



Friday 25th December 1998

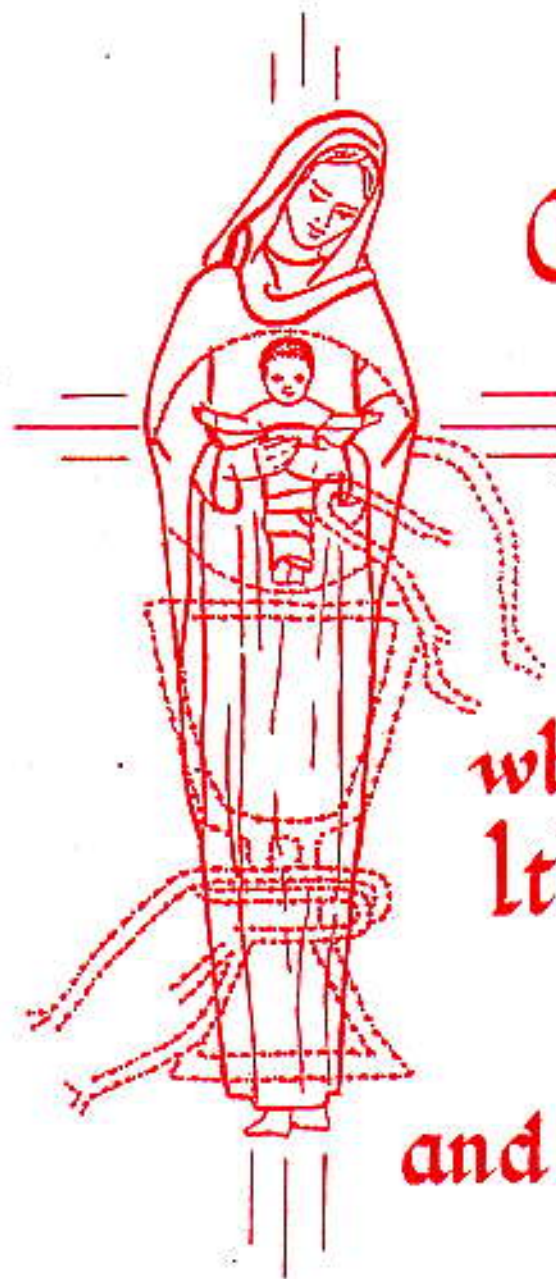
No. 575

Ballineaspais Bulletin

Christmas Day



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
DENNEHY'S CROSS, CORK.



On this night
— True Love
— was born,
— that Love
— which gives of
— Itself to the
— end . . . ,
and without end.

Pope John Paul II.

Courtesy of The Poor Clares.



OUR
**PARISH
PRIEST**
writes

The billboard poster has a Christmas message: "Happy Holly Day". It is a clever advertisement. The cute play on words attracts our attention. Of course Christmas is about holly and ivy and all they symbolise. It is also about caring, sharing and celebrating. At Christmas time, the caring for the deprived and less well off is undertaken with generosity and gusto. That is very good, especially when it extends to a renewal of love, acceptance and caring within each family circle. Our Christmas sharing is well known. At this time, every charity evokes a great financial response. The challenge is to bring this spirit of family into the New Year in our social welfare and taxation systems. Anything less is to make a mockery of the Christmas spirit.

Celebration is the foundation stone of Christmas. Celebrating God is the centrepiece of the festivities. Christmas without God is like a shadow without substance, like love without fidelity. It is hollow. It is so easy to settle for the tinsel. The season's opportunity is to renew our faith in God, to celebrate His coming in the person of Jesus Christ, to receive salvation from His hands through the forgiveness of our sins, to be nourished by the Eucharist. God's holiness heals us and inspires us. To fail to accept God's holiness into our lives at Christmas is to breathe without oxygen. It is to reject

the source of life. Christmas is God's time. It is a holy time. Happy Holly time and Happy Holy time.

Tom L. Lacey

The Buzz of Christmas.

There always is a great buzz around the place during the weeks before Christmas. Everyone is out buying presents, visiting people, arranging to come home or making arrangements to meet people during their stay at home. It's a time of parties and celebrations. I think we all notice the extra people who are in attendance at Mass, the emigrants home for the holidays. It's a time when everyone should be in good form and able to relax in the company of friends and family. With the Celtic Tiger in full force, I think we all need this break more this year than ever before.

Listening to 96FM recently, where they arranged to bring some people home for Christmas, reminded me of the loneliness that will hit some people over the next few weeks. These are the people who are not able to make the journey home and also the people who miss having them here at this special family time of the year.

On behalf of all the people involved in the bulletin, I would like to wish everyone in the parish a happy and holy Christmas, with a special wish for parishioners who could not make it home and for their families who miss them this Christmas. May God watch over them and keep them safe wherever they are.

Colm Linchan

Colm Linchan
Editor - Ballinaspaig Bulletin



COMMENT

MEDIA COMMENT by "LUKE"

A LONG WAIT

"Christmas comes but once a year and, when it comes, it brings good cheer." Isn't that how the old ditty went? And like most of the old sayings, there was a great deal of truth in it. Christmas for most people is a time for cheer, for remembering, for looking forward. Sadly for some, the joy has gone out of Christmas. Hopefully, and with God's help, the grief that many carry at Christmas will ease with time and Christmas will once again be a time for celebration.

In a Christian country like ours, perhaps we take Christmas for granted? In Cuba, Christmas was abolished almost thirty years ago. Recently the Politburo there issued the following Statement: "The Cuban Communist Party proposes to the Council of State that from this year onward, each 25th of December should be considered a holiday for Christians and non-Christians, believers and non-believers." Now that will be a Christmas worth celebrating!

I'll let the last word to Fr. Colm Kilcoyne, writing about President McAleese's visit to Cong, Co. Mayo, the first visit of an Irish Head of State since the arrival there of Ruairi O'Connor, High King of Ireland 800 years previously! Mrs. McAleese commented that they must be a very patient people!

Her first task was to turn on the lights of the Christmas tree, "no big deal in the worldwide scheme of things," said Fr. Kilcoyne. But he went on: "There is something about turning on the lights of any Christmas tree that softens the soul and fades the differences of age and rank. For a few seconds, all faces register the same wonder and wish that this Christmas will be happy."



*Season's
Greetings*

It is my sad duty to tell you that Luke has decided to retire from the bulletin. After many years of stimulating and often controversial columns, everyone who enjoyed reading the weekly instalments will seriously miss them. We wish them well in their retirement and hope that they will still submit special articles for future publications.

EMERGENCY NUMBER

087 - 251 9940

1. The Cortes is the name of the parliament in which southern European country?

2. In which century was the National Library of Ireland founded?

3. On which continent would you find the Serengeti Plain?

4. Which American State is represented by the abbreviation "NH"?

5. In which George Orwell novel is Britain known as Airstrip One?

6. Mrs Hudson was the landlady and housekeeper of which famous fictional detective?

7. If your birthday was the 12th June, under which sign of the zodiac would you be born?

8. What is the collective noun used to describe a group of buffalo?

9. How many dimes in one American dollar?

10. If your parents were celebrating their golden wedding anniversary,

how many years would they be married?

11. What member of the pop group *The Spice Girls* left the band during the year?

12. *Boy George* has made a return to the pop world recently. What is his real name?

13. How many people in the Dublin band *B'Witched*?

14. *Celine Dion* sang the theme to the film *Titanic*. What is the name of the song?

15. How many bytes in a kilobyte?

Please complete your answers on the page, and submit your entries to the C.P. Centre on or before Wednesday 6th January 1999.

Name _____

Address _____

Age _____

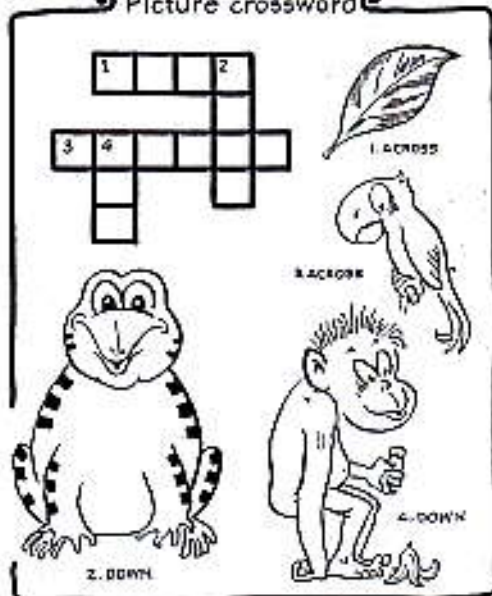
A gift voucher will be given to the person who is the first person out the hat with the most questions correct.



KIDS



Picture crossword

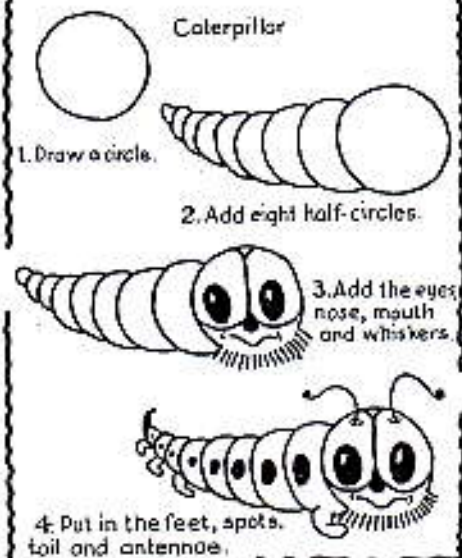


Look at the picture - Make up a story and tell it to your friends. Then colour in the picture.



Look at the picture - Make up a story and tell it to your friends. Then colour in the picture.

Drawing is fun



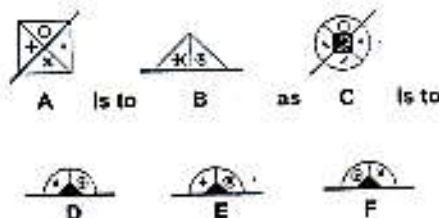
1. Can you fill in the blanks?

C	L
M	D
?	?
O	F
G	P
Q	H

2. Can you move these matches and change the number to sixteen?



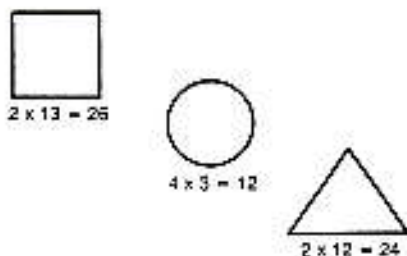
3. Solve this riddle



4. If a dog is worth 5, can you work out what the other symbols are worth?

				= 20
				= 23
				= 23
				= 22

5. A man was in a burger bar one day. When he had finished the meal, he drew the following picture in green ink on his bill.



As he handed the bill to the waitress, with his money she said to him "You're in the navy aren't you?" How did she know?

6. Mr. Jones, the local baker, was asked how many loaves of bread he had sold last Monday. Feeling rather mischievous he said:

"My first customer bought half of my bread plus half a loaf extra. My second customer, Mrs Smith, bought half of what I had left plus half a loaf more. The third customer asked for half of what I had left plus an extra half to feed the ducks at the local park".

By the time Mr. Black, the fourth customer, visited the shop he had sold all his bread. He did not sell any half loaves. Can you work out how many loaves he did sell?

7. Whenever fun loving Ursula is asked for her age, she responds with this answer:

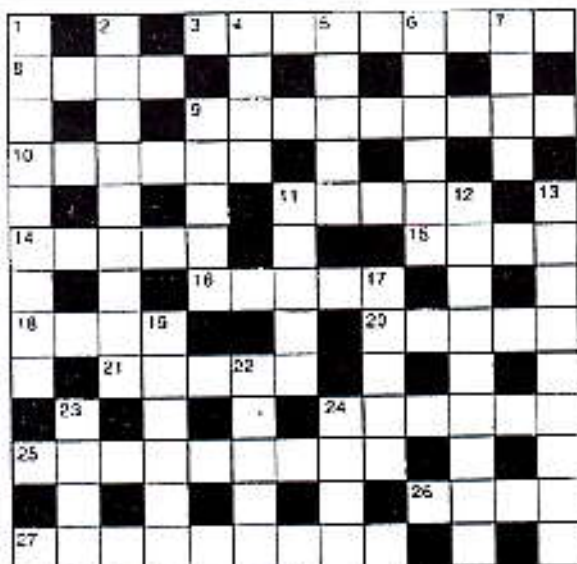
"I am three times older than my niece, five years ago I was five times older than her twin brother."

How old is she?

Name _____

Address _____

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



Across

3. Now is the season. (9)
8. Related to - a family. (4)
9. She gave birth to a son, her --. Luke 2:3. (5,4)
10. Sounds like a lease, further up the scale. (6)
11. Get ready - to attack. (5)
14. Overthrow, the top part. (5)
15. Has been taking lessons? No, but very tense. (4)
16. With mate it's the end. (5)
18. He gets most of the spoils. (4)
20. Turnabout, face with this. (5)
21. Come up out of these! They are not very nice. (5)
24. Bad traits can be transformed into a cultured person. (6)
25. Phantom Clan Cycling Club includes a very important person in the parish. (3,6)
26. Not "de paper". This one resounds. (4)
27. Place of tranquility, if somewhat soapy. (9)

Down

1. Assault totally - with reticence. (9)
2. Her kind go awry for a wicked man. (4,5)
4. He has to succeed. (4)
5. To oppose a point take this. (5)
6. One of those on which the Law of the Testimony was written. (Exodus 31:18) (6)
7. With graces such tunes are a bit pretentious. (4)
9. Usually occur in families, though undesirable. (5)
11. Be sure to know what you're doing before you burn them! (5)
12. Found on animals? An afterthought. (9)
13. Note a tint changes for close scrutiny. (9)
17. The most common sort of day. (5)
19. A messenger with ecclesiastical connections. (6)
22. As the saying goes, men can lay them as well as mice. (5)
23. Generally speaking, this many corners cover all the world. (4)
24. Describing the ultimate test. (4)

Entries to the C.P. Centre by 10th January please.

O Come, All Ye Faithful



"And suddenly the star the wise men had seen rising went forward and halted over the place where the child was. The sight of the star filled them with delight, and going into the house they saw the child with his mother Mary, and falling to their knees they did him homage. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh."



The Magi

Who were these mysterious characters in the story, described as "wise men from the east", the Magi, or kings? The word "Magi" is used by the historian Herodotus to describe the Medes, who were a tribe of priests and wise men in the Persian empire. They may therefore, have been non-Jewish religious astrologers from Arabia or Babylon, who believed that their star charts showed the birth of a great Jewish king.

The star

What exactly was the star that heralded the birth of the baby? It may have been Haley's Comet which appeared in 11BC or another comet reported as visible in 4 BC. It could have been the planetary conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn and Venus, which took place early in 7BC. Chinese Astronomers also recorded a supernova, a faint star that suddenly flares up in the sky and then slowly fades, at about the right date. If this was the Magi's star, they would have been looking at light coming from a star a billion times stronger than our sun, pouring out to herald the birth of God's son.



Gold, the ancient world's most precious metal, was the gift of one king to another. The wise men's gift to Jesus symbolised the greatness of the baby born into King David's line and destined to be called The King of the Jews.

Frankincense - this sweet-smelling resin comes from the bark of the Frankincense tree (*Boswellia*), which grows in Africa, Southern Arabia and India. It was burnt as incense in worship by many ancient civilisations, including the Hebrews. It symbolised prayer and meant that the baby was destined to be a priest, capable of bringing his people close to God.

Myrrh is a gum from the bark of a low growing, thorny bush. It is collected, dried and burned as incense. In ancient Egypt it was also used to embalm the dead. Therefore in the Middle East it was one of the fragrant spices used in burials. This gift pointed to Jesus' later suffering and death.

The wise men followed the star,
and found Christ who is light from light.
May we too find the Lord,
when our pilgrimage is ended.
Amen.