

Ballineaspaig Bulletin



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SPIRIT
DENNEHY'S CROSS, CORK

11th December 2005

Third Sunday in Advent

No. 861

PARISH EVENTS THIS WEEKEND

Family Gift Mass



This Sunday at 12.15 p.m.
Children invited to bring a non-
perishable food item (no toys)
for distribution by the St. Vin-
cent de Paul.

GET INTO THE ADVENT SPIRIT



REMEMBER
OUR ADVENT CAROL SERVICE THIS
SUNDAY AT 7.00 P.M. CAROLS, READ-
INGS AND REFLECTIONS WHICH WILL
TAKE ABOUT ONE HOUR.

NEXT WEEKEND

Parish Reconciliation Service

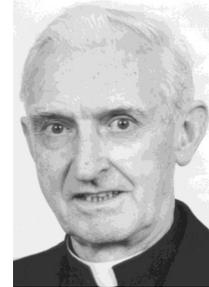
Prepare the Way of the Lord
Give yourself a gift of peace
for Christmas

A Parish celebration of healing,
forgiveness and God's love.

Sunday 18th December , 5.00 p.m.

THE DEAN WRITES

SAINT NICHOLAS



I am writing these few lines on the 6th December – the feast of St. Nicholas. So what, you might ask. Well, he was the original and real Santa Claus, who died in 350 A.D. Little did he think that he would be parodied throughout the world in every store and advertisement for weeks before Christmas, thousands of years after his death.

The reality of his life is even more interesting than the fiction which surrounds his name today. He was a bishop in Myra – a city in Asia Minor (present day Turkey). The red fur-brimmed clothes of Santa were originally a bishop's robes.

He was a very holy man, very kind and caring – especially for children whom he loved. There are many stories of his thoughtfulness and generosity to younger people. Perhaps the most enduring of these is the legend of the three young girls in the city of Myra who were due to be married, but they were too poor to meet the necessary expenditure. When St. Nicholas heard of their plight he arranged for each of them to receive a small dowry – and to spare them the embarrassment of receiving the gift publicly, he arranged to have the money dropped down the chimney of their respective homes. This gave rise to the custom of leaving the empty stocking near the fireplace on Christmas Eve, and of Father Christmas arriving by this unusual route – also the legend that he delivers his presents secretly – and then disappears, never to be seen. As his feastday occurs in the weeks running up to Christmas, he became associated for ever with gifts especially for children coming up to the feast of the Nativity. The idea that he lives around Lapland or the North Pole is a more modern fiction and makes little sense; likewise, outlandish and expensive gifts, and the vacant Ho, Ho, Ho of his impersonators.

At the heart of the whole tradition is the lovely custom of sharing in a spirit of cheerful generosity – particularly to our young people. Long may it live.

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