

A few words from the Parish Priest.....

For my friends John and Moira, Christmas was transformed by the surprise arrival on December 23rd of their son who lives in the USA. They answered a knock at the door and there he was, as large as life, home. They hadn't seen him in over 18 months and his absence a year ago cast a cloud over their family celebrations. Sure, they saw him on Facetime and could rejoice in his joy at skiing with his friends, but Christmas wasn't the same without him. Last year his stocking hung at the fireplace with all the red and white stockings bearing the names of their five children, but he wasn't there on Christmas morning to jump with joy at the gifts awaiting him. This year all the children were round the table, in mad jumpers, with their parents, and the family was complete. A fantastic Christmas. Then on Thursday they took him to the airport. It was time to say goodbye, a last hug and kiss, his chin up, a thin-lipped smile, knuckle bump, and he was gone from their sight, off through the departure gate, his journey 'home' to America ahead of him, tears in his eyes. They felt so sad as they let him go, so glad that he had come, and so hopeful that he might return to live here one day. Like many parents they would love to keep their children close, even as they move through their twenties, develop relationships, get jobs, make their way in the world, it would be so nice to see them, have them nearby. I reminded them of what Lincoln said when he left home to go and become president in Washington, "Trusting in Him who can go with me, and remain with you, and be everywhere for good, let us confidently hope that all will yet be well. To His care commending you, as I hope in your prayers you will commend me, I bid you an affectionate farewell." I know they will keep him in their prayers every day.

Christmas Dues:

Envelopes have been distributed and are available at the tables near the doors for Christmas Dues. The gift of money at Christmas and Easter for the care of priests is essential both for the upkeep of our active priests but also for the sick and retired priests who are now cared for in nursing homes. This care is very expensive and only made possible through your donations. The elderly men, after a lifetime of ministry can't express thanks to you directly, so on their behalf, we thank you for all you contribute to their care and well-being.

Collections 30th December 2018

Offertory Collection: €1,284
Share Collection: €650

Thank you for your support for these collections, and for your contributions to the Parish Fund each month.

Christian Meditation takes place every Thursday morning after 10.00am Mass in St. Brigid's Room. Meditation is the quiet prayer of faith, silence, stillness and simplicity handed on to us by the Benedictine Monk, John Main O.S.B. All are welcome.

Gianna Care provides compassionate, life-affirming and confidential care during pregnancy. If you would like further information, please see notices at back of church or call 086 0293727.

Rathgar Active Retirement Association is a friendly and welcoming group of active retired people. We meet every Tuesday and Friday at 2.30pm for: table tennis; scrabble; cards; and indoor bowls. Outings to the theatre and other interesting venues; and twice-yearly holidays, are also on our agenda. For further information, contact Phyllis at 01 4909167

Save the Date: World Day of the Sick 2019 will take place on 9 February 2019 in All Hallows, Drumcondra (9:30am to 1.00pm) on the topic '*Community Struggle with Addiction - A Pastoral Response*'. More details closer to the time.

Unused/Unwanted Gifts Campaign You are invited to bring unused or unwanted gifts which you may have received, to the Crib in St Mary's Pro-Cathedral, Marlborough St, so that they can be redistributed through **Crosscare** – the Diocesan Social Care Agency. All gifts can be donated from 26th December to 6th January.

The Bethany Bereavement Group meeting will be held in Rathgar Parish Centre, 52 Grosvenor Road, Rathgar on Wed 9th January 2019 at 8.00pm and at The Milltown Parish Centre on Wed 16th January 2019 at 8.00pm.

Nutrition and Healthy Ageing. UCD is holding a public lecture about *Nutrition and Healthy Ageing*. The lecture will be given by Professor Helen Roche of the UCD Institute of Food and Health on Monday 14th January at 7 pm in the Lynch Theatre, UCD O'Brien Centre for Science. There is no need to register and admission is free.