

# the Connection

June 2022



“Then... and now.”



# the Connection

## Mass Times

### St. Nicholas' Carrickfergus

Sunday 11.30 am

Tuesday 10.00 am

Wednesday 7.00 pm

Holy Days: As announced

### Our Lady of Lourdes, Whitehead

Sunday 9.30 am

Wednesday 10.00 am

Holy Days: As announced

## Sacrament of the Sick

Father Owens attends the sick and house-bound monthly as announced in the parish Bulletin or as required.

## Baptisms

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated in Our Lady of Lourdes on the first Sunday of the month and in St. Nicholas' on the second Sunday.

Contact the parish office giving a minimum of one month's notice.

## Weddings

By Arrangement.

Three months' notice required.

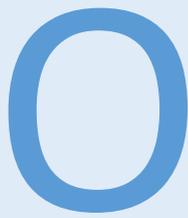
## Confessions

### Whitehead:-

Sunday before Mass

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." ~ Proverbs 22:6

# Dear Parishioners



On 31st May 2020 (Solemnity of Pentecost) Pope Francis sent a letter to the priests of the Diocese of Rome. In it he speaks movingly of the impact of the unfolding COVID-19 Pandemic,

*“Our usual ways of relating, planning, celebrating, praying, meeting and even dealing with conflict were changed and challenged by an invisible presence that turned our everyday existence upside down ... The pandemic knows no descriptors, no boundaries and none of us can think of getting by alone. We are all affected and isolated.”*

And so it has been for all of us in the Parish of Carrickfergus and Whitehead over the past two years – a time of unbelievable disruption and restrictions. Yet also a time of extraordinary generosity, courage, loyalty and resilience on the part of so many volunteers and parishioners, who looked beyond their own needs to serve the common good within our parish family and in our wider local and global community.

In this Pentecost 2022 issue of ‘The Connection’, we as Parish Priest, Chair and Vice-Chair of our Parish Pastoral Council, wish to acknowledge this legacy of Christian witness and service with deep gratitude and appreciation.

In the aforementioned letter our Holy Father reminds us, *“The Resurrection is not simply an event of past history to be remembered and celebrated; it is much more. It is the saving proclamation of a new age that resounds and already bursts onto the scene ... Do not be afraid!”*

We salute the resurrection faith of so many in our parish, not least during the time of pandemic.

During the last couple of months, emerging from the pandemic with the relaxations of the necessary rules to keep us all safe, it has been a great joy and relief to be able to return to our various Church services that we used to take for granted. We are now able to welcome everyone back to Mass together, no longer having to attend in turn alphabetically. There were a number of services and paraliturgies during Lent, with displays of artwork by our children on what Lent means to them in and around the churches. We were delighted to have a full Easter Triduum, with our heightened awareness of the suffering, death, burial and then resurrection of Jesus at Easter. We were honoured to receive Stephen Pitman into the Church at the Easter Vigil, when he was Confirmed and received Holy Communion for the first time. It was acknowledged by considerable acclamation and joy by all the parishioners.

# Dear Parishioners

Our Primary 7 children had their Service of Light and Commitment to prepare for Confirmation on 31st March and the beautiful and uplifting Confirmation Mass itself took place on 7th April. Then, on Saturday the 21st May, our Primary 4 children celebrated their First Holy Communion.

We remain mindful that not everyone who used to come to Mass has been able to come back yet. Please be assured that you will be fondly welcomed whenever you feel able to return.

But what of the future? What does the future hold for our parish? No one can say with any certainty other than change is inevitable. Indeed, we have recently held a number of listening exercises in our own parish seeking 'on the ground' feedback on the aspects of parish life you feel are working well and on those areas you feel may need improvement. We have also recently had the opportunity to respond to the Synodal Listening Church exercise as facilitated by the Diocesan Living Church group. We look forward to future guidance on the way forward from the Irish Bishops as they consider all the responses from the parishes across Ireland. We listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to and through us and journey together in hope for the future.

We should not fear change. As you will read in this edition, our legacy as a parish family has shown that we have weathered many storms. However we have been blessed with many positive experiences throughout our parish history all serving to draw us closer to God and to each other. Within the pages of this edition (themed 'Then and Now') you can read how God's provision has blessed our parish. We hope you'll enjoy reading how the power of God has manifested itself—and continues to do so—in the lives of our parishioners as they reflect on memories of times gone by.



# Dear Parishioners

As Christians we are endowed with the theological virtues of Faith, Hope and Love. It's not often we speak on Hope but of the three virtues 'Hope' is the one constrained to the confines of our earthly existence. Hope is that fervent desire and confident expectation that God walks with us and leads us through the inevitable changes the future will bring. We therefore can walk fearlessly and joyfully together into the future with a blessed confidence that God is good and that He loves us dearly.

In closing, we should like to inform you that going forward the role of Chair of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) shall be rotated on an annual basis. This will enable more PPC members to have the opportunity to lead the team for a defined period of time. Current PPC members are as follows: -

Fr. Peter Owens (President), Paddy Stewart (Chair), Steve Lavery (Vice Chair), Julie Elliott (Secretary), Marian Frampton, Siobhan Gilmore, Mary McCormack, Thomas Moore, Patrick Quinn, Petar Segó, Paul Smith and Robert Sweeney.

We hope you enjoy this edition of 'The Connection' and will feel inspired while looking forward with joyful anticipation to change and the blessings He will bring.

God Bless.

Fr. P.J. Owens (President PPC), P.P., V.F., Paddy Stewart (Chair PPC), Stephen Lavery (Vice Chair PPC)



PPC Members—Left to Right: Petar Segó, Paddy Stewart, Tom Moore, Stephen Lavery, Paul Smith, Bob Sweeney, Mary McCormack, Fr. Peter Owens.

Members absent from the photo: Julie Elliott, , Marian Frampton, , Siobhan Gilmore, Patrick Quinn

# Journeys in Ecumenism

It is both a delight and honour to contribute to your parish magazine and share some of my journeys in ecumenism.

As I write this article, I am sitting in my study, having retired to the seaside town of Donaghadee on the beautiful Ards Peninsula in County Down. We have had a house in Donaghadee for many years, and now it is our permanent home. I was brought up just outside Donaghadee in the townland of Ballyvester. Indeed, I can trace my relatives back to the 17th century who came to that part of the world from Scotland.



31 December 2021 saw us leave Carrickfergus, where I served as minister of Joymount Presbyterian Church for 23 years and seven months. Joymount has had a long association with Mount St. Nicholas. My predecessor Rev. Ronnie Clements had close links with the parish and was instrumental in setting up the Carrick Council of Churches, of which yourselves, Joymount, North St., Saint Nicholas, Downshire, and St. Coleman's all played their part in promoting unity and wellbeing within our community. From that, the Intercessors for Carrickfergus, an ecumenical prayer group, was formed. I believe it has played a significant role in encouraging 'ordinary' members of our Churches to be part of an ecumenical body whose task it was to uphold our town and its leaders, those in public office, business, education, health and social services and security, and its citizens in prayer. Prayer changes things! We worship a God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, who hears and answers prayer. In over 30 years of parish ministry, I have seen God work, time and time again, through the prayers of very ordinary people who make time to engage in prayer. God honours the prayers of His people; how great is our God!

My personal ecumenical story begins with Sister Catherine. My parents had a newsagent shop in Donaghadee, frequented by the Sisters of Mercy from Downpatrick who lived in a convent on High St. in our town for several years. My First ecumenical contact was through the Sisters of Mercy. Sister Catherine gave me great encouragement and prayed regularly for me during my undergraduate studies and then seminary for the ministry for our Church. I have very fond memories of her; she was a godly woman.

# Journeys in Ecumenism

I was ordained into the ministry of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, having completed my studies for the ministry, three years as an undergraduate in London, four years in seminary in Belfast, and then a further three years as an assistant minister in the congregation of First Presbyterian Church, Comber, Co. Down.

The congregation of First Comber invested in ecumenical activity and during my time there I held the office of chairman of the Council of Churches for a year. It was an excellent experience for a young minister; my Catholic counterpart was Father Dan White, who retired recently from the Parish of Glengormley. Unfortunately, our paths never crossed since those early days in Comber.

While I was in Comber I met my wife Lynda, a native of Crossgar. We enjoyed lots of walks around the grounds of Tobar Mhuire. If you have never been, I thoroughly recommend a visit. The grounds are beautiful, and the chapel is outstanding. In recent years extensive work has been completed with new paths and trails. Much later on, at a retreat in the monastery, I was to meet your parish priest, Father Peter, but that is much later in my story.

Lynda and I were married in Lissara Presbyterian Church, Crossgar, in June 1992. I had received a call to become parish minister of two congregations - 2nd Castlederg (Co. Tyrone) and Alt (Co Donegal) in April of that year. After we were married Lynda gave up her job as a Social Worker, based in Belfast, and moved to Castlederg to set up home for almost seven years. In that time, we were blessed with a son Mark. Lynda lectured for a year in Omagh College before moving back into social work: Family and Childcare in Derry and then the Fostering and Adoption Team in Omagh.

I ministered in the cross-border charge of Castlederg in Tyrone and Alt on the southern side of the border (near Castlefinn in Donegal). Castlederg had many troubles, and it was a community that had suffered a lot. The Churches in the town were united in their approach to taking a stand for right and truth. My Catholic counterpart was Father Jim McGonigal, he and I became great friends dropping in to see each other from time to time to have a chat and, as they say in this part of the world, share in a "bit of craic". I held him in high regard and still do. Castlederg wasn't the easiest of places to minister but the ordinary people who tried to get on with life and living were great. We have many, many happy memories from those days.

The Churches in Castlederg were involved with "The Ulster Project". The Ulster Project is an ecumenical body set up to educate and develop young people as leaders and to effect change in their communities.

# Journeys in Ecumenism

It came into being in 1975, and it involved young people coming from the USA to NI and then NI Young people going to the USA. We were linked with New Orleans in Louisiana. During my time in Castlederg, I did a pulpit swap with the Presbyterian Coordinator in New Orleans. Lynda and I spent four weeks serving in the church there and two weeks holiday.

While in Castlederg, I was a part-time hospital chaplain in Derg Valley Hospital. During in-service training, which the Health Service requires from all its chaplains, I met the late Father Michael Cosgrove and then when I came to Joymount, I was able to renew my friendship with Fr. Michael when he became your parish priest. Lynda and I were privileged to attend the dedication of your new church building and were warmly welcomed by the congregation. Last year I joined your congregation one Sunday to worship and was warmly greeted and welcomed by many in the congregation. Theology may separate us but God, the Holy Spirit, unites us and calls us as Christians to love one another.

I have always had an interest in pastoral theology and the practice of pastoral counselling. To hone my skills, I went for pastoral supervision outside my own denomination. Firstly to a high Anglican Rev. Dick McDonald and then, after Rev. Dick retired, I went to a Passionist priest, Father John Friel. I benefited greatly from the insight both men brought to my thinking. On one occasion, I attended a retreat in the Tobar Mhuire Monastery in Crossgar, where I was to meet your current priest, Father Peter. It is a small world; eventually, he was to become my neighbour in Carrickfergus.

My journeys in ecumenism have taught me a lot. I firmly believe that while unity may not always be feasible, cooperation is. We may not agree on all issues, but we can work together and respect each other, striving to recognize each other's ministries and the common participation in various activities for the good of the community in which we live and serve.

In closing, I am reminded of the words of St. Paul as they are found in the 12th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, "*For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free, and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. Even so, the body is not made up of one part but of many. There should be no division in the body, but its parts should have equal concern for each other. ....*"

I pray that cooperation and recognition of each other's ministries will continue in the years to come so that God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit may be glorified.

May God bless you, all.

Richard Graham (Rev.)

# Saint Nicholas' Secondary School



**A**s one of the first 1st-years at St Nicholas' Secondary School, which opened in September 1969 to a small number of pupils and teachers, I have been asked to delve into my memories of my time there. St Nicholas' was a place where I was to spend 5 happy years. It had very small beginnings; we didn't even have a badge or tie on our opening day!

They came later when the school ran a competition among the pupils to design them. However, the expectation was that the school would grow in numbers and educate children for many decades to



come; but unfortunately, that was not to be. The opening, having coincided with the beginning of "the troubles", meant that the hopes for the school were not to be realised long-term. However, during the 20 years it remained open, a lot of us made many happy memories, maybe even

remembered more fondly because the school had such a short life span.

I really enjoyed attending the school and still have lifelong friends made from my time there. As many of you will know, my dad and grandfather were both teachers at St. Nicholas' and many will remember not just getting lessons in woodwork from Hubert Snr., but also learning a lot about life in Nigeria where he had previously taught. People were always telling me that if they wanted to do a bit less woodwork, they just needed to ask him about Nigeria!



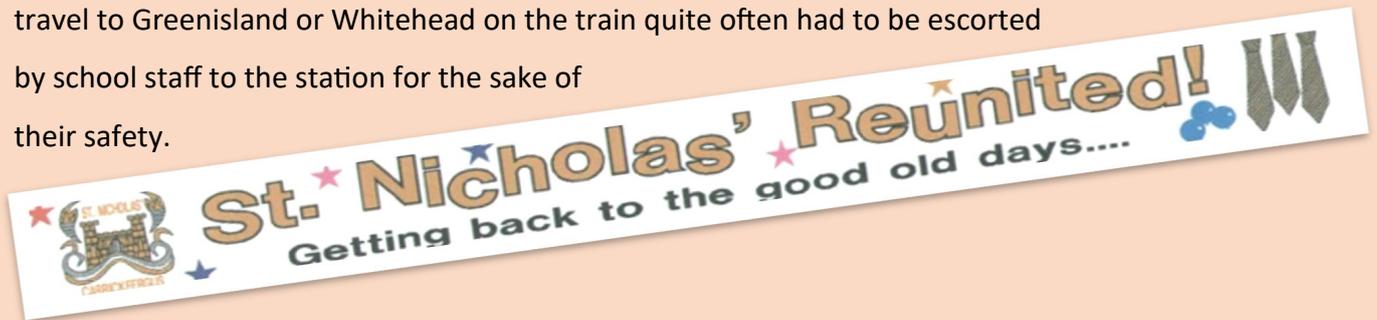
I felt that the school was ahead of its time in many ways, with a strong emphasis on not only educational results, but practical life skills like gardening, car maintenance and cycling proficiency and after-school clubs provided fun and sport for many. My dad ran a badminton club in the gym/assembly hall in the evenings and once organised an attempt at breaking a world record with 9 people playing badminton non-stop for 3 days and nights (You can read more on our record attempt further on in this issue.) **SPOILER ALERT:** The attempt was successful, but unfortunately, another group broke our record just before the Guinness Book of Records went to print! Disappointing!

# Saint Nicholas' Secondary School

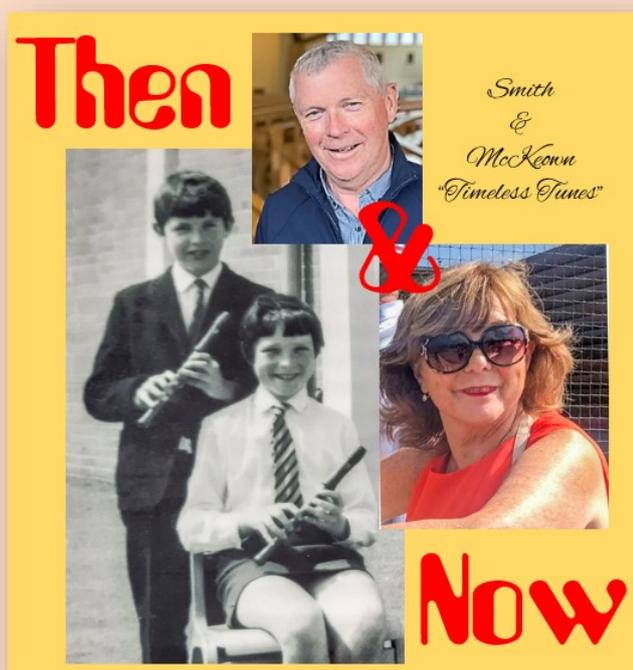


Also, our PE class once featured on the 1970s news programme, Scene Around Six, demonstrating our creative dance skills. I don't think any of us made it to Riverdance, though!

I remember some scary times too, like the day we all had to go to the assembly hall as the school was deemed to be under attack! Thank goodness we were fine on that occasion, but pupils who had to travel to Greenisland or Whitehead on the train quite often had to be escorted by school staff to the station for the sake of their safety.



Around 2004, after chatting to some former pupils and realising there was still a lot of fondness for the school, a few of us got together and organised a really successful school reunion, where several hundred ex-pupils and teachers came along and enjoyed a fantastic night. The success of that night, which was attended not only by people still living locally, but also by pupils who had moved to England, Scotland and Wales (and even 1 from Australia!), led to the formation of St. Nicholas' Reunited, which ran successfully for around 12 years, hosting annual events at Christmas. It also led to our famous Family Football Tournaments which were followed by gala prize-giving nights. Happy times!! Anyone for an encore?



# Saint Nicholas' Secondary School



After the school closed in 1989, the building remained in place for many years, at times being used as a film studio for local productions, then a training source for the Fire Service, before eventually being purchased by Tesco who built the store that now stands on the site. A competition was launched by the local paper for someone to cut the ribbon when the store was opened. Due to our family history in the school and the formation of St. Nicholas Reunited, which re-established so many forgotten friendships and a great community spirit, I got the opportunity to open the store. It was nice to see the history of the school being recognised on that occasion. To this day when I park my car at Tesco, I still think I've parked it on the hockey pitch!

By Patricia McKeown



# The Kindness of a Parish

I have always been struck by the special nature of Mount St. Nicholas Parish. From the outset when I arrived here in July 2003, I was welcomed and embraced. I have, for almost 20 years, felt very much a part of this parish with so many friends who have been there for me through some tough personal times. That is why I wish to share the story of my father's death, as it demonstrates the generosity of people in the parish, who willingly go above and beyond in supporting fellow Christians in times of need.

My father, Tom Hayes, was born in Dublin in 1928, the eldest of five children. He was educated at St. Augustine's College, Dungarvin, Co. Waterford and he studied Mechanical and Electrical Engineering in University College Dublin, where he met my mother, Angela; then, a pre-medical student with roots in Tyrone. Love blossomed and they married in 1953 and immediately moved to Canada. Seven years later, with children Mark and Miriam, they transferred to Belgium. In 1962, he joined ITT and the family, now with a third child, me, moved to Harlow in Essex.

The parish I grew up in was Our Lady of Fatima in Harlow. As part of the "Baby-Boomers" the parish was very family-orientated. My parents were very involved in the parish, with Mum taking on the choir and organ at short notice after a stroke disabled the previous organist weeks before a Golden Anniversary of one of the priests, Fr. Burgess. Dad ran the Tax Relief Scheme for Offertory Donations, as well as moving the organ console from the choir loft to the ground floor. So you see, from the start I was brought up that parish-life was an integral part of my life. Before I left the nest I was involved in a nascent folk group – anyone spotting something here?

Dad's final career move in 1986 was to STC (Nortel) in Monkstown and my parents took up residence in Jordanstown (a little strange to have your parents leave home!). After retirement he undertook part-time lecturing in management at Ulster University's School of Engineering and became Chairman of the Board of Governors for the East Antrim Institute for Further Education. He was awarded the OBE in 2002.

Dad always attended Mass, First in Whitehouse, where Mum was organist and choir mistress, then latterly in St. Coleman's, Greenisland, and from time to time they would come to St. Nicholas (to this day I received good feedback on the services in which, as part of the folk group, I was involved). He never missed attendance while on many overseas trips and was an active member of the Knights of Columbanus for over 30 years.

# The Kindness of a Parish

This deep personal faith supported him through the tragic deaths of my siblings - Mark and Miriam. The morning of my sister's death in a car accident in the US, Roisin White told her daughter, Grainne aged 8, to give me a big hug: to this day Grainne is still my walking hug!

In retirement Dad studied the Gospels in ancient Greek - on leaving school, he achieved the highest Leaving Certificate score in Ireland in Ancient Greek. Summers spent in the Connemara Gaeltacht resulted in a fluency and love of the Irish language. This facility with languages was developed throughout his life and he also became fluent in French and German and had a working knowledge of Russian and Italian.

He also pursued a lifelong love of archaeology by joining the Ulster Archaeological Society (UAS) in 1988. In 2003 he became President of the Ulster Archaeological Society. On standing down in 2006, he became a Vice-President for a further six years. Dad's professional skills guided the committee through his presidency and his easy sociability, calm enthusiasm, boundless knowledge and love of archaeology enriched all who met him. In recognition of his contribution to the society, at the 76th AGM in 2018, he was awarded Honorary life membership.



Dad remained physically, mentally and socially active despite being handicapped by failing eyesight. He died on 11th September 2021, aged 93, following a fall while working in the garden. I take comfort in that he literally was out fixing a fence at 93 – he was a talented engineer and his tool shed put B&Q to shame! He literally lived to the end.

This is where the Parish of Mount St. Nicholas stepped in, in a big way, offering support and kindness to both my mother and myself. I contacted Mullholland's Funeral Directors and was wonderfully looked after and guided through the whole process of arranging the funeral by Margo McNamara of the Children's Liturgy Group. Then Tommy Mone arranged the plot at Prospect Cemetery and Eamon Grant and his team dug the grave.

The funeral was held at St Mary, Star of the Sea, Whitehouse presided by Fr. David Delargy. Due to restrictions still in place, the numbers were limited but a cortege of six Knights of St Columbanus accompanied my father in and out of the church. Family from Ireland and the UK attended in person, as well as two of his grandchildren (Vanessa & Alex) and great granddaughter (Layla) in the US via the internet.

# The Kindness of a Parish

As everyone knows, adjusting to bereavement after a death takes time. For my mother especially, after 68 years of marriage, it has been a hard time. However, Louise Mayne volunteered to visit with my mother while Jay and I got away just after Christmas for some skiing. Fr. Peter visited my mother – a gesture of compassion and kindness given that my mother is not in this parish.

Margaret Barry has phoned me and asked how my mother is, as well as me. So many friends have supported us and combined with my mother's own circle of friends from the Loughshore Parishes, the UAS and beyond, we have been very moved by the love shown.

Dad was blessed with a very long life and while his passing was sudden and tragic, I relish the love he had for his faith. He was devoted to the Rosary, which he said daily, as well as to the Catholic Church. He lived his faith publically and with devotion. He was a humble man for whom family was his focus, especially Mum. To me, he challenged me to be the best I can be and in particular to continue to have faith. Mum and Dad were a formidable team! I know he rests in peace in God's arms.

By Anne Nagley

# Parish Confirmations

**O**n the 7th of April our Primary 7 students celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation, in what was a beautiful service. The students prepared themselves for receiving the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit during their Service of Light and Commitment. Confirmation marked the next stage of our students' sacramental journey through the strengthening and deepening of the graces they were given at Baptism. By renewing their baptismal vows, made on their behalf at Baptism, our students were able to publicly strengthen and affirm their faith and their



intention to live in the way of Jesus.

**Sinead O'Neill P7** ~ *Confirmation means that I can move onto the next stage of the Sacraments with God by my side. I will become a full member of the Catholic Church and get the opportunity to renew my baptismal vows. I will become filled with the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit. I hope that the gifts and fruits I receive will help me live as God expects me to.*

**Lucy Maxwell P7** ~ *For me, Confirmation means becoming a full member of the Catholic Church and being able to renew my baptismal vows. I will be blessed with the Holy Spirit and receive its gifts and fruits. It is my hope that these gifts and fruits will help me live as Jesus expects.*

By Geraldine Doherty

# Parish Confirmations



## Times Gone By....

**W**hen Fr. Owens asked me to write something for the parish magazine, memories, at first reluctant, came crowding back: first, of a very warm welcome to the parish from Fr. McKenna, who, despite having had a stroke some years before, was far-sighted enough to have bought a site and had made preparations for building a church in Greenisland, and was negotiating the purchase of the brickfield at Minorca Place as the site for the building of a secondary school – a site costing around £5,000.00, which, after the town commercial boundary was extended, was sold for around two million pounds.

But no man can have all the talents – for, when I had to go over his accounts, neither I nor our accountant could make head nor tail of them!

I remember the year when my windows were broken every week and our insurance firm refused to renew our contract. In the same year I was called out to a house that was being confronted by a mob; as soon as I got into the house the windows were smashed. On the following day the family moved to England and many similar incidents caused the Catholic population to decrease in the town from around 3,000 to approximately 1,750.

Fr. McKenna's Golden Jubilee (Fr. Beagon is on the far right of the photograph)



# Times Gone By....

Much worse is my memory of being called to give the Last Rites to a man shot dead in the street, whose blood, when I arrived, was trickling down the gutter.

My memories of the Parish Youth Club are very different:

- memories of the young people enjoying their evenings together;
- of their winning the Northern Ireland Quiz Competition and the Diocesan Football Competition;
- of my persuading six instructors to teach what seemed like hundreds of them to swim;
- of driving to Lourdes with them in a minibus, camping along the way, and in the days before mobile phones, welcoming the girl who caught up with us, bearing the good news of successful exam results.
- of the few days spent in Spain after our pilgrimage.

Some of these memories are not memories now; they have become lifelong friendships.

By Fr. Brendan Beagon

(Pastor Emeritus)

# Minorca - Then & Now

There have been many changes to Minorca Place over the years. The only buildings standing today are the small row of terraced houses beside the church gate, built in 1928.

Across the road, where Tesco stands today, parishioners will remember the Parish Youth Club, and the Secondary School where children were taught, and friendships forged. But years earlier, there was a small row of houses that stood behind a stone wall, known locally as 'The Hollow.' Behind these houses was a sawmill and the site of the old Albert Brickworks. When the brickyard lake would freeze over, people would skate on it.

Beside our current church on Ellis Street stood the Salt Works building. This then became derelict after many years.

Behind Minorca Cemetery and the old chapel, there was a railway line connecting the mainline with Carrick Harbour, this line crossed over the tramway bridge.

Where the current school car park is today, there were three large houses and the old parochial hall, just visible on the right of the photo, below.

Parishioners could drive in the church entrance and then exit via a narrow laneway, where the school pedestrian path is today.

Fr. Beagon resided in one of the houses shown.



Behind the old parochial hall there was a stairway to a loft room which was used as an overflow classroom for the girls school in the 1950s. The old parochial hall was used for school dinners and lots of other activities over the years.

In earlier years, a large crucifix was situated between the boys' and girls' schools. It was later moved up beside the front of the old chapel.

# Minorca - Then & Now

Today our current church is situated on the grounds of the original parochial house gardens. Below is a picture of the late Fr. George McKay in the gardens.



These gardens were used for the annual Corpus Christi procession, with parishioners and children walking from the chapel to the gardens, reciting the Rosary and singing hymns, returning to the grass lawn beside the playground and tennis court for benediction, (the crowds were unbelievable, with people coming from all around to watch this glorious day).

There was a pavilion beside the tennis court and lawn. Parishioners would play rounders or cricket on the lawn and there was table tennis in the pavilion.

The old chapel had a gallery, and to go to Holy Communion, you had to go back outside, down the steps, and re-enter the front door of the church.

The large bell tower was moved down to the new round church in the late 1970's but was then later returned to its original position in the cemetery where it stands today.

The bingo was introduced into the parish by the late Fr. Archie Kelly. This was held in the old parochial hall and then moved in later years to the primary school assembly hall. A bazaar was held in the school hall before Christmas each year and this was very well supported by parishioners.

Researched by Patrick Quinn

# Out and About

**T**hough I have never been on a 'packaged pilgrimage', I have found myself visiting places of pilgrimage when on holiday, or when visiting friends and family. Two in particular, stand out for me.

## **The Basilica of Sacre-Coeur in Paris.**

The Basilica sits at the summit of Montmartre, the highest point in the city. The site had an original chapel to honour Saint Denis and Christians, martyred during the persecutions, thus contributing to the hill being called the Mount of Martyrs (Mont des Martyrs - Montmartre).



In December 1870, following the military defeat of France by Prussia, a project began to build a church in Paris dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus, as a sign of penitence, trust, hope and faith.

Construction started in 1875 and was completed in 1914, and was formally dedicated in 1919 after the First World War.

On the 6 November 1887, en route to Rome, fourteen year old Thérèse Martin (later Saint Thérèse of Lisieux), devoted herself to the Sacred Heart at Saint Peter's altar in the crypt of the Basilica.

Stepping into the Basilica, I was struck by the immediate silence in the church. This was because, adoration was taking place.

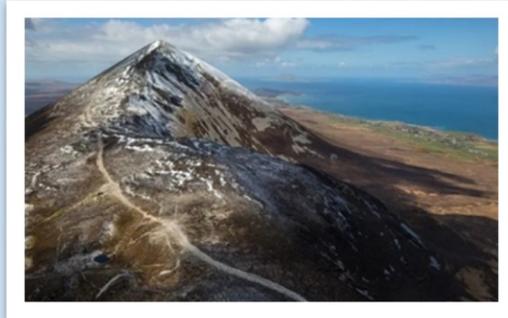
Since 1885, before construction was completed, the Blessed Sacrament has been continually on display above the high altar and this has continued night and day uninterrupted, to the present day.

Definitely a quiet oasis in a busy city.

# Out and About

## The second is Croagh Patrick – Co. Mayo.

Good weather, and I was thinking of doing something after a busy month at work. On reading a newspaper article, it transpired that the following weekend would be Reek Sunday, the last Sunday in July. After a long drive down to Westport on the Saturday afternoon, a concert in the grounds of Westport Park and very little sleep, Sunday morning arrived, and the climb beckoned ahead.



Nicknamed 'the Reek' at a height of 764m (2,507ft) Croagh Patrick is climbed by thousands of pilgrims every year on Ireland's holiest mountain, a custom which goes back to at least the Middle Ages. This particular year, over 25,000 pilgrims were taking part and Mass on the summit, was being broadcast live worldwide for the first time.

The climb seemed easy to start with but on catching up with others the path became more difficult. I realised then the long journey the day before had not been the best way to prepare for a hike!

In the distance thousands were walking ahead with the path stretching as far as the eye could see. On the final section, the incline increased to its conical summit. On reaching the summit pilgrims attended Mass at the small chapel built on top of the mountain. Others preferred to simply take in the spectacular view in a private moment of reflection.

A beautiful spectacle of humanity walking in faith together. Now for the descent, another two hours, but a bit more dangerous!

By Patrick Quinn

# Challenging Times for Our Youth

**O**n Sunday 20th March, the parish Lenten evenings continued, this time in Carrickfergus. I was asked, along with Ellie Morgan, to read some reflections on the Stations of the Cross. Alex, Evan and Madison were also there to carry the cross to each station around the church while the reflections were being read.

The evening was entitled 'Challenging Times for Our Youth'. The pandemic has brought about even more challenges for our generation and there has been no better time to remind ourselves of how we can meet those challenges head on. We are surrounded by media and messages on a daily basis and we often need time to think about our place in the ever-changing world. The reflections had been beautifully written and focused on how the youth of today could make Jesus' Good Friday journey relevant for themselves.

Jesus accepted difficulties, needed help and overcame the struggles of his journey, ultimately being who God made Him to be. The same challenge presents itself to us.

Where do we need to ask for help? Who can we trust and turn to? How can we become the best adult version of ourselves - when we are alone, and when we are in the company of our families, friends and even strangers?

Struggles are necessary as we become more independent. Failures lead us to be humble, resilient and forgiving. We often need to dig deep to live courageously in our faith. Acknowledging our own self-worth and dignity as a child of God is central to this.

Thank you to those who gave me the opportunity to be involved.

by Olivia Mayne



# Catechism Corner

## WHAT IS THE CATECHISM?

The Catechism is a manual of doctrine (Christian teaching) that clearly explains the teachings of the Bible, Church Traditions and Church Authorities.

The most recent version of the Catechism was compiled by Pope John Paul II, but Christians have been using a catechism since the days of the Apostles. Almost 2000 years ago, people from a pagan background who had become Christians were taught about their faith, studied the teaching of Jesus and were prepared for receiving the Eucharist. They also learned about baptism, prayer, fasting and the Christian way of life.

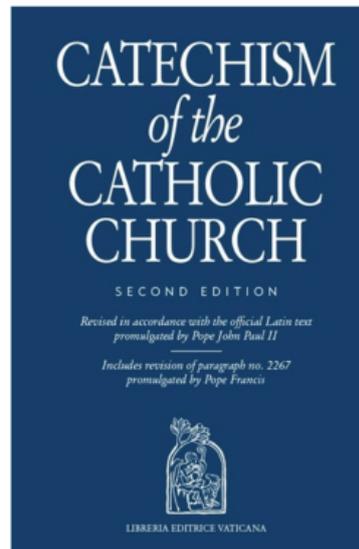
The Catechism is made up of 4 parts about Faith, Sacraments, Christian living and Prayer.

Every paragraph in the Catechism is numbered so it is easy to find a reference that you are given. An example of such a reference is, CCC 13-17.

The **YOUCAT** and **YOUCAT For Kids** (and parents) are catechisms made for young people and children. They are vividly illustrated and have language that is easily accessible.

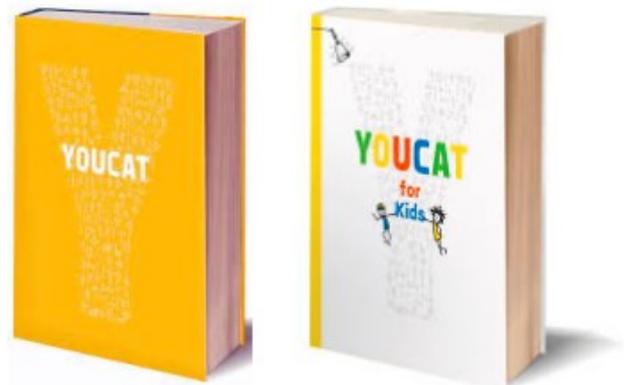
The Profession of Faith – discussion of how God is revealed to man and how man must respond in faith to God. Summary of the gifts that God gives to people. Discussion of our faith in the one God who is the Almighty Father, Jesus Christ our Saviour and the Holy Spirit who makes us holy.

The Sacraments of Faith – how God's salvation is accomplished once for all through Christ Jesus and the Holy Spirit, and how we see Him in the liturgy of the Church, particularly in the seven sacraments.



The Life of Faith – explaining the right way to live in accordance with God's law and with the help of God's grace. Also how we should live in a way that fulfils the commands to love God and love our neighbour, as detailed in the Ten Commandments.

Prayer in the Life of Faith – the meaning and importance of prayer in the life of believers. Explanation of the Lord's Prayer and how God hears and answers us when we pray.



## WHAT ARE CATECHESIS AND CATECHISM CLASSES?

Catechesis is Christian teaching and learning. This can happen in many different settings. One type of catechesis is done in catechism classes. This is Christian religious education for children, youth or adults. It is a systematic way of teaching to introduce students to the fullness of Christian life.

Catechism classes consist of the following topics: -

# Catechism Corner

- Proclaiming the Gospel to awaken faith
- Researching reasons for Faith
- Experience of Christian Life
- Celebration of the Holy Sacraments
- Entering the Church community
- Living the Gospel and sharing the message to others.

The Church's intention in these classes is to make people Christ's disciples and for them to know that Jesus is the Son of God. This is so that people would, by faith, have life in Jesus' name and in this way to build the body of Christ. They are for people who want to know more about their existing faith or deepen their faith, or for those who are curious and seeking answers. Catechism classes for the earliest Christians were about learning the Lord's Prayer and Apostles' Creed and having a knowledge of the Sacraments. Since then, catechism classes have played a big part in making new disciples and educating Christians in their faith. Children attend catechism classes in preparation for their First Communion and Confirmation. They are also for adults who are wanting to join the Catholic Church.

## ARE CATECHESIS OR CATECHISM CLASSES FOR ME?

Catechesis is a great way to be an educated Christian and understand our faith, so we can live it better. The importance of knowing and understanding our faith is given in 1 Peter 3 v15: *"Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have."* Pope John Paul II wrote an apostolic exhortation called *Catechesi Tradendae* where he reminds us that Jesus' final command before he ascended into Heaven was that His people were to make disciples. In the early days the Apostles taught the Christians and the Church has always viewed catechesis as its right and its duty. Pope John Paul II also writes that everyone needs to be catechised, particularly adults because they have the greatest responsibilities and the capacity to live the Christian message in its fully developed form. While more structured learning can be done in a catechism class, there are lots of other opportunities for Christian learning as well e.g. conferences, guided pilgrimages, retreats, prayer groups, cell groups, books teaching about faith, podcasts and online videos about faith etc.

Our parish provides some of these, others are organised by the diocese and there are many good resources on the internet.

## What form of catechesis (Christian learning) can you commit to being a part of?

By Petar Šego

# First Communion

**O**n Saturday 21st May the Primary 4 children from St. Nicholas' Primary School celebrated the Sacrament of First Holy Communion in Mount St Nicholas' Church. It was lovely to see the church so full of family and friends supporting the children on their faith journey. The choir from St. Nicholas' Primary School accompanied the children and helped them celebrate the special occasion.

The children have been preparing for their special day over the past few weeks and have enjoyed their visits to the church to practice. In particular, the children loved talking with Father Owens and hearing the story of the San Damiano Cross which hangs above the Tabernacle.

The children were joined by their peers from Acorn Integrated Primary School and children prepared for the Sacrament by Mary Muir also included children from Whitehead Primary School, Model Primary School, Ligoneil Primary School and Ben Madigan Preparatory School.

Children and their families enjoyed some refreshments back in St. Nicholas' Primary School.

Thank you to all those who helped prepare the children to receive the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

## FIRST COMMUNION MEANS ....

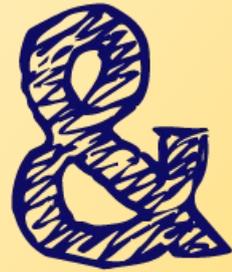
- ⇒ *"Celebrating the Last Supper like Jesus did."* ~ **Oliver Ireland**
- ⇒ *"Having a good heart."* ~ **Ciara Diola**
- ⇒ *"Being closer to Jesus."* ~ **Natalie Simpson**
- ⇒ *"Being welcomed to the Church and Jesus."* ~ **Emma Galvin**
- ⇒ *"Having the Bread of Life, I can do anything as part of the Church."* ~ **Aoife Brock**
- ⇒ *"Is a special Memorial of Jesus."* ~ **Conor Lowry**
- ⇒ *"Gathering with Family to celebrate.."* ~ **Theo Moore**

By Geraldine Doherty



# First Communion

Then



Now



# Badminton Marathon

M

y dad, Hubert McKeown, 'Hub', was never one to resist a challenge. So on Thursday 29th October 1970 at 4pm, he decided to take on the world!

After weeks of preparation and getting local businesses on board, while the school was closed for Halloween, 9 members of St. Nicholas Badminton Club embarked on a world endurance record attempt for non-stop doubles badminton. The title was claimed at midnight on the following Monday, completing 104 hours play, and breaking the existing world record by 4 hours.

Edward Armstrong, Moira McKeown, Thomas Arkins, Damon Oldcorn, Michael Quigley, Albert McMullen, Malachy McGowan, Mary O'Hagan and Colum Crickard played in groups of 4 on a 4 hours on—4 hours off rota for 5 days and 4 nights. It resulted in many blisters and sore feet, which were expertly treated by St. John's Ambulance Brigade, but the achievement was literally world beating!

Not only was it a fantastic and fun feat, it was enjoyed by the many spectators who watched the event: some even staying overnight on the assembly hall stage in sleeping bags to cheer the players on.

Though, unfortunately, the sleepovers were knocked on the head after the discovery of an over-amorous couple in the school corridor! Tom Arkins remembers a table-tennis table being provided on the stage for the more active spectators. He also reminded me about a large wall clock, used as the timer, being donated by local shopkeeper, Davy Dubois.

My sister Jackie recalls herself and a few other amateur cooks commandeering the domestic science room to cook the meals, making the tech drawing room their bedroom for the duration. She said they cooked endless chickens which Dad had persuaded Moy Park to provide. They also served up food from Irish Quarter West chip shop, 'The Step Inn', who supplied "suppers" every day.

My sister, Moira, remembers Hume's shop in West Street providing a crate of yoghurt! But she had no idea what it was, so that was her introduction to this trendy new food.... Remember, in those days, spaghetti came out of a tin and was smothered in tomato sauce!

Someone must have brought a record player or radio because there was always music for those of us who were watching, 'My Sweet Lord' had just been released by George Harrison and it is one of my abiding memories!

# Badminton Marathon

Nº 6113

St. Nicholas (Minorca)  
Badminton Club

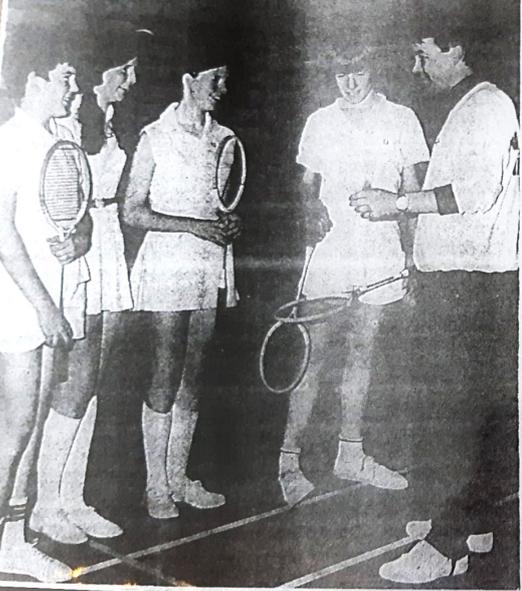
As well as the world record attempt, the event also served as a fundraiser to help provide a parish minibus which could be used to take the team to away matches.

The practice of Dad packing 8 teenagers into his car to go to games needed a new strategy, especially after the night his car broke down on route, the sub-frame collapsing; probably under the weight of all those people. .... compulsory seat belts and MOT tests being a long way off, back then!

The record attempt was reported in, the now defunct, Carrickfergus Advertiser on the 5th of November that year, along with a group photo which included local N.I. badminton international, Sammy Blair, who turned up to give his support.

CARRICKFERGUS ADVERTISER AND EAST ANTRIM GAZETTE - THURSDAY, 5th NOVEMBER, 1947

## BADMINTON RECORD BEATEN



Eight teenage members of St. Nicholas Youth Club, assisted by their coach, on Monday night claimed a world endurance record for doubles badminton when they completed 104 hours continuous playing beating the existing record by four hours.

Play started last Thursday at 4 p.m. and finished on Monday at midnight. The coach and organiser, Mr. Hubert McKeown, who was responsible for the attempt said "They deserve the greatest credit," he said. "It was a wonderful achievement. They were blistered hands and feet and this was the only problem. I appreciate very much the wonderful help we received from the local branch of the St. John's Ambulance Brigade. The attempt was made to raise funds for the purchase of a minibus to transport members of the club to away league games. The members of the team who took part were Mr. Hubert McKeown, the coach; F. Armstrong, T. Aikins, C. Crawford, M. Quigley, Mary O'Hagan, Moira McKeown, D. Alcorn and A. McMullan.

Mayor condemns vandalism

The Mayor of Carrickfergus, Alderman T. J. Patterson, O.B.E., J.P., issued the following statement at the monthly meeting of the Borough Council:

"The Council views with growing concern the amount of vandalism taking place within the Borough at present. Various schemes have been completed to improve both the appearance and amenities within the Borough and it is very discouraging for the Council to discover trees broken along the Marine Highway, summer seats thrown into the sea and smashed, ropes removed from life-saving equipment, damage caused in Shaftesbury Park and many other instances.

Vandalism affects the rate payers in two ways. It first deprives them of enjoying

### ROY FUND NEARING £400 MARK

DONATIONS still continue to come into the office of the Carrickfergus Advertiser and East Antrim Gazette for the Roy Fund. At present the total amount stands at £381.

	£	s	d
Total carried forward	323	15	0
Anonymous	0	10	0
W. D. B. Orr	1	0	0
Mrs. O'Neill	5	0	0
Mrs. Beattie	1	0	0
Mrs. Johnston	1	0	0
Mr. and Mrs. Dorman	1	0	0
Mrs. V. McClenaghan	0	10	0
Mrs. Owens	0	10	0
Mary Kelly	1	0	0
Rev. and Mrs. R. W. C. Clements	10	0	0
Engineers in C. J. Brook	10	0	0
J. Wilson & Sons	5	5	0
Anonymous	1	0	0
Knockfergus Children's Home	5	0	0
Jefferies Carry-Out Bar	5	0	0
Anonymous	1	0	0
Gilchrist	1	0	0
T. Monaghan	1	0	0
J. McClenaghan	1	0	0
Captain Jim Owens	1	0	0
Catering Staff Whiteabbey Hospital	1	0	0

The Fund is still open and donations

Damon Oldwin, Mary O'Hagan, Moira McKeown, and Thomas Aikins receive a few tips from Irish International badminton star, Sammy Blair, prior to their record break.

However, while we all waited excitedly for the Guinness Book of Records to print the achievement, sadly, another club broke our record... It was so disappointing, but it never demoralised anyone.

The achievement might not have made the book, but it remains in memories as yet another great event in the history of our parish.

By Patricia McKeown

# Lourdes Pastoral Centre

It has now been over 4 years since Bishop Treanor blessed our former Primary School for its new role as Lourdes Pastoral Centre (LPC) on Sunday 17th September 2017. Like most community facilities over the past few years, COVID-19 has had a major impact on the use of this great parish asset. However, things are certainly starting to get busy again and it is great to see new enquiries coming in our direction.

Current groups using and activities going on in the LPC include: -

- The **National Autistic Society** (Larne and Carrickfergus branch) have been using the Pastoral Centre as their hub since January 2020. They are a parent-run group supporting families living with Autism in our local area. They make full use of what was formerly the junior end of the school as well as hiring the main hall for their youth club evenings. If anyone is interested in finding out more about this great support group, you can email them at [larneandcarrickfergus@nas.org.uk](mailto:larneandcarrickfergus@nas.org.uk)
- **Whitehead Coastal Rowing Club** have also been regular visitors to the centre for a number of years now, renting out a room to hold their rowing machines and other fitness equipment used for their winter training programme. With the onset of Spring, they are now rowing and training on the water in Whitehead bay and beyond. New members are always welcome, so if you are interested in finding out more details about the club, you can email them at [info@whiteheadrowers.co.uk](mailto:info@whiteheadrowers.co.uk)
- **Zumba Class** with Loiri & Annabella has been very popular on a Monday night for almost a year now, offering a fun way to exercise and socialise. If you are interested in joining in with the class, just come along on a Monday evening at 6:30pm (cost £5).
- **Whitehead Ladies Choir** resumed their weekly practices in the main hall of the centre once COVID-19 restrictions permitted. They are a pleasure to listen to—if you ever get the opportunity—or, if you would like to make enquiries about joining them, contact [whiteheadladieschoir@gmail.com](mailto:whiteheadladieschoir@gmail.com) for further details.
- A new popular addition to the array of things on offer at Lourdes Pastoral Centre is a **Guided Meditation** group held on a Wednesday evening and led by one of our own parishioners, Alison Dewar. If you would like to find out more about this, you can contact Alison directly on 07771479220.

# Lourdes Pastoral Centre

- It is also great to see the Pastoral Centre being used during the day on a Tuesday morning at 10:30 for a **Yoga** class. Sarah is a well-known instructor in the area and can be contacted on 07706803444 if you would like to enquire about joining her class.

The local **Whitehead Storehouse/Foodbank** continues to be based within the centre. This hard-working group of volunteers are tireless at working in the community to help support anyone who needs short-term emergency help with food and other necessities. Geographical areas covered by the confidential service are Whitehead, Ballycarry and Islandmagee. Whitehead Storehouse is not associated with any other food banks and does not need a referral from another agency for anyone to contact them or receive help. The Storehouse also has a quantity of Keep-warm Packs with blankets, fleeces and thermals for anyone who would benefit from them. They can be contacted by phone or text on 07596213763, or by emailing [whiteheadstorehouse@gmail.com](mailto:whiteheadstorehouse@gmail.com).

Some of our parish groups, such as the Parish Pastoral Council, also make use of the centre to hold their meetings.

The **Whitehead Cell Group** has now started their fortnightly meetings in the centre (with a break during July and August). Contact Ruth on 028 93378958 if you would like more information on the cell group.

As well as all of the above ongoing user groups, there are often one-off requests for the use of the main hall or a room. Such requests are always welcome and these can be directed to Ann Woods 07859078151, Eileen Vance 07942921654 or Paddy Stewart 07771607943.

Many thanks to the Lourdes Pastoral Centre Committee for looking after the management of the centre and ensuring it is kept clean and tidy for all the groups using it. Thanks are also due to the volunteer Whitehead Gardening Team in the parish who maintain the grounds to such a high standard around the church building as well as the Pastoral Centre.

By Ann Woods



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Connection