

The Year 2020-21 in St. Brendan's.

Two years ago, Bishop Toal gave the instruction that in St. Brendan's we must focus on "building up the Sunday worshipping community." Today we publish the bishop's letter Friday for the Season of Lent:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

I hope this finds you and your family and friends well.

I heard someone remark in recent days that it has been a year-long Lent since last February. We have indeed come through an extraordinary period, marked for all of us by some deprivation and anxiety; an extended communal penance inflicted upon us by the coronavirus. For some the suffering has been more acute, because of personal illness, the illness of others, or the death of a loved one. We continue to hold each other in prayer, even when separated by the lockdowns, and we reach out to God for protection and healing. As we begin therefore the liturgical season of Lent and accompany the Lord in his suffering and death, we look forward to Easter and the hope of new life promised by his Resurrection.

The season of Lent mirrors the forty days Jesus spent in the desert in prayer and fasting, and these days also reflect the forty years the Jewish people spent wandering in the desert before they were able to reach the "Promised Land". The Old Testament books tell us of the difficulties of these years – the deprivations of food and water, the tensions and conflicts, the crises of leadership, the loss of hope for the future as they looked back to their past life, and, yes, anger at God and times of apostasy and loss of faith. It was a hard, almost brutal experience, but they survived it as a people and came at last to the "land of milk and honey". My thought as we begin this Lent is that the reality of life for us in the times ahead may be more akin to the forty years than the forty days, and it may take a long time and a lot of hardship before we fully recover from the travails of the past year. Our faith encourages us not to lose hope, and indeed we have the Lord Jesus within and among us to help us persevere, strengthening and protecting us through the blessing of the Holy Spirit.

In the reading at Mass today from the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses instructed the people as they were about to enter the promised land after their long years in the desert: "*Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live, in the love of the Lord your God, obeying his voice, **clinging to him**; for in this your life consists, and on this depends your long stay in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob he would give them.*"

God wants us **to cling on to him**, whatever happens, and in doing so we will experience and know his love within us and the life of grace and goodness he offers us when we obey his voice and place our hope in his promises. While we seek security and consolation here in our earthly homeland, we also trust that we will share eternal life with the Lord in our heavenly homeland, and that the way there is through, with, and in the Lord himself. **Throughout Lent, then, let us cling to the Lord and ask him to cleanse and purify us of all that would keep us apart from him** and from showing his love to all our brothers and sisters with whom we share our time here on Earth. This is our time – "The day of salvation" as St Paul told us on Ash Wednesday - and we must make the best of it. With the Lord Jesus we can do so, without him we may lose hope and patience. **Let us cling on to Him!**

Wishing you a fruitful and holy Lent, full of faith, hope and love,

Yours in Christ,

+ Joseph Toal

St. Brendan's Parish – our place of worship - Lent points us to Easter.

Something to help us to give attention to our spiritual life, which Bishop Toal asks of all of us:

Pope Francis writes: "The Lord asks everything of us and in return he offers us true life, the happiness for which we were created. **Happiness hinges on holiness.**

Lent does not normally begin with happiness. Instead, we are told how hard it will be to achieve happiness. The theme of conversion - seeing our lives in a new light, changing the way we assess our life - is often presented not as a positive thing but as a matter of sacrifice, struggle and even suffering. Christian women and men often appear like someone who attends a funeral each day if not two funerals a day - in a permanent state of mourning. **Yet properly understood, the call to repentance means holding the darkness of our lives up against the light of God's love for us, which is revealed fully to us in Jesus Christ.** He is the light of the world. **We are asked to see and recognize the difference between the sin of the world and the salvation offered by the kingdom of God.** **Happiness lies in knowing and experiencing that difference.**

As part of that experience, we can share the celebration of Mass each day from Sunday to Saturday through the parish's social media platform. HERE'S HOW TO DO IT: Mass for families with children at primary school: Mass each day midweek at 8.30AM broadcast from the church as well as on Sunday at 10.30AM, will be celebrated with children very much in mind. At the beginning of Mass we will speak with the children trying to engage with them right from the start and speaking at all times during Mass as if they are present in the church. Mrs. Oates will broadcast 8.30AM Mass to all families via the school APP using Microsoft Teams.

Please try to gather the family by your side where you view Mass broadcast "online" and follow this Mass as if you are present in church together with your children. Only in this way can the preparation in the Home and in the Parish and in the School start hand in hand this year for all three Sacraments. Please participate as fully as you can with your children in these special arrangements for Monday-Friday and Sunday

To help families in our community contribute to the pastoral and spiritual growth and nourishment of their children through engagement with the parish's Children's Liturgy each week Fr. Ness and Margaret Dochlenko will take turns to present on Facebook a Talk for the children of Primary School age P3, P4 and P5. Fr. Ness will lead this talk on Saturday night. When Margaret is scheduled to lead this Talk, she will post a pre-recorded video on the social media page by 7pm.

Many families have requested the Sacrament of Reconciliation for their child in P3 and many have requested the Sacrament of the Eucharist - First Holy Communion - for their child in P4. Fr. Ness will read out at Mass on Sunday morning, the first name of each child from these class groups who has been entered on the Parish's List to prepare for these Sacraments once the church re-opens for worship which we hope will be very soon. The List allows the parish to maintain contact by individual text messaging.

Many children from P6 or P7 who wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation this year have obtained and completed a Letter of Request for this Sacrament. Fr. Ness will read out the first name of those upper school children who have registered. The List allows the parish to communicate by individual text messaging.

Anyone wishing to participate at Mass on any morning from Monday to Friday as representing the Parish Family, please enquire with Lynne or Kathleen. Contact Lynne on 07803-314555 or by email: lynnekellas@icloud.com or Kathleen on 07585-225837 or at: Kathleencosgrove@btopenworld.com. Fr. Ness welcomes the prospect of always having one parishioner present with him for Eucharist.

On Saturday and Sunday, a cantor/reader will be present at all four Masses. From next Saturday at 9.30AM Mass Lenten hymns will be sung to mark the end of the Weeks of Lent and similarly hymns for Lent will be sung during the Vigil Mass on Saturday PM and at each of the two Masses on Sunday.

On Facebook: Daily Mass at 8.30AM and 9.30AM and Mass on Saturday at 9.30am and every Requiem Mass will be live streamed AND ALSO the Mass at 6pm on Saturday and both Masses on Sunday – 10.30 and 16.30. From this Monday a Talk at 1pm on Sacred Scripture will be offered each day AND at 9pm each evening a Prayer Time for Lent will be offered for participation by all who wish to meditate and pray together.

PRAYER INTENTION REQUESTS FROM PARISHIONERS:

those who have died recently: Steven Hunter [Hamilton]; John Ferrie [St. Patrick's]

for those whose Month Mind or Anniversary occurs about now: Robert Lees; Susan Lees [14th]; Henry McCarthy [5th]; Nita McGinn [5th]; Brian McAlinden [3rd]; Lizzie Kelly.

Looking forward to next week and the start of Lent:

The Piety Stall: Today begins Lent. For the journey using Scripture through Lent to Easter please use the My Day by Day booklet which is available at the church without charge. Alternatively, the Magnificat Mass and Prayer Book for February and March with the insert booklet for Holy Week is available on request at £5 per month. Elspeth and Evelyn have tried to keep the Stall stocked with cards and booklets as if the church were in use as normal. Please support them and the parish as you have always done to maintain this valuable resource in place. We follow the Gospel of Mark, chapter by chapter, during the Ordinary Season of 2021 but during the Season of Lent and continuing into Eastertide and Pentecost selected readings are used from all four Gospels and these are printed for you in the My Day by Day and Magnificat booklets. Once more *please* take up a spiritual exercise during Lent [*before Palm Sunday overtakes you*]

Maintenance, Repair, Replacement, Renewal and work of Enhancement in this church:

The four windows which were broken in the south elevation of the church overlooking the car park were replaced on Friday by the company which did the original installation. The cost which the parish will pay will be reclaimed from our insurers under an excess of £300 but without any loading of the renewal premium for year 2021.

The stripping out and replacement of the warped and split hardwood on both sides of the Glass Chapel partition had been delayed from last year because of the shutdown. Nimmo Joinery will do this work and will also install a new oak timber supports over the radiator which currently holds the statue of Padre Pio and one over the adjoining radiator to hold the refurbished statue of the Child of Prague. This once adorned the parish's Mass Centre in the former Coop.

The staining and varnishing of hardwood internal doors and adjoining facia and skirting throughout the church has been underway steadily throughout this week by Jim McAlinden and is almost finished. Jim believes this woodwork is untouched since the church was built. It's a great benefit to the church and we are very grateful to him. His aunt Elizabeth has removed all plants and flowers from the sanctuary and changed the altar and lectern colours from Ordinary Season [green] to Lent [violet]. Jim also changed the banners on the rear wall with the help of Anne Therese.

The platform and ramp for the south exit needed approval by the Diocese because the increased dimensions brought an increase in cost. The bishop recommended that we first apply in April for a Grant to Viridor Waste Management Community Fund which the Diocese will support for up to 50% of the total cost. The application is being prepared.

On the Feast of St. Joseph [19th March] Pope Francis will establish the Year of "the Joy of Family Love" lasting until 22nd June 2022. We will have a special feature to celebrate family life in this parish. We will give out jam jars which will contain six A5 sheets of spiritual themes to think about, pray about, talk about and above all "do" something about. We hope that all six sheets will be by the family group over a period of about one month.

SCIAF this Lent: IMAGINE "THE WEE BOX" HELD A PHOTOGRAPH OF YOUR FAMILY - YOUR CHILDREN AND YOU ON ITS COVER. We and all other parishes are being relied upon to pick up the Appeal packs and use these to save up what we can during Lent. The last five packs are available at the church entrance. Thank you very much to those who have collected the thirty five that have been taken for this Lenten almsgiving. **Please look upon giving to this Appeal as a matter of Justice to our brothers and sisters, and not as Charity.**

Paul's house.

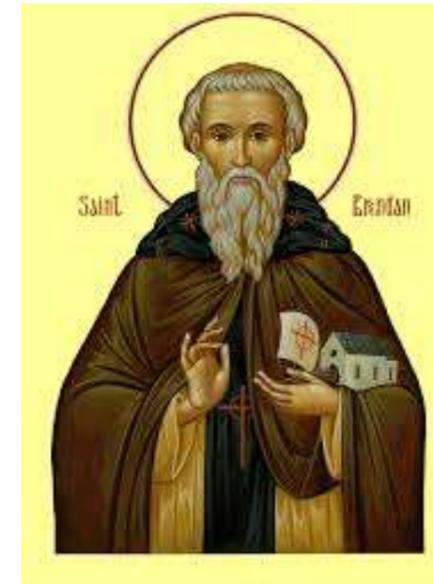
Thank you: to the young family who have joined those who now pay their collection direct to the parish's bank account as this secures the income which the community needs to maintain the property and our service to all.

St. Brendan's the Navigator Parish

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**Twitter: [stbrendanrcdom](https://twitter.com/stbrendanrcdom).
Facebook: www.facebook.com/saintbrenrc**



First Sunday in the Season of Lent.

Twenty first February 2021.

Liturgies during this week:

Monday to Friday: Mass at 8.30 AM in the church for the Primary School children [with one teacher attending and broadcast on school app and on our Facebook.]

Monday to Saturday: Mass at 9.30AM with one parishioner attending.

Saturday at 6pm: Vigil Mass for Sunday with one parishioner attending.

Saturday at 7pm: conversation between Fr. Ness and the children of primary school P3, P4 and P5 age group on the Parish's Facebook site - but children of all ages can listen in too.

**Sunday: Mass at 10.30AM and 4.30pm each with one parishioner attending.
*The parish's Facebook page and Twitter feed show any changes to the schedule.***