

# NEWS — *from the* — PEWS

## **A Sense of Awe**

We are in the ‘thick of it’ now in the preparations for Christmas. Such an exciting time of year, even under these restrictive circumstances. The children in the school have worked so hard to produce a series of clips that have been forwarded to the Rectory for editing into a

Nativity Video for parents and parishioners. Of course, we need to be careful with this, as there are children filmed (without names being mentioned) so this video will be made private on our YouTube channel

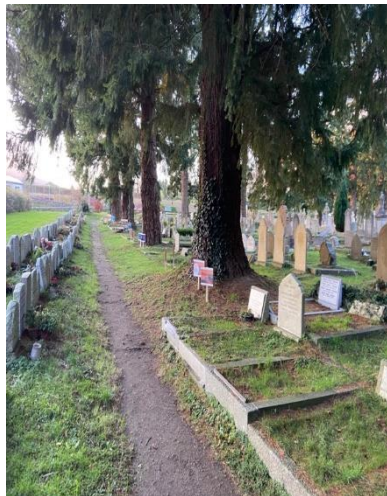
and a link sent to parents and parishioners only, to view it. Just the other day I glanced out the Rectory window to see Mr. Middleton our Principal standing in a crowd of angels and shepherds in the paddock beside the Rectory garden as he



filmed 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class (on location!) in their acting out of the Nativity Story. At the same time, the younger classes were busily at work recording prayers and carols with the smallest souls in the school re-telling the story in their own words. It will be a body of work to compile, but such joy in my office this week! My thanks to the Principal and teaching staff of the School for their work. There is a clear sense of commitment and participation in our church and its festivals. It is part

of our vision going forward that this should be nurtured and grown into a bright and colourful array of different expressions of faith and community in both churches.

The little Advent trail beside the Rectory Hedge has been visited regularly by passers-by as well as our own children and throughout the school ‘elves on shelves’ have been up to great mischief scattering baubles and leaving footprints in some of the school’s classrooms every evening to be found by the children in the morning! Richard Bird has spent his time fashioning a rather remarkable new crib for the church with incredible attention to the finer details and several parishioners have performed Christmas Miracles turning Barbies into bearded shepherds and Wise Men! Thank you all!





In the midst of all this, a young girl sits bathed in a light from an unseen source. This is the image that has permeated our fellowship groups over



the past weeks and now is the central focus of the Gospel for this Sunday - the young Mary, visited by an angel. To those of us who like to imagine and picture the Gospels; to place ourselves in the room with the remarkable people we encounter throughout the year's scriptures, this scene is one of the most fascinating. Deep

at its core is a conversation between human and divine; an uncertainty and confusion on Mary's part and a reassurance of a joyous nature on the part of the Angel Gabriel. Our online service this Sunday will focus on the word 'Amen' – so be it! This is the sentiment expressed by Mary at the end of the conversation *'Let it be with me according to your word.'* This follows a type of inspirational honesty of conversation between the two. Mary in her humility and acceptance, gives us permission to question, to be uncertain and to be human when encountering the Divine in our lives. May we be clear in our understanding of what God asks of us in different situations and may we too live a life of 'Amen' – so be it God, as you see fit!

God bless you in all you do for the coming week in the busy build up to Christmas. Keep safe and well.

Cathy

## PARISH GIFT DAY



The HOPE initiative has been set up with the United Dioceses to help individual parishes raise funds for themselves. Here in Powerscourt with Kilbride we offer you an opportunity to support our wonderful parish in the following way:



On this one day we appeal to Parishioners to make a donation towards your Parish directly (see below) or by making out a cheque made payable to:

*Powerscourt Parochial No.1 Account or Kilbride Parochial fund.*

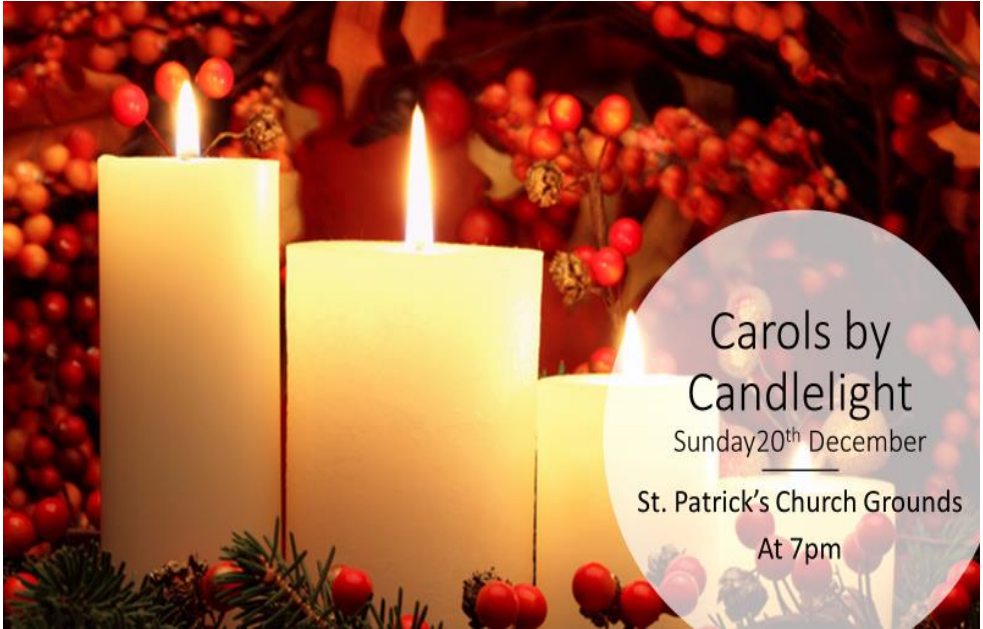
*We invite you to watch the below video to see how you can help your parish.*

<https://youtu.be/a2zKlxaHA9Q>



The Powerscourt with Kilbride Parish would like to thank King's Tree Service for donating our beautiful Christmas tree again this year.

## **Christmas in Powerscourt with Kilbride**



### **Carols by Candlelight**

Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December

St. Patrick's Church Grounds

At 7pm

Please bring Torches or Lanterns and dress for the weather, thank you.

There will be a short service of Holy Communion at 10.00 am in Kilbride and 11.30 in Powerscourt on Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December. The main service will be the 'Carols by Candlelight' at 7.00pm in the church grounds.



### **THE ANNUNCIATION**

Axel Theofilus Helsted

(Danish, 1847–1907)

### **GOD'S WORD FOR THIS WEEK**

**Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**The Fourth Sunday of Advent**

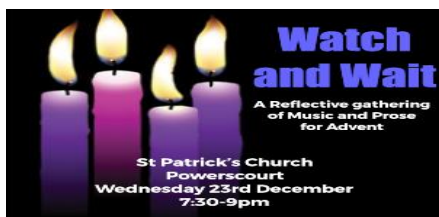




## **Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> December**

*“Remembering the Shepherds”*

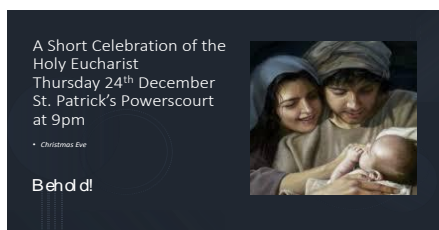
A short Service of the Holy Eucharist  
St. Brigid's Church, Kilbride  
at 8pm



## **Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> December**

‘Watch and Wait’ a chance to stop and quietly reflect to music and prose.  
St. Patrick's Church, Powerscourt

7:30pm – 9pm



## **Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> December**

A short celebration of the Holy Eucharist  
for Christmas Eve.  
St. Patrick's Church, Powerscourt

9pm.



## **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December**

Family Service  
St. Brigid's Church, Kilbride  
at 10am



## **Friday 25<sup>th</sup> December**

Outdoor Family Service for Christmas Day  
St. Patrick's Carpark, Powerscourt  
At 11:30am

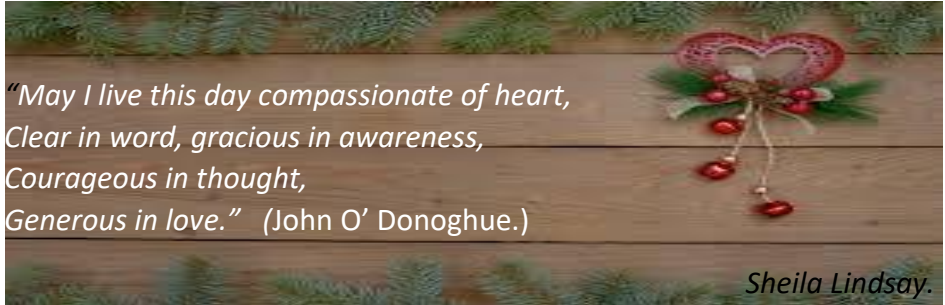


## The Season of good will...

While we look forward to Christmas with a sense of hope and joy, alongside that for some people there can be a sense of grief and loss. For many there will be an empty chair at the table which may be recent or many a long time since past. Though we never get over the death of a loved one, we somehow get through it and learnt to live life in a different way. *"The absence of their life, the absence of their voice, their face and presence becomes something that begins to grow beside you like a tree".* (Sylvia Plath). There are many conflicting thoughts during this time of year, and it is important to show ourselves and others compassion and kindness. What I often hear the bereaved person say is *"nobody cares, everyone is going about their lives and I feel my loved one is forgotten"*. Of course, this may not be the reality, but for the grieving person that is how they feel. Never underestimate the power of kindness and if someone is kind to you never take it for granted.....

This year because of the Global Pandemic there may be many other reasons for 'an empty chair' at the table this Christmas time. Family and friends can no longer gather in freedom and safety. Loved ones who live around the world and far away from their family of origin may not be able to get home, or indeed may make the difficult choice not to travel in order to keep their loved ones safe. While this does not have the permanence of death nevertheless it can bring up strong feelings of disappointment and

loss. I suppose each of us will only know the true extend of this as we experience it on a personal level. Looking back on this year I have to remind myself that alongside the challenging times I have many things to be grateful for....



## **Wintertime Lockdown: Making Christmas Great Again!**

A friend of mine loves travelling and has visited a whopping 106 countries. He says of Christmas, *"It's a most beautiful and joyous time. Having travelled so much of this world, I've yet to see any other festival that can compare – a celebration of the birth of Jesus and brings people together and a festival that stimulates the senses with light and colour, aromas, great music and food. And, after such a sad and tough year, I think we all need it more than ever. Bring it on!"*. Who could argue with that?

Many of us know the nativity Scriptures well since early childhood. Yet, in 2020, one specific gospel verse strikes me in a whole new light. Elizabeth is in her sixth month of pregnancy when her relative Mary calls. Elizabeth exclaims, *"As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy"* (Luke 1:44). The baby was, of course, John the Baptizer. John was cocooning. John was self-isolating in his mother's womb. One might even say John was in his sixth month of



“lockdown”. Yet, despite John’s circumstances, he “*leaped for joy*” upon hearing the voice of Mary, who had recently conceived the Messiah. There’s a sobering lesson here for those of us who identify as Christians in a hostile, aggressively secular culture. Just because we’re home alone, cocooning and “socially distancing”, we can still get excited by any reminder that Christmas is on its way!

Many people complain of being exhausted on the evening of December 25<sup>th</sup>. Yet 100% of that Christmas Day exhaustion is avoidable. There’s a very simple two-step approach to eliminating all stress, strain and tiredness associated with the festive season. I’ve been implementing it for decades and strongly recommend giving it a try...

### **STEP ONE – DRAIN THE SWAMP**

Are you attempting to celebrate a 12-day festival inside 12 hours? If so, I guarantee that’s the cause of all your exhaustion. After all, would you run the Dublin City Marathon in 10 minutes? Hardly! It’s meant to be run over several hours. Draining the swamp means swatting aside anything at all connected to the superficial, American, commercialised “holiday”. Eschew all notions of Christmas being a secular 12-hour event. Stick to the familiar terminology of the church calendar. Talk about “*Advent*” instead of “*the run up to Christmas*”. Why use five words where one would suffice? Keep far from your lips the vocabulary of apostasy – any talk of “Holiday Seasons”, “Dark Fridays”, “Hyper Mondays” and all such transatlantic twaddle.

### **STEP TWO – RECLAIM A FOURTH CENTURY TRADITION**

Christmas is a tradition, stretching back to the Fourth Century, in which the birth of Messiah is celebrated over 12 days – NOT 12 hours! It’s easy. You simply take all of that festive joy, love, peace and goodwill, and you

spread it evenly over 12 days. Then mark the official end of Christmas by celebrating “*Nollaig na mBan*” on January 6<sup>th</sup>. Even if you’re subject to work commitments, there are three bank holidays plus two weekends. That’s seven days for starters, before you even count annual leave and privilege days. One practical application of this is to eat 12 Christmas dinners instead of one. Many friends, knowing that I don’t like turkey, cheerfully ask, “*Well Ronan, what are you cooking for your Christmas dinner this year?*”. And I respond by handing them an A4 page listing all 12 of the dishes I intend wolfing back from December 25<sup>th</sup> through January 5<sup>th</sup>. It leaves them speechless.

## **CONCLUDING ADVICE**

For Christmas 2020, jettison everything that’s false and commercial about the season. It’s a time of holy joy. Listen to carols. Read the Scriptures. Celebrate your Saviour’s birth. Let your private prayers “*overflow with thankfulness*” (Colossians 2:7). Eat the food. Light the candles. Chat on the phone. Walk in a forest. Cuddle your pets. Spread the joy evenly over 12 days. And let’s make Christmas great again!

*Ronan Scanlan, Friday 18<sup>th</sup> December 2020*

***Remember Me*** is a fundraising initiative that presents an



opportunity for you to sponsor a tree in remembrance of a loved one or family group. Your tree will be one of a group of Scots Pine that will be planted along the Cookstown Road (within the church grounds). While Scots Pine was one of the first species to colonise our island after the ice age it all but disappeared

from most of the country about 4000 years ago. Our initiative will introduce a modest plantation of these native evergreens that will watch over us, and future generations, for years to come.

*To make your dedication, simply contact (John Davis 087 238 8984). Trees will be allocated on a first come first served basis. While sponsorship is at your discretion, a suggested donation is (€250).*



There are three Saul brothers buried within a few metres of each other here.

They were part of a large family of ten.

Captain Jonathan Patrick Saul, always known as Paddy, 1895-1968, gained fame as a member of the Free State Army Air Corps, in 1930. He had been chosen as the

navigator for the last leg of the flight of the already famous plane, the "Southern Cross", which had flown from California to Australia, and then from Australia to Ireland. In 1930 the plane with its crew took off from Portmarnock sands, to fly to New York. Crowds gathered to watch it fly. Reading a description of the flight is to realise how heroic it was. After 31 hours in the air, and running out of fuel, they had to land in Newfoundland, before flying directly on to New York. They received a triumphant welcome, as pioneers of long-haul flight. The Southern Cross still exists in Australia, a tiny plane with none of the sophisticated technology of today.

Saul became a navigational instructor with the RAF in 1937, and later worked to establish the Irish Air Traffic Control system at Shannon Airport.

His first wife died in a boating accident in 1922, when Saul had to swim ashore with his baby daughter. She died in 2012, aged 91, and is buried here with her father.

The other brothers are William Hogan Saul, who died in 1960, a Naval Commander, and Air Vice Marshal Richard Ernest Saul, CB, DFC, RAF, 1891-1983. He was one of the most senior RAF officers during WW2, responsible for the

aircraft, crews, and stations in the north of England and Scapa Flow during the Battle of Britain. His DFC was awarded as a fighter pilot in WW1, and on retirement he lived in Canada. His ashes are buried here in another Saul family grave.

*Judy Cameron*



*We in the News from the Pews office would like to take a special moment to express our sincere thanks and gratitude to the parishioners who have contributed beautiful pieces to the News Pews through the last year.*

*We would especially like to thank Shelia Lindsay, Judy Cameron, Ronan Scanlan, Robert Neill and Helen Beardsley O'Toole. Thank you, most sincerely.*



Our Living Room concept began by embracing the Wednesday Fellowship Group and encouraging it to expand. Now, under present restrictions, this little group has expanded even further as it is now held as a zoom meeting and possible for people to attend who may not be from the locality. With this in mind we encourage you to

join us on Wednesday Mornings at 10 am on Zoom. If you would like to take part in this group please contact the Rector at [cathyhallissey@hotmail.com](mailto:cathyhallissey@hotmail.com).

ENNISKERRY

*Christmas Market*

DECEMBER 3, 10, 17 & 24

POWERSCOURT ARMS HOTEL  
CAR PARK &  
SCHOOLHOUSE FOR ART