

# dgkk|NEWS

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Deoise na Gaillimhe  
Chill Mac Duach & Chill Fhionnúrach

Diocese of Galway  
Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora

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## A Message from Bishop Brendan

St Patrick's Day, our National Feast, will be upon us very soon. It was just a few days before this day of celebration and parades last year that a regime of severe restrictions and strict regulation of life was imposed upon us. All the St Patrick's Day festivities were cancelled and life as we had known it was suddenly brought to a halt. Covid-19 had arrived, spreading like wildfire, full of threat and danger, and had to be stopped. No other way but stay at home, keep your distance, no gatherings, no school, no church-going. Fear and insecurity stalking the land, isolation our best defence.

We thought it would be brief. The radical 'measures' would soon curb and halt the virus, and we'd be back to 'normal'. But there's been no going back. And St Patrick's Day as we had known it is still cancelled.

Or is it?

When you look at the real man we know as St Patrick, however, you quickly realise he is very much a man and a saint for these times of confinement and restriction.

As a teenager, this young Briton was forcibly taken captive by Irish raiders and brought to this country as a slave, his education disrupted for about six years. "I was almost sixteen at the time and I had not known the true God. I was taken into captivity to Ireland", he tells

*continued on inside back cover...*

## DGKK ISSUE 2 — MARCH 2021

If you would like to submit an article or suggest content for the next issue, tel. 091 563566 or email [info@galwaydiocese.ie](mailto:info@galwaydiocese.ie)



## GALWAY DIOCESAN PASTORAL CENTRE



### Pastoral Outreach News

As we go to 'print' with our second electronic newsletter, we still find ourselves in Covid lockdown. Nearly a year has passed and once again spring is on the horizon, Lent has already begun, and we journey to the great celebration of Easter. In spite of all the upset of the pandemic, the essential parts of our life, especially our life of faith, remain: the Reign of God is still among us.

Whatever our future will be like, and we will have one, it will come about through us, through God working through us. This is the way it has always been, this is the point of us having been created in God's image and likeness. Keep in mind Paul's great phrase in Romans 8.28: "God works with and through those who love him to bring all things to a good end".

Our online pastoral programme continued last autumn with four evenings on the theme "Remain in My Love". We had an online attendance of twenty people from different parts of the diocese. This was followed by helping out with an initiative of the Cathedral parish — a Faith Formation/ RCIA Programme that will run over two years. We also hosted a series of Zoom conferences for our Religious Education secondary school teachers.

In January we started a series on "Praying through God's Word". Originally planned for only four consecutive Tuesday evenings, the participants asked if we could continue with the series on a fortnightly basis until the end of May and so the series continues with over thirty participants.

On Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February we began a series "The Living Word in Lent" — five evenings of reflections on the Passion narrative in Mark's Gospel. Already we have more than 45 people registered for these Zoom evenings.

The outreach team and I were amazed at how quickly people adapted to the Zoom conferences. The series we present are open to all, but if you would like something tailored to your specific parish, just get in touch with us! I would also draw your attention to the online videos on Reconciliation/Communion and Confirmation that are available on our diocesan website: a handy resource for the times in which we live (see <https://www.galwaydiocese.ie/parish-resources>).

*Fr Gerard McCarthy SVD  
Pastoral Outreach Co-ordinator*

### Diocesan Priests' Retreat 2021

Due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, Bishop Brendan has cancelled the annual diocesan priests' retreat at Knock Shrine, which was scheduled for 10<sup>th</sup> to 13<sup>th</sup> May. As an alternative, the diocese will participate in an online retreat facilitated by the Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality, taking place on the same dates, but beginning with an opening conference at 8.00pm on Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May. The online retreat will take place via Zoom. Find information on the Manresa Jesuit Centre of Spirituality at <https://www.manresa.ie>

## WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY 18–25 January 2021

### **‘Abide in my Love and you shall bear much fruit’**

Zoom Gathering to Pray for Christian Unity held on 21 January 2021

These opening weeks of 2021 seem largely dominated by the Covid-19 virus and its impact on people’s lives in many countries world-wide. And yet it was Bishop Brendan Kelly’s desire to see if some prayer service for Christian Unity could be organised and be available to people who might like to join it from their own homes...

The writer of these lines was named late in 2019 as Diocesan Ecumenical Officer by the bishop, and it thus fell to me to ‘sound people out’ first on the phone, to see would there be sufficient interest. And was there! When the prayer service took place on 21 January, from 7.30pm to 8.15pm, there were close to sixty participants at their computers in different locations, and not just in Galway! The viewers included members of the Church of Ireland, the United Methodist/Presbyterian Church, the Coptic Church, the Romanian Orthodox Church, the Lutheran Church, the Society of Friends and the Redeemed Christian Church of God.

Fr Martin Whelan was able to master the technology so that – as well as biblical readings and prayers spoken by different participants – we were all able to enjoy Darina McCarthy’s voice as she sang in the Cathedral with Ray O’Donnell at the organ, both at the start and end of the service, while we also were able to enjoy Choral Voices from St Nicholas’ Collegiate Church, with Mark Duley playing the organ.

Bishop Brendan welcomed viewers at the start and invited all who had logged on to join him and the others in prayer for the unity of Christians. And just before the service concluded, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, Dr Patrick Rooke, held his crozier as he blessed all who had participated.



Fr Thomas McCarthy OP  
Diocesan Ecumenical Officer

### **Conferences for Parish Pastoral Councils**

The Diocese will host two online Zoom conferences for Parish Pastoral Councils, on 24<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> March, from 7:30pm to 9.00pm. Members of Pastoral Councils are invited to join the meeting date that best suits them. Links to the meetings will be circulated via parish office emails. The purpose of the conferences is to offer formation to Pastoral Council members, bring Pastoral Councils together in a spirit of co-operation, and to facilitate dialogue between the diocese and parishes for the sake of our common mission. It is hoped that the conferences will develop into annual pastoral gatherings at a deanery level, when restrictions on physical meetings are lifted. This year’s conferences are facilitated by Fr Gerard McCarthy SVD, Diocesan Pastoral Outreach Co-ordinator.



## Zoom Rosary Prayer Group

“The rosary is the most beautiful and rich in graces of all prayers.” (Pope St Pius X.) What a beautiful gift the Rosary is. I have found the Cathedral Rosary via Zoom such an anchor and strength in these challenging times.



The Cathedral Rosary Zoom Group has been running daily at 7.30pm since Tuesday, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020. My husband John and I were delighted to have been asked to be rosary hosts via Zoom on Monday evenings. We look forward to it very much and feel that it gives us a great start to the week. There are different rosary hosts through the week. Fr Martin Whelan (Galway Diocesan Secretary and curate at Galway Cathedral) very kindly emails us the daily Rosary Zoom link.

My husband and I usually join the Cathedral Rosary Group two to three evenings a week. It is a very relaxed and welcoming group. The rosary takes approximately 25 minutes daily, via Zoom, through the Cathedral Rosary Group. Meetings of up to 40 minutes duration are free using the Zoom platform, so it would be very easy and essentially free of charge should a parish wish to set up an online Rosary Group via Zoom.

In the words of Saint Padre Pio, “the Rosary is the weapon for these times”. If you would like to be part of the Cathedral Rosary Zoom Group just send an email expressing your interest to:

[galwaycathedralrosary@gmail.com](mailto:galwaycathedralrosary@gmail.com)

**Teresa Casserly**

## Accord Marriage Preparation Programme

All Accord Marriage Preparation Programmes (2021) will be virtual interactive programmes until further notice, and can be booked with any centre as they take place via Zoom. Couples must ensure they have downloaded the Zoom app. Bookings can be made through the Accord website: [www.accord.ie](http://www.accord.ie)

The programmes are generally delivered on Saturdays; however some centres deliver them on weekday evenings. Accord Galway runs them on most Saturdays from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Information is provided on the Accord website [www.accord.ie](http://www.accord.ie) when booking.

Once a course has been booked, the course administrators arrange to post the required workbooks to the couple's address/es. They will use the workbook on the day of the course to reflect on their relationship and their future.



Communication in a relationship, dealing with conflict, and the sacrament of marriage, are examples of some of the modules covered during the programme. Usually, two facilitators and the local priest deliver the modules. The couples are requested to complete feedback forms on completion of the programme and return them to the centre's office. Their certificates are then posted to the couple's parish priest by Accord facilitators.

It is advisable to consider booking the Accord Marriage Preparation Programme at least six months in advance, as demand for places is high.

The local Galway Accord Office may be contacted for any information or details on the Marriage Preparation Programme:

Email [galwayaccord@gmail.com](mailto:galwayaccord@gmail.com)  
Tel. 0872733704 / 091 562331



## Safeguarding Children – Online Guidance

### *Guidance when using online audio and web conferencing platforms with parents/guardians and children in a parish/diocesan setting.*

It is diocesan policy that parish/diocesan groups should **never** engage with children under the age of 13 using online audio and web conferencing platforms (e.g. Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.), other than in the presence of a parent/guardian. In all other instances it will be dealt with on a case by case basis, and in all cases the consent of the parent/guardian must be sought.

Where a parish group such as a sacramental preparation group or prayer group wishes to engage with families using these platforms, the following guidance should be adhered to:

- Consent must be sought in writing from children and their parents/guardians for participation in online audio and web conferencing platforms, specific to the meeting/ministry in question.
- Parents/guardians should be informed of the format of the meeting prior to it taking place. This allows them to make an informed decision as to whether they wish to take part or not.
- Parents/guardians must always be visibly present at all meetings with children under 13 years of age.
- Parishes/diocesan agencies should only use parish/diocesan accounts on these platforms. The account should be managed by someone who understands the platform and who is appointed by the priest in charge.
- Church personnel should **never** use a personal account to engage with children or vulnerable persons.
- If for any reason a meeting is infiltrated from the outside, that is, if somebody not invited to the meeting appears, the meeting should be terminated immediately. The breach should be reported to the platform and in the event that the organisers, parents or guardians feel that such a breach poses a threat of harm to or abuse of the children taking part, this should be reported to the Diocesan Director of Safeguarding without delay.
- All leaders should be fully conversant with diocesan safeguarding policy as set out in the *Safeguarding Children Parish Handbook 2017*, and the parents/guardians should be made aware of the diocese's commitment to the safety and welfare of their children.
- Diocesan child protection procedures apply whenever concerns for the safety and welfare of children are identified during these meetings, including reporting concerns to the diocesan and civilian authorities. The diocesan safeguarding policy document is available on the diocesan website, [www.galwaydiocese.ie](http://www.galwaydiocese.ie), under the 'Welcome' tab on the Safeguarding dropdown menu.

All church personnel engaging with children and their parents/guardians using online conference platforms are exercising public ministry and consequently:

- must be Garda vetted by their parish or diocesan agency.
- must have completed appropriate safeguarding training.
- should be competent in the use of whichever platform they are using.

Kevin Duffy  
Diocesan Director of Safeguarding



## Trócaire Lent 2021 Mass Talk

*The speaking notes below are from Caoimhe de Barra, CEO Trócaire. Normally, representatives and volunteers from Trócaire speak at Masses during Lent as part of their Lenten campaign. Obviously this is not possible this year. Caoimhe has written these notes so that priests themselves can deliver the Trócaire message this year. Ideally, this should be done on the fourth Sunday of Lent (14<sup>th</sup> March) as this is the day for the special collection for Trócaire.*

This weekend, our homily is on behalf of Trócaire, our overseas development agency.

Firstly, Trocaire wishes to thank you for the support you give to them each year. Your donations reach thousands of vulnerable communities and families all over the world. This support is critical and it allows Trócaire to continue its work every year. The Lenten period is a time when people recommit their support for their brothers and sisters around the world through Trócaire's Lenten Appeal.

This Lent, Trócaire's Appeal highlights the impact that conflict has on people's lives in South Sudan, and how love, friendship, and solidarity can help them to survive and thrive. Awut and Ajak are two widowed mothers; brave women from South Sudan who are the face of Trócaire's Lenten campaign this year.

Ten years ago, South Sudan became an independent country. The people dreamt of a bright future, but sadly a civil war cut their dream short and people are still wishing for peace.

Awut and Ajak were among the millions of people in South Sudan to lose their homes to the war. They fled their villages with nothing but the clothes on their back, trekking through miles of dangerous bushland with no food or water for themselves or their families. Awut arrived in the community of Malek, frightened, but she was welcomed with loving arms by her new neighbours. They too had little, but what they had they shared. In this remarkable community – where people who had already lost so much to war – Awut found kindness, solidarity and hope.

Awut received such love and kindness from her new neighbours. When Ajak arrived in Malek, Awut knew this was her chance to show that same love and kindness to someone else. She shared what she had with Ajak and her family. Today, Awut and Ajak are best friends. Two women brought together by the horror of war are now living together with love and kindness.

Awut and Ajak are survivors. They are surviving a war, but each day remains a battle: a battle to earn money; a battle to grow food; a battle to pay for their children's school; a battle to survive and thrive. Their lives have been torn apart by a war they never wanted. This is the injustice of war. It is not just that

they lost their homes. It is not just that they struggle each day to survive.

The solidarity and friendship between Awut and Ajak is also an example of exactly what Pope Francis tells us in his recent encyclical, *Fratelli tutti*. At a time of uncertainty and fear, it reminds us to always work together and protect the most vulnerable. These values are exactly why the bishops of Ireland founded Trócaire, and almost 50 years later these values of solidarity and justice have never been more relevant.

The Coronavirus crisis has shown us how small our big world is and we pray for all those affected by the virus in Ireland and around the world. We also pray for all those living through conflict all over the world and we continue to pray for peace in the lives of Awut and Ajak and their families in South Sudan.

Last year, your generosity helped Trócaire to support 2.5 million people in over 20 countries. Everyone in Trocaire is so thankful for your support. This Lent, your support will provide vital help to Awut, Ajak and many more like them as they try to create better futures for their families.

We invite and encourage you to make your donation through the traditional Trócaire box or online at [trocaire.org](http://trocaire.org). You can also log onto the Trócaire website to see their resources for teachers and parishes or to learn more about their campaigns.

I conclude my words with this prayer from Fr James, a priest in South Sudan who is appealing to us to pray for peace in South Sudan and an end to the war:

*As we move through the Lenten time,  
the time when we contemplate Jesus in the desert,  
pray for us, the people of South Sudan,  
and pray for peace here.  
Accompany us, hold our hands,  
hold the hands of the church in South Sudan.  
Hold the hands of our brothers and sisters in South  
Sudan, walk with us during this Lenten time.  
Through Christ our Lord, Amen.*

\* \* \*

Parish priests should advise parishioners how they can safely collect a Trócaire box, e.g. from the church porch. Donations to the Lent campaign can also be made online at [trocaire.org](http://trocaire.org)

**LENT  
2021**

A Resource for  
Parishes Exploring  
the Impact of  
Conflict on Families  
in South Sudan

**Trócaire Lenten Campaign Resources**

*Information from Colm Hogan, Trócaire Church  
Outreach Officer:*

“Trócaire has created an array of online resources for parishes as part of their 2021 Lenten campaign. All material

can be found at: <https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/working-in-ireland/parishes/resources/>

The resources include PowerPoint presentations, homily notes, reflections for stations of the cross, and videos. The material can be used in any way by your parish or school as you deem appropriate. The resources capture the reality facing so many people in South Sudan, Somalia, and beyond. The CEO of Trócaire, Caoimhe de Barra, raises the issue of vaccine equity following the passionate calls from Dr Mike Ryan of the WHO. All material can be uploaded onto your websites.”

**Pray for the people of Ethiopia**

The diocese enjoys links with Tigray, Ethiopia, through Fr Teum Berhe who worked as a priest at Galway Cathedral in 2015. A civil conflict broke out between the province of Tigray and the Ethiopian Federal Government on 3 November 2020. Since then all communications into and out of Tigray have been cut. At the moment, the conflict has largely come to an end, but the communication systems have not been restored. We have learned indirectly through aid workers that Fr Teum is alive. However, main-stream media outlets have reported that thousands of people have lost their lives during the conflict. Fr Teum asks that we keep the people of Ethiopia in our prayers.



## Tombura-Yambio, South Sudan

**Bernard Tansey, an engineer who lives in Salthill, shares his experience of volunteering in South Sudan.**

*Bernard's volunteer work with CDTY is carried out through The Nazareth Trust, A Charities Aid Foundation Trust No.268369, 1 Railshead Road, St Margarets, Old Isleworth, TW7 7EP, United Kingdom.*

The Catholic Diocese of Tombura-Yambio (CDTY) is in South Sudan. CDTY is just short of the size of the island of Ireland and its population is around 800,000 to 1,000,000. The diocese includes Ave Maria parish which is located at Rio Yubu on the border with the Central African Republic and near the geographic centre of the Africa. The mission was established by the Comboni Fathers in the 1920s and run by the Order until it was driven out in the early 1960s following the independence of Sudan.



The Ave Maria parish church, which was built in 1928 with bricks and clay mortar, is currently being restored. The local vocational school, which teaches basic trades to the youth, is playing a big part in the restoration of the church under the supervision of two Kenyan instructors as a demonstration project.

A far more ambitious project in the diocese is HASTY (acronym for Humanitarian Air Service in the Diocese of Tombura-Yambio). This project, in Yambio, the diocesan centre involves the purchase of an

aircraft, building of a hangar and fuel depot, and the training of two diocesan priests as both pilots and maintenance technicians.



The photographs I took show the the Central African Highway, which runs from Juba, capital of South Sudan, to Yambio, then to Tombura and onto the Central African Republic. They demonstrate the poor condition of the highway and the absolute need for the HASTY service. I might add that during my most recent visit to CDTY in December 2017, the Bishop's 4x4 got stuck in a water-filled pothole. The Bishop's driver and I had to walk the final 25km through the equatorial forest in the dead of night, with only a flash-lamp to guide our way to avoid stepping off the hard edge into water-filled ruts. The sounds of the forest and native drum-beats were matched by the continual recitation of the Holy Rosary for our Blessed Mother's protection. The walk took three hours, finishing at 1:00am. The entire bone-shaking journey from Juba to Ave Maria parish took twelve hours even though the total distance was only 170Km.

Bernard Tansey



## A Note from Tom Hansberry

### Diocesan Financial Administrator & Property Manager



We held our annual Parish Finance Committee Workshops on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> and Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February, delivered online via live webinar. There was a very strong attendance from across the diocese over the two sessions

and the feedback has been very positive. We will continue to review and amend the content of these annual sessions based upon this feedback, as we want the sessions to provide the level of information, support, and guidance that is most beneficial to the Parish Finance Committees.

While we continue to deal with the impact of Covid-19 and the restrictions in place, it has been most encouraging over the past twelve months to witness the ability of parishes to adjust to the circumstances and continue to meet the needs of their community, from initially moving to online Masses and streaming services through to the extraordinary local volunteer efforts required to allow the safe return to public masses when restrictions were lifted last summer and again at Christmas. The introduction of an online donations facility for all of our parishes was another significant innovation during the year. The facility, which is

operated by iDonate, allows parishioners to make an online contribution to their parish and has proven very popular since being introduced last April. The facility is accessible through your local parish website or via the main diocesan website, [www.galwaydiocese.ie](http://www.galwaydiocese.ie)

Another very encouraging aspect of the past year has been the solidarity shown by our parishes in terms of sharing information, ideas, resources and general support across the diocese. It has certainly played an important role in allowing all of our clergy, parish staff and volunteers to adapt and maintain an active and vibrant parish, despite the extraordinary circumstances.

As we look forward for the year ahead, one of the key tasks for all of our parishes at this time is the preparation and return of their 2020 parish accounts. The timely submission of the accounts is particularly critical this year, given the substantial changes in financial circumstances over the past twelve months. With a submission deadline of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021, it is expected that we will have a preliminary assessment of the overall impact on finances by late March, which in turn will inform general budget preparations for the year ahead. It will also allow the diocesan office to understand where any guidance and technical support may be required in our parishes, to ensure supports are delivered where most needed.



Digital Hub from the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference seeks to assist parishes and ministries in the creation and management of website and social media content.

The resources available are from current best practice in the Church across Ireland: a mixture of guidelines and principles for engaging on the digital highways, an overview of digital media platforms to assist in understanding how to best use them in a faith context, and an A-Z of technology terms. The Digital Hub includes videos, interviews and podcasts; short 'how to' videos and podcasts including interviews with experienced practitioners.

Find Digital Hub at [www.catholicbishops.ie/digitalhub](http://www.catholicbishops.ie/digitalhub)



## Online Conference for Second Level Religion Teachers

In February, the diocese hosted its second conference for religious education teachers working within the diocese. Given the ongoing Covid-19 restrictions, the February conference took the form of three talks streamed via Zoom over three consecutive Thursday evenings. The three contributors were Dr Gareth Byrne, Dr Amalee Meehan, and Dr Justin Harkin. Gareth and Amalee both lecture in religious education at DCU Institute of Education. Justin is the Religious Education Advisor for the Diocese of Elphin.

Gareth spoke on the new Junior Cycle programme for religious education in second level schools. He explained how the new programme seeks to facilitate the holistic development of students through personal engagement with the gospel, and helps students to identify principles of moral behavior and spirituality.

Amalee explored how religious education is an important source for developing well-being in

students. The Department of Education (DES) has made well-being one of the core principles for second-level education. Well-being is seen as the basis for physical, mental, emotional, and social resilience. DES recognizes and promotes religious education (RE) as a major contributor towards students' well-being. This gives RE, and chaplaincy services, a very strong position in Irish schools.

Justin discussed fostering faith identity among Junior Cycle students. RE is not just learning about religion: it is also about helping students find their religious identity in accordance with their religious tradition or background. Therefore RE is more than the communication of information. It is a profoundly pastoral subject where teachers help their students to grow spiritually, ethically, and emotionally.

*The next diocesan conference for RE teachers will take place in September.*

## St Mary's College

Mass will be celebrated by Bishop Brendan Kelly on Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to mark the close of the academic year at St Mary's College. St Mary's College was founded in 1912 and has always been regarded as a flagship of the diocese. This liturgy will be particularly poignant as it will also mark the transition from St Mary's College to Coláiste Muire Máthair, the amalgamation of St Mary's and Our Lady's colleges. The exact details for the Mass have yet to be arranged, but the liturgy will try to engage as many participants as possible, with special consideration for past associates of the college. Further celebrations will be organised to mark the official opening of Coláiste Muire Máthair.

## Coláiste Muire Máthair



Betty Hernon has been appointed as principal of Coláiste Muire Máthair. Following her graduation from St Angela's College, Sligo, Betty began her educational career as a home economics teacher. Betty was a staff member of Coláiste Éinde for thirty years, with various roles, the last nine as deputy principal. A strong educational professional, Betty is dedicated and committed to the education of young people. An active member of her local community, she brings her leadership and management skills to her current role as chairperson of Galway Ladies' Gaelic Football Association. A lover of nature, Betty enjoys year-long swimming, and walking in the beautiful landscape that West Galway offers.



## Linking with our Schools



In Moycullen, we the priests of the parish endeavour to keep in touch with our four local schools during the Covid-19 restrictions. It's so important that we touch base with our young people, especially those who are to receive the sacraments this year.

Initially our involvement began with a monthly Mass for each of the schools on Friday mornings. We were able to chat to the individual schools and pray with them as the teachers joined on our webcam. Prior to the school's Mass, the teachers would chat with the pupils and sent the children's intentions and prayers to us. We then referred to the particular school's prayers during the Mass. For the First Communion and Confirmation classes we would chat to them via

webcam from the church during their religion class. The teachers facilitated questions and answers by sending us WhatsApp messages, and we'd answer the children while focusing on the religion programme. All of this was done while the children were attending school in person.

A step further: using Zoom, WebEx, and Teams formats. When the schools were closed we sought and received permission from principals and parents to join in on their Zoom classes for a 10-minute slot. This was a very positive development because we could interact with the pupils and teachers. It was very simple to manage. We received an invite via email from the teachers, who would send us a link to whatever platform they were using online. By clicking on the link, we were available to see and chat to the pupils. The applications that facilitate this interaction can be downloaded on to a computer, phone or tablet. It is a wonderful medium to chat to our pupils, because when you think of it, they haven't been able to interact with us and go Mass regularly in the past year. I wish every blessing on our pupils, teachers, Boards of Management and ancillary staff during these difficult times.

*Fr Michael McLoughlin PP, Moycullen Parish*

## REPP

A Resource for Religious Education Post Primary Teachers



This exciting new online platform has been created for teachers in the Diocese of Galway, Kilmacduagh & Kilfenora in partnership with our IT team, Tela Design Ltd.\* The platform provides a forum for teachers to share with each other resources in various formats which might be useful for their teaching work: text documents, pdfs, videos, audio, links, etc. There is also a chat forum, where messages, requests or ideas can be posted for members to see and respond to.

REPP is open to all second-level religious education teachers: see [repp.galwaydiocese.ie](http://repp.galwaydiocese.ie)

*\*Tela Design is a micro-company run by Darina McCarthy and Ray O'Donnell, who are already well known to parishes when wearing their administrative and music hats. Tela Design's bespoke software clients include Galway Technical Institute and Galway Flying Club. They created our new diocesan website during the first lockdown last year.*

## The Restored Organ of St Colman's Church, Gort



The organ-builder William Telford (1809–1885) was born in Warwickshire, England, from where his family relocated to Dublin in 1825. He possibly learned the craft of organ-building from one of the local builders active in Dublin at the time; in any case, he established his own organ- and piano-building business in 1830, moving in 1837 to what became its permanent home at 109 St Stephen's Green.

The decades following Catholic Emancipation saw a surge of church-building all over Ireland, accompanied by a corresponding need for new organs. The quality of Telford's work and the tonal colour and beauty of his pipes ensured that his instruments were in high demand, and by 1847 (when his young brother Henry joined the firm, which then became Telford & Telford) he had built more than 100 organs. By the time William died in 1885, the company had provided organs for cathedrals, churches and convents all over the country, not to mention instruments built for England, Australia and New Zealand.

The Telford & Telford organ in St Colman's Church, Gort, was built in the mid-1880s. There is some evidence that it might originally have been designed for a different building and subsequently moved to Gort; be that as it may, it was installed in St Colman's Church in 1886, where it has served the liturgy faithfully ever since. The instrument's solid construction has ensured that, 135 years later, its fundamentals – such as the winding and action – are sound, and there is every reason for it to continue operating reliably well into the future. Time, however, has been less kind to the pipes: an accumulation of dust and dirt, coupled with some less-than-sympathetic recent work, resulted in their musical quality diminishing to the point where they were producing a travesty of their original musical excellence.

To address this problem, Irish organ-builder Trevor Crowe was engaged to restore the organ. Trevor may fairly be described as the pre-eminent organ-builder in Ireland. His large symphonic instruments, such as those in Galway Cathedral, St Fin Barre's Cathedral in Cork and St Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny, are internationally-acknowledged examples of the pinnacle of the organ-builder's craft. All his organs – whatever their size – boast unparalleled artistic quality, complete mechanical reliability and keen attention to the specific musical and liturgical requirements of the buildings and their communities. Over the summer of 2020, Trevor cleaned, repaired and revoiced all of the pipes in St Colman's organ. Those which had been damaged beyond repair he replaced with good-quality contemporaneous pipes, voiced to fit into the ensemble. The electric blower, which was reaching the end of its life, was replaced with a new one. The nineteenth-century pedal-board was restored and refitted in a position more in keeping with modern international standards, allowing visiting organists to feel more immediately confident when playing it. The key-action was adjusted to make it easier to play, and new tuning slides were fitted to all the pipes.

The fruits of this work are immediately obvious. Even at its softest, the organ now has a real presence in the body of the church, a presence which was previously lacking. For a small instrument, it offers



a surprisingly large range of tonal colour, and each individual colour has been lovingly restored to speak at its best within the superb acoustic of the church. The different sounds may stand alone, asserting their character and individuality, or they may be blended into a variety of ensembles. The result is a versatile

organ of great beauty, of which the parish community may feel deservedly proud. Given a minimum of ongoing maintenance, it should continue to serve the community in a variety of roles for many decades – if not centuries – to come.

*Raymond O'Donnell, Galway Cathedral*



### Fr Tommy Marrinan & Fr Michael King:

*“The organ is as old as the church itself, having being installed in 1886. It has embellished our liturgies for many, many years, and was played on the occasion of Cardinal Seán Brady’s visit to Gort in 2010.*

*We are indebted to the great organists who have played over the years. One in particular deserves a special mention: Mr Byron Davies, who used to play the organ for many years in Lourdes. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the organists who enriched our liturgies over the years.*

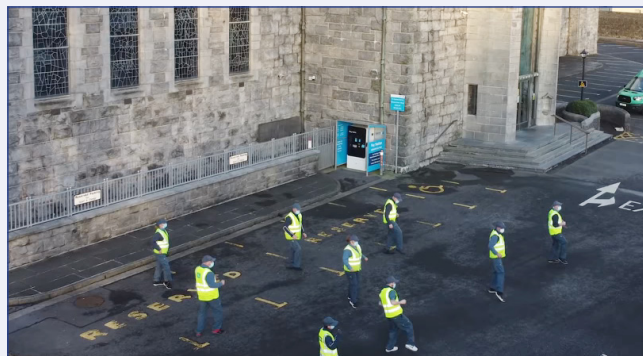
*We would also like to thank the restoration committee members and Mr Ray O'Donnell of Galway Cathedral for their initiation of the restoration of our organ. A special word of thanks to our benefactors who have helped progress this project to date – and if anyone would like to contribute to the restoration, they can still do so.*

*Finally, thanks to Mr Trevor Crowe who restored the organ so skilfully. May God bless all involved and may it enrich many ceremonies in the future.*

*When brighter days come, we hope to have a blessing of the newly-restored organ by Bishop Brendan Kelly.”*

## The Jerusalema Challenge!

The South African pop song ‘Jerusalema’ has taken the world by storm in recent months with various groups posting dance routines set to its music on Youtube in order to cheer people up during the Covid lockdown. The first group in Ireland to take up the ‘Jerusalema Challenge’ was An Garda Síochána, who posted a video of their dance routine at the start of February. Since then countless groups across the county have shared their versions. Two groups in Galway city, employees of Corrib Oil and An Post, have posted their routines on YouTube with Galway Cathedral as the backdrop.





## Patris corde – The Year of St Joseph 2021

Pope Francis inaugurated the Year of St Joseph on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2020 with the apostolic letter, *Patris corde*. The Year of St Joseph marks the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St Joseph being declared the patron of the Church by Pius IX in 1870. It will conclude on 8 December 2021.

If this anniversary had occurred in any other year, both the consecration and letter might have gone unnoticed. However, the ongoing Covid-19 crisis has pressed the pause button on the whole world, and we find ourselves in desperate need of modern Josephs, people who look after their families while working calmly in the background.

*Patris corde* is essentially a meditation on the spirituality of fatherhood.

*Patris corde* ('with a father's heart') was how Joseph loved and cared for Mary and Jesus. But what is it to have a father's heart? Francis draws upon the very few scriptural references to St Joseph in order to propose him as an icon for our times. Joseph is the one who had to sacrifice his own plans for the future. He is the one who accepted a crisis, changed his life, and looked after those who were dependent upon him. Joseph is "the man who goes unnoticed, a daily, discreet and hidden presence – an intercessor, a support and a guide in times of trouble."

Joseph's world was turned upside down when he discovered that his fiancée was pregnant, and he was not the father. Francis says that when our expectations are shattered, "our first reaction is frequently one of disappointment and rebellion.

Joseph set aside his own ideas in order to accept the course of events and embrace them." Joseph is the standard for being a father; a protector and guide in times of crisis. He embraces the responsibility of fatherhood because he had "reconciled [himself] with [his] own history."

Francis encourages us to reconcile ourselves with our personal histories, and not to be ashamed of them, no matter how painful or dysfunctional they may be. It is only



when we do this that we begin to possess a father's heart, *cor patris*, a heart that is compassionate, brave, and loving. The world is in desperate need of fathers; be they men or women, without or without children. "Every child is the bearer of a unique mystery that can only be brought to light with the help of a father who respects that child's freedom." Joseph shows us how to protect the weak, guide the lost, and to live selflessly.

Fr Martin Whelan  
Galway Cathedral

## Bishop Brendan's Message continued...

us in the extraordinary (and unique for its time) memoir he wrote towards the end of his life, known as his *Confession*. Captivity for Patrick, no more than the confinement of Covid today, was anything but a bed of roses: "I was like a stone lying in the deep mud" is his graphic way of describing it. But then, with the wisdom of years, he goes on: "He who is mighty came and in his mercy he not only lifted me out but lifted me up and placed me at the very top of the wall". And significantly for us he continues: "I cannot be silent then, nor should I, about the great benefits and grace that the Lord saw fit to confer on me in the land of my captivity".

In the isolation and loneliness of his enslavement in a foreign country, out "tending herds every day", this son of a prosperous Roman/British family who had by his own admission "turned away from God", began to pray. "I used to pray many times during the day. More and more, the love of God and reverence for him came to me. My faith increased and the spirit was stirred up so that in the course of a single day I would say as many as a hundred prayers and almost as many in the night. This I did even when I was staying in the woods and on the mountain. Before dawn I used to be roused up to pray in snow or frost or rain ... the spirit was burning within me".

In the heavily restricted and isolated life to which he was condemned in Ireland, the young Patrick rediscovered prayer, faith, and hope to such a degree that all he wanted after his escape was to come back to his pagan captors and tell them about the God and the faith of Jesus Christ that he had re-discovered amongst them as a slave. Patrick thus became the

great missionary and patron saint of the Irish people. The long and difficult disruption to his youthful education did not at all in the end come between him and his calling in life. In fact it rather clarified and enabled him to find and marvellously fulfil that calling.

There can be no better way of celebrating the Feast of St Patrick than to quietly listen with our hearts to the man himself, and to what he continues to tell us in our generation – and particularly in these times of isolation and confinement. St Patrick is best and most appropriately celebrated by doing as he did in times of radical limitation and confinement: turning to God with all our heart in prayer, and soaking up the love and mercy with which He is invariably awaiting us.

*Beannachtaí Padraig Naofa go raibh orainn ar fad, sa mbaile agus i gcéin, agus ar ár dtír i mbliain seo ár dTiarna 2021.*

✠ *Brendan*



Wall mosaic in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

[www.galwaydiocese.ie](http://www.galwaydiocese.ie)

Check the diocesan website regularly to stay up to date with news, events and resources!



# COPE Galway

*Let's help together*

COPE Galway is a local charity with a vision of an improved quality of life, in a home of their own, for people affected by homelessness, women and children experiencing domestic abuse, and older people. We work together with community partners, groups, businesses and individuals, to help some of the most vulnerable and isolated men, women and children in Galway.

Homeless Services for individuals and families — Domestic Abuse Service for women and children — Senior Support Services for older people in need of support

Advocating on behalf of our clients is a key aspect of what we do. COPE Galway advocates for policy and social change on across a range of issues at local and national levels, including improved access to housing and accommodation, access to benefits and entitlements, and contributing towards debate and dialogue.

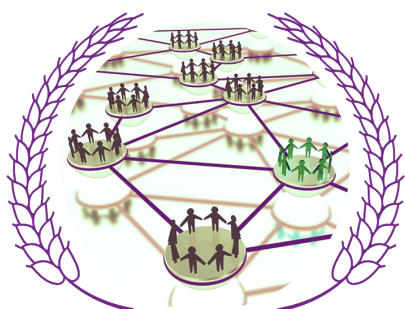
Visit [www.copegalway.ie](http://www.copegalway.ie)



The national Age Friendly Ireland Programme supports cities, counties and towns across Ireland to prepare for the rapid ageing of our population by paying increased attention to the environmental, economic and social factors that influence the health and well-being of older adults.



<https://agefriendlyireland.ie/>



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[www.galwaydiocese.ie](http://www.galwaydiocese.ie)

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