



Parish Matters

Newsletter of Douglas Union with Frankfield

October 2020

The Rector writes.....

In recent days, the impact the current pandemic is having on us, was brought home to me in an unexpected way. I was attending a school board of management meeting in St Michael's NS in Blackrock. (Yes, we were all wearing masks and socially distanced in a large room with the door and windows wide open for ventilation.) In the discussion before the meeting started, we were talking about the special video assembly that the staff and pupils had made for St Michael's Day, 29 September. I had recorded a short piece which was included alongside the drama, Bible reading, songs, art and prayers that the individual classes had done. When put together, this became a 30 programme, which was then played to each of the classes in their rooms at the same time on St Michael's Day.

The reaction of the pupils to this assembly was interesting. Apparently, they were delighted to see me on the screen! I don't for a moment think that I have any particular celebrity status and it is not that what I said was particularly interesting. It was down to the simple fact that they were seeing and hearing me again. Up to March I was a familiar part of the school community as every Friday morning I led the school assembly in St Michael's Church. They were missing that familiar connection. Secondly, the teachers at the meeting said that it was the first time, since the lockdown, that the whole school community was engaged in something together and they really enjoyed it. For now, the children must stay in their classroom pods all day. They use separate parts of the playground at different times for their break. They don't see each other. In fact, some of the junior infants think other parts of the building are a completely different school. It is an easy mistake to make if you never see the other rooms or meet the teachers and pupils that go into them.

All this strikes me as having relevance for the parish. There is a danger that we will lose that sense of connectedness as members of Douglas Union with Frankfield. It is important that we continue to interact with, as well as see and hear each other, that we engage on common projects. I'm writing this just before a decision will be made as to whether additional public health restrictions will have to be imposed on Cork and elsewhere. I don't know if our Sunday services will be suspended and our churches closed again. If this does happen, worship will again go online. In the darker and shorter days of winter, we will have to continue to keep engaged as a worshipping community for fellowship and mutual support.

You will see in this issue that I am proposing we do two things that will go some way towards that end. One is social (A Parish Cookbook) and the other is spiritual (The Genesis Reading Challenge). In the coming weeks, please look out for one another. Phone and stay connected with the housebound. If you know a parishioner who is not

on the internet and so can't get the weekly parish email or see the service or reflection on the parish Youtube channel, please print off this newsletter and deliver it to them. Please print off the Sunday reading or liturgy sheet and deliver it to them too if the churches have to close for a few weeks. By staying together and looking out for one another, we will emerge as a stronger community which puts our faith into practical action.

Yours in Christ,

Adrian

Genesis Reading Challenge

The article below, which appeared in the Irish Times on 1 August this year, gave me an idea. It was one of a regular series where authors and other well-known figures talk about the favourite books. In this one, Lucy Sweeney Byrne tells of her surprise and delight in what she discovered when reading the Book of Genesis.

What I am hoping to do is to encourage as many in the parish as possible to follow her example and read the Book of Genesis this autumn. It has 50 chapters and if we all started reading a chapter a day on Saturday 10 October, we would finish on Advent Sunday.

To encourage you to keep going, I have asked a number of parishioners to contribute a short video piece of 3 or 4 minutes to tell us of their favourite passage or character in Genesis and of how it encourages, challenges and comforts them. I will put up one of these each week in October and November on the parish YouTube channel so you can watch it. Happy reading! *Adrian*

The Book of Genesis, by Anonymous

Old favourites: Lucy Sweeney Byrne on her most loved texts



Have you ever tried to read the Bible? In all my years of Catholic schooling, never did we open a Bible. The idea didn't seem to occur to our educators, nor to us. The Bible was a concept, an unreadable tome, full of gobbledegook that we were far more capable of taking in through vague summaries, children's picture books (most of which were New Testament, and featured Jesus, doing *lovely* things), or school sermons, through which we surreptitiously listened to Green Day or Avril Lavigne on our iPods.

I knew about Adam and Eve, as in I knew women brought the pain of childbirth upon themselves (silly ladies!), that Cain killed Abel and that Joseph had a groovy coat. Oh, and I knew that I was a sinner, damned to hell, because my thoughts were *filled* with sins – at first, I was mostly afflicted with greed and envy, as in, “Jesus, I want that Cabbage Patch Doll so-and-so has, more than

anything in the *world*, and I'd happily sacrifice her sweet innocent life just to get it". Those sins later combined with many others, most notably gluttonous lust. Still, I never thought of actually *reading* the Bible, until a lecturer at university told us, to our youthful disapprobation, that the Bible was the best book ever written. So I picked up a Bible. And it was *fantastic*.

Take Genesis, the beginning, to begin. It's a genuinely exhilarating read, moving, tense, even funny, full of betrayal, murder, desire, incest, famine, floods, and quite a bit of thigh touching. The language, too, is extraordinary. Until reading the Bible, I'd assumed "I am not my brother's keeper" was Shakespearean.

It's also mind-boggling to recall that what you're reading is the moral, ethical and intellectual basis of all of Judeo-Christian (and some Arabic) culture. It's both awful and absurd to think people have died over what you're reading – no text will ever remind you, so forcefully, of the power of the written word.

The Bible is at once ridiculous and humbling. I couldn't recommend it strongly enough.



A PARISH COOKBOOK

In recent days you will have noticed a chill in the air. For those who enjoy cooking, programmes like the 'Great British Bake Off' are back on our TVs. This autumn, due to the health restrictions, our parish social and youth activities have ceased. People will be at home more and have some time on their hands for cooking and baking.

Against this background, it has been suggested that the parish put together a special **Parish Cookbook**. There will be a dedicated email address so that people can submit their recipes directly to it. What I am looking for are all sorts of recipes, both simple and more challenging - biscuits, cakes, brunch ideas, dinner menus, desserts, drinks, lunchtime snacks, party ideas, etc. Basically, anything edible and entries are welcome from parishioners of any age or skill level. There is only one condition and it is that you must send in your name with the recipe and just a sentence or two as to what this recipe means to you. For example, it might be the first thing you learned to cook as a child, a family favourite curry recipe when everyone is home on a Saturday night, your Christmas cake recipe, your treat for brunch on a bank holiday weekend etc. The more varied the collection the better. Gluten free, vegan and or speciality recipes are also particularly welcome. The address for all entries is:

douglasfrankfieldcookbook@gmail.com

I know not every parishioner uses email or has a computer. For those who don't, recipes can be posted to the Rectory or perhaps as you are reading this and so have email, I suggest that you might use the cookbook as an idea to phone and collect a recipe from someone who can't email one in. Just type it up and send it in on their behalf. I think in the coming months finding such excuses to stay in contact with each other, particularly with those who live alone, will be very important. All recipes should be sent in by **31 October**.

Finally, I hope to print off and produce the cookbook and sell it. While this is not a major parish fundraiser, any profits will go to parish funds where it is much needed at present.

So, get thinking, hunt out your cooking and baking ideas. I look forward to hearing from you. *Adrian*

Parish YouTube Channel

During the period of lockdown, a parish YouTube channel was set up so that parishioners and others could view the recorded services and Sunday three-minute reflections. Should our churches have to be closed again, recorded services will be put up on it. In addition, the recorded contributions by parishioners on the Genesis Reading Challenge will also be available on it over the next couple of months. The link to this can be found at:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZDmEQt2VvcJI9ErW29vxPA/videos>
Happy viewing!

St Michael's School Notes



We are all delighted to be back to school at St Michael's. We all appreciate more the simple aspects of our day. I am reminded of the quote by Cynthia Ozick:

"We often take for granted the very things that most deserve our gratitude."

Like all schools it has required quite a logistical effort from staff, board of management, parents and volunteers to open with all required measures in place but thankfully we were able to welcome back all pupils on the 27th August. Parents have been very patient as we have endeavoured to organise drop off /pick up in the most efficient and safest way we could. Pupils have been brilliant at accepting and co-operating with the new regimes of bubbles, pods, teachers with masks and hand washing. Extra daily cleaning has been organised and furnishings have been reduced to allow more space in classrooms. We are blessed with lovely outside space as well as being adjacent to the wonderful Blackrock Line for walking which has allowed us to enjoy the last of the sunny days.

It has been a joy for us to see the children play and learn together so happily over the past two weeks. We were thrilled to welcome our fifteen junior infants to the Oak Room - they have been having loads of fun and have easily settled into the routines of the class. The first day of school is always a very significant day for children and parents. It will have been difficult for parents not coming into the classroom due to covid19 restrictions and we appreciate the trust placed in us to mind their precious infants! We also welcome pupils Ruby and Abi to Chestnut Room and Rapheal to the Willow Room.

We have had some staffing changes also. Ms Alison Quill has been appointed as principal following Ms Annemarie O' Donovan's decision to return to a classroom teacher role in our school. We wish Ms Mary Hehir all the best as she has taken a position in Dublin close to her home. Ms Josie Bowden has joined us as the Willow

Room teacher. Ms Bowden previously worked in St James's National School in Durrus and before that in the UK. .We are delighted to welcome her to our team, As we await our permanent building extension our Hazel Room pupils are housed in the Old School House , given there are only 6 pupils in this class it is a suitable and charming space. We are most grateful to the parish for facilitating this arrangement.

Our main focus as always, but especially in these times, is the holistic wellbeing of our pupils. It is only when the mind and body are in tune that true learning can take place. We are planning lots of creative activities and outside time. We have been thinking up ways to stay connected as school assembly is not permitted and so far, we have used Zoom to connect the classes together. Alas broadband speed continues to be a challenge when trying to best use our technology.

Please include our school in your prayers as we work together to navigate this new normal. We are hopeful that once all in the community are vigilant, schools can continue to be a safe and healthy environment for us all.

St Luke's School Notes

Little did we think that when we closed the school doors on 12th March that we wouldn't be returning until the end of August. It was very easy to close the school but reopening again proved far more challenging. However, we were delighted to open the doors again on 26th August for our 26 new Junior Infants. We warmly welcome the Class of 2020 and their families to St Luke's and hope that they will have many happy years with us.



All our pupils. teachers and SNAs are now safely back in their classrooms and getting used to our new procedures and routines. We have become very familiar with pods, bubbles, staggered breaktimes, sanitising our hands, lining up on our designated spots, wearing masks and social

distancing.

A huge amount of work went into preparing the school building for reopening. Classrooms had to be reorganised, furniture moved, footprints painted in the yard, an isolation room created, new cleaning routines organised and new policies implemented. Many thanks are due to all the team involved in organising all the extra requirements for an efficient and safe reopening.

We are constantly finding new ways of doing things and we made history recently when we had our ever first outdoor Assembly. Hopefully the weather will stay fine for us and we can have many more.



Cork University Maternity Hospital (CUMH) will be holding its annual **Service of Remembrance** online from Friday 15 October 2019 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

All who have experienced pregnancy or infant loss are invited to take part in the Remembrance Service by visiting www.cumhremembers.ie. The website is dedicated to this important event for parents, siblings and

family members to gather with CUMH staff to remember the short lives of babies who have died during pregnancy or in infancy.

The **Church of Ireland Historical Society** will host its winter conference in a virtual format on Saturday, 7th November. Members and day



participants can hear four speakers via Zoom Video Conferencing. The first speaker will start at 11am. Dr. Aoife Bhreatnach will give her presentation at 3pm on 'Burying the poor: the Church of Ireland and the friendless dead, 1830-1930.' Burying the very poor presented a recurring challenge to communities, parishes, and local government yet the burial practices of the destitute remain an understudied area of Irish

funerary culture. 'Friends' – family and community who claimed bodies and petitioned for coffins – negotiated a network of private alms and publicly-funded poor relief to secure burial for their dead. This paper will use Cork-city parishes to show who paid for the burial of the destitute dead from 1830 to 1930. St Luke's in Douglas played an important role in burying the Protestant dead from the nearby workhouse from the 1880s to the 1930s. Extensive claiming of corpses by friends and Anglican parishes from the workhouse in post-Famine Cork shows that the symbolic power of the pauper grave was manifest in the burial landscape rather than cheap coffins and common graves. She will also talk about city-centre parishes such as St Nicholas, St Anne's and St Fin Barre's.

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