

# ST. MICHAEL'S PARISH

ENNISKILLEN

LISBELLAW



Volume 1, Issue 9

## NEWSLETTER

June 2016

I've noticed more people taking photographs of St Michael's Parish Church recently. Both our parish churches are looking well. People tell me they appreciate the restoration work of recent years. We take pride in our parish and in its positive contribution to the good condition of the town and local area. Thank you to all who have contributed, and who continue to contribute, and to promoters and participants in our parish draw. Could I ask that the parish might be a benefactor in your will? In this way, you could leave something to the parish to help its work; and we will pray for you, our benefactors, when that day comes.

Important as buildings are, the parish they serve needs maintenance too. To that end, a subgroup of the Parish Pastoral Council is helping make arrangements for a Parish Mini-Mission. It will start on the evening of Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> November and will end on the evening of Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November. It will be good for us spiritually and it will be good for our sense of parish community. We need to stretch ourselves

sometime so as to be spiritually fit for what life asks of us. You will hear more about this over the coming months and weeks.

I was deeply grateful for the way that parishioners participated in the initiative requested by Pope Francis: 24 Hours For The Lord. My fellow clergy 'pulled out all the stops'. The meetings we called were faithfully attended. Members of the parish pastoral councils both here and in Tempo (Pobal) Parish helped with the reflection beforehand. Most of all, I am grateful to the parishioners who went out of their way to attend. The initiative was a fillip to all involved.

However, it would be important to admit that the 24 Hour event revealed the extent of the present challenge before our parish. We may be reasonably effective in delivering parish services (baptisms, weddings, funerals, Masses); however, we are not as effective as we need to be to reach to the margins of our parish. There are still a good number for whom the parish has become peripheral, something they engage with on an 'as-required' basis, not something that they see themselves as building. Of course, the parish is here when it's needed. I believe it should be. The Good News is for everyone and it is here for anyone regardless of what support they offer. Yet, our parish will thrive when more people engage actively with it. This is why it would be great if the Parish Mini-Mission were to be the occasion of 'reconnecting' for those who feel they can do so. This is where the encouragement of all parishioners is important, though we should be careful to respect those for whom the time is not right. (God's ways are not always our ways!) In saying this, I'm thinking of the 18- to 30-year-old age bracket. They have spiritual needs that the parish could serve, but that service cannot be as effective if they are absent. Please encourage them gently.

Two final comments. I continue to be moved by the generosity of our local Mass goers. The most recent benefactors were the Franciscan Missionary Sisters who spoke at Sunday Masses recently; similarly when Mary McDaid went to India recently; similarly for the Lenten collection for Trócaire; similarly for St Vincent de Paul. Thanks again to those who contribute to the parish. It needs it. We have a lot of maintenance work to do, most recently in the parish centre, which I hope you will be able to see soon for yourselves.

*Rt. Rev. Monsignor Peter O'Reilly, P.P.*



**Confirmation Sunday, 17<sup>th</sup> April: St Michael's Parish clergy with Bishop Liam McDaid - Fr. Joe McVeigh, C.C., Fr. Raymond Donnelly, C.C., Mgr Peter O'Reilly, P.P., and Fr. Ian Fee, C.C.**

# Getting to Know: Dean Kenny Hall (St Macartin's), Bridge-builder and Country Music Fan

*Recently, I met Dean Kenny Hall who is well known for his great work in building bridges and breaking down barriers in this parish. I asked him for an interview for our St Michaels' Parish newsletter and he very kindly agreed. I am most grateful to Kenny for agreeing to do this interview for the Parish Newsletter.*

*Fr Joe McVeigh*

**Where were you born and reared?** I was born and reared on the family farm in the townland of Cregganconroe in the foothills of the Sperrins! Baptised in and attended Termonmaguirke Parish Church, Carrickmore.

**Schools?** I went to Pomeroy Primary School and was taught by the now Lord Maginnis, former MP for Fermanagh & South Tyrone. Then attended the Royal School Dungannon.

**What career did you want to follow?** After leaving school I followed a career in Business working in the textile and furniture industries, proprietor of a busy Petrol Service Station and then moving into the finance world, working for a number of years as a Financial Advisor for the First Trust Bank.

**Many in your family?** I am from a family of five boys and I am married to Stephanie and have three sons Philip (doctor), Gary (teacher) and Michael (software engineer). I am also a proud grandparent of James, aged fourteen months.

**Were they a religious family?** Yes, my family are all devout members of The Church of Ireland. I have never known a Sunday not to be at church. Even as a child we travelled seven miles to church on the back of a tractor – rain, hail or snow!

**When did you come to Enniskillen?** 2010: I became Rector of Enniskillen Parish and Dean of Clogher Diocese. I had been Rector of the Parishes of Brackaville (Coalisland), Donaghendry and Ballyclog in the Diocese of Armagh

**When and why did you become an ordained minister in the Church of Ireland?** In the early 1990's I got more and more involved in church activities and felt strongly the call of God to the priesthood (we use the same language in the Church of Ireland!) I was ordained a Deacon on St Barnabas' Day 1998 and ordained a Priest on St Peter's Day 1999.

**What is important to you about your church?** My church is important to me for the simple fact that I was born and brought up by its teaching and see no reason whatsoever to change! Neither do I see reason for others to change from their spiritual home if they are satisfied within it.

**What religious person inspires or inspired you?** Not really anyone in particular, several have inspired me on the Christian pathway. Looking for inspiration in human beings is not desirable as many of us, myself included all have flaws – we should look only to the Lord himself!

**What do you enjoy about working as a minister in the church?** Each day is very varied in what we do and each day we try to bring light and hope especially to those in need. Our calling is to be servants and shepherds among the people.

**What do you think about church relations in Enniskillen?** The clergy of our different churches have a very close working relationship. I just hope and pray that that will ripple down to more parishioners! Many are beginning to cross the 'dreaded divide' but many more need to be prepared to follow! We can 'nod and smile' at each other in the street but that is not enough – we need to go further and share with each other. Our thoughts, concerns and problems are similar!

**What do you think of Pope Francis?** He is obviously a deeply spiritual man and is making great efforts to work with the marginalised and the poor. He shows such compassion and humility. He may not be changing Church teaching but he's changing the way it's represented. Some of those who may have felt on the 'outside of church teaching' are hearing that the Church doesn't 'hate' them. A few steps further to allow priests to marry, if they so wish, would be good - even female priests!



**Dean Kenny Hall, Mgr. O'Reilly, Fr. Fee and Fr. McVeigh with Daniel Lawton, the US Consul General, when he visited Enniskillen in May.**

**What is good about the Catholic Church - in your view?** What a question to ask me! (only joking) I too claim to belong to the holy catholic and Apostolic Church using 'catholic' with a small 'c' meaning 'universal'. The sheer numbers of regular worshippers, especially in Holy Seasons that attend your church are a major witness to the Christian Faith.

**You seem to be 'easy' around Catholics/Catholic clergy. Was that something you learned growing up?** I was brought up to respect all and lived in an area with us as the only Church of Ireland family for many miles and even back then we did not talk of two communities. We helped each other on our farms. I see no reason to be 'uneasy' and why should I be? I see no difference - sure all of us are brothers and sisters made in the image of God!

**Are you interested in politics, local/global?** Yes of course I'm interested in politics both local and global and doesn't the United States create great interest at present!

**What is your attitude to local politics?** While I watch very closely what happens in local politics I have never been a member of any political party, nor do I intend to ever join one! I will leave politics to the politicians and do the job that God has called me to do and that is build community, one community not two!

**Is Alliance party the answer to the community division in the north?** Each political party has their own policies, aims and objective and no one party alone will solve community division. The people at ground level need encouragement and the will to do it. That is where the church comes in (the church is not just the clergy but the parishioners) because the church is the centre of community life, or should be, and giving the encouragement to break barriers and build bridges (certainly not building walls).

**How do you see the peace process progressing?** Not without its difficulties, but it is my hope and prayer that politicians of all parties will have the will to work together for the good of all citizens regardless of who or what they are!

**What can the main churches do to make peace permanent?** There is always a fear from some people of losing their identity when they work with others who have different opinions, but why have this fear? We can keep our own identity, our own churches, our own denominations, but that does not have to divide us - in fact respecting difference, having tolerance and respect for one another can unite us and build community. Differences sometimes can be enriching. The politicians can chose to do the same if they so wish!

**Have you any pets?** Not really pets, but I do have silkies and banties (poultry) in the Deanery back garden. So if you are at Mass in St Michael's you might just hear a cock crow!

**How do you relax?** I'm not into sport whatsoever either to play or watch. You may find this funny but I build 1000 piece jig saw puzzles, but only when I'm off and out of town for my summer month. No time for such pleasure while in this busy Cathedral Parish! I also like short city breaks, especially a wee trip to London.

**Classical or Country & Western?** As a country boy it has to be Country Music - why else would Nathan Carter have performed twice in St Macartin's Cathedral?

**Favourite country outside Ireland?** Gran Canaria or Spain (Barcelona)

**Favourite county in Ireland?** It would have to be 'Tyrone among the bushes'. Birth roots are important!

**What's your favourite book/film/song or music/prayer/Bible story?** I'm not really a reader or one who watches films. My most inspirational Bible story would be that of the Good Samaritan and my motto for life comes from Proverbs Chapter 3 verses 5 and 6. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths."*





## Memories of Enniskillen



I grew up in Wesley Street and have fond memories of a very happy childhood with my parents, Betty and Paddy Maguire, and my sister, Paula. We weren't rich by any stretch of the imagination but we never wanted for anything. Mummy and daddy worked hard to ensure we had all our needs plus lots of treats. We looked forward to a wonderful week in Bundoran each July and it didn't matter if it rained!

When it came to religion, we, of course, went to Mass every Sunday and on Christmas morning we attended three masses, starting at 7.00am. This was absolute torture for children who were anxious to see if Father Christmas had got the order correct! Every few years we had the 'Mission'. It was long and boring for children: I used to daydream and never heard a word! I was an accomplished daydreamer, as most of the Sisters of Mercy could verify.

I loved to visit Granny Cassidy in Blacklion and often spent my entire school holidays there. Apart from my love of the farm and my ability to do most of the farmwork, I had another interest - 'The Ballroom of Romance' in Glenfarne!

I attended the convent primary school and went on to Mount Lourdes. I feel so privileged and thankful for my education and experience there. At the time, though, I used to get into trouble for minor misdemeanours. I really couldn't help it - I was a free spirit! I couldn't possibly get to school on time. We then lived over the shoe shop in Townhall Street, which was a stone's throw from the school, but I was always three or four minutes late! Paula would never wait for me. I loved the attractive uniform we wore but flatly refused to be seen in the beret!

I loved The Sisters of Mercy and became great friends with Mother Eucharía once I left school! It was then I realised that she and the Sisters only ever had our best interests at heart. I served as vice president of the Mount Lourdes Past Pupils committee and the Past Pupils' annual Dinner Dances and annual Retreats were always hugely enjoyable.

I was a guide leader with Philomena Blake for a while but, I have to say, I never seemed to command authority. Possibly, this helped me to take the decision not to become a teacher! I joined Allied Irish Banks as soon as I left school and did not take up the offer of a Teacher Training course in England. I really enjoyed working in the Dromore, Co. Tyrone Branch, under the management of Seamus O'Connell.

Some years later, I decided to change career. I did my training in Podiatric Medicine in Belfast. Once qualified, I spent thirteen years working for the NHS in Milton Keynes, during which time I taught the podiatry students on placement from Northampton College of Podiatry and I worked in the Diabetes and Rheumatology units in Milton Keynes Hospital. Before I came to open my own podiatry practice in Wicklow Town, I went to Durham University to train in electro surgery and advanced local anaesthesia. Nail surgery has always been my favourite job.

In Milton Keynes, my late husband, Alistair, and I were involved in quite a lot of charity work for Willen Cancer Hospice in Newport Pagnell and also for the animal sanctuary in Aspley Guise, Bedford.

I am very happy in my career and due to a very busy schedule. I spend a few days in London every three or four months, as opposed to longer holidays. I love living in Wicklow and have a great network of friends. I have no plans to stop working but I wish I had more time to spend helping the animal charities and, of course, I would like to be able to spend a little more time in Enniskillen.

*Monica MacDonald (nee Maguire)*



# St. Michaels Parish Parent and Toddler Group



At the initial gathering of the parish community in 2014 it became apparent that there was a desire in the community for a parent/toddler group. After an appeal in the parish messenger, a group of interested parents met with some members of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) and discussed issues involved in establishing such a group. Then, after listening to the views expressed at the second Parish Gathering in September 2015, the setting up of the parent/toddler group became a priority for the PPC. A subcommittee was asked to research possible venues and the resources that would be required and to visit existing groups elsewhere. Although the Council agreed to support the group in the early stages, it was hoped that a committee

would be formed to organise the weekly sessions. Three taster sessions were very well attended and from these sessions a committee was formed.

The group started in the Clinton Centre but, it being evident after two weeks that a larger place was required, the newly decorated St. Michael's Community Centre became the location. There it is possible to provide a separate area for young babies with mats, play gyms and toys appropriate to their age whilst toddlers can sit on their ride-on toys and play with large inflatable balls and a variety of toys or take part in various art/craft activities. Each week a healthy snack is provided for all of the toddlers and the adults enjoy a cup of tea or coffee and a scone. Adults appreciate the opportunity to chat with other parents/carers and for some who are new to the parish this has become a welcome social occasion and new friendships have been formed. The session concludes each week with a sing-along and some action songs. Each child must be accompanied by a responsible adult.



Aisling King, a member of the organising committee, has provided this view of the operation: *"Following the success of the "Taster Sessions" for a parent and toddler group, which were organised by Maria Quinn, a member of the parish council, and facilitated by Jill Stronge from the Clinton Centre, it was apparent that the parish was very keen for a group to run on a regular basis. A small committee of local volunteering parents was formed and the group has now (end of May 2016) been running for 12 weeks. We are delighted with its success and progression every week.*

*Due thanks are necessary to Monsignor O' Reilly, the Parish Pastoral Council and the S.V.D.P. who have been instrumental in helping the group establish, through funding, most of the toys and craft materials. This generosity and that of others who donated items have meant we are now a well*

*resourced group. Without the help and encouragement from the social hub in the Clinton Centre there would have been greater difficulty in getting the Parent and Toddler group started.*

*There is currently a list of volunteers who come on a rota basis to help serve tea/coffee, manage the washing up and partake in socialising with parents. We are very grateful for their time as it helps things run smoothly. We welcome anyone interested in volunteering for this role as many hands make light work! Contact the parish centre with your details and a committee member will be in touch with you.*

*We would like to give special thanks to the parents and children who have attended to date. We appreciate your weekly contributions which go towards supplying the snacks, tea/coffee, kitchen equipment, art/craft materials etc, and in time, when we have raised enough money through your donations, we plan to bring in outside entertainment and activities to benefit the children.*

*It has been incredibly rewarding for us, the committee, to see so many faces young and old, from all parts of our community, come through the doors and breathe such life and energy into the St. Michael's Parish Community Centre.*

*We hope that with your continued support and contributions the group will grow from strength to strength. Thank You.*



**Parking is available at the Community Centre and all are welcome; come along on a Friday morning 10.30am till 12 midday during term time.**

# Preparing for an Inter-Faith Wedding

Marriage is one of life's biggest choices and one of its biggest changes. There are two things I always say to any couple getting married: - 'Congratulations!' and 'Make sure to have a look at our St Michael's Parish Website section on Getting Married'. When the couple is an interfaith couple - one is Catholic and the other is not - it raises some extra questions. Is the pre-marriage paperwork different? What sort of wedding service will there be? Can I invite my priest or minister? Are there any other particular issues that we need to consider: the pre-marriage course? children and faith practice? Marriage, like baptism, belongs across the Christian tradition. While there are some additional considerations, an interfaith wedding, properly carried out, has the same dignity as any other wedding.

**The Preparatory Paperwork:** Even if the wedding is going to be in a Protestant church, the couple should contact the home parish of the Catholic party to speak to the priest there. This should be done before the hotel booking is confirmed. In St Michael's Parish, the couple should complete the usual parish Wedding Booking Form. *Brides and/or Grooms who are Catholic should make it their business to contact their home parish and speak to the local priest even if their wedding ceremony isn't in their home church. (Readers, please tell brides or grooms whom you know about this.)* The Catholic Church always does a full set of wedding papers for couples even where only one of the couple is Catholic. The parish priest of each Catholic bride or groom is obliged by Church pastoral practice to ensure that the couple is both free and ready to marry.



**The Pre-Marriage Course:** There is a special additional session in the pre-marriage courses specially designed and put on for interfaith couples. See the *Accord* website ([accord-ni.co.uk](http://accord-ni.co.uk)) about this or contact the local number (028) 66325696. This course is an opportunity for couples to listen to the experience of others and to have their own personal chats about issues that concern them. It is well worth doing and for many years now has been a requirement.

**The Wedding Service:** A couple should talk this through with their folks beforehand. While the couple should make the choice about the kind of church service (after all, it is their wedding day), it is wise for them to check with their families. It helps everyone to connect with the day when they have had time to think about it. It lets the couple themselves know if there are any issues before they make any choice. It's always better to talk these things out beforehand.

As regards the service itself, there are three basic choices. *Firstly*, there is the possibility of a *Wedding Service*, which has a Liturgy of the Word (the Scripture Readings) and the full Rite Of Marriage, concluding with the Lord's Prayer, the Sign of Peace and the usual Blessing. (See the template of a *Wedding Service* on our parish website.) The *second* possibility is to have the usual Catholic Rite, which includes all the above as part of the Mass. (See the template of a *Wedding Mass Booklet* on the parish website.) There are some interfaith couples who both share a deep appreciation of the Mass. When that is the case - and the Protestant spouse broadly shares the Catholic sense of Holy Communion - an official permission can be obtained from the Bishop for that spouse to also receive Communion formally as part of Mass that day. This is because, in the Catholic understanding of marriage, the expression of the unity of the couple on their wedding day takes primacy over the divisions in formal understanding between the different Christian traditions. The *third* choice is for the wedding to take place in the church of the Protestant party to the marriage. It is important to remember that even in this case, the Catholic Church paperwork must be done beforehand, as evidence that both are free and ready to marry. The couple should always speak to the priest, regardless of where the wedding is to take place.

Nowadays, clergy of all denominations are welcome in whatever church. We priests notify fellow-clergy when we are going to attend their church. This is equally true when attending church services of other traditions. It has become normal practice for visiting clergy of other denominations to read prayers at weddings they attend. Custom differs in relation to whether clergy robe or not when they participate at a service of another denomination. This can be checked beforehand.

When an interfaith wedding takes place in the Catholic Church, special care should be taken with the music. Suitable hymns and songs should be chosen to represent the different traditions. This will set the tone for the service, and can help those of traditions other than the Catholic tradition to feel more welcome and worshipful in a strange setting. It is ideal and inclusive when readings and prayers are read by all clergy present and by guests who reflect the range of religious traditions present.

**Future Faith Practice and Children:** If every religion and every church building vanished tomorrow, the depth questions would still remain. Why am I here? How should I live? What is the meaning of my life? Is this all there is? Do the bonds of love that knit us together as one in life end in death? The purpose of religion is to foster and form the faith sense that people have in relation to these questions. That faith is a gift, which, like the gift of thought or speech in an infant, needs to be cultivated throughout life, especially in the early years. It can be lost. It can fail for want of fostering. Priests (or ministers) will face any couple with the question of what they are going to do in relation to faith practice for themselves and for their children, and the same is true for an interfaith couple. Nowadays this question is always explored within the context of the unity of their marriage. No couple will be asked to do anything that undermines the unity of their marriage. Yet there is a choice to be made. And the best time to address that choice is *before* marriage. It's not the kind of choice that should be left until the maternity ward. Couples should at least come to a working decision in regard to the religious tradition in which they will raise their children. They may review that decision later. In making that decision, couples should have regard to their own religious practice. There is little point in any parent undertaking to raise a child in a religious practice if there is no custom of practising it. (In relation to the choice of primary school, it should be remembered that Catholic Schools are not merely schools for Catholics. Several different religious traditions are represented in our parish primary school.)

**Conclusion:** A wedding is a wonderful day. It makes visible the power of God, who is love itself. Thought always needs to be given to how love is best expressed, and the same is true of a wedding day. It goes best when it is well prepared. Interfaith couples should make initial contact with the local home priest of the Catholic party before the wedding booking is confirmed.

*Rt. Rev. Mgr. Peter O'Reilly, P.P.*

## A Reflection at Pentecost

One day last week a tyre on the wheel of my car burst when I hit a kerb, later I got a parking ticket and then I got food poisoning (not in the priests' house, I hasten to add). I was surprised with myself that I was not more upset. There was no colourful language. Some years ago, if any one of these had happened, I would have been up to high doh and so would my blood pressure - but not this time. Maybe it was still the good effects of the Diocesan Retreat we had just finished. I think I have learned over the years to see things more in perspective and to stay calmer in the midst of difficult events and contrary people and situations. I have come to realise that all these things are minor and can be fixed – though the food poisoning takes time and patience!

Learning to stay calm in the midst of crisis and chaos also takes time. Some people are good at it. For the rest of us it is a learning process. Learning to accept the things that happen and move on is a skill we all have to practice. Life can throw anything at us and often does. In the midst of all the crises it is good to pray and renew our trust in the One who is God of All, over All and in All –

short prayers like *'Come Holy Spirit, give me strength'*. Pentecost reminds me of the power of the Holy Spirit working in our lives and in our community to bring healing, calm and peace. In that way we become more human. That is what true religion is about - making us more human. The ability to cope, I have discovered, is called resilience. It is a quality most often found in people of faith and in communities of faith and it is most needed in times of crisis and challenge.

Sr Mary McGlone, who writes every week in the National Catholic Reporter, had these wonderful words of wisdom in her reflection last week: *"The feast of Pentecost is meant to be a blowout celebration that reminds us of the unfathomable power we have been given to create a community of universal solidarity. Pentecost celebrates the fact that the Gospel can be understood in every time and culture because it fulfills the deepest yearning of human hearts. With all of our bewildering differences, Pentecost tells us that we are all such a part of one another that sharing God's peace is really possible. That is the message we are called to believe and proclaim by the way we live. To the extent that we believe it, it will become true."*

I have read and re-read these words. It strikes me that the AA Prayer, also known as The Serenity Prayer, is a good one for anybody in difficult or challenging situations: *"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; / Courage to change the things I can and should; / and wisdom to know the difference."* Come, Holy Spirit! Come...and give us strength to be human especially in times of trouble.

*Fr. Joe McVeigh*



## Parish Mission

There will be a four day Parish Mission here in St Michael's parish in November ( 6<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup>) led by Redemptorist priest, Fr Laurence Gallagher, a native of Dublin. It will be an opportunity for everybody in the parish to take time out to renew our commitment and to nourish our spirits. The Mission is not for holy people or the saints in our parish but for all of us sinners. It will be a time for renewal and healing and a wonderful opportunity for us to deepen our friendships and sense of community as a parish. Details later.



*"In this age lacking in social friendship, our first task is that of building community."*

*"We need to discover the gifts of each person: may communities transmit their own values and be open to the experiences of others."*

## St Michael's Parish

[www.st-michaels.net](http://www.st-michaels.net)

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**28 Church Street, Enniskillen**

**Open: Monday to Thursday: 9:30 – 4:30**

**Friday: 9.30 – 2.30**

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