

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

Sung Response to the Psalm today, [led by the Bulloch family: Catherine Anne (Cat) with Lucy her daughter in duet and her husband Jamie on guitar]: "Come, Lord, and save us." *Families serving God in and through the community is a great joy to the priest and to many parishioners. Thank you.*

Sacrament of Reconciliation here: St. Brendan's: Monday at 3pm-4pm and at 7pm – 8.30pm.

Tuesday: 5pm -6.30pm; Wednesday: 5pm -7pm; Thursday: 6pm - 8pm. Saturday: 10am-12noon.

and in Wishaw: Tuesday 17th December: St Ignatius', Wishaw at 7pm.

Saturday 21st December: St Patrick's, Shieldmuir 10.30 - 13.30pm & St. Aidan's 5.45pm- 6.45pm.

Sunday 22nd December: St Mary's Cleland at 5pm-6pm; Monday 23rd December: St Thomas' at 7.00pm

Today is Baminelli Sunday. Pope Benedict wrote this in 2009 about this custom at the Vatican:

The blessing of the "Baminelli" [Baby Jesus figurines] reminds us that the crib is a school of life where we can learn the secret of true joy. This does not consist in having many things but in feeling loved by the Lord, in giving oneself as a gift for others and in loving one another. Let us look at the crib. Our Lady and St Joseph do not seem to be a very fortunate family; their first child was born in the midst of great hardship; yet they are full of deep joy, because they love each other, they help each other and, especially, they are certain that God, who made himself present in the little Jesus, is at work in their story. And the shepherds? What did they have to rejoice about? That Newborn Infant was not to change their condition of poverty and marginalization. But faith helped them recognize the "babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger" as a "sign" of the fulfilment of God's promises for all human beings, "with whom he is pleased."

We invite those families who have brought the image of the baby Jesus from their homes to bring these down to the table at the sanctuary or perhaps depending on the numbers come down with the image and hold them while the blessing is given immediately after the Creed.

The Children's Liturgy AND Sacramental Preparation:

People ask: "why is there such an emphasis in St. Brendan's parish on the participation of primary school age children in the Sunday Liturgy and does it have to be that so much time is spent on the children as this inevitably extends the time given to the celebration of Mass."

By way of explanation, the Scottish Catholic Observer carries a report this week of a change made by the Irish bishops in that the Church there is to take a much greater role in preparing children of primary school age for their Sacraments.

West of Scotland Catholicism is founded largely on the model of the Church in Ireland because so many Irish priests gave their lives in ministry here - in our memory think of those priests who served here and those who served in St. Patrick's, St. Ignatius' St. Thomas' and St. Aidan's. The Irish bishops have recognized "a strong demand for parents and parishes to play a greater role in readying children for Sacraments"

The arch-diocese of Dublin has begun "a process of significant change" and it is reported that there are now discussions in every diocese in Ireland on this issue. The first step is to train lay people to let the Church support the preparation which families will intensify at home for First Reconciliation, Holy Communion and Confirmation. Dublin's Archbishop Martin commented last weekend on RTE'S morning TV programme that a child's First Communion was "drifting away from what is a religious event" He said the Church wants to work with parents, work with children and schools to ensure that people understand what this is about.

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.

PARISH AND PARISHIONERS.

The Ecumenical Christmas Carol Service will be held with the community from St. Margaret's tonight at 6pm. We ask you to make this service a priority for this evening as we approach the great feast of Christmas. Fr. Ness will join with the Reverend Ann Paton of the Old Parish East Kilbride, who is also the interim Moderator for St. Margaret's, to proclaim the chosen passages of Scripture. One lay reader will be needed from our community We ask families to bring their children to take part in singing the carols which have been selected. We will invite them onto the Sanctuary to be near both the crib and the tree. Please also share in the hospitality which we will provide in the hall for a little while after the Service.

On Tuesday this week a lay Leader will preside at the Liturgy of the Word and distribution of Holy Communion. During the following weeks until the schools resume on 6th January, Mass will be celebrated by Fr. Ness each day of the week. **Mass on Boxing Day will be at 11 AM not 9.30AM.**

St. Brendan's are here on Wednesday morning for the Annual Carol Service.

Mrs. Oates has a shared vision with Fr. Ness about the need for consistent cooperation between the school and the parish and she does all she can to focus attention on this. **She and Fr. Ness both regret that the time he must now give to ministry at OLHS has greatly reduced his involvement with the children day to day in the primary school.** It makes it very necessary for families to bring their children to the church where Fr. Ness can relate to them as both Mrs Oates and he had established since last February. **The parish and her school benefited from this. We have given without hesitation all the help - and heat - requested by Mrs. Oates to let the children rehearse here for the Carol Service [and drama.]** This is followed by **the Coffee Morning and Christmas Fayre. Mrs. Oates asks for our wholehearted support.**

Wednesday evening Faith development at 7pm: the first session which began in September will end on Wednesday. We have written about the need for deepening our knowledge and understanding and Peter has spoken about it. Few parishes hold these evenings because priests have concluded that few people see Faith Development as a priority among so many other commitments. **We will resume on 15th January.**

Baptisms celebrated during Advent: Next Sunday at 2pm Emma and Christopher will celebrate their wedding. **They are the priests of this Sacrament.** Then Fr. Ness will baptize their son, Leo Thomas. This will be a double celebration in our community, and we encourage couples who are free to marry as Emma and Christopher are, 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 convalidation - making their civil marriage lawful under the Church's Code of Canon Law.**

Appeals for financial help that might attract you when thinking of Gifts at Christmas:

SCIAF – Real Gifts - we wouldn't think of giving one of the many options on offer to a child as coming from Santa - *but perhaps to a friend or parent who has everything they could ever want*

Fertility Care Scotland: see the poster at our entrance. They rely totally on financial help that parishes offer to them. They are a registered charity and so Gift Aid supports a taxpayer's donation.

Let the Children Live - for street children in the city of Medellin, Colombia - Fr. Peter will present an Appeal personally here on 22nd/23rd February. Send to c/o 81 Calder Road Mossend ML4 2RH.

And now also the St. Margaret's Children and Family Care [Adoption] Society. It is the only Catholic Adoption Agency in the UK. The annual Crib Appeal is a vital source of income to the society. Please support it now the Crib is in place even without the image of Jesus until the Christmas Vigil Any parishioner wishing to make a donation can do so personally or through Fr. Ness.

Bishop Toal will undergo eye surgery on Thursday. We will pray for him and for Fr. McGachey at Mass on Thursday. **The Requiem Mass for Fr. John Docherty is tomorrow in the Cathedral at 12.30pm.**

PRAYER INTENTION REQUESTS FROM PARISHIONERS

Christmas Remembrance: a booklet will be prepared for the Christmas Vigil Mass and the Mass on Christmas morning. Space will be reserved in this booklet to 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. This is a community intention and invitation to the community. Only the names of your loved ones are needed for inclusion on 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 Advent and for Christmas and the **My Day by Day Pocket Diary for 2020.**

Magnificat booklet AND the **Sacred Heart Messenger** for December/Christmas.

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

Redemptorist Diary for 2020 which includes a very readable Introduction to Matthew's Gospel.

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 with your very much appreciated and very necessary help for the development of this community in all aspects.

All Signs, Orbiston Road, Motherwell, have given three options for us to choose a sign to be displayed on the church wall facing out onto Barons Road to promote the close link between the parish and school and the school and parish. Please look at what is suggested and let the pass keepers know your opinion. Fr. Ness has a preference, but this is a choice for parishioners

Dates in December:

Today: Christmas Tree and the Crib are in place for Mass to be led by our children.

15th December: Mass led by the children in Liturgy of the Word and in music. **ALSO at 6PM Christmas Carol Service in St. Brendan's celebrated jointly with the congregation from St. Margaret's Church of Scotland.**

16th December: beginning of the Octave of Christmas: sing Come O Divine Messiah for the first time.

20th December: Christmas Dance in the Hall with Santa Claus' visit expected for all adults and families present.

22nd December: the Christmas Party for the children led by Tickle and surprise guest, starting immediately after morning Mass. All children are invited and refreshments are available for parents who stay with children.

24th December: Mass at 9.30AM will bring Advent to an end. **Christmas Carol Service begins at 8.30pm**

The Vigil Mass of Christmas will start at 9pm and light refreshments and Christmas pies will be offered in the Hall after Mass to allow all parishioners time and space to wish a Happy and Holy Christmas to one another.

Christmas Day: Mass will be at 10.30AM. **Parents of altar servers please let Fr. Ness know either personally or by email on ojness@hotmail.com or by text message to 07768-396970 whether your family will be attending Mass on either the Vigil of Christmas or Christmas Day. There will be practices for servers at those Masses and it will be hard on a child if they arrive enthusiastically wanting to serve at either of the two Masses and they haven't been involved in the practice for that liturgy. They won't be able to serve unless they have practiced the special parts which relate to each Mass and it will be sad to refuse serving.**

Last Monday Reader Ian Douglas and Fr. Ness were guests at the Christmas Dinner of the Monday Club. .

11th December: Mass in the Hall ended until after the schools return from holiday this very special element of our sacramental, pastoral and social life. Bishop Nolan's presence brings to all a sense of the apostolic Church.

12th December several parishioners with Fr. Ness took up the invitation of the young people of OLHS to a Xmas Party in the School. The HT of the School in his welcome stressed one word in particular: **COMMUNITY.**

St. Brendan's the Navigator Parish

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The Third Sunday of Advent - 15th December 2019.

Our mission as a community is to *nourish the spiritual life of each parishioner by participation in parish life throughout the liturgical year.*

Today: our children will lead morning Mass. This evening we join in a Carol Service here with the St. Margaret's community. Please be part of this with us.

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: Sunday at 10.30 [with Children's Liturgy] and at 4.30PM and: Monday to Saturday at 9.30AM.

Holy Hour: at 7pm on Thursday with Stations of the Nativity of Jesus.