and **confidence**. With Live Streaming people are able to avail of Mass and other services, if afraid to come to the Church. I am most grateful to Fr. Pat Stafford for his invaluable help and support, now that Ferns is a one priest parish.

Grateful thanks is extended to all involved in various ministries in the parish. Your generosity and support is something I greatly value and appreciate.

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.



CHRIST BORN IN A STABLE



Christ born in a stable is born in me.

Christ accepted by shepherds accepts me.

Christ receiving the wise men receives me.

Christ revealed to the nations be revealed in me.

Christ dwelling in Nazareth You dwell in me.

Christ, grant that people may look at me and see Your Presence.

Our Church, Crib & Dead

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

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.

Lord, We Rejoice at Your Birth

Lord,

We thank you for sharing the wonder of your presence with us, as Word made flesh. We bless you for coming among us humbly, as a New-Born Babe. We praise you for bringing healing to our world, as our Saviour. We honour you for coming to take away our darkness, as the Light of the World. We rejoice that you are with us always, as Son of God. Lord, fill our lives with the joy of your love, this Christmas, and always. Amen

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.