# "TWELVE DAYS OF CHRISTMAS"

"Twelve days of Christmas" with its nonsensical verses has always baffled me. According to Fr. Gilhooley, a chaplain at St. Mary's College in an article in "Our Sunday Visitor" in 1992 says it is a carol that dates back to the 16th century and was written by the English Jesuits and it is far from filled with nonsensical verses. Catholicism in 16th century England was not a nice place to be.

Henry VIII was rebuffed by Rome in his bid to divorce Catherine of Aragon to marry Anne Boleyn. He declared himself head of the Church replacing the Pope and demanded that all swear an oath of allegiance to him. The practice of the Catholic faith was banned. Priests were exiled and forbidden under pain of death from returning or performing the sacraments.

With this as a background we can see the need for secrecy and deception. "The Twelve Days of Christmas" was written to educate the faithful in the doctrines of the faith and yet not be obvious to the persecutors. "On the twelfth day of Christmas, my true love gave to me: twelve lords a leaping, eleven pipers piping, ten ladies dancing, nine drummers drumming, eight maids a milking, seven swans a swimming, six geese a laying, five golden rings, four calling birds, three French hens, two turtle doves, and a partridge in a pear tree."

"My true love" refers to God, "me" a Catholic. The "twelve lords a leaping" are the twelve basic beliefs of the Catholic Church. The "eleven pipers piping" are the eleven Apostles who remained faithful after the treachery of Judas. The "ten ladies dancing" are the Ten Commandments. The "nine drummers drumming" are the nine choirs of angels.

The "eight maids a milking" are the Eight Beatitudes. The "seven swans a swimming" are the Seven Sacraments. The "six geese a laying" are the Six Commandments of the Church or the six days of creation. The "five golden rings" are the first five books of the Old Testament. The "four calling birds" are the Four Gospels. The "three French hens" are the Three Persons in God or the three gifts of the Wise Men. The "two turtle doves" represent the two natures in Jesus: human and divine or the two Testaments, Old and New. The "partridge" is Jesus himself, and the "pear tree" is the Cross.

# "SOMETHING SPECIAL" PERSONAL WITNESS

Recently I had gone through a very dark period in my spiritual life, and drifted away from the Church. I was away for about four years.

Something special happened on Pentecost Sunday this year - I think it was the Holy Spirit who nudged me to go to Mass. I have been going every Sunday since with a renewed and joyful heart. This has led me to pray the Rosary each day. And so a light globe started to flicker in my head ... and now there is this new website. If you wish to have a look at it, you can find it at www.therosary3.com

therosary3.com is a new reflective way to pray the Rosary. It takes you to a quiet place within, away from the noise and din of life, and all its distractions ... into the presence of God. You are welcome to visit anytime.

Nancy Hargrave

# **CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS**

Notices and submissions for the Newsletter must be received before 10.30am on **WEDNESDAY** morning to be considered for inclusion into that week's edition. Envelopes marked "PARISH NEWSLETTER" should be left into the Sacristy or Parish Office.

# PARISH TEAM CONTACTS

# Village

Office/Sacristy 459 3520

Fr Damian Farnon Adm St Cecilla's 459 2665

Fr Pádraig O'Sullivan CC St Columba's 459 2311

Fr Jim McCaffrey CC St Mary's 406 4329

### Clonburris

Fr Shán O Cuív CC c/o Parish Office

### Knockmitten

Fr Des Byrne CC 45 Woodford Drive. 459 2323



Parish Pastoral Workers (for the Combined Catholic Parishes of Clondalkin)

> Peter Siney 089 461 4226

Christopher Okereke 457 3546

# **PARISH NEWS**

Clondalkin Village, Clonburris & Knockmitten

clondalkinchurch@eircom.net

www.clondalkinparish.com

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No 53

# **GETTING OVER CHRISTMAS**

How did you get over the Christmas is a question frequently put to me. The tone of the question is similar to that when parishioners enquire of me as to whether I got over the flu or jet lag! I realise that Christmas can be a stressful time for people particularly for those who have lost their job or a loved one during the year. I acknowledge the effort made by so many people to make the church clean and beautiful and all who assisted at the various liturgies

The numbers attending the ceremonies was up on last year. It was joyful yet poignant to see younger parishioners who returned home from Australia, Canada and many other places to be with their families. We remembered and prayed for those spending their first Christmas away from home and for those who have made Clondalkin their new home.

Do not forget the *Last Lights Ceremony* on New Year's Eve which this year falls on a Monday. It will commence at 4pm and should last around thirty minutes. This ceremony provides all of us with an opportunity to ask God to bless the year ahead. Please join us for the ceremony if you are in the vicinity of the church.

Wishing you and yours all the very best for the New Year.

Fr. Damian on the behalf the Parish Team and the Parish Pastoral Council.

# **CLONBURRIS Mass Intentions**

Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> December

6.30pm Deceased members of Murphy Family.

Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> December

11.00am Deceased members of Gleeson and O'Doherty Families.

We wish all our Parishioners a very happy and peaceful New Year.

# **ADORATION**

This Thursday, 3<sup>rd</sup> January Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament:

In the CHURCH: from after 10am Mass

to 11.45am

In the SISTERS'S ORATORY: 7pm to

9pm and all are welcome

### **CHURCH DUTY**

**Cleaning:** Kitty Egan, Angela McCreevey, Kathleen Fitzpatrick, Veronica Bayly and May Stynes

The cleaning teams wish Elsie a speedy recovery

**Altar Linen:** Mary Jenkins

Flowers: No flowers until after 6<sup>th</sup> January.

### NOTICES

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> December

Miraculous Medal Novena after 10am Mass and Rosary.

Tuesday

Lectio Divina under the direction of Sr. Anne 12 Noon in the Pastoral Centre after 10am Mass.

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January

The prayer group meet in the Pastoral Centre at 8.00pm (downstairs). All are welcome.

# **DEATHS**

We extend our deepest sympathy to the family and friends of:

Kathleen Murphy, St Brigid's Road

recently deceased. May she rest in peace.

# PARISH WEBSITE

The Parish Website is up and running and can be visited on www.clondalkinparish.com

# **ANNIVERSARIES**

Monday 31<sup>st</sup> December

10.00am Percy Reeves

Tuesday 1st January 2013

10.00am Peg and Greg Pidgeon

Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> January

10.00am Special Intention

Friday 4<sup>th</sup> January

10.00am Tom and Nellie Cassidy

Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> January

10.30am

7.30am (Vigil) Cyril Storan

Phillis Hurrell MM

Bill Forftune

Jim Stynes. Christmas Remembrance for the

deceased members of the Breen and Stynes families

Ciaran O'Carroll

James Crehan and Thomas O'Neill Mary Coughlan

Sean Fagan B/Day Rem

Brigid Gill

2 Noon Joseph Morton 7<sup>th</sup> An

Martin and Kevin McInerney

Kitty Brett Brigid Leydon

Martin McLoughlin Jnr.

# THE HOLY FAMILY: JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

# We celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family today.

The devotion to the Holy Family was born in Bethlehem, together with the Baby Jesus. The shepherds went to adore the Child and, at the same time, they gave honour to His family. Later, in a similar way, the three wise men came from the East to adore and give honour to the newborn King with gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh that would be safeguarded by His family.

Today's celebration demonstrates Christ's humility and obedience with respect to the fourth commandment, whilst also highlighting the loving care that His parents exercised in His keeping.

We can go further to affirm that in a certain sense Christ, Himself, was the first devotee of His family. He showed His devotion to His mother and foster father by submitting Himself, with infinite humility, to the duty of filial obedience towards them. This is what St Bernard of Clairvaux said in this regard, 'God, to whom angels submit themselves and who principalities and powers obey, was subject to Mary; and not only to Mary but Joseph also for Mary's sake [....]. God obeyed a human creature; this is humility without precedent. A human creature commands God; it is sublime beyond measure.' (First Homily on the 'Missus Est').

Looking at the Holy Family, we see the love, the protection, and the diligent care that they gave to the Redeemer. We can not fail to feel uneasiness, perhaps a shameful thought, for the times in which we have not rendered the appropriate care and attention to the Blessed Eucharist. We can only ask for forgiveness and do penance for all the sacrilegious acts and

the lack of respect that are committed in front of the Blessed Eucharist. We can only ask the Lord, through the intercession of the Holy Family of Nazareth, for a greater love for their Son Incarnate, who has decided to remain here on earth with us every day until the end of time.

From the Congregation for the Clergy

# **GALLERY NEWS**

The venue for the 'Carol Night in Clondalkin Library' was in a building built with money donated by a Scottish-American businessman - Andrew Carnegie. A total of 2,5019 libraries were built between 1883 and 1929. As a result of his generosity Clondalkin library was completed in 1910. It is an imposing building with elements of Church and Castle architecture. Andrew Carnegie was a philanthropist and was a passionate believer that everyone should have equal opportunity and access to learning, Libraries have proved to be a wonderful resource for knowledge. The Gallery choir on the 19<sup>th</sup> December sang a mixture of old and new carols and the library staff very kindly supplied refreshment to the appreciative audience. Once again our efforts have been rewarded by a kind benefactor and the money received will go to charity.

Music has the ability to unite and inspire many different types of artists. Not only have composers expressed, through their medium, the wonder of Christmas but also painters, writers and poets. Patrick Kavanagh, in his poem "A Christmas Childhood", evokes a powerful image ....The light between the ricks of hay and straw was a hole in Heaven's gable... Outside the cow-house my mother made the music of milking / The light of her stable-lamp was a star / And the frost of Bethlehem made it twinkle.

Phyllis.