

Our sacramental, spiritual and pastoral life in St. Brendan's.

Sung Response to the Psalm today, [led by Elizabeth]: "Let the Lord enter! He is the king of glory."

Celebrating the Year of the Word during 2020 - as requested by Pope Francis to the Church.

How to begin: Set aside fifteen to twenty minutes on one day each week and create a suitable environment around you by removing any distractions. Perhaps light a candle. Make the sign of the cross and remain still for a minute or so of settling into silence. Call to mind the love God has for you. **Remember that through the passage of the Gospel you are about to read that Our Lord is truly present.** Then read the day's Gospel passage slowly and pay attention to any sentence or even any word that stands out. If any do stand out stop and give time to them in your own life and in the lives of those most dear to you and enter into a dialogue with God through the thoughts that well up from within. Thank God for any insight you may have received and ask God to bless you with one or more of the following gifts to help you act on the resolution which you may have made: love, wisdom, understanding, faithfulness, peace, self-control, patience or joy. Please remember to pray for the Church and particularly our families with children at either of our schools.

Living God, you walk alongside us

and speak to us throughout the Scriptures.

Your Son, Jesus Christ whose birthday we celebrate

listens to our hopes and fears

and shows us how to live for one another.

Send us the Holy Spirit to open our hearts and minds

so that we may be your witnesses Throughout the world. Amen.

Your word is our path and your truth is our light. This day and every day.

The Children's Liturgy AND Sacramental Preparation:

Dublin's Archbishop Martin has commented that a child's First Communion was "drifting away from what is a religious event" The Church not only in Ireland but also in Scotland wants to work with parents, work with children and schools to ensure that people understand what this is about. **In this parish we want to set a solid foundation from Primary 1 to Primary 6/7 for the three Sacraments celebrated in Primary School.**

Fr. Ness will meet with families on **Sunday 19th January at 2pm in the church** to review the preparation by P3 & P4 children since August. We have given families a card so that they can record for themselves the level of their participation in the sacramental life of this community.

Life in the Church is and as participation: we are all called to participate in the life of the parish. This is the local Church meaning the Church of the locality - St. Brendan's in Muirhouse. **We saw participation of many people in our parish last Friday night at the Christmas Dance.** Many people contributed - sold tickets, bought tickets, got a drinks license, ordered the food and drinks, cleaned and set up the Hall, worked in the kitchen and in the bar on the night, greeted one another, provided secret prizes for Santa Claus AND THEN - the singer arrived to report the loss of his voice and offer to do the best he could which was one song. THE PARISHIONERS TOOK OVER AND PROVIDED THE ENTERTAINMENT. From the youngest to the oldest people participated for the good of all - **it worked.** The night was not lost although it took a different form to what was intended. One thing couldn't be provided - a quick step waltz. Despite this, people did enjoy the night. If in doubt look at the photographs exhibited on Twitter.

PARISH AND PARISHIONERS.

Mass during Christmas Week:

Monday and Tuesday at 9.30AM. Fr. Ness is available and will celebrate both Masses.

Tuesday night, Christmas Vigil:

Carol Service begins at 8.30pm followed at 9pm by the Vigil Mass of Christmas with blessing of the Crib and Christmas Tree. At the end of Mass, everyone present are invited to the Hall to share the Christmas moment and exchange Christmas greetings as part of a community where people care for one another and help each other in all that they do. Refreshments will be available to those who come to share time together.

Wednesday, Christmas Day:

Mass is at 10.30pm. All children can bring their gifts from Santa if their parents will allow them and we will celebrate the children and the gifts. The Liturgy for children will be provided as usual.

Thursday, Boxing Day: Mass at 11AM - not 9.30AM [the normal time] Please note this well. Holy Hour will be as normal at 7.30pm. Prayers will be said for the Pope's Intentions in 2020.

Friday and Saturday: Mass at 9.30AM - usual arrangements and Fr. Ness will celebrate Mass.

The Ecumenical Christmas Carol Service: with the community from St. Margaret's was celebrated last Sunday evening. The Reverend Ann Paton who is the interim Moderator for St. Margaret's, took unwell and didn't attend but a good many people from both here and St. Margaret's did attend and enthusiastically shared hospitality afterwards. The seed of fellowship between us and our neighbours has been sown and welcomed. We hope this will thrive in 2020 through further joint services. The next opportunity will be as part of Christian Unity Week.

St. Brendan's Primary School Annual Carol Service: many families came to see their children present the story of the birth of Jesus in drama, speech and music in our church. The Blessed Sacrament was removed from the Tabernacle to allow the sanctuary to become a stage. **Those who couldn't manage missed something quite remarkable. The script used by the children was worthy of the Vatican far less a primary school in Scotland.** The performance of the readers, the actors and the singers exceeded what might reasonably be expected of children of their individual age. The school community of the school excelled overall. All the teachers and assistants were invited onto the Sanctuary/stage to be affirmed in their sacred ministry of teaching by the applause of the community. Mrs Oates was presented with a sumptuous bouquet of flowers by the parish as a sign of our appreciation of her and her colleagues' commitment to Catholic Education.

The Coffee Morning and Christmas Fayre in the school followed and received wholehearted support.

Wednesday evening Faith development at 7pm: gives all parishioners an opportunity to deepen their knowledge and understanding of our faith and its practice. **We will resume on 15th January.**

Marriage and Baptism: today at 2pm Emma and Christopher will celebrate their wedding. Then Fr. Ness will baptize their son, Leo Thomas. We encourage all couples who are free to marry to come and discuss and plan for this in 2020. We also encourage couples who have married in ceremonies outside of the Church **to ask about making their civil marriage lawful in the eyes of the Church under the Code of Canon Law.**

The St. Margaret's Children and Family Care [Adoption] Society is the only Catholic Adoption Agency in the UK. The annual Crib Appeal is a vital source of income to the society. Please be generous in response.

PRAYER INTENTION REQUESTS FROM PARISHIONERS

those whose Anniversary or Month Mind Remembrance occurs about now: Gerard Lynch and Leo and Agnes Symonds; Mary McGinn; Michael McAlinden; James Cavanagh.

Christmas Remembrance: a booklet will be prepared for the Christmas Vigil Mass and the Mass on Christmas morning. This will record the names of family members whom parishioners would like to be included in the prayer intentions for both Masses. Please leave the names in the box provided at the Stall or give the names to Fr. Ness personally for inclusion in this booklet. *Only the names of your loved ones are needed for this list.*

In our Piety Stall at the main entrance: a range of cards, calendars and spiritual gifts are available:

Pope Francis' own publications A-Z *Living for Christ and Lessons to children.*

My Day by Day* booklet for Christmas and the *My Day by Day Pocket Diary for 2020.

The *Magnificat* booklet AND the *Sacred Heart Messenger* for Christmas and for January.

***Redemptorist pocket/purse size Diary* incorporating a print of the Prayers of the Mass.**

Redemptorist Diary for 2020. This has an excellent Introduction to Matthew's Gospel for Year A.

Floral arrangements used in the past at the altar have been prepared for families to purchase and use at cemeteries or at home. These too are at the Stall. Funds raised will help provide future floral decoration.

Collections at Mass - Christmas Collection: Please continue to support the development of this community in all aspects. You will see the change of the banners on the sanctuary to mark the beginning of the Christmas Season.

All Signs in Motherwell will make and erect a sign facing onto Barons Road using option 3.

Dates in December and into January:

Today: Christmas Party for the children led by Tickles and a special surprise guest, starting immediately after morning Mass. All children are invited and refreshments are available for parents who stay with children.

Bishop Toal was to have eye surgery last Thursday but another was offered to the bishop. We will continue to pray for him and meanwhile the bishop will continue with his ministry and will celebrate the Christmas Vigil Mass in Motherwell Cathedral.

This is part of the bishop's Christmas letter to all priests and to all parishes in the Diocese:

Pope Francis wrote a lovely letter recently to us all from the Shrine of the Nativity at Greccio, the site of the First Christmas Crib set up by St Francis of Assisi in December 1223. He concluded his reflections on the beauty of the Christmas Crib as follows:

"Dear Brothers and Sisters, the Christmas Crib is part of the precious but demanding process of passing on the faith. Beginning in childhood and at every stage of our lives, it teaches us to contemplate Jesus, to experience God's love for us, to feel and believe that God is with us and that we are with him, his children, Brothers and Sisters all. We give thanks to that child who is Son of God and Son of the Virgin Mary, and realise that in this knowledge we find true happiness. Like St Francis [of Assisi] may we open our hearts to this simple grace, so that from our wonderment a humble prayer may arise, a prayer of thanksgiving to God, who willed to share with us his all, and thus never to leave us alone."

In union with our Holy Father, I wish you a very happy and holy Christmas, and the peace of Christ in 2020.

+Joseph Toal Bishop of Motherwell.

Christmas Vigil and Mass on Christmas Day: altar servers please meet with Fr. Ness at 12 noon on Monday to rehearse for Tuesday Vigil Mass and Wednesday morning Mass. ***Please Fr. Ness know either personally or by email on ojness@hotmail.com or by text message to 07768-396970 whether your child who serves at the altar will be attending Mass on either the Vigil of Christmas or Christmas Day.***

Wednesday Coffee Morning Masses: will resume on Wednesday 15th January.

St. Brendan's the Navigator Parish

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The Fourth Sunday of Advent - 22nd December 2019.

Let us nourish the spiritual life of each parishioner by encouraging their participation in St. Brendan's throughout all the seasons of the liturgical year.

Today: we invite all of children to the party which has been organised for them in the Hall immediately after Mass. Face painting for Christmas will be on offer and there may be a visit from someone dressed in red with presents.

Parish Christmas Hamper Raffle - Seasonal Appeal to raise funds for the Parish - Elizabeth will be on hand with tickets on entering and leaving church

Mass times for this week and arrangements for other liturgies and meetings are displayed at the top of page three of this bulletin