

## The Church is the people of God

Michael Commane

In mid-November I attended a conferring ceremony in Tallaght. It had a sense of history to it as it was one of the first conferring ceremonies of the new Technological University Dublin.

The conferring was at the Priory Institute. The degrees offered by The Priory Institute are accredited by TU Dublin.

Twelve students were awarded MAs in Biblical Studies, 14 received BAs in theology and a further six students obtained certificates and diplomas in scripture and theology.

They were all mature students, all out working in their own particular jobs, indeed, some may be retired.

It is often striking how little we actually know about our faith and the two-millennium Christian tradition.

Only recently when former president Mary McAleese was in the news, the media referred to her as a theologian. Ms McAleese is not a theologian; she is a canon lawyer.

It's impressive to see people, non-clerics, study theology. It is a great sign of hope.

The future of our church is in the hands of all baptised people. And we really need to get our heads around that.

The church is the people of God.

Since coming to celebrate Mass here in Rathgar I have been impressed with the sense of community and fellowship that exists between us. I have also noticed that with a little prompting people easily find themselves taking part and answering the prayers at Mass. Not having a note in my head, unfortunately I cannot help with the music and that's a pity.

Maybe you are aware that on Wednesdays at the 07.30 Mass a member of the congregation speaks for two minutes on the Gospel of the day.

Honestly, it has been an extraordinary moment of grace and hope. The faith and the wisdom spoken by people every Wednesday morning is simply astonishing. Of course everyone is different. Difference is good.

A large number of people in the last two years have spoken at the Mass. And guess what, over the last few weeks I have noticed that the Wednesday Mass is the best attended 07.30 Mass of the week. Indeed, someone suggested that the talks have great potential for a book.

Church is community from beginning to end, with Christ at the centre.

Our new hall will be an exciting moment for our parish. It has great potential in strengthening our sense of community. It will be a focal point for all of us. It's looking great.

And don't forget, tóg go bog é.

**Children's Programme for Advent.** As St Patrick's Hall is not yet available, the children will go to the Sacristy during Mass for a short lesson and some prayer time followed by Arts and Crafts. The capacity of the Sacristy means we may have to restrict the programme to children under 6 years of age, and if any older children are excluded, the craft will be available after Mass.

## Collections 1<sup>st</sup> December 2019

Offertory Collection: €1,286  
Share Collection: €1,162

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

**St Vincent De Paul** annual church gate collection will take place this Sunday, and as always our local Conference will gratefully receive all donations large and small, and put them to great use helping people who live locally and struggle to make ends meet.

**Baptism** We welcome Charles Thomas Stempniewicz who joined the family of the Church through Baptism on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2019.

**Crosscare** have advised us they will have no food collection at the Church this Christmas, but they will collect during the year instead.

**Alexandra College** A huge thank you to all who contributed to the recent collection and cake sale for the Hope Foundation, and helped to raise €1200.

**Bambinelli Sunday** will be held next Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> December and all children and families are invited to bring the Baby Jesus figure from their homes to be blessed. Blessed straw will also be available at the back of the Church after all Masses, so please help yourself.

**Christian Meditation** takes place every Thursday morning before 10.00am Mass in the Church. 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.

**Books for Advent** *Dipping into Advent*, by Alan Hilliard, and *Advent and Christmas*, by the Irish Jesuits' Sacred Space, are available to purchase at the back of the Church price €10 and €5 respectively

**St Louis High School, Rathmines** Annual Christmas Fair will take place today, Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2019 from 12-3pm. All the usual stalls with Wheel-of-Fortune, Bric-a-Brac, Coffee Shop, Santa etc will be there.

**The Bethany Bereavement** Group meeting will be held in Rathgar Parish Centre, 52 Grosvenor Road, Rathgar on Wed 11<sup>th</sup> December at 8.00pm and at The Milltown Parish Centre on Wed 18<sup>th</sup> December at 8.00pm. Please phone Anne at 086 3602198

**Advent Reflection Series** Journeying through Advent in song, with hymns, psalms, chant, and dánta Dé, in the Avila Carmelite Convent, Bloomfield Avenue, Dublin 4. Join Kerrie O'Connor, Vocalist; Mary Louise and Teresa O'Donnell, Harpists; and Naomi Dunleavy-O'Shea, Violinist, on Tuesdays 10<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Dec 7.30pm - 8.30pm.

**St Joseph's Young Priests' Society** monthly meeting will take place on Thursday 12<sup>th</sup> December at 10.30am in the Sacristy. New members welcome.