

Sunday 13th December 1998



No. 573

Ballineaspais Bulletin

Third Sunday of Advent



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
DENNHY'S CROSS, CORK



OUR
**PARISH
PRIEST**
writes

COMING HOME

A poor boy once said, "We have a home. We just have no house to put around it." To be at home is to be where one feels one belongs, where the vulnerable one feels most secure, where failure is forgiven, where trust evokes new beginnings, where the joy of being related is celebrated, where family ties bind us together to face adversity.

Christmas is a time of being at home with each other and with God. In Bethlehem, God made his home in our human nature and there he lives among us still. He is always at home for us. Christmas is the time when most come home to him.

Some choose never to come. Others postpone the coming and another Christmas slips away. Others feel too far away and feel unable to come the whole way on their own. God suggests that such children come as far as they can and he will go to meet them. The Prodigal Son did not deserve forgiveness but he accepted it on coming home. God's forgiveness is a power to change us. His forgiveness is a catalyst that releases goodness within us.

For those who are away, coming home is a joy beyond compare. To help a loved one or a friend to come home and to come home to God at Christmas is a gift beyond compare. It is a highlight of a priest's life to facilitate the homecoming in the sacrament of reconciliation. To focus the Christmas opportunity, at least one priest will be available in the Church all day next Saturday 19th December (9.30 a.m. to 7.30 p.m.) to extend God's welcome to all who wish to come. There will also be the customary Reconciliation Service on Monday 21st December at 7.30 p.m. with additional priests available.

Everyone is invited to pray (and even to fast) that the blessings of sincere reconciliations and happy homecomings will blossom in all our families and in God's family this Advent time.

Welcome home.



**SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS - A
TERMINAL DISEASE**

In the old days, it used to be known as the parable of the prodigal son. The children nowadays describe it as the story of the loving father. Each title refers to one of the three main characters in the story. The odd man out in the titles race is the elder brother, but he should not be left out of our reflection in the gospel story. He had worked hard, always on the job, doing what he should be doing. He had developed the family business since that no-good brother had pulled out. They had not heard from the younger man for years and he could have been dead for all the elder brother cared.

Then, out of the blue, he arrived back home unannounced. The old man lost his head with delight and welcomed him back with joy that baffled the self-righteous heir to the family estate. However, he would hold his head and treat the returned exile politely but with the reserve due to one who had brought disgrace on the family. How could his father be so foolish? Was not he, the elder son, the one who was entitled to everything? The other son had earned nothing.

Self-righteousness is a terminal disease. It progresses rapidly like a cancerous tumour if not removed by courageous surgery. It corrodes inner peace, joy, faith, hope and love. It kills the spirit within the human heart. Many of us have the

A PARISHIONER WRITES....

Porres,
Linaro Avenue

Dear Editor,

The writer of the abusive letter in last Sunday's bulletin who wished to be 'anonymous' did me a great favour by concealing his/her identity!

Bill Moriarty



We welcome into our Christian community:

RONAN DERMOT KEOGH

SARAH LONERGAN RYAN

NIAMH MARY KELLY

JOHN EDWARD O'SHEA

CHANTAL RACHEL CUMMINS

BRENDAN CHRISTOPHER CUMMINS



Congratulations to parishioner MIRIAM MORIARTY, Linaro Avenue, who recently married John Garry, Kildare.



COMMENT

MEDIA COMMENT by "LUKE"

A LASTING PEACE

Winner of the Irish-American Peace Prize, International Person of the Year, Freeman of Cork City and recipient of honorary doctorates from UCC and Trinity, George Mitchell was in Cork recently to accept the freedom of the city and to take part in a seminar at UCC. Quite rightly, the media covered his visit, capturing his moments with Bertie Ahern and his advice on keeping the peace momentum going.

What was not covered - obviously it was not considered that important - was his acceptance of the annual P.E.A.C.E. award from that great man of peace, Cecil Hurwitz. Perhaps it was a measure of the man's humility that Senator Mitchell found time in a busy schedule to attend this presentation in his honour.

I had the great privilege to be invited and to meet this extraordinary man. Observing him in this small gathering, I had no difficulty understanding how George Mitchell succeeded where others failed in finding a peaceful solution to the on-going strife in Northern Ireland. The body language exuded patience, serenity, calmness and humour. Cecil Hurwitz, in his address, mentioned the wisdom of Solomon and the patience of Job. All this and more was there.

George Mitchell grew up in a

working-class slum, put himself through college, eventually graduating from Georgetown University. He has never forgotten his humble beginnings and claims that "peace, political stability and reconciliation are not too much to ask" for the young people of Northern Ireland.

At every gathering during his visit he pleaded that everyone would continue to work towards lasting peace. The Good Friday Peace Agreement, he stressed, was only the beginning. Most of the work still lay ahead. With prayer and with patience the agreement can be built on and the final goal achieved.

MOUNT MERCY NEWS

Transition Year Goes to Cobh - 77 students and four teachers made their annual pilgrimage to Cobh Heritage Centre and St. Colman's Cathedral. The day began when everyone travelled on the 9.25 train from Kent Station. On arrival in Cobh the first stop was the pier where a launch was arranged to give a guided tour of the Lower Harbour. Then the group climbed up to St. Colman's Cathedral which has recently been restored. The remainder of the day was spent at the Cobh Heritage Centre where the girls were particularly interested in the Titanic exhibits.

THE FOLD

The December/Christmas issues goes on sale this week-end with many interesting items - a profile of Billa O'Connell, activities of SHARE, meaning of Sign of Peace at Mass, and many more interesting features.



NOTICE BOARD

**COMING HOME FOR CHRISTMAS
COMING HOME TO GOD**

Christmas Reconciliation:

Saturday December 19th

Priest available all day (9.30 to 7.30 p.m.)

Monday December 21st

Reconciliation Service 7.30 p.m.

Bulletins to Homes

Bulletins will be delivered to all homes in the parish next week-end.

Pastoral Council

Meeting this Monday 14th in C.P. Centre at 8.10 p.m.

Annual Christmas Day Dinner

Organised by the Knights of St. Columbanus will be held in the St. Vincent Hostel, Anglesea Terrace at 12.30 p.m. For further information contact Jim at 341875.

Lavanagh Christmas Cards

Designed and printed in Cork are now on sale at Brown Thomas and many other retail outlets in Cork. The entire proceeds go to help children and young adults with physical disabilities attending the Lavanagh Centre, Ballintemple. Please support this very worthy and local cause.

Help Wanted

Wanted lady to collect/mind two St. Catherines N.S. girls four days per week. For further information please phone 870453.

Christmas Church Services

Details will be printed in next week-end's Bulletin.

Celebration

CHILDREN'S ADVENT MASS

Your Advent Mass will be held in our church next Sunday 20th at 12.15 p.m. Don't forget to bring:

- 1) Your greeting card for Jesus, brightly coloured, with a little string attached so that it can be hung on our Christmas tree.
2. Your gift for the poor - it doesn't matter how small or big it is, but wrap it up so that nobody knows what is in it but the child Jesus. After Mass the St. Vincent de Paul will unwrap the gifts and give them to families in our parish who haven't much for themselves this Christmas.
3. Bring all your friends and family with you.

We'll all have a happy time together at this Mass.

More details? See notices at the end of the church.

Bishopstown G.A.A.

Congratulations to the U-15 Football team who won the City title last weekend.

The A.G.M. was successfully held last week-end. Pdraig

O'Donoghue is our new chairperson. We wish him well and thank Con Begley for his tremendous work over his term.

Senior Footballers defeated Clyda Rovers in the Tom Creedon Cup.

EMERGENCY NUMBER

087 - 251 9940