



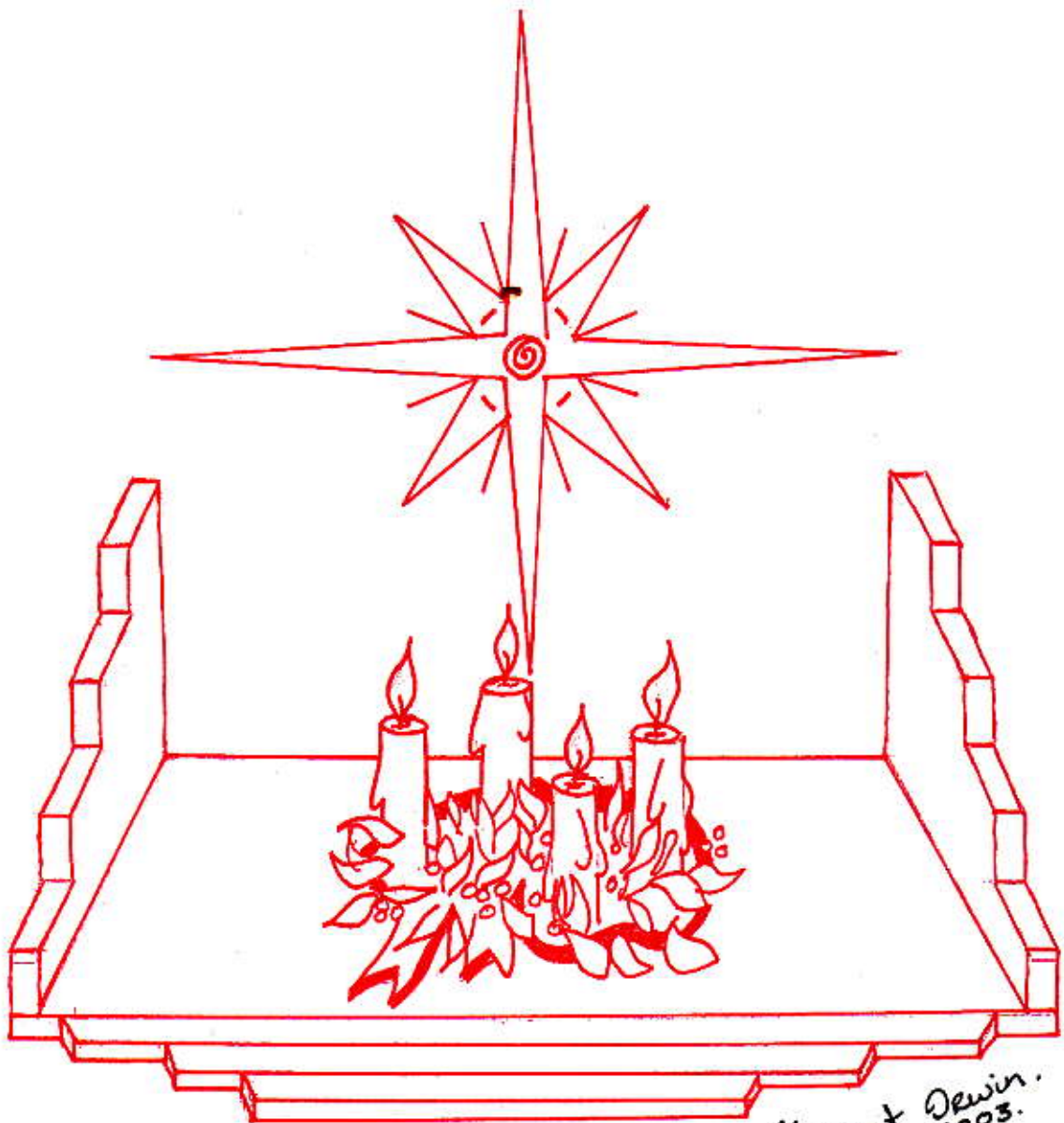
Ballineaspaisg Bulletin

Christmas Day 2003



No. 784

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



Vincent Dewin.
2003.



OUR
**PARISH
PRIEST**
writes

The young of SHARE have got it right. They place the Crib under the Christmas tree. The Crib and the gift tree are intertwined in our lives. The finest of all the Christmas gifts is the one that God the Father gives us in Jesus, his Son. Many families put their gifts under the Christmas tree to await a midnight or an early morning unwrapping. Hopefully all the recipients will accept their gifts graciously and unwrap them to be enriched by the thoughtful goodness of those who love them.

We need to accept the gift of Jesus graciously, and even to unwrap him to allow his presence touch our lives. We have a choice. We can leave him in the Crib or under the tree as it were, or we can open our hearts in faith to the power of his love. Such an opening up can be a risky business. We may glimpse how blessed we are by God. We may even recognise how Jesus comes to us through each of our brothers and sisters, friends and neighbours, and we may respond accordingly. Such awareness is often sparked off and nourished through regular sharing in the Eucharist with due attention, faith and love.

The beauty of this gift is that it is unique to each of us and yet, binds us together in a spirit of enabling, reassuring and hope-filled love.

It enables us to be grateful and content for who we are, siblings of Jesus.

It reassures us that we are not alone but that Jesus is by our side on the road of life in times of joy and of trouble.

It strengthens our hope that one day we will be reunited in the heart of God forever.

It is a gift to be accepted and unwrapped.

Fr., Declan and the Dean join me in wishing you and yours God's every blessing, grace and joy this Christmas. Many thanks for your continuing interest support and love. Let us continue to care and pray for each other in 2004 and always.



OUR
EDITOR
writes

On behalf of the Bulletin Team I wish all our readers a very happy Christmas. Thanks to Vincent Irwin for his beautiful front cover. Thanks too to all who help in the production of the Bulletin.

We are very grateful to our Parish Team for their uplifting weekly input and to Anne, our Parish Secretary, for her great work on the Bulletin. A very special thanks to our Parish Priest, Fr. Tom Clancy, for his advice and support.

A final word of thanks to the O'Mahony & Sons, Printers, for their long service to our Bulletin.

Sincerely,

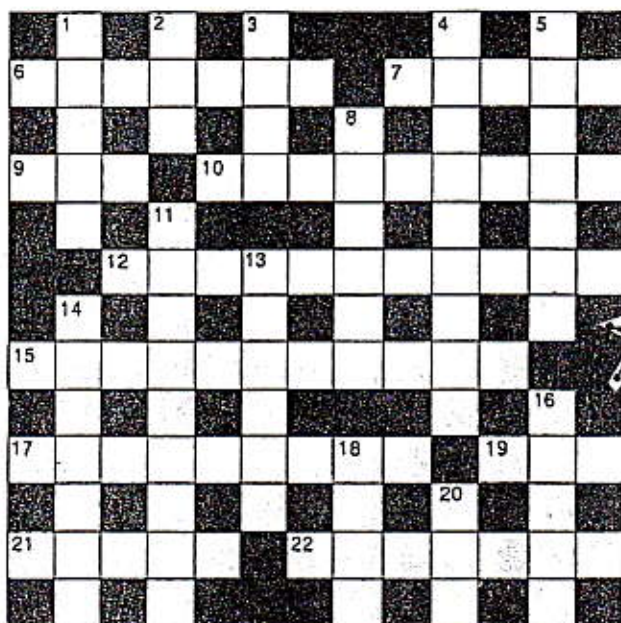
Irene Connolly

EMERGENCY NUMBER

087 - 251 9940



CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



Across

6. This census – the first – took place while Quirinius was governor...Lk.2. (2,5)
7. Sounds like it's in the church, for a change. (5)
9. Subsequent to clue No. 16 down. (3)
10. Describes the pessimist's drinking vessel. (4,5)
12. The travelling salesman might do it, or the chairperson. (4,2,5)
15. Will give birth to a son whom they will call Immanuel, a name which means... Mt.1. (3,2,4,2)
17. You must do this in making the Christmas cake, or the proverbial omelette. (5,4)
19. For our parish they're our neighbours. (1,1,1)
21. Beautiful girl, sounds like she might give you a ring. (5)
22. Made an attempt around Fr. Tom, and almost fell over. (7)

Down

1. Frequently, of half a score. (5)
2. Lift the lid and see what's inside! (3)
3. Turn around eagerly for the prima donna. (4)
4. Our girl from 21 across might look alluring like this. (9)
5. He pays his debts and takes up residence. (7)
8. If you must go overboard, at least keep this. (6)
11. A silly cab can be converted fundamentally. (9)
13. Sounds like someone you couldn't trust, but actually a pillar of society. (6)
14. House all cluttered? Here's the culprit. (7)
16. This lovely autumn shade should stop us in our tracks. (5)
18. Big or tiny, there's a Galway town in there. (4)
20. These and downs – that's life! (3)



Solutions to be in by 11th January.



Only a Star

Only a star to guide them,
Three strangers without a name,
Yet they willingly went on a pilgrimage
When each of them saw the same
Constellation ablaze in the heavens,
And this one that seemed like a flame,
Travelling through darkness, intrigue and deception
Until to the stable they came.

Only a star to guide them
In the darkness of their day
To a place and a meeting so contrary
To what they believed was God's way.
Yet, entering into that stable,
They found they had nothing to say,
And all they could do was to worship
The Child who in front of them lay.



Only a star to guide them
To the place where their searching would end,
To the Light that no darkness can master,
To the One who had come to befriend
A world that was wounded and broken,
That rebelled and would never attend
To a God whose own heart was aching
For them - that their sorrows might end.

Only a star to guide us
In a world paralysed by the pain
Of terror and hunger and madness,
Of disease and the spirit of Cain;
A world where the powerful triumph
And the poor and the weak cry in vain,
And God's voice goes unheard and unheeded,
And we long for His coming again.

Only a star to guide us
In a land that still doesn't hear
The message that came in that stable
From the One who can deal with our fear
Of the other, the stranger, the different,
And He did it by coming so near
That He took on our form and our likeness
To show us that each one is dear.

This year as we journey towards Christmas,
We pray that nothing may mar
Our willingness, too, to be pilgrims,
Like those strangers who travelled from far.
If, after darkness, intrigue and deception,
We find the door of the stable ajar,
May we enter and fall down and worship,
Though to guide us - there's only a star.