

## PARISH FINANCE

This year we have been all faced with many financial challenges as increased charges are levied from us and the long awaited economic recovery is slow to make a difference in people's income. While there has been a drop in contributions to support the Parish, your commitment to meeting the daily running costs and providing funds for the ongoing maintenance and development of the Parish Pastoral Centre is deeply appreciated.

During the year we had to change our Standing Orders from Danske Bank to Ulster Bank. We thank you for your patience and co-operation during the changeover. We hope that nearly all the issues have been resolved.

The only source of income that the Parish receives is from the Church Envelope and Standing Orders. The first collection at Mass and the Christmas and Easter Dues is to support the Priests, here and throughout the Diocese and the second collection at Mass is for the Diocesan Share Fund.

In February we will produce the statement of Accounts for the year. A summary of how our income has changed is: Total receipts from €182,938 to €169,247; a fall of 7.48% and Family Offering from €139,610 to €123,400; a fall of 11.61%.

In the New Year we will be launching a fundraising campaign to develop the Parish Pastoral Centre. While we have much of the funds built up thanks to your generosity we have a shortfall of around €50,000.00.

I would like to thank the members of the Finance Committee who advise and oversee the management of the Parish Monies and the collectors, counters and record keeper whose work is so important. Now that the Charities Commission is in operation we will have some minor changes in practice to implement. Most have already been done in how we keep records, issue receipts, use the pouches for the Mass collection etc.

Thank you again for your ongoing commitment and support. We hope that all our building and fundraising plans will run smoothly through the year.

*Paddy O'Byrne, Chairperson of the Parish Finance Committee*

## A NEW APPROACH TO READING THE NEW TESTAMENT



Over the past two years we have run "Reading The Bible In A Year" which have been a great success and given people support in making their way through the Old and New Testaments. It is a huge commitment and much of the discussion centres around the Old Testament.

In 2015 we are offering different modules and reading the New Testament. It gives you the opportunity to follow through the whole year or to choose which ones you would like to do. This will be facilitated in the same way as the "Reading The Bible In A Year" ie: a weekly guide to the reading for the week, a facilitated discussion by Paddy O'Byrne and others. There will also be talks on each section during the year by a scripture teacher which will be open to all.

The plan for the year is:

February to April: The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and the Acts of the Apostles; May and June: The Gospel and Letters of St. John and the Book of Revelation; September and October The Letters of St. Paul; November: The Letters of James, Jude and Peter.

It will be on Monday Night 7:30 – 8:30pm (except Bank Holidays and Do This In Memory Parents Meeting when it will move to Tuesday).

More details will be available in January and you can register your interest by emailing [brackenstownparish@gamil.com](mailto:brackenstownparish@gamil.com) or ringing 01 8401188.



## A CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

In the lead up to Christmas this year a programme that was inspiring was 'High Hopes'. It followed a group of people who are normally invisible in our society either through homelessness or isolation and brought them together to sing. As the programmes' went on, you could see the difference that belonging to a group and working on a project meant to them. At times it was too much for some of them as they sought the refuge of being alone on the street, only to be encouraged back. It was great to see the sense of pride and achievement when they performed in public, recorded a cover of High Hopes, from our own local group Kodaline!, and then performed on the Late Late Show.

In watching these programmes the words of the Prophet Isaiah came to life "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light," and you can understand why it was so important that God would come into the world as a tiny baby to be Emmanuel, God with us. We welcome every one who has come to pray and celebrate with us today. This is your home, we are your family, you are welcome here always.

We thank you for your kindness and support over the year. Your words of encouragement mean a lot and your suggestions help to clarify things. Let us work together to create the open, healing, joy filled place here that allows us to experience the presence of Jesus.

Wishing you and yours a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

Fr. Paul and Fr. Rajeev Joseph

## EPIPHANY GIFTS APPEAL

Are there gifts that you have received today that you would like to share with someone else? Instead of putting them into the wardrobe or leaving biscuits or sweets as a temptation to break your new year fitness regime bring them to the crib in St. Cronan's Church on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> January. Marking the Feast of the Epiphany like this is a good way to share our good news with others.



All the gifts will go to Alice Leahy's TRUST drop in centre for people who live on Dublin's streets. Alice and her team provide showers/baths, food, clothes and basic first aid. But the most important thing that they provide is a listening ear, time to be with and get to know those who call in. Their service meets the daily needs of people who live on the streets with no awkward questions just a smile, cup of tea and a place to take a break.

The kind of things that Alice can use: biscuits, sweets, toiletries, scented candles, towels, gloves and hats.

## PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

This year the term of office of the Parish Pastoral Council came to an end and under its constitution a quarter of the members had to stand down to allow others to come on board. Those who stood down were Tony Donnelly, Terry Donoghue and Rosaleen Devery (who had stood down earlier but was not replaced). We would like to thank them for the hard work and commitment to the work of the Pastoral Council during which the Constitution was set up, a Parish Mission and two Retreats were organized, a Parish Assembly was held and a night to acknowledge the many volunteers was established.

An open nomination invitation was put to the Parish, an invitation made to individuals to come to an information evening and out of this our new Parish Pastoral Council has been established.

The Members are: Liam Campbell, Declan Colgan, Bridie D'Arcy, Maureen Mc Garvey, Therese Mulligan, Maryanne Okoye, Frank Stacey (all of whom served previously) being joined by Mary O'Callaghan, Melissa Morgan and Margaret McLoughlin. Fr. Paul and Fr. Joseph are also part of the Parish Pastoral Council.

We will be having our night for all the Parish volunteers on Friday 6<sup>th</sup> February beginning with Mass at 7:30pm during which the Parish Pastoral Council will be commissioned followed by a social evening in the School Hall.

*Liam Campbell, Chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council*



## FAMILY PRAYERS FOR CHRISTMAS



**For placing the Baby Jesus figure in the Crib:** God our Father, you sent Jesus your son, born of Mary in the stable in Bethlehem. As we celebrate this great event and place this figure of the Infant Jesus in our crib, we ask you to bless our family, friends and community. We pray for peace and goodwill among all peoples. We pray for compassion and care for all who are in need. We pray that we may be open to your Son being born in our hearts and strengthening the bonds of family and friendship between us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**A Prayer Before the Christmas Dinner:** Bless us Lord as we sit on this Christmas Day around the table. Bless each one here and those who cannot be with us. Bless those who supplied and prepared the food, mindful that there are many who will go hungry. Bless us with the peace, joy, love and hope that your Son Jesus brings into the world. Amen.

**A Prayer for the New Year:** May God make your year a happy one! Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain, but by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes; not by making your path easy, but by making you sturdy to travel any path; not by taking hardships from you, but by taking fear from your heart;

not by granting you unbroken sunshine, but by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows; not by making your life always pleasant, but by showing you when people and their causes need you most, and by making you anxious to be there to help. God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead.

## PARISH PASTORAL CENTRE

Each year for the last three years we have been saying that we hope next year to bring the building of the Parish Pastoral Centre to completion. It is with great excitement that I can announce that on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2015 the builders will move on site and by August the Centre will be completed.

The vision of this building has been held by many people over the years as they saw the need to upgrade the bathroom facilities, provide a place for people to meet for tea/coffee after Mass, particularly our senior Parishioners, during the week. There will be two meeting rooms and a new Parish Office. Through a process of consultation, presentation of the plans, contact with our neighbours and Fingal County Council we now have a plan that fulfills the needs of the Parish at this time. Earlier in the year we appointed James Ahern as our Architect and through a tender process he has recommended Duke Construction of Clanbrassil Street to do the building work.

I would like to thank the members of the Parish Pastoral Centre Development Group who have undertaken to see the project through the various stages to completion. Each one has brought a lot of wisdom to the various stages of design development.

We now look forward to seeing the building rise from the ground and Duke Construction have assured us that they will cause as a little disruption as possible to the daily activities in the Church.

*Michael McDermott, Chairperson of the Pastoral Centre Development Group*

## CHRISTMAS GREETINGS FROM ST. COLUMBA'S PARISH

On behalf of all the Parishioners in St. Columba's Parish may we wish you a very blessed



Christmas and a joyful New Year. It was with great excitement that we were able to hold our Service in our Church on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> December and our Service of Nine Lessons and Carols the following Sunday. It was affirming to see so many of you join us for the Carols.

Thank you again for the part you played in helping us to attend to the restoration work, which had closed the Church for so long. Your friendship and support was not just about buildings but about the faith we share in the one Lord.

May this be a time filled with hope for you and yours and may bonds of friendship and community continue to grow between our Parishes.

*Rev. Robert Canon Deane, Rector of St. Columba's Church*

