



## PARISH NEWSLETTER

22nd December 2020.

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### Parish Finances

Our Group of Parishes is really struggling as we approach the end of this year. There has been virtually no income from the tours of St Michan's or the shop and these two combined would normally generate in the region of €100,000. Coupled with this, there have been no church collections which compounds the matter.

Those of you who are on the envelope scheme I know have been keeping your donations going even though not in church and this is most helpful. I am now asking parishioners (and friends) to consider setting up a Standing Order or Direct Debit on a monthly basis as this will help our cash flow in the early part of 2021. Details of our bank account and IBAN is given below.\*

Some of you who have not been affected financially by the current pandemic might consider a one-off donation to parish funds or the Special Fund (which assists those who are less fortunate than most of us). Any donation can be sent directly to me at (The Vicarage, 30 Phibsborough Road, D07 Y9T3) or the parish office (St Michan's Church, Church Street, Dublin 7). All donations will be acknowledged, and receipts given.

**ALL SAINTS':** The boiler in All Saints' Church has finally given up the ghost and is irreparable. A new boiler has been ordered and the cost of purchasing this industrial unit together with labour and fitting is in excess of €20,000. This will make a huge hole in our already depleted funds so parishioners might wish to make this project a priority if you plan to donate to the parish.

Of course, I fully realise that this time of year can be a financial drain on many households so please do not feel under any pressure to donate.

2020 is almost gone and we look forward to a brighter and safer 2021. It has been a tough year for so many people and I wish to reassure you all of my continued prayers. On behalf of Denise and myself, I wish you all a very happy, holy and peaceful Christmas and a hope filled New Year.

God Bless

*David*

**\*Parish IBAN: IE91 AIBK 9322 0500 163078**

## Thanks to parish workers

I wish to say a special thank you to Patricia Parfrey in our parish office who despite travel restrictions has kept the office going, paying our bills, organising various things, publishing the Newsletter and generally being available to Ross and myself when needed.

Thanks also go to Peter Condell, who, although not working in his usual role as tour guide, has been maintaining the grounds and the church in St Michan's along with Shane who continues to work a few hours each week.

Thanks also to Fran Gorman who has kept the grounds in All Saints so well maintained and to Denise McGowan for the graveyard in St Werburgh's.

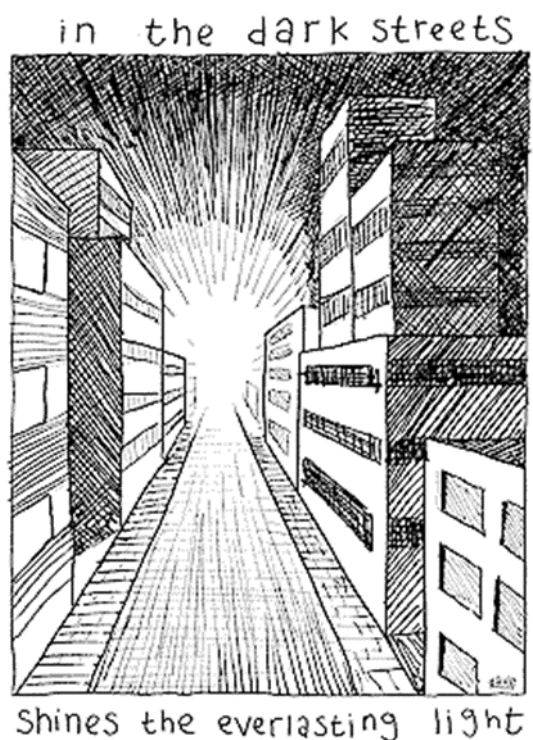
### *David*

It is commonly said that time flies by when you are having fun, which is perhaps why 2020 has seemed so long! Nevertheless, I cannot believe that this will be my fourth Christmas as curate assistant for the Christ Church Cathedral group of parishes, and our fourth Christmas in 32 Shandon Drive! The past year has been a difficult one for all of us and truly if there was ever a year that we deserve a peaceful and happy Christmas, this is it. Advent and Christmas are a time of hope and expectation and the New Year brings renewal and a new start. Hopefully 2021 will bring a more settled and a happier year for all. 2021 will certainly bring change for us as a family, as we move to the parishes of Newcastle, Newtownmountkennedy and Calary.

We are looking forward to this new chapter in our lives but we will be sad to leave the Christ Church Cathedral group of parishes. We will always be eternally grateful for the warmth and welcome that you have all shown us over the last three years and you will always be in our hearts and prayers. Ava, Ben, Fiona and I would like to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy and peaceful New Year.

God bless,

**Ross**



**Even in the darkest years, the light of the world  
shines bright**

## The history and origins of popular Christmas carols

### **The Coventry Carol**

The origins of the Coventry Carol as we know it today are somewhat hazy. It is not really a Christmas carol as it more usually associated with the feast of the Holy Innocents on 28<sup>th</sup> December, when we commemorate the slaughter by King Herod of the young children in Bethlehem. The carol was traditionally performed in Coventry in England as the second of 3 songs in a mystery play that goes back to the 15<sup>th</sup> century called *The Pageant of the Shearmen and Tailors*. The play depicts the Christmas story from chapter two in the Gospel of Matthew and takes the form of a lullaby sung by mothers of the doomed children. Another interpretation has it as Mary's lament for the future fate of her new born Son. The song's haunting sorrowful melody could not be described as festive, but perhaps its purpose is to help us to reflect on the deeper meanings of Christmas. The lyrics known today are attributed to Robert Croo 1534 (based on early 19<sup>th</sup> century copies of a manuscript that was destroyed in 1879), and the music to an unknown composer in 1591.

There are some lovely versions of this carol available. Three that I particularly like are sung by Anúna, Annie Lennox, and by Alison Moyet. All 3 versions are available on YouTube at the following links.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wit-jGD4wCw&list=LL7NciqvKfYn6sqDgP2NkZDQ&index=2254> (Anuna)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ONuNrpahj7g> (Annie Lennox)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MDCnHJ5QqK4> (Alison Moyet)

### **The Coventry Carol.**

Lully, lullay, thou little tiny child,  
Bye bye, lully, lullay.  
Lully, lullay, thou little tiny child,  
Bye bye, lully, lullay.

O sisters too, how may we do  
For to preserve this day  
This poor youngling for whom we sing,  
"Bye bye, lully, lullay"?

Herod the king, in his raging,  
Chargèd he hath this day  
His men of might in his own sight  
All young children to slay.

That woe is me, poor child, for thee  
And ever mourn and may  
For thy parting neither say nor sing,  
"Bye bye, lully, lullay."

As Christmas approaches the airwaves will be flooded with 'Christmas music' for those of you who find the somewhat endless repetition of The Best Christmas Songs in the World ever.... to grate a bit on the ears can I suggest the following albums as an easier listening alternative.

Christmas with Anúna ([WWW.ANUNA.IE](http://WWW.ANUNA.IE) ,2010)  
A Tapestry of Carols, Maddy Prior with the Carnival Band (Saydisc records, 1987)  
Carols from the Old and New Worlds (HarmoniaMundi, 1994)  
Medieval Carols, Oxford Camerata (Naxos, 1992)

### **We Three Kings.**

'We Three Kings' is one of my favourite Christmas carols. It was written in 1857 by John Henry Hopkins Jr, for a Christmas pageant at the General Theological College in New York during his final year as music teacher there. Hopkins was the eldest son of immigrant parents. His mother was from Hamburg and his father from Dublin. He was ordained a priest in 1872. He was rector of Trinity Church, Plattsburg, New York, from 1876 to 1887 and died in 1891.

But have you ever wondered who these three kings were? Where did they come from and what happened to them after their visit to Jesus? The bible doesn't tell us much about them, not even their names and there is no evidence that they were actually kings. They are only mentioned once in St. Matthew's Gospel (2:1-12). The phrase "from the east", is the only information Matthew provides about the region from which they came. This may suggest that they came from somewhere within the Parthian Empire which stretched from Syria to the borders of India. Although other traditions suggest that they came from Turkey, Ethiopia and Yemen.

The names Balthazar, Caspar and Melchior come from an Armenian tradition naming the Magi as Balthasar of Arabia, Melchior of Persia, and Gaspar of India. The idea that they were kings probably originates with the Old Testament prophecies in Isaiah and in the Psalms that have Jesus being worshipped by kings. Bible scholars tell us that they were educated and upright men of integrity, possibly

philosophers or counsellors. Whatever their names, origins or status there is no doubt that they were moved by the Spirit to make the long and arduous journey to Bethlehem to visit the new born Messiah on that first Christmas long ago. So give them a thought as you sing John Hopkins' lovely carol this Christmas.

There are lots of recordings of this carol available on YouTube. The links below will take you to 2 very nice versions.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lx35\\_DRIZ8g](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lx35_DRIZ8g)  
(Kings College, Cambridge).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HDqTL49OwDA> (Clamavi De Profundis)

Finally if you would like to listen to a nice medley of carols check out this link.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=04XF4zzFGB4&list=RDHDqTL49OwDA&index=2>

**Paul Dawson.**



Some scholars believe that the name *holly* is derived from the word *holy*. The famous 16th century botanist, William Turner, referred to holly as the “Holy Tree.” It is also called “Christ’s Thorn” throughout various parts of Europe. Other scholars maintain however that the word *holly* can trace its roots to an Indo-European word meaning “prickly”.

Regardless of the origin of the name, Christians have long identified a wealth of symbolism in the form of holly, adapting a tradition of using holly to decorate their homes that dates back thousands of years. The sharpness of the leaves help to recall the crown of thorns worn by Jesus; the red berries serve as a reminder of the drops of blood that were shed for salvation, and the shape of the leaves, which resemble flames, can serve to reveal God’s burning love for his people. Combined with the fact that holly maintains its bright colours during the Christmas season, evergreen and vibrant in a time of darkness and cold, it seems only natural that people continue to use this lovely plant to decorate their homes at Christmas.



The robin is a familiar symbol of Christmas, often found on Christmas cards. Yet why do we associate the Robin with Christmas?

The Robin is a tough little bird, which is often seen looking for food in the coldest winter weather, when many other birds have sought out warmer climes, but this is not the reason for its Christmas association. To discover the link between Robins and Christmas, it is necessary to go back to the 1880’s, when the postmen of the Royal Mail wore bright red uniforms and were nicknamed “robins” after the familiar red-breasted bird.

At Christmas, in an age before phones or other modern communication, people eagerly awaited the arrival of cards from loved ones far and wide – delivered by the “robins.” Artists often illustrated Christmas cards with the delivery of letters and one artist decided to draw an actual robin, instead of its human namesake, with a card in its beak. The idea caught on so quickly that the robin became a symbol of Christmas in its own right which has stayed with us through to the present day.



# Recipes

## Gingerbread (Fiona Styles)

### Ingredients

- 250g/8oz Cream Plain Flour
  - 75g/3oz Butter, softened
  - 75g/3oz Light Muscovado Sugar
  - ½ teaspoon Bread Soda
  - 50g/2oz Golden Syrup
  - 1 Egg Yolk
  - ½ teaspoon Ground Cinnamon
  - ½ teaspoon Ground Ginger
- Cookie cutters (any shapes, gingerbread people etc...)



### Optional for decorating

- Icing Pens
- Melted Chocolate (optional)

### Method

1. Preheat oven to 180°C/350°F/Gas 4.
2. Cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy.
3. Add bread soda, golden syrup and egg yolk and stir well.
4. Sift the flour and spices into the bowl and mix with a wooden spoon until well combined.
5. Shape into a ball and knead lightly on a work surface until smooth. Wrap and chill for about 30 minutes before using.
6. Thinly roll out dough and use gingerbread cutters to cut out shapes. Place on lightly greased baking sheets, leaving a space between each.
7. Bake for about 10-12 minutes. Transfer to a wire tray to cool.

When completely cool, decorate if desired.



## **Vicar's gingerbread men**

How to make about 25 gingerbread men!

### **Ingredients:**

360 g of plain flour

1 teaspoon bicarbonate of soda

2 -3 teaspoons of ginger powder

180 g of butter (preferably not too hard)

175 g of light brown sugar (or castor sugar)

1 large egg

4 tablespoons of golden syrup

Mix the flour, bicarbonate of soda and ginger together, then add the butter and finally the sugar.

When the mixture becomes a paste, tip this out and knead for about 30 seconds then wrap the dough in cling film and place in the fridge for about an hour.

Pre-heat the oven to 160c fan oven/ gas 4.

Put some grease - proof paper on two baking trays.

Roll out the dough and shape (with cutters if available). The dough should be about 3 mm thick. This will give the gingerbread men (or any shape you choose) a nice crispy finish.

Bake in oven for 10 mins. Leave to cool and then enjoy.

### COVID-19 Guidelines for Attending Worship

In line with government and HSE guidelines, we must ask you to comply with the following:

1. Please do not attend the service if you or any member of your household is feeling unwell, or if you have been in contact with anyone in the past 14 days who has displayed symptoms of COVID-19 or who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, or who is awaiting a COVID-19 test.
2. Please do not attend the service if you or a member of your household has travelled from overseas in the past 14 days, unless you/they have had a COVID-19 test since arriving, the result of which has been negative.
3. Please wear a face covering.
4. Please sanitise your hands as you enter and leave the church.
5. Please leave your contact details for the purposes of contact tracing in the boxes provided.
6. Please only sit where indicated.
7. Please follow the directions of the churchwardens.



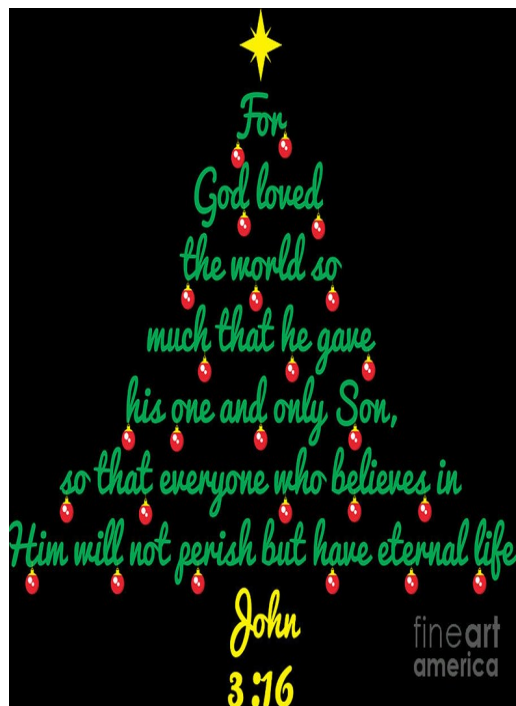




Prayers that we can say together at home:

Lord Jesus Christ,  
your birth at Bethlehem  
draws us to kneel in wonder at heaven touching earth:  
to the presence of the divine in our world  
accept our heartfelt and everlasting praise  
as we worship you,  
the light of our world.

Amen





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United Dioceses of Dublin & Glendalough***

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17<sup>th</sup> December 2020

Dear Friends

Christmas is now upon us. It has been a very long year and probably, like me, in the month of April or May you wondered if we would ever reach this point when 2020 would begin to turn to 2021. We have all been through a lot. Some of us have been through a lot more than others. Our shared experience has been something none of us could ever have predicted. It has been a script that none of us could ever have written. Both bad and good things have happened in all aspects of life today. There has been more fear and sorrow than laughter and joy.

But – Christmas is now upon us. I want to wish you a Happy Christmas. I want you to enjoy this Christmas, however different it is from any Christmas you have previously known. I want to thank all of you for keeping going, for doing the regular things well and for doing the extra things well. With good grace and willing hearts, clergy and people right across the United Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough have moved quickly to adapt and also to develop new ways of giving voice to the life of the community of which you are part. On all of this substantial achievement, in its variety and in its compassion, I wish to thank you. You have had to cope with a very sudden closure of churches, then a re-opening and then a renewed closure and another re-opening, all in accordance with Public Health Guidelines. In all of this, you have been very patient and extremely careful – careful of others and of yourselves – making yourselves ready for all eventualities. You have kept the life of the church and its churches going. In so many ways, this time, while unimaginable in itself, has also given us a new sense of appreciation for the church we love and the church to which we belong. Never again will we take it for granted. And we have also seen the church come to meet us in new ways. Once again, I want to thank everyone for this magnificent individual and group effort aided and assisted by the staff in The Diocesan Office.

We are not there yet. We are asked constantly to be vigilant and constantly to avoid unnecessary movement and contacts with other people. We continue to rely heavily on those who form the front line, as that front line keeps expanding and deepening. Healthcare workers, retail workers, everyone associated with teaching and learning, all those associated with the production of food, everyone involved in transport and security – the list is only beginning. I also want to include in this list you who have sustained the life of your households throughout this time.

But – Christmas is now upon us. I shall not delay you further but shall say simply: Happy Christmas to everyone.

Yours sincerely

+ Michael

+Michael

*Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and his name shall be called the Prince of peace.*  
Isaiah 9.6