



Ho! Ho! Ho!

This seasonal Santa greeting is going to have a much hollower ring to it this time round than it has had for many a long year. The changed economic climate has already altered the lifestyle of so many over the last few years, that the prospect of the added expense at Christmas is pushing many where they would much rather not go!

The ghost of Christmas' past takes on a whole new meaning too when we think back on 'excesses' of Christmas' past, for adults as well as for children alike. However, it's worth reminding ourselves again that in the midst of all the climate and economic change, the truth of Christmas hasn't altered one bit.

The claim that the Creator God chose 'to dwell in the midst of his people' by being born as one like ourselves is as 'shocking' as it is true. If the first doesn't impact on us, the second probably never will!

The amount of glitz and glam, the expenditure on ribbons and bows – as well as on tinsel, packaging and appearance may well be down in financial terms – but Ireland is more than an economy – it is a society. What's in the heart of a society is essentially far more important than what is in the coffers of an economy.

The truth of what we try to celebrate as Christians each Christmas is that Love is incarnate in human life and to know what that really means is to know the touch of God.

Christmas is rightly a time for genuine celebration of the love that unites us with family and friends. It's a time of wonder before the birth of a child in history, a Christ Child in time. It should be an experience of togetherness that doesn't attempt to give us trite or childish answers – but rather a deep renewed experience of what matters, as opposed to what costs!

Here's wishing all of us in this Parish and the wider community of Cabinteely a wonderful celebration of the love that we've been privileged to share thus far. If Ho, Ho, Ho has a different ring to it this year Holy, Holy, Holy doesn't.

Many Happy Returns

Frs. Arthur, Conor and Tom



Making the connection

Living and working in Dubai, UAE, is a long way from home, but staying connected to the activities and happenings within the parish has never been easier, thanks to the Cabinteely Parish website, but more importantly, the web cam which was recently installed. Being away from home isn't always easy when you are missing family events, such as anniversary masses for loved ones who have passed away, or special occasions. Thanks to the web cam, I am able to watch these masses and events nearly 8,000km away, and feel like I am present with the rest of my family. **AL**

For more see next page

Christmas Mass Times

Check out the leaflet enclosed here or our website for details of all the celebrations over Christmas here in St Brigid's as well as those of our neighbours in Foxrock and Johnstown. We look forward to seeing you around!

Make Contact

Like to get involved or have a story? We'd love to hear from you. Please make contact through the Parish office at **(01) 2858835** or email contact@cabinteelyparish.ie.



A "view" from overseas

Regular churchgoers to St Brigid's will be familiar with the welcome given each week by the celebrant, including in recent years, to those who are linking in via the web. Little did I think, a few short months ago, that I was to become one of those "overseas" participants linking into Cabinteely on the internet.

In September I relocated, for employment reasons, to the Middle East and had to make many adjustments to my lifestyle. Some of these were positive adjustments; it rarely rains and a fill of petrol is less than a fiver. Other adjustments require a greater effort to get used to, like our working week that runs from Saturday to Wednesday, with Thursday and Friday being the weekend, driving on the right, and the language barrier.

There is a very strong adherence to the Muslim culture and all ladies wear the traditional black abayah and headscarf. The few western ladies that live here also wear the abayah when in public but generally do not cover their heads. The local men wear the white thobe and will always cover their heads, usually with the red and white checkered scarf, when in public or at business meetings. Westerners are not obliged to adhere to the customs and dress code but are expected to show respect at all times. For example, shorts are not acceptable in restaurants, or even in the

food halls in shopping malls.

There are six daily prayer times and these are determined by sunrise and sunset. Accordingly they vary during the year, and at the moment the first call is around 5am with the last one being at 6.30pm. All businesses and shops close for prayer with all local employees leaving for worship. While the actual prayer time is only a few minutes, they spend a while in preparation, so the entire event lasts around a half an hour. When the last prayer time finishes the shopping starts in earnest with most stores staying open until around mid-night.

Given the strong observance of Muslim customs the authorities only allow public worship of Islam, so availing of Catholic services is a real challenge. Accordingly, it is great to be able to practice my faith, by tuning into Cabinteely each week on the web cam and participate in the celebration of mass.

We are currently three hours ahead of Ireland so the most suitable service for me is the Saturday vigil that I can pick up at 9.30pm. However, if I'm out on Saturday night I "attend" the Sunday afternoon Taize service that is available here at 7.30pm. Sunday morning services are not practical for me as I'm at work, so I'll have to wait until my next trip home to hear the 12.30 Gospel group.

Locating the site is simple, even for me!!!!!! Just go to www.cabinteelyparish.ie, select the web cam on the home page and you're in. The sound and picture quality are very good, albeit dependent on a reliable internet connection. As the service I most commonly attend is the vigil mass, I particularly enjoy the contribution of the cantors as they lead the congregation in singing the more traditional hymns.

Interestingly, I have found that it can be easier to concentrate on the service when viewing from afar rather than when "sitting in the pew". I'm not sure why this is; perhaps it's because I'm watching on my own that there are fewer distractions. In addition, it helps me keep in touch with the cycle of events in the parish, like the recent Do This in Memory mass that helps children prepare for First Holy Communion. Finally, it's nice to stay in touch with what's going on in the parish by listening to the notices, and, like everyone else, I wonder if the Lotto Jackpot will ever be won!!!!!!

If you know of anyone who may be living away from home (whether or not they were a regular attendee) I would recommend that you pass on the word about the Web Cam facility at St Brigid's. At a time when social networking sites are attracting a lot of negative comment this is a positive example of technology keeping us "in tune" with our faith.



Orla and Michael Neville (centre) celebrate the Baptism of their daughter **Emma** with **Asif Shahab** (Godfather), Emma's big sister, **Anna** and **Orla Shahab** (Godmother).

Paving the way forward

The yellow brick St Brigid's Cross set into the paving of the community meeting space was the finishing touch to a six year programme of refurbishment and renewal undertaken by Fr.Tom.

Older parishioners will remember the narrow side passage leading to the former mortuary chapel (later the parish office) with the fenced off private garden belonging to the Parish House. In August 1993 this path was replaced by the present community meeting area with a re-designed and replanted open garden.

At that time the 45 bus stop was opposite the Church entrance and it was felt that something visual should be incorporated into the design which might



attract the attention of the commuters as they gazed in wonder at this new village garden.

So came about the setting of a St Brigid's Cross into the paving. A gentle reminder perhaps that there is more to the history of a local church and how it might have come to be called after our national saint.

OG

A season of celebration

“Begin as you hope to continue and intend to finish” was always the advice given to those embarking on a new adventure of any kind! Not that the season of Advent is in any way a new venture for anyone, yet it was against the backdrop of similar advice that the season of Advent 2012 began for St Brigid’s on December 1st. As the many photographs of the night in the pastoral centre illustrate, if the season of Advent ends (as it does each year) with a celebration on December 25th, then to begin the season with a bit of a celebration seemed appropriate too.

A festive mood prevailed and seasonal food and drink was enjoyed by all as witnessed by our cameraman, Finbarr Geaney...



Jake (aged 10), **Saffie** (5) and **Jasmin** (8) O’Connell.



Oisín Grey.



Celebrating the strength that is reflected in the voluntary contribution of time, interest and talent of so many people in St Brigid’s, the night was marked with a special mention of two people in particular. Our outgoing chairperson of the Parish Council, **Greg Clarke**, and our retiring Pastoral Worker, **Irene FitzPatrick**, (both pictured here with Fr Arthur) were each presented with a plaque in appreciation of their contribution to ‘Friendship’ and ‘family’, two attributes so important to them and to us.



Dermot Connaughton, Noel and Joan Dillon.



Brendan Henderson and Jim Flavin pulling the not so lucky lotto numbers. Have you tried your luck yet?



A big thank you to **Annette Honan** (centre) for organising the event and to her able assistants, **Siobhán Seligman** and **Jeremy Seligman**.



Red nosed **Liam Ó Lonergáin** lending his festive cheer!



Anne McCarthy, Maria McBride and Kay Kenny.



December saw the return of the popular Christmas Fair fundraiser at St Brigid’s, which was a great success with a variety of stalls including woollen goods, home baking, jewellery, paintings and much more. Pictured are **Aisling Smith** (left) and **Siofra Pratt** displaying their Christmas jumpers, handmade decorations and gifts.



Mother and daughter, **Dearbhla and Saoirse Ní Lonergáin.**

The 'F' Word

Like every other individual and/or grouping in this country, the 'F' word (meaning finance!) is an ever present reality or concern for parishes as well.

Here in St Brigid's, as you can see from the barometer – the shortfall of roughly €300k in relation to our building fund – finds us financially embarrassed! Worse than that, it means our repayments on borrowings are, as you can imagine, a monthly challenge not always easy to meet.

The sole source of income that remains exclusively in the parish and helps to fund this debt (as opposed to the two collections at Mass that are shared with other less well-off parishes) is the "family offering". Whether this be contributed to annually, monthly, weekly or sporadically, it remains entirely for our own parish use.

If this thumb-nail overview in any way serves to remind people, identified or associated with St Brigid's, of the very real need that a parish like ours has for running costs like services, salaries and supplies – it could be mutually beneficial to all of us.

AON



As the jackpot reached a staggering €13,000 this month, Fr Arthur was mighty relieved as it rolled over for another week!

National award for Pixies

Congratulations to Pixies Montessori who have been awarded a Certification of Validation Level 4 on the Siolta Programme, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education, by The Department of Education and Skills. It's the highest level that can be awarded and the achievement was based on their work over two and a half years.

Winning Team

Congratulations to the girls of St Brigid's Girls School Red Squad who won the Coran Austin Finn 1st Division Final in Croke Park recently. They overcame the challenge of Belgrove National School, Castleknock, who were the 2011 winners, and won by 3 points! Well done to all players, mentors and vast number of supporters.

Know your entitlements

A retired Information Officer of the Department of Social Protection will be available in the Pastoral Centres of Johnstown, Cabinteely, Foxrock parishes in the New Year to advise on entitlements.

Advice will also be provided on Schemes available from the Department of Social Protection (previously Social Welfare) as well as assistance in the completion of any Social Welfare Forms, advice on Jobseekers Benefits/Allowance, Illness Benefit/Pensionable and all other Social Welfare Payments.

This is a completely

FREE AND CONFIDENTIAL service.

Times and location from January 7th 2013:

Monday and Friday 10.30a.m to 12.30p.m

Pastoral Centre, Johnstown

Tuesday 10.30a.m to 12.30p.m Pastoral Centre,

Pastoral Centre, Cabinteely

Thursday 10.30a.m – 12.30p.m Pastoral Centre,

Pastoral Centre, Foxrock

So any queries just drop in.



Rachel and David Breslin celebrate the Baptism of their son **Hugo** with Godmother **Clara Brennan** (left) and Hugo's big sisters, **Megan** and **Amy**.

Disclaimer

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From 31st December to 5th January there will be a
Christmas revision course for Leaving Cert students
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