

# Parish of Newry

Monday 25 December 2017  
The Nativity of our Lord

There is a kind of timelessness about Christmas: it takes us out of our routines; suddenly all the rush of preparation is over and there is nothing more to do. This could be the moment to experience something different from the perpetual motion that is our ordinary life. But what happens? We turn on the TV, which is what we may have been doing every single evening since last Christmas. No change. Then we say Christmas is boring, or sad, or too commercial.... Of course it is; it is just like all the other days. We have not allowed change to happen. We have not allowed space for anything new to appear. Paradoxically, all the flashing lights, the incessant television, the emailing and text-messaging...all have the effect of filling our lives and so leaving no space to move, no space for anything really different to appear; so we are enclosed in a cave of artificial lights that never lead us to the sun.

"The light shines in the darkness." But it does not shine in artificial light. We have to turn something off. We have to leave space and time for the new thing to appear.

The Child born today is God's new deed: the newest, the youngest, the most recent...the latest. But this is not announced in the excited voice of the advertisers; it is a silent deed. He is the Word made flesh, but he lies there as helpless to speak as any infant. Only in silence can this silent Word be heard. The new blade of grass does not make a scene or a noise; neither does the Word made flesh.

Fr Donagh O'Shea, O.P.,  
www.goodnews.ie



## Mass Times

### The Cathedral of SS. Patrick & Colman, Hill Street

Sunday Mass Times:  
Saturday Vigil : 6.00pm  
Sunday : 8.30am, 10.00am,  
12 noon, & 5.30pm  
Weekday Mass Times :  
Monday to Friday 8.30am,  
Monday to Saturday  
10.30am.

### St. Brigid's Church, Rooney's Meadow

Saturday Evening  
(Vigil Mass) : 7.00pm  
Sunday : 9.30am  
(Po Polsku)  
Friday : 7.00pm

### St. Mary's Church, Chapel Street

Sunday : 9.00am  
(Latin Mass) & 11.00am  
Tuesday : 7.00pm

### St. Catherine's Church, Dominican Priory, Dominic Street

Saturday Vigil : 7.30pm  
Sunday : 8.00am, 9.30am,  
11.00am & 12.15pm  
Weekday Mass Times :  
Monday to Saturday 7.30am,  
11.00am & 7.30pm

### Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Cathedral: Monday, Tuesday,  
Wednesday, Friday & Saturday  
9.00am – 11.00am.  
Thursday 9.00am – 9.00pm  
Sunday 1.00pm – 5.15pm.  
St. Catherine's: Blessed  
Sacrament Chapel each day

### CONTACT DETAILS FOR THE PARISH OFFICE

All Baptisms, Marriages and appointments may be arranged by calling the Parish Office. A Priest is available in the Parish Office from Monday to Friday 1.00pm – 2.00pm and in the evening by appointment.

### OFFICE HOURS AND CONTACT NUMBER FOR PARISH OFFICE

Opening Hours: 9.00am – 4.00pm Monday to Friday

Tel No: 028 302 62586

Email: office@newrycathedralparish.org

Website: www.newrycathedralparish.org



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## INTRODUCTORY RITES

*Congregation stands*

Entrance Hymn or  
Entrance Antiphon (Dawn Mass)

**Is 9:1, 5; Lk 1:33**

**All:** Today a light will shine upon us,  
for the Lord is born for us;  
and he will be called Wondrous God,  
Prince of peace, Father of future ages:  
and his reign will be without end.

## GREETING

**Priest:** In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen

**Priest:** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

**All:** And with your spirit.

## PENITENTIAL ACT

**Priest:** Brothers and sisters, let us acknowledge our sins, and so prepare ourselves to celebrate the sacred mysteries.

**All:** I confess to almighty God  
and to you, my brothers and sisters,  
that I have greatly sinned,  
in my thoughts and in my words,  
in what I have done and in what I have  
failed to do,

*Striking your breast as you say:*

through my fault, through my fault,  
through my most grievous fault;  
therefore I ask blessed Mary ever-Virgin,  
all the Angels and Saints,  
and you, my brothers and sisters,  
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

**Priest:** May almighty God have mercy on us,  
forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

**All:** Amen

Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.

**Lord, have mercy.  
Christ, have mercy.  
Lord, have mercy.**

## THE GLORIA

**All:** Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to people of good will.  
We praise you, we bless you,  
we adore you, we glorify you,  
we give you thanks for your great glory,  
Lord God, heavenly King,  
O God, almighty Father.

Lord Jesus Christ, Only Begotten Son,  
Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,  
you take away the sins of the world,  
have mercy on us;  
you take away the sins of the world,  
receive our prayer;  
you are seated at the right hand of the Father,  
have mercy on us.

For you alone are the Holy One,  
you alone are the Lord,  
you alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,

with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of  
God the Father.  
Amen.

## THE COLLECT

**Priest:** Let us pray

*Pause for silent prayer*

**(Night Mass)**

**Priest:** O God, who have made this most sacred night radiant with the splendour of the true light, grant, we pray, that we, who have known the mysteries of his light on earth, may also delight in his gladness in heaven. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

**(Day Mass)**

**Priest:** O God, who wonderfully created the dignity of human nature and still more wonderfully restored it, grant, we pray, that we may share in the divinity of Christ, who humbled himself to share in our humanity. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.

**All:** Amen.

## THE LITURGY OF THE WORD

*Congregation sits*

### FIRST READING

**(Night Mass)**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

9:1-7

The people that walked in darkness has seen a great light; on those who live in a land of deep shadow a light has shone. You have made their gladness greater, you have made their joy increase; they rejoice in your presence as men rejoice at harvest time, as men are happy when they are dividing the spoils. For the yoke that was weighing on him, the bar across his shoulders, the rod of his oppressor, these you break as on the day of Midian. For all the footgear of battle, every cloak rolled in blood, is burnt and consumed by fire. For there is a child born for us, a son given to us and dominion is laid on his shoulders; and this is the name they give him: Wonder-Counsellor, Mighty-God, Eternal-Father, Prince-of-Peace. Wide is his dominion in a peace that has no end, for the throne of David and for his royal power, which he establishes and makes secure in justice and integrity. From this time onwards and for ever, the jealous love of the Lord of hosts will do this.

**All:** The word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

**(Day Mass)**

A reading from the prophet Isaiah

62:11-12

This the Lord proclaims to the ends of the earth:  
Say to the daughter of Zion,  
"Look, your saviour comes,  
the prize of his victory with him,



his trophies before him."  
They shall be called "The Holy People,"  
"The Lord's Redeemed."  
And you shall be called "The-sought-after",  
"City-not-forsaken."

**All:** The word of the Lord  
**Thanks be to God**

## RESPONSORIAL PSALM

Ps 95:1-3, 11-13, R.Lk 2:11

**(R)** Today a saviour has been born to us;  
he is Christ the Lord.

1. O sing a new song to the Lord,  
sing to the Lord all the earth.  
O sing to the Lord, bless his name. **(R)**
2. Proclaim his help day by day,  
tell among the nations his glory  
and his wonders among all the peoples. **(R)**
3. Let the heavens rejoice and earth be glad,  
let the sea and all within it thunder praise,  
let the land and all it bears rejoice,  
all the trees of the wood shout for joy  
at the presence of the Lord for he comes,  
he comes to rule the earth. **(R)**
4. With justice he will rule the world,  
he will judge the peoples with his truth. **(R)**

## SECOND READING

**(Night Mass)**

A reading from the letter of St Paul to Titus **2:11-14**

God's grace has been revealed, and it has made salvation possible for the whole human race and taught us that what we have to do is to give up everything that does not lead to God, and all our worldly ambitions; we must be self-restrained and live good and religious lives here in this present world, while we are waiting in hope for the blessing which will come with the Appearing of the glory of our great God and saviour Christ Jesus. He sacrificed himself for us in order to set us free from all wickedness and to purify a people so that it could be his very own and would have no ambition except to do good.

**All:** The word of the Lord.  
**Thanks be to God**

**(Day Mass)**

A reading from the letter to the Hebrews: **1:1-6**

At various times in the past and in various different ways, God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; but in our own time, the last days, he has spoken to us through his Son, the Son that he has appointed to inherit everything and through whom he made everything there is. He is the radiant light of God's glory and the perfect copy of his nature, sustaining the universe by his powerful command; and now that he has destroyed the defilement of sin, he has gone to take his place in heaven at the right hand of divine Majesty. So he is now as far above the angels as the title which he has inherited is higher than their own name.

God has never said to any angel: You are my Son, today I have become your father, or, I will be a father to him and he a son to me. Again, when he brings the First-born into the world, he says: Let all the angels of God worship him.

The word of the Lord.  
**All:** **Thanks be to God**

*Congregations stands*

**ACCLAMATION**

**Lk 2:10-11**

**All:** **Alleluia, alleluia!**  
**I bring you news of great joy:**  
**today a saviour has been born to us,**  
**Christ the Lord. Alleluia!**

## GOSPEL

**(Night Mass)**

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** **And with your spirit.**

**Priest:** A reading from the holy  
Gospel according to Luke

**2:1-14**

**All:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Caesar Augustus issued a decree for a census of the whole world to be taken. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria, and everyone went to his own town to be registered. So Joseph set out from the town of Nazareth in Galilee and travelled up to Judaea, to the town of David called Bethlehem, since he was of David's House and line, in order to be registered together with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to a son, her first-born. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them at the inn. In the countryside close by there were shepherds who lived in the fields and took it in turns to watch their flocks during the night. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone round them. They were terrified, but the angel said, "Do not be afraid. Listen, I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. And here is a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly with the angel there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace to men who enjoy his favour".

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**All:** **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

**(Day Mass)**

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** **And with your spirit.**

**Priest:** A reading from the holy  
Gospel according to Luke

**2:15-20**

**All:** **Glory to you, O Lord.**

Now when the angels had gone from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us." So they hurried away and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in the manger. When they saw the child they repeated what they had been told about him, and everyone who heard it was astonished at what the shepherds had to say. As for Mary, she treasured all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds went back glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen; it was exactly as they had been told.

The Gospel of the Lord.  
**All:** **Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.**

*Congregation sits*

## HOMILY

*Congregation stands*

## THE CREED

**All:** I believe in one God,  
the Father almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth,  
of all things visible and invisible.

I believe in one Lord Jesus Christ,  
the Only Begotten Son of God,  
born of the Father before all ages.  
God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made, consubstantial with the  
Father; through him all things were made.  
For us men and for our salvation  
he came down from heaven,

*(bow your head up to the words 'and became man')*

and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the  
Virgin Mary, and became man.

For our sake he was crucified under Pontius  
Pilate, he suffered death and was buried,  
and rose again on the third day  
in accordance with the Scriptures.  
He ascended into heaven  
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.

He will come again in glory  
to judge the living and the dead  
and his kingdom will have no end.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver  
of life, who proceeds from the Father and the  
Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored  
and glorified, who has spoken through  
the prophets.

I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic  
Church. I confess one Baptism for the  
forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the  
resurrection of the dead and the life of the  
world to come. Amen.

## PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

*Congregation sits*

## THE LITURGY OF THE EUCHARIST

Offertory Procession

*The gifts of bread and wine which will become the Lord's body  
and blood are brought to the altar.*

*The celebrant raises the host on the paten saying:*

**Priest:** Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,  
for through your goodness we have received  
the bread we offer you:  
fruit of the earth and work of human hands,  
it will become for us the bread of life.

**All:** **Blessed be God for ever.**

*The celebrant pours wine and a little water into the  
chalice, saying quietly:*

**Priest:** By the mystery of this water and wine  
may we come to share in the divinity of Christ  
who humbled himself to share in our humanity.

*The celebrant then raises the chalice above the  
altar and says:*

Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation,  
for through your goodness we have received  
the wine we offer you:  
fruit of the vine and work of human hands,  
it will become our spiritual drink.

**All:** **Blessed be God for ever.**

*Bowing, the celebrant says quietly:*

**Priest:** With humble spirit and contrite heart  
may we be accepted by you, O Lord,  
and may our sacrifice in your sight this day  
be pleasing to you, Lord God.

*Then the celebrant washes his hands, saying quietly:*

Wash me, O Lord, from my iniquity  
and cleanse me from my sin.

Pray, brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and  
yours may be acceptable to God,  
almighty Father.

**All:** **May the Lord accept the sacrifice at your hands  
for the praise and glory of his name,  
for our good and the good of all his  
holy Church.**

## PRAYER OVER THE OFFERINGS

**(Night Mass)**

**Priest:** May the oblation of this day's feast  
be pleasing to you, O Lord, we pray,  
that through this most holy exchange  
we may be found in the likeness of Christ,  
in whom our nature is united to you.  
Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**All:** **Amen**

**(Day Mass)**

**Priest:** Make acceptable, O Lord, our oblation on this  
solemn day, when you manifested the  
reconciliation that makes us wholly pleasing in  
your sight and inaugurated for us the fullness of  
divine worship. Through Christ our Lord.

**All:** **Amen**

*Congregation stands*

## EUCCHARISTIC PRAYER I

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.

**All:** **And with your spirit.**

**Priest:** Lift up your hearts.

**All:** **We lift them up to the Lord.**

**Priest:** Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**All:** **It is right and just.**

**PREFACE (Nativity II)**

**Priest:** It is truly right and just, our duty and our salvation,  
always and everywhere to give you thanks,  
Lord, holy Father, almighty and eternal God,  
through Christ our Lord.

For on the feast of this awe-filled mystery,  
though invisible in his own divine nature,

he has appeared visibly in ours;  
and begotten before all ages,  
he has begun to exist in time;  
so that, raising up in himself all that was cast  
down, he might restore unity to all creation  
and call straying humanity back to the heavenly  
Kingdom.

And so, with all the Angels, we praise you,  
as in joyful celebration we acclaim:

## ACCLAMATION

**All: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God of hosts.  
Heaven and earth are full of your glory.  
Hosanna in the highest.  
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.  
Hosanna in the highest.**

## Congregation kneels

**Priest:** To you, therefore, most merciful Father,  
we make humble prayer and petition  
through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord:  
that you accept and bless + these gifts, these  
offerings, these holy and unblemished sacrifices,  
which we offer you firstly  
for your holy catholic Church.  
Be pleased to grant her peace, to guard, unite and  
govern her throughout the whole world,  
together with your servant Francis our Pope  
and N our Bishop, and all those who, holding to  
the truth, hand on the catholic and apostolic faith.

Remember, Lord, your servants **N.** and **N.**  
and all gathered here,  
whose faith and devotion are known to you.  
For them, we offer you this sacrifice of praise  
or they offer it for themselves and all who are dear  
to them: for the redemption of their souls,  
in hope of health and well-being, and paying their  
homage to you, the eternal God, living and true.

Celebrating the most sacred night (day)  
on which blessed Mary the immaculate Virgin  
brought forth the Saviour for this world,  
and in communion with those whose memory we  
venerate, especially the glorious ever-Virgin Mary,  
Mother of our God and Lord, Jesus Christ,  
and blessed Joseph, her Spouse, your blessed  
Apostles and Martyrs, Peter and Paul, Andrew, and  
all your Saints; we ask that through their merits  
and prayers, in all things we may be defended by  
your protecting help.

Therefore, Lord, we pray: graciously accept this  
oblation of our service, that of your whole family;  
order our days in your peace, and command that we  
be delivered from eternal damnation and counted  
among the flock of those you have chosen.

Be pleased, O God, we pray, to bless, acknowledge,  
and approve this offering in every respect;  
make it spiritual and acceptable,  
so that it may become for us the Body and Blood  
of your most beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

On the day before he was to suffer,  
he took bread in his holy and venerable hands,  
and with eyes raised to heaven to you, O God,  
his almighty Father, giving you thanks,  
he said the blessing, broke the bread  
and gave it to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND EAT OF IT,  
FOR THIS IS MY BODY,  
WHICH WILL BE GIVEN UP FOR YOU.

In a similar way, when supper was ended,  
he took this precious chalice in his holy and  
venerable hands, and once more giving you  
thanks, he said the blessing and gave the chalice  
to his disciples, saying:

TAKE THIS, ALL OF YOU, AND DRINK FROM IT,  
FOR THIS IS THE CHALICE OF MY BLOOD, THE  
BLOOD OF THE NEW AND ETERNAL COVENANT,  
WHICH WILL BE Poured OUT FOR YOU AND FOR  
MANY FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS.

DO THIS IN MEMORY OF ME.

**Priest:** The mystery of faith.

**All: My Lord and my God.**

**Priest:** Therefore, O Lord, as we celebrate the memorial of  
the blessed Passion, the Resurrection from the dead,  
and the glorious Ascension into heaven  
of Christ, your Son, our Lord, we, your servants and  
your holy people, offer to your glorious majesty  
from the gifts that you have given us, this pure  
victim, this holy victim, this spotless victim,  
the holy Bread of eternal life  
and the Chalice of everlasting salvation.

Be pleased to look upon these offerings  
with a serene and kindly countenance,  
and to accept them, as once you were pleased to  
accept the gifts of your servant Abel the just,  
the sacrifice of Abraham, our father in faith,  
and the offering of your high priest Melchizedek,  
a holy sacrifice, a spotless victim.

In humble prayer we ask you, almighty God:  
command that these gifts be borne  
by the hands of your holy Angel to your altar on high  
in the sight of your divine majesty, so that all of us,  
who through this participation at the altar receive the  
most holy Body and Blood of your Son,  
may be filled with every grace and heavenly blessing.

Remember also, Lord, your servants **N.** and **N.**,  
who have gone before us with the sign of faith  
and rest in the sleep of peace.  
Grant them, O Lord, we pray, and all who sleep in  
Christ, a place of refreshment, light and peace.

To us, also, your servants, who, though sinners,  
hope in your abundant mercies, graciously grant  
some share and fellowship with your holy Apostles  
and Martyrs: with John the Baptist, Stephen,  
Matthias, Barnabas, and all your Saints;  
admit us, we beseech you, into their company,  
not weighing our merits, but granting us your  
pardon, through Christ our Lord.

Through whom you continue to make all these  
good things, O Lord;  
you sanctify them, fill them with life,  
bless them, and bestow them upon us.

Through him, and with him, and in him,  
O God, almighty Father, in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
all glory and honour is yours, for ever and ever.

**All: Amen.**

*Congregation stands*

## COMMUNION RITE

**Priest:** At the Saviour's command and formed by divine teaching, we dare to say:

**All:** **Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name; thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.**

**Priest:** Deliver us, Lord, we pray, from every evil, graciously grant peace in our days, that, by the help of your mercy, we may be always free from sin and safe from all distress as we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

**All:** **For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever.**

**Priest:** Lord Jesus Christ, who said to you Apostles: Peace I leave you, my peace I give you, look not on our sins, but on the faith of your Church, and graciously grant her peace and unity in accordance with your will. Who live and reign for ever and ever.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Priest:** The peace of the Lord be with you always.  
**All:** **And with your spirit.**

*The celebrant may add these or similar words.*

**Priest:** Let us offer each other the sign of peace.

*All make a sign of peace, according to local custom.*

**Priest:** May this mingling of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ bring eternal life to us who receive it.

**All:** **Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, have mercy on us. Lamb of God, you take away the sins of the world, grant us peace.**

*Congregation kneels*

*The celebrant says quietly:*

May the receiving of your Body and Blood, Lord Jesus Christ, not bring me to judgment and condemnation, but through your loving mercy be for me protection in mind and body and a healing remedy.

## INVITATION TO HOLY COMMUNION

**Priest:** Behold the Lamb of God, behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.

**All:** **Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul shall be healed.**

**Priest:** May the Body of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.

**Priest:** May the Blood of Christ keep me safe for eternal life.

## COMMUNION ANTIPHON

*Cf. Zec 9:9*

**All:** **Rejoice, O Daughter Zion; lift up praise, Daughter Jerusalem: Behold, your King will come, the Holy One and Saviour of the world.**

*Purifying the chalice the celebrant says quietly:*

What has passed our lips as food, O Lord, may we possess in purity of heart, that what has been given to us in time may be our healing for eternity.

## PRAYER AFTER COMMUNION

*Congregation kneels*

**Priest:** Let us pray.  
Grant us, we pray, O Lord our God, that we, who are gladdened by participation in the feast of our Redeemer's Nativity, may through an honourable way of life become worthy of union with him. Who lives and reigns for ever and ever.

**All:** **Amen.**

## THE CONCLUDING RITES

**Priest:** The Lord be with you.  
**All:** **And with your spirit.**

**Priest:** May the God of infinite goodness, who by the Incarnation of his Son has driven darkness from the world and by that glorious Birth has illumined this most holy night (day), drive far from you the darkness of vice and illumine your hearts with the light of virtue.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Priest:** May God, who willed that the great joy of his Son's saving Birth be announced to shepherds by the Angel, fill your minds with the gladness he gives and make you heralds of his Gospel.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Priest:** And may God, who by the Incarnation brought together the earthly and heavenly realm, fill you with the gift of his peace and favour and make you sharers with the Church in heaven.

**All:** **Amen.**

**Priest:** And may the blessing of almighty God, the Father, and the Son, + and the Holy Spirit, come down on you and remain with you for ever.

**All:** **Amen.**

*Then the celebrant, with hands joined and facing the people, says:*

**Priest:** Go forth, the Mass is ended.  
**All:** **Thanks be to God.**

*Congregation stands*



## **CHRISTMAS 2017 LETTER FROM THE ADMINISTRATOR**

Dear Parishioner,

On behalf of Bishop McAreavey, my brother priests, our Deacon, and on my own behalf, may I begin by taking this opportunity to wish you all a joyful and peaceful Christmas in the hope that you will enjoy an opportunity to relax in the company of family and friends. We thank all our parishioners who are actively involved in the life of the parish by their participation in Sunday and Weekday Masses, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and their prayerful and practical support. The times of Adoration provide opportunities for prayer in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament.

We thank the Religious Sisters living and working in the Parish for their ongoing support to us and the Parishioners. We also thank those who contribute to the many ministries in the parish through Music, Ministers of the Word, Ministers of the Eucharist, those who spend hours arranging the flowers for the altar in each of the Churches, the Altar Servers, the Cleaners and the Sacristans in the various Churches.

At this time of year we are mindful of the fact that due to death, illness, poverty or separation, some homes will not be experiencing fully the joy of Christmas. Those families that have had a bereavement this year will be remembered in a special way at Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning. We share your loneliness and pain and pray that you will be consoled in the knowledge that your loved one is at peace. During this Holy Season our hearts go out to you and you are remembered in our prayers. May Christ be present to you in a special way at this time to heal hearts that are broken.

A very important and vibrant group of volunteers in our Parish is the Parish Pastoral Council under the leadership of Mr. Fred Hollowood. We appreciate the work which they do and are planning to do.

We are blessed with 12 excellent schools in the Parish. I express, on behalf of the parish community, our gratitude to the Principal and Staff of each of the twelve schools for the leadership and high standard of education our young people are fortunate to receive.

To the many groups working in our parish for the benefit of all, I extend a special word of thanks. Your efforts do not go unnoticed. I thank the Baptism Team, the Online Media Team, the Liturgy Committee, the Knights of Columbanus, the Lection Divina Groups, the Faith Development Groups, the Bible Study Group, the newly formed Newry Parish Funeral Ministry Team and the many other groups and individuals working for the good of our parish community. At this time of year I acknowledge the mighty work being done by the St. Vincent de Paul Society and thank you for your generosity in supporting them. I thank Frances McNally, the Diocesan Youth Director, for her work during the year I commend and thank the Youth Leaders and Sacramental Team in the Parish for their enthusiasm and selfless giving as they encourage our youth in so many ways to grow spiritually. One example of this work is the Youth Leaders' dedication and their active involvement in the 'Do This in Memory of Me' programme in the parish. This work is invaluable and is such an advantage to our Primary 4 children and their parents. It is so encouraging to see our P4 boys and girls participating actively in these Masses. I commend in a very special way the leaders who continue with the very successful Children's Liturgy of the Word at the 12 noon Mass in the Cathedral each Sunday. Their dedication and commitment to the Primary 4, 5, 6 & 7 children is admirable. The children are being nourished with the Word of God in a very meaningful way. It is also encouraging to see that parents are now being given the opportunity to prepare for the Sacraments of First Penance, First Communion and Confirmation. The enthusiasm of this team is very commendable and helps parents to help their children.

June 4th 2017 was a memorable day for our parish and diocese when two men were ordained Deacons, Rev. John McClelland from Newry parish and Rev. Michael Rooney, Ballela, parish of Dromore. We wish them every blessing in their ministry.

I commend the Sacramental Team for their work with the parents of the P4 and P7 pupils. A programme for each set of parents was delivered for each school followed by three additional talks in the Parish Centre. The additional talks were on the themes, faith, the Mass and the living Church. I have no doubt this work will help parents to help their child for the reception of the sacraments.

During this year a course has taken place to prepare parish pastoral workers. There are 50 persons participating in this development from 16 parishes of the diocese. We are blessed to have 19 volunteers from Newry Parish. We encourage all parishioners to live out their baptismal calling by being more active in helping in their parish.

Congratulations to the World Meeting of Families working group under the chair of Mrs. Michelle Morgan. This group has done great work since they came into existence. They prepared a wonderful prayer service for the 2nd Sunday of Advent and have more events prepared for the World Meeting of Families in Advent 2018. I encourage you to support them in their endeavours.

I wish to express my personal thanks to Bishop John McAreavey and my brother priests and Deacon for their friendship, counsel and co-operation over the year. I thank too, the Parish Office Staff for their commitment that very often goes well beyond the call of duty in a very busy Parish Office with many demands

I extend a special thought to the sick and housebound to whom we minister. Their faith always affirms us and lifts our hearts with renewed hope. It is such a joy to visit the sick each First Friday. Thankfully, they are now able to be with us in spirit as they are able to view the Masses and services taking place in our Cathedral Church, St. Brigid's, St. Mary's and St. Catherine's by using a computer, a lap top, iPhone, or an iPad. Recently, parishioners have been informing us that their relatives in Australia, the Americas and various locations in Europe and around the world have been logged on and have seen different Masses and services.

May our awareness of Christ's presence in our daily lives, and especially at Christmas, help to raise us up and give us renewed confidence in 2016. May the New Year bring us fresh hope and enable us to be living witnesses of Christ to each other by the way we live our daily lives so that we support each other in our faith, are joyful and active in charity.

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