

Carrickfergus Parish Newsletter

Incorporating the Churches of:
ST NICHOLAS
OUR LADY OF LOURDES

carrickparish.org

SUMMER 2005
Produced by
Carrickfergus Parish Pastoral Council

Murder victim's father gives testimony at Whitehead cell meeting

by Cecelia Armstrong

Michael McGoldrick, whose son was murdered outside Lurgan in 1996 by Loyalist paramilitaries, gave his testimony to a joint cell meeting in Whitehead earlier this year.

The meeting was both moving and special as Michael revealed his story of how God changed his life completely after the untimely death of his only son, also called Michael.

After hearing about his son's tragic death he and his wife, Bridie, planned to commit suicide, so great was their sorrow.

Michael was walking his dog; he just couldn't cope with all that life had brought

him so he called out to God to help him: He said a fervent Act of Contrition, in a way that he had never prayed before. A feeling of utter and complete happiness came over him and a knowledge that he was now in a state of grace. He felt the power of the Holy Spirit fill him. He was given a new life.

Michael now works for United Christian Aid. His mission takes him to Moldova about six times a year. The money he brings with him is used for feeding the poor, orphans, street children, and anyone in need. He depends completely on donations and sponsorship, really on the generosity of us, the ordinary people.

At the end of our meeting

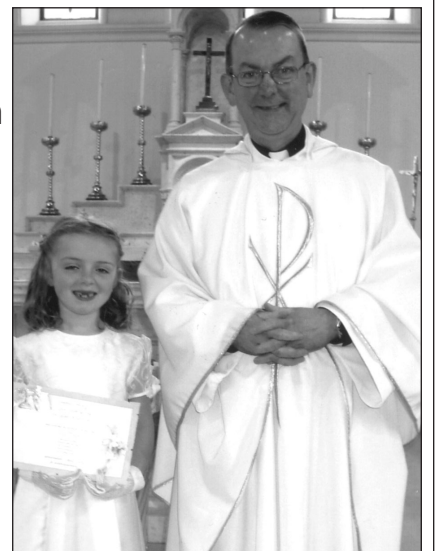
Michael thanked everyone for the wonderful donation, he was given that night.

A few weeks later he also sent his thanks to Whitehead for the money raised in the ballot.

Olivia makes extra special First Communion

Olivia Read had an extra special First Holy Communion Day in Whitehead in May - she was the only first communicant there!

Olivia said: "I'm so glad God made me. I feel very proud. I am very thankful to all the people who helped me prepare for such an important day. I wore a beautiful dress and got lots of nice presents."



Wizards help conjure up community magic

by Michael Johnston

The 'Windmill Wizards' are the family football champions in the parish, after beating 'The Disciples' in the final of a thrilling competition on 18 June.

The second St Nicholas' Reunited Family Football Challenge, which now looks set to become an annual event, was a great community sporting celebration.

Some 60 players plus a large crowd of around 180 spectators from the parish gathered to take part in the event at Carrick Leisure Centre.

As well as the tournament the event also featured children's and non-player penalty competitions, and cheerleading displays from

young girls in the parish to the tune of 'Match of the Day'.

The woman's penalty competition was won by former parishioner Lelia Edwards (nee McGowan), formerly of Sunnylands Avenue, who had travelled over from Liverpool to attend the fun packed day.



The 'Wizards' and the 'Disciples' - finalist in the Parish Family Football Challenge

Organised by the St Nicholas' Reunited Committee, ten family teams of six players took part, all of which needed two generations of players aged 13 and upwards to be eligible to compete.

Billed as 'a game of two halves' the second half evening prize giving proved as

popular as the daytime event and saw the Wizards – the Moore family from Windmill – celebrate their victory in style.

Father Cosgrove presented the cup and medals saying: "The whole parish is a winner today and I hope we can see more of this type of event in the future."

'The Disciples' – alias the Smith family – lost out in the final for the second year in a row - even with their secret weapon, Father Anthony Fitzsimons from Greenisland.

The other semi finalists were the Brock family and the McKeown-Scallons.

Patricia McKeown, one of the organisers, said: "This was a great day out for men, women and children in the parish. We are delighted it went so well."

Happy holidays!

From the Keyboard of the Parish Priest...

As I write this piece for our Parish Newsletter it is 11.30 p.m. on a very hot and steamy night in the middle of June, with the temperature rising to 23 degrees.

Summer has arrived at last, and with it our thoughts turn to all that has been achieved in the past number of months in our schools, our parish, our community and in the workplace.

For many, this time of year is really about looking forward. For some it is looking forward to a long summer break and the chance to rest, relax and catch up on the things you like to do, but just don't seem to have the time for during the winter.

This is what summertime is designed to do – help us throw off the winter blues, put a smile on our face and enjoy all the good things that God brings our way at this time of year.

May I also take this opportunity to let you know in advance that the Redemptorist Fathers have been invited back to the Parish for the first week of Advent to give another Mission. They were so well received last year that I look forward to their return visit from 27 November to 3 December, so please take note and set that time aside to take part in our Parish Mission 2005.

To finish, I take this opportunity to thank everyone for your support and encouragement in all that we have tried to achieve over the last number of months, and I wish all of you a very happy, peaceful and restful summer break.

Fr. Michael Cosgrove, PP

Worship Watch challenge

by Connell Lafferty

Worship Watch was introduced to Carrickfergus by Ian McMaster almost two years ago.

One of the key things about Worship Watch is that, Christians from all churches can be united in a simple service of praise.

Worship Watch usually lasts four hours, from 8pm to midnight, with people coming and going as their time allows.

The service's sole purpose is to offer God our thanksgiving, worship and praise.

Worship Watch is led by a number of different musicians and worship leaders from various churches in

Carrickfergus.

The musicians do not perform but lead the congregation in singing worship hymns.

Worship Watch has been hosted in many different churches this year. It has been held in St Nicholas', Elim Church, St Colman's Church of Ireland, Downshire Presbyterian church, Gateway Church and the town hall.

For me the meeting held in our church earlier this year was very special.

To see so many Christians from Carrickfergus united in praise and worship was a powerful witness of love and unity. An event unthinkable only a few years ago.

Many new visitors commented on the atmosphere of peace and prayer they found in our church.

The other visitor always present is the Holy Spirit, guiding the service and building unity.

I would like to challenge you to attend a Worship Watch service, and stay in your seat without joining in the singing. I do not think it would be achievable: these are extremely lively and moving meetings.

I would like to thank Ian McMaster for all his hard work. He has sown the seeds and we will reap the rewards. I wish him and his family every blessing on their relocation to Thailand.

Children's liturgy progressing

by Geardine Stewart

The children's liturgy groups in both ends of the parish continue to do well.

We have recently introduced a new group for the P6s, P7s and Year 8 children in St Nicholas' Church. We felt they needed to be in a group specifically aimed at that age range. We would like to invite all young people of that

age to come along and join us.

At a recent workshop we leaders learned how to make a beautiful banner displaying the children's liturgy logo for our groups. Our logo is a big book on a stand, which represents the Gospel stories, with a large lighted candle just behind it. The candle indicates the light which faith in Christ gives to our lives,

lighting our path. On the left we have the children's footprints making their way to receive the Word and on the opposite side there are footprints going from the Word, having been nourished by it and now becoming lights themselves in a sometimes dark world.

The footprints form a circle to show a never-ending ring of receiving the Word at Mass and living it for

the rest of the week.

A line of scripture is shown also which was chosen by each individual group and which you will have to read for yourselves when they are displayed in the churches in the near future.

The whole thing has been made in bright primary colours. We await your (and the children's, of course,) opinion on them.

Help our young people appeal

by Robert Connor

The Parish in Carrickfergus and Whitehead has a small population but young people form a large part of it.

If we want our Parish to thrive and grow we must look to the young people to stay connected and be an active part of it.

There are plenty of activities for the adults, as can be seen in the church bulletin each week and the primary school children have their after-school clubs, but what about our 11 to 18 year olds?

A group of adults have

organised a fortnightly evening in the community hall for this age range to give them a place where they can be together. It is only a small beginning but from small acorns large oak trees grow.

There is a desire from our youth to have organised activities both indoors and outdoors but that will only happen if there are enough talented and caring adults willing to lend a hand in any form (It is not a lifetime commitment).

We have a wonderful group of young people but unless we care for them they will drift

aimlessly away from a Parish which does little to engage them.

Please offer a little of your time to help our fledgling youth 'club'. Our Parish will be a better place when people work together to serve other people and help improve our society. Our youth will develop self respect and self confidence in a safe environment, show proper respect for people and property and have an active faith to take into the future. Will you be part of it?

Principal says farewell

by Whitehead PTA

Many parishioners will know that Mr Keenan is leaving Lourdes Primary School this summer to take up the post of principal at St Luke's Primary School in Belfast.

He was with us for almost five years and his shoes will be hard to fill – in every sense of the word!

During his time with us he has been successful at developing the caring, family atmosphere which is at the very heart of the school ethos. He has been extremely proactive about increasing our numbers and fostering good community relations with our neighbouring schools and the community at large.

He has maintained the high academic standards we have come to expect from Lourdes whilst also introducing the children to a wider variety of sporting experiences. (Despite his dubious choice of football team!)

He has been undoubtedly faced with challenges while he was with us – the most notable probably being the attack on the school which he coped with most admirably.



The supportive response from the community and neighbouring schools at that time was indicative of the high regard in which he has been held.

His eloquence and sense of humour were always appreciated at the school events over the years and his support and enthusiasm for building a community spirit within the school family was always apparent.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish him every success for the future and thank him for his commitment and hard work for the benefit of our children.

Commenting on his move Mr Keenan said: "As a teacher, the end of June is usually a happy time but not so this year. I am moving on

to a new school. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the children, parents, staff, governors and those of you in the wider parish community for your friendship and support in my five years here as principal. A special thanks to Father Cosgrove for his guidance and support. Best wishes to all those connected with the school and I hope that my successor will have the same support as was given to me."

He added: "It has been another fabulous year for Lourdes. Concerts, festivals, discos, quizzes, communion, confirmation and first confession, trips to the Odyssey and the Opera House, sports day and treasure hunts. These events all ran alongside another set of impressive results and attainments achieved by our children. We also have another seven children joining us next year to once again raise our overall numbers. This reflects the school's reputation and the hard work being done by the whole school community. Of course we say goodbye and best wishes to our P7 Pupils. We wish them well as they move to a new school."

Parish Bereavement Group

by Stephen McCusker.

Remember that the Parish Bereavement Group exists in order to help bereaved individuals and their families to cope with their loss.

We are available to you in your moments of need, providing a confidential service based on listening to you and being present for you.

If you are grieving for a lost loved one and want to talk to someone, please contact us through Fr. Cosgrove.

P7s fly the nest

by Eithne Brady

The P7s at St Nicholas' Primary School have worked very hard this year for their transfer test, the inspection, their Confirmation and their End of Key Stage Assessment.

Of those sitting the transfer test 60% received grade A and 27% received grade B.

We are delighted with the children's and the school's successes as these grades are well above the Northern Ireland average.

The children will be going to the following schools: St Malachy's College, Dominican College, Little Flower, Ulidia and Belfast High.

The P7s hard work did not stop there. They then proceeded to participate in Queen's University 'Sounds Like Science' conference, the basketball finals at the University of Ulster and the Belfast Telegraph's Literacy-Geography project.

The pupils recently came joint first place in the Carrickfergus FM radio schools competition. They have also just received their CCEA ICT Accreditation grades for computers and their certificates for Heartstart, a life skills programme.

The children are a credit to St Nicholas' Primary School. We wish them all the best in their new schools.

United Holy Week Service hosted

By Pat Quinn

On Palm Sunday 20 March, the Parish held host to this year's Holy Week Service, which took as its theme 'Reconciliation'.

The congregation, made up of many churches, from the borough of Carrickfergus, was warmly welcomed by Father Michael.

With a leaflet to follow and good encouragement from the Folk Group the service was quite easy to follow and understand.

Roy Crowe led the First Reading with the reverend Billy Stewart proclaiming the Gospel and Steve Ames saying the Examination. The Homily was given by Mike Mc Cann (St Colman's Church of Ireland). He spoke of St Paul's journey, how we rejoice and bond together to be one with God, all in the church of Jesus Christ. How we strive to be in harmony as one body, everyday, not just on Sundays.

After listening and participating in the final prayers and hymns, the congregation all got together for tea, biscuits and some chat. Everyone seemed to have had an enjoyable evening and we look forward to getting together again in the future.



Confirmations

Our Lady of Lourdes pupils David Evans, Louise Maxwell and Kathy Darragh are congratulated on their Confirmation by principal Mr Keenan and Bishop Farquhar

A Short History of Lourdes Church Hall

Dempsey, Parish Priest of Carrickfergus, celebrated Mass in the new church, and a few months later the church was dedicated and called St Colman's.

When the present Church was opened in 1909, the old church, as planned, became a school and was called Lourdes Public Elementary School.

The first teacher

appointed was Miss Bridget McCluskey, who taught in the school from January 1909 until she retired in 1947.

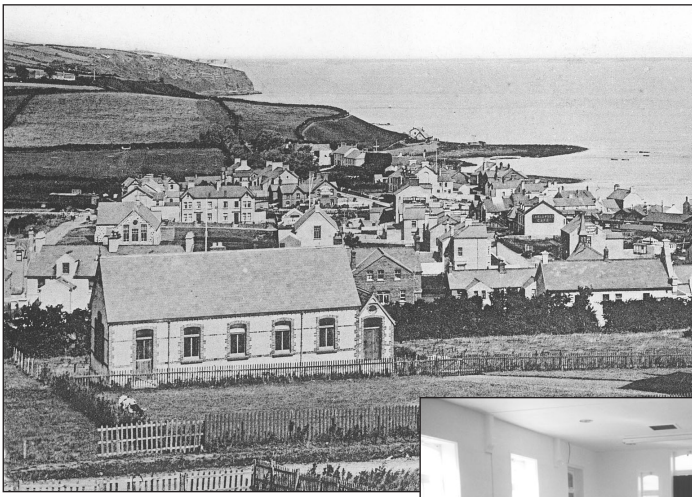
For many years the school consisted of one large room, which was heated by two coal fires. There were no toilets in the school. The boys' and girls' toilets were situated

about 25 yards from the schoolhouse, which was a great inconvenience, especially in bad weather.

In later years a partition was erected, making it into a two room school with two teachers. Eventually, in 1963-4, inside toilets were put in place. While this work was underway, classes were held in the bishop's house.

After the present school was opened in 1972, the old schoolhouse came into use as a community hall. To improve facilities at the hall, a new entrance porch, kitchen and storeroom were added and a much lower false ceiling was put in place to help contain heat.

During the period October 1998-April 1999, while Our Lady of Lourdes Church was being refurbished, the hall was once again used as a temporary church.



by Paddy O'Donnell

The community hall situated at the rear of Our Lady of Lourdes Church, Whitehead, dates back to 1898/9 when the Catholics of Whitehead decided to proceed with the building of a small church.

The cost was to be approximately £340, and it was to accommodate up to 200 people.

A grant of £35 towards the building fund was

donated by the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. It was intended as a temporary church, and would be used as a school when a permanent church was built. The final cost was £500.

On Sunday 9 July 1899, the Reverend Father William



Behind the scenes at the Folk Choir

by Linda Mellon

The Folk Choir is getting ready for its summer break.

Currently we have 24 members of varying ages, and we owe our existence to the dedication of everyone who turns up early every Sunday and attends practices during the year.

I'd like to lay claim to being the youngest, but as I'm writing for the parish newsletter, I'll have to pass on that one! As yet, no one has currently owned up to being the eldest!

Everyone in the choir plays

an important role – and some have extra 'jobs', which aid in the organisation of our morning service.

Our youngest member Maebh, sings for the children's liturgy each Sunday, and along with her mum and dad, Theresa and Robin, she helps distribute and collect the hymn sheets.

Connell, otherwise known as our roadie, sets up the mikes and deals with any electrical problems, while Ursula announces the hymns.

Helena is the chief harmony advisor and Martin produces

the hymn sheets.

However, every group has its problems, and there is usually an altercation each Sunday morning, over who sits in the front row, with the boys winning and staying glued to the back seats. Grace is 'my big stick' and keeps the men in check when they refuse to move each Sunday.

Occasionally when our numbers are low we have 'self appointed stand-ins' to fill the seats! Thankyou Hugh and Brendan! I'm currently working on them to become permanent

members.

Behind the scenes, a lot of time is spent, sourcing music and choosing hymns, and these are then printed by Martin, before making their way to Father Cosgrove for copying.

To relax, we had two outings last year. A meal at the Windrose to mark the beginning of the summer break, which we'll do again this year, and a murder mystery evening at Harry Ramsdens in October which was great fun.

Varied programme for young adult group

by Louise McKernon

We have had a great few months with our young adult group and have varied our programme a little recently.

We've had some theme nights which have proved very enjoyable. One evening we had a close look at the film 'Bruce Almighty' and the questions it raises about our faith in today's world. Our international friends working in local YMCAs have joined us from time to time and this has given our already varied group a whole other dimension - on one occasion

earlier in the year we asked everyone to bring a dish from their country. What a spread! Bridget's dishwasher had a big job afterwards!

On a more serious note we put aside one night to look at the life of Pope John Paul II and his impact on the youth of our church. He had a special relationship also with Catholic youth and is known by some as the Pope for Youth. He was a hero to many of them.

He established World Youth Day in 1984 with the intention of bringing young Catholics from all parts of the world together to celebrate their faith. These

week-long meetings of youth occur every two years, attracting hundreds of thousands of young people, who go there to sing, party, have a good time and deepen their faith.

Personally I was ashamed at how little I knew about Pope John Paul II and found our night of reflection to be humbling and inspiring.

All in the group are looking forward to our summer break and even more to coming back together in September to continue to build our friendships and our faith. Watch this space for details...

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Last issue winners

Wordsearch

Hannah & Emma Hefferan

Liturgy quiz

Sam Bridges

1. Missing numbers competition

Fill in the missing numbers

				10
5		2	1	11
9	9			27
	4			22
	6	9		24
22	22	20	20	27

The missing numbers are integers between 1 and 9.

The number in each row adds up to the total on the right.

The numbers in each column add up to the totals along the bottom.

The diagonal lines also add up to the totals to the right.

• Please leave your entries on a separate piece of paper in the sacristy at Carrick or Whitehead by the 15th August. Don't forget to enclose your name, age address and phone number. The prize for each competition is a £10 book token. Good luck!

2. Unscramble competition

Unscramble each of the clue words

Take the letters that appear in the circled boxes and unscramble for a final message

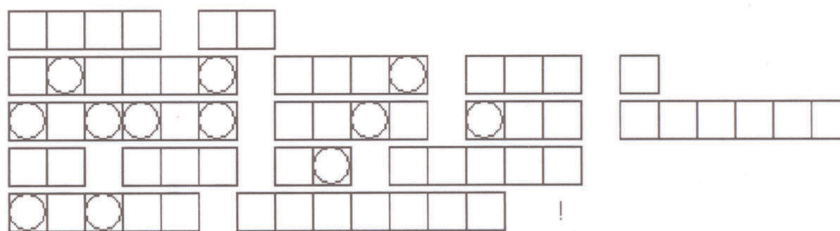
THSI SI

MERMUS TIEM DAN I

RALLEY VOEL TNO AVNIGH

TO TGE PU ELRYA

REYVE NONRIGM I



□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ !

Head reports on Sacraments at St Nicholas'

by Eithne Brady

On Saturday 28th May 15 P4 children from St Nicholas' received the Sacrament of First Holy Communion.

The weather was not exactly on our side, but the children braved the wind and the rain for this special event in their lives. They were joined by their parents and extended family, along with the school choir, the staff and teachers of the school.

Miss Emma Donnelly gave great support to the school by playing the organ alongside the choir, who sang beautifully. A special thanks to our school caretaker Mr Kirk, who recorded the day's proceedings on video.

Father Cosgrove put all the boys and girls at ease during the Mass and it was made all the more special by the involvement of the P4

children, who sang, said the readings and the prayers of the faithful. A great day was had by all who attended!

After the Mass the congregation were invited to join the children in a celebratory tea in St Nicholas' school hall. The PTA and the ladies of the Parish hosted a splendid afternoon.

Many thanks to all those who helped at the Mass and on the day. It was a fabulous day in the life of our school and of course a very special day for the boys and girls.

Meanwhile Monday 21st February was a very exciting day for the P7 pupils – it was the day that they received their sacrament of Confirmation. Preparations had begun well before Christmas, with much discussion about who would be there, which saint's name would be picked and what

special jobs the children would do to make their day memorable. It was a very exciting time for all involved.

The choir raised the rafters with their singing. The congregation was very impressed with the high quality of their voices. The children were extremely well behaved and Mrs. Byrne was rightly proud of them when Bishop Farquhar remarked on how much he was impressed by their maturity and the respect that they showed during the service.

Afterwards the children, parents, sponsors and all the guests headed down towards the school assembly hall for a party.

Thanks to all for making their day so special, especially Father Cosgrove and Bishop Farquhar.

My First Holy Communion

by Ivan Buick

"I made my First Holy Communion on Saturday 21st May 2005 with 6 other friends called Peter, Daniel, Niamh, Caitlin, Lisa and Karina. The weather was nice, but I felt a bit nervous when I arrived at the chapel. I was looking forward to receiving the sacred host for the first time ever and I hoped I wouldn't make any mistakes.

Father Cosgrove was very nice and he gave us all certificates to help us remember our special day. After Holy Communion I felt very grown up and happy."

Bittersweet mangoes

by Alisdair Cunningham

Guatemala. Mangoes fall from the heavens in June. Last year, on arriving at the village of San Agustin in the central sub-tropical lowlands, where I would spend 12 months working with poor small farmers, I was greeted by mangoes in their millions.

My first purveyors of this most sumptuous fruit were a middle-aged couple who picked me up on a dusty road and drove me and my over-sized rucksack 60 miles to the village, whereupon they felt the need to pay me for my company, presenting me with a boxful of the golden beauties.

A few days later, on my first excursion up the dirt tracks to the small communities dotted around the sierra, we made a mango pit stop at the humble abode of Alberto, a small coffee and fruit farmer from the local cooperative, ADIPSA. I got my cue from the others and, eyes marvelling at the sight of hundreds, maybe thousands of mangoes strewn across the dirt floor, I wasted no time in tucking in. I managed four or five of the juiciest mangoes I had ever eaten, happily tossing the skin off the side of the porch towards the river and the exuberant valley below. As Alberto looked out over the lush green landscape that had been his home for 50 years, he took me aside

and insisted "Guatemala is not a poor land, its people are poor." Nature's profusion took my breath away. Yet juxtaposed with this beauty, was great human suffering. Small farmers and their families –all toilers of this most bountiful land– lived in abject poverty. Their homes were little more than shacks of corrugated iron, or pest-ridden adobe huts; children everywhere, dressed in rags, bellies bloated from lack of clean water, sanitation and basic drugs. These are some of the countless 'tapeworm millionaires' throughout Latin America, Africa and Asia.

Mangoes (Guatemala): a fruit so common that they fall from the heavens in their thousands; cost: roughly a penny each, meaning that small farmers like Alberto cannot make a living.

Mangoes (Ireland): an exotic, expensive fruit; last week I bought one in a supermarket for £1.50.

If Alberto, his fellow villagers in San Agustín and poor farmers throughout Latin America, Africa and Asia could sell their mangoes, bananas, cocoa, sugar, rice, beans, cotton, etc at a decent price at local and international markets, this would go a very long way to ending much of the terrible deprivation in rural areas.

Yet there are a couple of simple things we can do in our daily lives to stop the horrible injustice. By buying Fair Trade products, we

can express our desire as consumers to place people over the profits of multinational companies. By wearing a white band and supporting the Make Poverty History campaign for fairer trade rules, debt cancellation and more aid, we can express our solidarity with farmers in poor countries at a time when the leaders of the eight richest countries in the world meet in Scotland at the beginning of July.

By making a few changes, we can help Make Poverty History so that a child no longer must die unnecessarily every three seconds.

By making small changes, we can achieve great things. Small is beautiful.

For more information on Fair Trade and to buy a white wristband, call into the Oxfam Fair Trade shop on Rosemary Street, Belfast; for those with Internet access, check out www.fairtrade.org.uk or www.oxfamireland.org/html/campaigns/fair_trade.html

For more information on the Make Poverty History campaign, headed by Bob Geldof, just listen to the news these days –it's on every day–, or visit www.makepovertyhistory.org

The sense of a goose

In Autumn when you see geese heading south for winter, flying along in formation, you might consider what science has discovered as to why they fly that way.

As each bird flaps its wings, it creates an uplift for the bird immediately following. The whole flock adds at least 71 per cent greater flying range than if each bird flew on its own.

People who have a common direction and sense of community can get where they are going more easily if they are travelling on the thrust of one another.

When a goose falls out of formation it feels the drag and resistance of trying to go it alone and quickly gets back into formation to take advantage of the lifting power of the bird in front. When the head goose gets tired it rotates back in the wing and another goose flies point.

It makes sense to take turns doing demanding jobs.

Geese in the rear honk to encourage those up front to keep up with their speed.

What messages do we honk from behind?

When a goose gets sick or wounded by gunshots and falls out of formation, two other geese fall out with that goose and follow it down to lend help and protection. They stay with the fallen goose until it is able to fly or until it dies. Only then do they launch out on their own with another formation to catch up with the group.

If we have the sense of a goose, we will stand by each other like that.

