

Carrickfergus Parish Newsletter

Incorporating the Churches of:
ST NICHOLAS
OUR LADY OF LOURDES

carrickparish.org

CHRISTMAS 2003
Produced by
Carrickfergus Parish Pastoral Council

Festive fun at Parish dinner



Pictured with Fr Cosgrove are some of those attending the Parish's annual Christmas dinner

Around 130 people enjoyed the Parish's annual Christmas dinner in the pleasant surroundings of the Glenavna House Hotel on Sunday 7 December, writes Paddy Stewart.

The local St. Vincent de Paul Conferences of Greenisland,

Carrickfergus and Whitehead helped to organise it, and it has now become quite a tradition in the Parish.

Fr. Cosgrove welcomed everyone to the hotel, recited grace and then the festivities began.

The traditional Christmas

fayre was served by very attendant and efficient staff, and the event was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

There was plenty of craic to be had around the tables in the banqueting room as people renewed old friendships and discussed the forthcoming busy Christmas season.

When the meal was over, and all the ballot tickets sold, the afternoon's entertainment was provided by Louis Small.

Many of you will be familiar with Louis, as he has been in the Parish a few times in the last couple of years. Well, he didn't disappoint, playing many requests, from country hits like 'Blanket on the Ground' to those with an Irish flavour like 'The Waves of

Tory', and everything in between!

During the interval, Louis helped with the ballot, calling out the winning tickets. There were many prizes to be had, and some lucky tables were called up several times to choose from the varied prizes on offer.

Unfortunately, one of the Whitehead tables didn't have a single winner, so a plot has been hatched to ensure victory next year (sorry about that)!

Proceedings were rounded off with a rendition of 'Auld Lang Sang' and we all took our leave, well fed, entertained and looking forward to Christmas - and of course getting together again next year.

Lourdes open day

by school principal, Mr Keenan

If it's Friday then those people must be from Germany, Italy, Belgium and Spain!

Lourdes Primary has gone European this year, which is just one of the highlights of this term. Hosting the visit of ten teachers from four countries is the culmination of a term's work in reaching out to our partner schools as part of the Comenius Contact Project.

Add to this tree planting, minibeast hunts, Mass for the beginning of the school year, soccer coaching, PowerPoint presentations, the Halloween disco, performing in the Odyssey Arena, singing at the Carol Service and preparing

for our Christmas performance of 'The Hoity Toity Angel' and you get some feel of what has been happening in Lourdes Primary this term.

Oh, and of course somewhere in all of that has been all the hard work that needs to go on throughout the year. It has been a great term so far, and there is still a huge amount to squeeze in to the last four weeks.

To find out more about Lourdes Primary, you are invited to our Open Day on Thursday 15th January 2004 from 1.00 p.m. - 2.30 p.m. All are welcome. Contact me on 9337 2444.



Community captured in collage

by Geardine Stewart

The picture above is of a collage made by the older children in the Whitehead children's liturgy group.

Sketched by Avril McCabe, one of our young parishioners, the collage represents Whitehead community, showing the different places where people meet.

On it are the park, the football pitch and the schools where the children gather and make use of

their God-given talents. Lovely smiling faces cut from magazines represent the elderly and there are several churches depicted, reflecting the diversity of faiths in the town. The rays of light reaching out from the lighthouse signify God's ever-lasting love stretching out, watching over and caring for us all.

The collage may be seen in the foyer of Our Lady of Lourdes Church in the new year.

From the Pen of the Parish Priest

Glory to God in the highest

'I bring you news of great joy. Today in the town of David a saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord'. And suddenly there was a great throng of the heavenly host, praising God and singing: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven and peace to all who enjoy his favour'.

Lk. 2:14.

In this Advent and Christmas season we have much to give praise and thanks to God for. We give thanks firstly for the gift of his son Jesus, the one who came into this world to set his people free. Free from the bonds of sin and hatred and division.

I feel that during the past year we in the Parish and in our Community have taken huge steps towards setting ourselves free from the bonds of sin and hatred and division.

In co-operation with a number of the other Churches in the town we have been meeting on a regular basis to discuss and pray for our community and for each other.

For all who have taken part in these regular meetings of the 'Intercessors for Carrick', and the 'Journey in Understanding', it has been like taking a step into the dark, into the unknown. But those who have taken those steps have done so for the sake of Christ, and for the sake of

building up his Kingdom in the world, and especially to build up his kingdom in Carrickfergus.

One of the things this has taught us is that there is a great yearning in the hearts of very many people to make Carrickfergus a better place for ourselves, for our families, and for those who will come after us. We know that the only way we will make Carrickfergus a better place is with the help of Christ and his healing grace.

My prayer for all in our Parish and our Community this Christmas is that the Lord will give each of us the grace and strength we need to continue his work in our world, in our Parish and in our Community. May the Prince of Peace be with us in all that we do in 2004.

Fr Michael Cosgrove PP

Irish night welcomes European visitors



Fr Cosgrove pictured with the European visitors at the Irish Night in Lourdes Primary School

by Ann Woods

Ten European visitors received a warm welcome at Lourdes Primary School welcome during an Irish Night on Thursday 26 November.

The school is involved in a European School Contact Programme – Comenius – which is funded by the European Union.

The party of visitors consisted of teachers from other participating European schools – three from Germany, three from Belgium, three from Italy and one from Spain.

Steaming bowls of Irish stew helped get the evening off to a great start, before the entertainment began. This was in the form of several performances by the talented girls from Bentra School of Irish dancing, followed by a

traditional music group - local man Michael Rodgers and friends.

Much to the delight of our foreign visitors Father Cosgrove also contributed to the evening with a few songs.

The high standards of our entertainers greatly impressed everyone. Indeed, our visitors were so inspired they all went on to participate in and enjoy The Waves of Tory, skilfully led by Moira Rodgers and Father Cosgrove.

The night was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone and succeeded in providing what we hope was a good Irish welcome for the school's European partners.

The staff and PTA of the school would once again like to thank the musicians, dancers, caterers and everyone else who were involved in the event.

Races please punters and building fund

by Tommy Mone

The Bingo Committee's Night at the Races in the St. Nicholas Community Hall on Friday 14 November 2003 raised £800 for the Parish Building Fund.

It was a great night to boot, with around 85 people attend-

ing. It was good to see so many of the Parishioners from Carrick and Whitehead coming along, also the young people from the Parish and their friends, lending their support: it was a great night's entertainment.

The first of nine races got off about 9.00 p.m. The craic was good with punters cheer-

ing on their fancied horses to the winning post. A fine supper of chicken and chips was served about 10.30p.m., after which came the presentation of the prizes to the owners of the winning horses.

Dancing followed, with music supplied by Louis Small who did a great job of getting everyone

involved in the dancing and fun of the night.

A special word of thanks to all who helped in any way to make the night special and what a smashing total for the Parish Building Fund!

Parish Bereavement Support Group up and running

by Eileen Vance

We are one parish, one community and the death of one is the concern of all.

A new Parish Ministry has been established, one that aims to provide a supportive ministry of caring, presence, practical help, and spiritual comfort to all those who have lost a loved one or someone dear to them.

Early in August Father Cosgrove and a number of volunteers met in the pastoral centre to lay foundations for our parish based Bereavement Support Service. The volunteers, eleven at present, come from a variety of backgrounds and all share a common interest: to help and support others in times of loss and sorrow.

Original meetings have been a time of getting to know each other, sharing our experiences and discussing our hopes and fears. What we have learned is that it will take time to establish and develop our group. Initially we see ourselves in a supportive role - responding to requests for help, making contact with and visiting the bereaved, especially over the first year of bereavement.

We recognise that in order to minister effectively and with sensitivity to those who are grieving we ourselves need training. Up till now we have had two training sessions that have helped us to develop an understanding of the grief process and needs of the bereaved. The sessions also allowed us to explore ways that we as members of the parish community can help and sup-

port those who have experienced loss. Both talks have been very useful and encouraging and we would like to thank Funeral Services NI Ltd who sponsored guest speakers at both meetings.

For those who are grieving the death of someone loved, Christmas and the New Year can be especially difficult times. In recognition of this, one of our first organised events was a special Parish Christmas Memorial Mass celebrated in St. Nicholas' Carrickfergus on Friday 12 December. During the service, prayers were offered for all those who had died since December 2002, all the dead of the parish and for all those touched by bereavement.

Father Cosgrove personally invited all those families who had been bereaved in the past year to attend the service. During Mass the names of all

the deceased were read out and family members were invited to place a candle on the altar in memory of their loved one. The Paschal Candle was lit and brought forward to represent all the dead of the parish. Prayers were also said for all the deceased and for the intentions of all their families and friends.

The service was followed by an invitation to light refreshment in the hall. This gave people a chance to come together and talk with each other and provided an opportunity to meet those involved in the Bereavement Support Group.

The group hope to make the Christmas Memorial Mass an annual event, and trust that the service will be a source of strength, comfort, hope, and peace during the Christmas season to all those who are bereaved and all those who have been touched by grief.

Women review their spiritual lives

by Maureen Holmes

Our annual Parish Woman's Retreat took place this year on October 18th – 19th at Drumalis.

It's something we all look forward to and this year, as per usual, we weren't disappointed.

We started with a warm welcome from Sisters Anna and Mairéad who were both delighted to see we had our original promoter with us, Annie O'Donnell.

Not having to think of shopping, cooking or any other household chores gave us time

to review our spiritual life and our faults and failings. The theme this year was the 'Waters of Life' which was ably explained to us by our retreat chaplain and the Sisters. We were joined for the weekend by the Trinity Parish – a happy

bunch who added to our enjoyment.

Come January and our promoters meeting we'll be pencilling in our dates for 2004 and for a lovely relaxing and spiritually rewarding weekend. I recommend you join us.

Successful PTA term

by Irene Stuart

St. Nicholas' PTA has enjoyed another term of fund-raising activities.

After a releasing summer, we got back to work and recently hosted a silver jewellery evening. Richard Lunn came to the school displaying various pieces of silver jewellery and parents and friends were able to come along one cold November evening and choose from a wide selection. Seasonal drinks and mince pies were offered to all who attended.

Following this, in early December, we had our annual Christmas disco and ballot in the Joymount Arms, where great prizes were won – including a dishwasher and a fantastic weekend for two in Dublin.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who supports our ventures. It's reassuring to know that our children at St. Nicholas' Primary School benefit from your generosity, thereby making learning a much more pleasurable experience.

Go for Autumn Club in 2004

by Theresa Boylan

You will be made most welcome if you want to drop into the Autumn Club in the new year to see what's going on.

In existence now for 15 years, the Autumn Club has been meeting in the community hall in Carrickfergus every Wednesday at 1.30 p.m. It is open to anyone over 50 years of age; it is cross community and plenty of fun.

The afternoon usually starts with a cup of tea and biscuits, followed by a game or two of

bingo, finishing off with a couple of dances. For those not wanting to dance, they can join the whist players down at the back of the hall.

Interesting bus trips are organised during the year, some of which are free whilst there is a small charge for the others. All the members receive a free Christmas dinner, which is always enjoyed by everyone who can attend.

All this for 50p per week! If you're interested, please do come along some Wednesday afternoon in the new year to experience it for yourself.

Ulster Project a hit with Robert

The Ulster Project by Robert Stuart

The Ulster Project is a cross-community activity aimed at broadening the faith and community experiences of teenagers living in Northern Ireland and the USA.

The aim is to get groups of about 20 teenagers (50/50 Catholic/Protestant, 50/50 boys/girls) over to North America to discuss their faith, their experience of life and the issues they face. This is done in small groups, so that everyone gets a chance to participate and, while a lot of it is tough, it's not all hard work – the days off are great!

I first heard of the Ulster

Project last year in school when Fr. Grant, the Chaplain of Aquinas Grammar School, asked pupils if we would be interested in participating in the 2003 venture. Fr. Grant explained that we would be partnered with an American teenager of the same age, sex and religion and we would live as a member of their family for five weeks.

At first five weeks seemed a long time – to be going away with a group of strangers and living with a different family was a daunting prospect.

However, after asking others and getting the views of peo-

ple who had gone before, I decided to give it a go.

Our group met every Sunday afternoon in Belfast for three months before we left. This gave us all a chance to get to know each other and my group worked well, often going out together at the weekend.

When the day arrived for us to go to the US we were all very excited, despite having to be in Belfast for 3.30a.m. on a Tuesday morning in June. The flight was long, but passed quickly with all the craic in the group. We met our US "teens" and their families that evening, and that was the start of five

fantastic weeks of hard work all hosted by the American side.

In those five weeks we did so much, met so many people and argued about so many things that I could write a book. Coming home was a heartbreak.

The one thing I would say for all teenagers is that if you ever get the opportunity to become involved in any youth based cross-community activities you should go for it – you'll never look back!

Connell completes challenging Journey of Understanding

by Connell Lafferty

The Journey in Understanding was an inter-church course to explore the influence of culture, history and religion in shaping identity in Northern Ireland and Carrickfergus.

It was supported by most churches in the area, starting in September and ended in November.

The Thursday night courses was facilitated by Helen Smith from ECONI in partnership with intercessors for Carrickfergus and supported by Carrick Borough Council Community Relations Office.

There were additional speakers, Derek Poole, Alwyn Thomas and David Porter, who gave input from their areas of expertise and personal experience of history, politics, religion and culture.

The course was well attended by a number of denominations in Carrick Whitehead and beyond. It was held in the Coast Road Hotel in warm, open and safe surroundings.

In small groups we discussed the differences between Christians living in our community.

I found this course very difficult. To explain to my Protestant neighbours what it

was like to grow up in Carrickfergus through the 1970s was not easy. I quickly learned that things are not as black and white as some of our community leaders would like it to be. I also learned that the difference between Christians is very small. We *can* live together and respect our differences. The myths and fears we hold onto disappear in the light of day.

Today light is shining on a different Carrickfergus from that of my childhood. A lot of hard work and prayer has led to the making of the Journey in Understanding happen in our town.

The commitment shown by the clergy to the journey was one hundred per cent. For me there was nowhere more important to be on a Thursday night than to take part and meet around a table sharing, learning, supporting and breaking down walls.

I ask for your prayers for this work in building peace in our community.

The challenge is to love, not hate, to forgive and to be forgiven. I feel many good things have begun from the course.

I started this journey alone, but I completed it with friends.

Invitations to primary school open days

The principals of both primary schools in the Parish have extended warm invitations to open days to be held early in the new year.

Parents should note that Friday 16th January 2004 is the

date for St Nicholas' Primary open day, while Lourdes opens its doors the day before on the 15th January from 1.00pm to 2.30pm.

For parents preparing to send their child to primary school for

the first time it's an ideal opportunity to experience the school environments, talk to teachers and see the amusing, entertaining and educational things the children get up to in the classroom.

Both principals have reported a busy term packed full of activities and trips involving everything from minibeast hunts, tree planting, barn owl visits, soccer coaching, poetry, and recycling.

Reunited for a night of school memories

by Michael Johnston

A magical night of memories, nostalgia and renewed friendships took place at the Quality Hotel in October as over 250 former pupils of the Parish's once thriving secondary school met once again.

The evening passed all too quickly in what was a reunion not just of a year group, but a significant slice of the school community and large section of the local community.

The evening included a champagne reception and give-away souvenirs. A highlight of the event was a computerised display of old school photos and other memorabilia. A photographer was also on hand to take individual class photos.

Several former teachers were present, including ex-principal Liam Raven, who spoke movingly to the gather-

ing. Sean Neeson MLA, formerly on the school's board of governors, and Fr Cosgrove also attended.

In his speech, organising committee member Seamus Cowan lamented the loss to the local community, referring to the school grounds as a "field of dreams".

MC for the evening Thomas Arkins said the event was "a marvellous success that exceeded all expectations." He added: "It is a tribute to all connected with the school that people came in such numbers.

"St Nicholas' still holds fond memories not just as a place of education, but also as a community focal point."

Many past pupils travelled over from England to attend, including one man from the Isles of Scilly.

The event was the brainchild of Patricia McKeown, whose father and grandfather both taught in the school.



Two former pupils enjoying the craic at the St Nicholas' school reunion

St Nicholas' Secondary School, which later became St Nicholas' High School closed in 1989 after only 20 years in existence.

Over 200 pupils enrolled in 1969 and in its heyday St Nicholas' catered for over 300.

As a follow-up the organis-

ing committee is looking at the possibility of forming some kind of past pupils association. It is hoped further parish community and social events can be organised.

• Videos of the reunion are on sale for £10. Call Patricia McKeown on 9332 9973.

Tribute to the late Jim O'Neill

by Fr Michael Cosgrove

What a witness and example Jim O'Neill was to each of us.

We can safely say that he was a truly holy man, a saint in the true sense of the word. Jim's love of God and neighbour went far beyond this Parish.

He was a lifetime member of the Carrickfergus branch of the Royal British Legion. For the past two years he was its President. I remember very clearly the day he came to tell me he had been elected to that post and to show me his chain of office. There was no prouder man in all the world on that day and rightly so.

Being a member of the

Royal Navy and the Merchant Navy, he knew what hardships his ship mates had to face at sea and he wanted to help those in the services who were sick and retired.

Jim was a familiar sight outside Tesco Supermarket every year. In the two weeks before Remembrance Sunday he sat for hours collecting for the Legion's Poppy Day Appeal.

Above all Jim O'Neill was a family man. He loved his wife Josie, who died eighteen years ago. He loved his children and grandchildren. He loved his parish family. He loved his Navy and British Legion family.

Now Jim has slipped his cable. He has gone to join Josie and all his relatives, friends and shipmates who have gone

before him. What a wonderful psalm which he asked me to read at his funeral:

The Seaman's Psalm

The Lord is my pilot, I shall not drift.

He lights me across dark waters.

He steers me in the deep channels.

He keeps my log.

He guides me by the Star of Holiness, for His name's sake.

Yea, though I sail mid the thunders and tempest of life, I shall dread no danger, for You are with me.

Your love and your care, they shelter me.

You prepare a harbour before me in the homeland of eternity.

You anoint the waves with oil, my ship rides calmly. Surely sunlight and starlight shall favour me on the voyage I take.

And I will rest in the port of my God for ever and ever Amen.

Jim was a daily communicant and also a member of our Parish Home Cell Groups who meet every two weeks for prayer and reflection, he will be sorely missed by all its members and also by the members of the Intercessors For Carrickfergus, of which he was a faithful member.

May Jim's soul and the souls of all the faithful departed through the mercy of God rest in peace. Amen.

Cell leaders across Ireland unite

by Martin O’Gara

Our Parish cell groups in Carrickfergus and Whitehead continue to play a central role in the spiritual growth of our community.

Now with seven very active and vibrant cell groups in our parish, with members of varying ages, it’s clear that the cells are truly alive and experiencing God’s blessing. The many people that are part of the cell groups really do feel that cells are a vital part in their walk with God and find great support and comfort in sharing it with others who listen and understand.

As cell group leaders, we try our best to keep things running smoothly, but really we’re just like any other member of the group. In our role as leaders we’ve often stumbled and at other times we’ve fallen flat on our faces. So, when the opportunity arose to travel to Dublin on the 20th of October for a cell leader training day, we absolutely jumped at the chance. We were also just as excited at the prospect of meeting with other cell leaders from all over the country and to share our experiences with them.

In the early hours of a Saturday morning, ten of our cell leaders set off in two cars for the long drive to Dublin. We literally battled our way there through horrendous road works and some minor car trouble, eventually arriving a little late and rather flustered. The leader training was hosted and run by the Balinteer Cell Community in Dublin, who welcomed us with such warmth and instantly made us feel more relaxed. For some of us it was our first visit to the people of Balinteer and through out the day it became increasingly obvious that this was a spiritu-

ally thriving community, with cells at its heart. The fruits of this were abundantly clear, through the warmth and care of the people, together with their passion for evangelism.

Over the course of the day we heard from a number of very gifted speakers on a range of topics, all directed at improving our ability to be more effective cell leaders. The commitment and extensive preparation of everyone involved could not fail to be appreciated. We even heard from our very own Margaret Webb, who had the bravery to stand up and deliver her testimony on her walk with God and how it has led her to the Parish cells. A very striking theme reinforced through much of the teaching was that fundamental to being a cell leader is adopting the attitude of a humble servant, not only for cell members but also for all in our community. Focusing on the way Jesus lived his life, the perfect role model of a cell leader was presented, giving us all a very concise and divine standard to aspire to. The teaching was truly exhilarating and was, without doubt, inspired by God’s Holy Spirit.

It was such an encouragement to meet directly with approximately 100 other cell leaders from places such as Cork, Kilkenny and Dublin. There was a feeling that we were gathered together as one extended cell family. To close the day we shared together in a most intimate and special Mass. The joy that we all felt as we praised and worshipped God was amazing. On our journey home there was a spirit of renewed vigour and energy. We truly felt better prepared to lead our cells and with God’s help we pray that we will.

Inter-denominational meeting for cell groups

by Rev Jim Herst

It was my wonderful privilege to address an inter-denominational cell-group meeting at Mount St. Nicholas on Wednesday 26 November.

Approximately 60 people attended this discipleship event, with members of the Roman Catholic parishes of Mount St. Nicholas and St. Bernards joining forces with those from the Methodist and Gateway congregations in Carrickfergus.

Following an inspirational worship session led by Roisin White, host Margaret Webb, chaired a small-group discussion, which reflected on St. Paul’s theme of reconciliation in Ephesians 2:11-16.

In my presentation, I linked the Ephesian passage with 2 Corinthians 5:17-20, where the apostle once again stresses that Christians already live in a state of reconciliation, both with God and with each other. Paul is simply telling us, “Be what you really are in God’s eyes – brothers and sisters in the Lord”. Paul states this categorically in Ephesians 2:20: we are fellow citizens in the household of God built on a

foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ as the cornerstone. Indeed, the great apostle offers his imprisonment and his prayers (3;13-19) that the Ephesian congregation (and Christians living in all generations!) will comprehend the love of Christ manifested in his making us one – a love that surpasses knowledge – so that we may be filled with all the fullness of God.

I would like to thank Margaret Webb for her gracious work in organising this special evening. I am also most appreciative to Father Michael Cosgrove and Father Dan Whyte for their loving support. And a big thank you to all who participated. Your Christ-like example reminds me of those immortal words of St. Francis of Assisi: “By all means preach the gospel; and if you have to, use words”. It is my pleasure to be at one with you!

Cell group contacts

Fr Cosgrove 93363269
Hugh Murray 93366939
Tommy & Marie Mone 93362511
Martin & Trudy O’Gara 93350480
Bob Stuart 93368719
Linda Mellon 93368392
Martin & Bridget Murray 90860915
Philomena Cunningham 93372449

Bridie Murray 93362304
Libby McIlwaine 93373937
Margaret Jervis 93361323
Cecilia Armstrong 93378244
John Cunningham 93368913
Matt Monaghan 93365222
Margaret Webb 93367861

CHILDRENS CORNER

CHRISTMAS WORDSEARCH 2003

S A N T A S C I D E Q U E E N R D O C
 P S T A B R E I N D E E R S T E M O D
 O R P Y E K N O D E F C O M E T O P A
 W N A U T P N O X I L B A L G S S E S
 R N F N H D W A R F S L D O L L H A H
 D K X C C F I S N T D A R E B E A C E R
 C O Q A E E G L A S S L L U L E P E R N
 I E N C H R R S N O W S O H I P P F N
 G P S N E G N W H I T E R A N Y Y R D
 A E J T E G R U M P Y A N A M G I O R
 M R O O S R H L M I R R O R S S P N A
 S S N E E Z Y E L S C O L E H E Y K Z
 T V H E R E M C N U I R E D Y B S I G
 O T R N F J E X P M N E X I V R L N A
 R D E E H L E I S A N M E N D E T C H
 R V C E P L D B E R M P L U F H S A B
 A L N P A C O U V Y W I C K E D A N L
 C B A N S R O S E V U O H P L O D U R
 V X D S N O W M N Q G E Y E N M I H C

FIND THESE WORDS

SANTA'S REINDEERS
 COMETDASHER
 PRANCER
 VIXEN
 CUPID
 DONNER
 BLIXON

RUDOLPH
 DANCER
 CHIMNEY
 CARROTS
 APPLE
 SNOW WHITE
 SEVEN DWARFS

SNOW QUEEN
 DOC
 SNEEZY
 DOPEY
 BASHFUL
 GRUMPY
 HAPPY

MIRROR
 SLEEPY
 WICKED
 MAGIC
 HAG
 RED
 GLASS

- Fill in the word puzzle then cut it out and leave it in the sacristy (don't forget your name and telephone number).
First correct solution out of the hat wins a £10.00 book token!

NAME.....

TELEPHONE.....

CHILDREN'S LITURGY QUIZ

For age 4 - 11

During Advent we p _____ and w ___ for Christmas.

There are _____ different colours of candles on the Advent wreath.

We say happy birthday to _____ on Christmas morning.

- Fill in the blanks, then cut it out and leave it in the sacristy (don't forget your name and telephone number).

First correct solution out of the hat wins a £10.00 book token!

NAME.....

TELEPHONE.....

Why I like the Children's Liturgy by Hannah Robinson, age 8.

"I like going to the children's liturgy on Sunday. It is good fun to meet all the other children. I like it because it is creative. It makes what the priest says easier to understand. I like Mrs. Goudie and the other leaders. I especially like the Arts and Crafts, because I enjoy Art a lot. When I go to Mass in a different Church, I miss children's liturgy."

Folk choir celebrates 25th anniversary in style

by Michael Johnston

The Folk Choir 25th anniversary celebrations, held on Sunday 9 November 2003 were a massive success!

Some 55 past and present members came to the Mass on the day, and many people have commented that the standard and spirit of the music plus the warm camaraderie in the church was nothing short of superb.

Hosted and organised by the current choir, the emotional day included a trip down memory lane via a photographic display depicting the many outings, concerts, weddings and functions the choir has sung at or attended over the years.

An evening dinner and entertainment at the Quality Hotel rounded off a truly marvellous day, and this was topped again by a flying 'appearance' from Fr Brian Mullan, the man who founded the choir in Greenisland in the 1970s.

Fr Mullan made strenuous efforts to pop in briefly to the event, and in a 15 minute period he managed to make a speech, receive a present and perform 'Yesterday' by the Beatles!



Current and past members of St Nicholas' Folk Choir enjoy a cup of tea after the celebration Mass

In congratulating everyone Fr Mullan said he had never heard of a folk choir lasting ten years, never mind over 25, and that he was encouraged by the young people in the current membership.

Roisin White, folk choir leader and the person whose idea it was to run the event, said she was delighted with the response.

She added: "Many thanks to all those who helped us out on the day with tea and flowers and various other things. It was important to mark the occasion in some way, and it was really great to see so many past members turning up to sing and say hello again.

"In essence this was a big

thank you to all who have served in the choir over the years."

It's estimated that around 150 people have been involved in the choir since it was founded in the mid 1970s. In the late 70s and early 80s, with around 25 members and many more 'auxiliary' members, the choir doubled as an unofficial young person's club, providing a focal point in the Parish for young Catholics to meet, socialise and explore their faith.

Famous past members include Eddie Friel, who represented Ireland in the Eurovision Song Contest, Alex Attwood, currently chairman of the SDLP and Adrian Jeffries, now a major name in folk music in

Australia.

The choir originally sang only in St Colman's Greenisland, but after alternating between St Nicholas' and St Colman's for a period, it began to sing permanently in St Nicholas' in about 1995 when membership became composed mainly of Carrick-based parishioners.

However, the people of Greenisland, always strong supporters of the choir, touchingly sent their congratulations on the day via a card containing over 50 signatures.

Over the years the choir has been influential in about 12 marriages: some couples met in or because of the choir; other couples were both in the choir at the same time.

At the dinner it also emerged that the Arkins and Murray families had contributed most members to the choir over the years. Special bouquets of flowers were despatched to Mrs Murray and Mr Arkins in recognition of this.

After the celebrations every current and past choir member was treated to a musically themed lapel pin as a memento of the day and in recognition of their contribution. Fr Cosgrove also received a present in recognition of his ongoing support.

An exciting term for St Nicholas' Primary School

by school principal, Mrs Brady

Another school year began in St. Nicholas' on 1st September – let me tell you about some of the exciting things we have been doing since then.

In September the National Trust visited the school and took the primary 4 - 5 children on a tree trail; the children learnt a lot of important facts on how to keep animal habitat safe. The pupils also took part, during 2002/2003, in the Belfast Lough

Sea and Shore Project organized by three borough councils around Belfast Lough.

The stated objective of the project is to develop environmental awareness of the lough and adjacent shoreline through cross community exercises.

Each child who participated in this project received a copy of a special book containing poems and art work from pupils in each school. Well done all!

In October the primary 4 – 7 classes witnessed an exciting

demonstration of the Flight Experience Show. There was lots of audience participation to explore a wide variety of topics from the KS 2 science and technology curriculum.

Barney the Owl visited us next. The children were able to see a real barn owl at first hand and discuss the various features of a barn owl.

At the end of October the Halloween fancy dress parade took place. All the pupils and teachers dressed up, including the principal Mrs Brady!

On 3rd November we embarked on a project about recycling our waste - 're-think, re-use, re-cycle'.

This term St. Nicholas' also offered pupils a wide variety of after school clubs, such as girls' netball, Ju-Jitsu, recorder, choir, computers and boys' football.

All clubs have been extremely well supported and will continue throughout the school year.

If you want to know more about the school come along to our Open Day on Friday 16th January 2004. See you there!