

*St. Mary of the Visitation Church, Killybegs.*  
**CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2024**



*O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him, O come, let us adore him,  
Christ the Lord.*

*Beannachtaí na Nollag agus na Bliana Úire oraibh uilig  
Wishing you love, joy and hope this Christmas and in the New Year*



## ***Dear Parishioners and Friends,***

*Advent is a season of joyful celebration singing and praying in different locations and on different occasions in churches, schools, town centres, shopping centres and other venues. Our own Carol Service last Wednesday evening was a celebration of joy, hope and gratitude. The words from the prophet Isaiah come to mind:*

*‘Those who hope in the Lord renew their strength,  
they put out wings like eagles’.*

*This image inspired the modern hymn On Eagle’s Wings:*

*You who dwell in the shelter of the Lord  
who abide in his shadow for life  
say to the Lord, ‘my refuge, my rock in whom I trust’  
and he will raise you up on eagle’s wings.*

*In a world where conflict, death, destruction and heart-break abound, we need such reassuring words to ring in our ears and to resonate in our hearts. It prepares us to listen to the good news: ‘for unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given’.*

*As I write these words, Storm Darragh has been making its presence felt in our neighbourhood and throughout the country. We hope everyone is safe. This comes in the wake of Storm Bert two weeks ago. In the early hours of Saturday morning 23<sup>rd</sup> November some residents in Bridge St. had a rude awakening as their homes were flooded and business owners were alerted to an ongoing threat of water damage to their properties. Within minutes the emergency service arrived and did heroic work, as did many other volunteers. Everyone was safe but water damage to many properties was extensive. Storm Bert had taken its toll. Seven years previously Bridge St. was also devastated by a water deluge. We sincerely hope that the relevant authorities take action to ensure that Bridge St. will be protected from such catastrophic occurrences in the future and that more immediate help will be made available to residents and businesses.*

*There was a poignant reminder for us at the Carol Service as the Parish Choir & St. Catherine’s V.S. sang ‘Steal Away’ in English and Ukrainian. The song was written by Phil Coulter four years ago, telling the story of a couple who escape the Troubles in the North, not unlike the story of so many Ukrainians today as they escape the Troubles in their native land. We can empathize with them in their plight.*

*Niall Mór, Commons & Fintra National Schools and St. Catherine's Vocational School continue to play an important role in parish life. Their cooperation and participation are much appreciated. They play a major part in the integration of members of the Ukrainian community into the local community. The Ukrainian community has so much to offer the local community.*

*Each school faces its own particular challenges and the support of parishioners is always needed and appreciated. This coming year Niall Mór N.S. will launch a special fundraising initiative, having purchased the property across the road (formerly Rose & Mary Byrne's house) for building purposes. The Department of Education has allocated funding to the school for two new classrooms and three S.E.T. (Special Education Teaching) rooms. A new site near the school was required to facilitate this building project. The school will outline its financial requirements in the New Year. Your support will be greatly appreciated.*

*We are grateful to all who help out in the Parish in many different capacities. Sacramental programmes in the parish are under way for Confirmation & First Holy Communion and the young people will play a special part in our Christmas Eve Masses, 6pm & 8pm respectively. The First Communion Parents' Liturgy Group are actively involved in coordinating our monthly celebrations, the home-parish-school link being so vital. We are delighted to have the Altar Servers back in action and they have undertaken their duties with grace and enthusiasm. Also, the Liturgy of the Word for Children has been re-established on a monthly basis and if more adult volunteers come forward we would like to have it once a fortnight, at the 11am Sunday Mass.*

*The Parish Choir, under the direction of Ann O'Donnell, continues to thrive and meet weekly for practice on Monday evenings at 7.15pm. Ann also works with the Junior Choir to good effect. Ann is invaluable as Parish Secretary and Patricia O'Boyle likewise as Sacristan. There are so many involved in parish ministry to which we are greatly indebted: Ministers of the Eucharist and the Word, Collectors, Maureen Cunningham looking after the candles so diligently, our money counters tending to the finances on a weekly basis and have been doing so for the best part of forty years, those who open and close the church morning and evening throughout the year, the Parish Finance & Maintenance Committee, Killybegs Employment Project looking after the church and grounds - Lawrence McGill (outdoors), Daiva Mingelaite (indoors) and John Hegarty taking great care of the graveyard while Brid Murphy excels with her gardening skills. The Christmas Crib is assembled every year in a meticulous manner by Patrick, Betty & John Boyle, showing exceptional attention to detail. The Christmas Trees are looked after by Johnny, James, Hubert, Thomas and Pat. Storm Darragh made their task a bit more*

*difficult this year! We are grateful to all concerned.*

*We endeavour to deliver this Christmas Newsletter and the Killybegs Parish Calendar 2025 to each household (along with Parish & Restoration / Maintenance Envelopes as requested). We are grateful to all the helpers who oblige with deliveries. More complimentary calendars are available from the Parish Office. The St Vincent de Paul & Legion of Mary continue their excellent work.*

*We are invited to celebrate the coming of Jesus not only publicly in song and prayer but also in quiet moments at home. Christmas can be a lonely time for many families as the loss of a loved one during the year is sorely felt and many people will be far from home at Christmas-time. We keep them all in mind and in our prayers at this time. May the love and joy of Christ be with you and your family, at home or away from home, this Christmas and throughout the New Year.*

*Wishing you every blessing this Holy Season and throughout 2025*

**Fr Colm, Sunday 8<sup>th</sup> December 2024**



*Christmas Carol Service Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024*



# CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS 2024

## Christmas Masses 2024

◆ *Mass at 10am Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> December, Confessions after Mass*

◆ **Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> December, Christmas Eve:**

**6pm:** Christmas Eve Mass  
(including First Communion Children & Junior Choir)

**8pm:** Christmas Eve Mass  
(including Confirmation Candidates & St Catherine's Vocational School Choir)

**10pm:** Christmas Eve Mass (with Senior Choir)

◆ **Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> December, Christmas Day:**

**9am:** Christmas Day Mass

**11am:** Christmas Day Mass (with Senior Choir)

Live streaming is always available. Go to the parish website *killybegsparish.com* and click on **Services Online** or go to *www.mcn.live*



*The Junior Choir, Christmas Eve 2023*

*For unto us a child is born  
Unto us a Son is given  
He is Christ the Lord*



## Advent Service of Reconciliation

Monday 16<sup>th</sup> December 7.00pm

This service will follow the usual format except that after people have received individual absolution you may depart quietly.

## Children's Practices for Christmas

(for Christmas Eve Mass 6pm)

The First Communion Children and other children are invited to take part in the Christmas Play during the Christmas Eve Mass at 6pm.

There will be two practices in the Church for them and the Junior Choir:

- ◆ *Tuesday 17th December at 5.30pm - 6.30pm* (play parts will be decided)
- ◆ *Wednesday 18th December at 5.30pm - 6.30pm* (dress rehearsal)



*Christmas Eve Mass 2023*

*Dear St Nicholas, so kind and true,  
on this special day, we turn to you.  
With gifts and joy, you fill our hearts,  
bless us now as this day starts.  
Guide us with your gentle hand,  
help us spread love across the land.  
May we share and care each day,  
in your spirit, we laugh and play.  
Thank you, St Nicholas, up above,  
for your kindness, grace, and love.  
On this day, and all year through,  
we celebrate the joy you bring, it's true.  
Amen.*

## Money Matters

We are sincerely grateful to everyone who supports the parish financially, contributing to the general administration, maintenance & restoration of the parish. The upkeep and maintenance of the parish, in terms of buildings, programmes and personnel, are carried out in a cost-efficient manner.

*Weekly or monthly or annual* contributions are very much appreciated. Many people use the weekly envelopes for their contributions. We are delivering two sets of envelopes to each household which has been in receipt of envelopes. Discard what you do not need. If you wish to receive a set of envelopes or have any queries, please contact Fr Colm or Ann at the Parish Office: 074 9731013.

## Safeguarding Children in the Diocese of Raphoe

We have adopted the Diocese of Raphoe Policy Statement and everyone working with children in the parish is required to comply with it. The two Parish Safeguarding Representatives are: Kathleen O'Donnell, Fintra Rd & Pat McGee, The Glebe.



*Christmas Carol Service in the Church, Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2024*

***There is no room in the manger except for Jesus and us:***

*There isn't room for all the baggage we carry around with us.*

*No room for our pious pride and self-righteousness.*

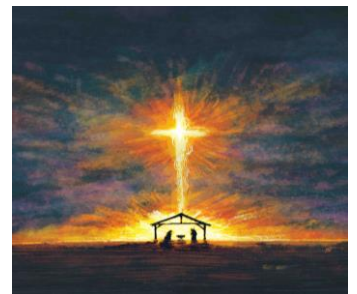
*No room for our human power and prestige.*

*No room for the baggage of past failure and unforgiven sin.*

*No room for our prejudice, bigotry and jingoistic national pride.*

*No room for bitterness and greed.*

*No room in the manger for anything other than the absolute reality of who and what we really are: very human, very real, very fragile, very vulnerable beings who desperately need the gift of love and grace which God so powerfully desires to give.*



**What is Christmas?** *It is tenderness for the past,  
Courage for the present,  
Hope for the future.*



**Dates  
for  
2025**

**Sacrament of Confirmation:** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> March 11.00am.  
**First Holy Communion:** Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 11.00am.  
**Mass at Ballysallagh Mass Rock:** Wednesday 4<sup>th</sup> June 7.00pm  
**Graveyard Mass:** Friday 25<sup>th</sup> July 7.00pm  
**Blessing of the Fleet Mass:** Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July 7.00pm  
**Mass at Croaghlin Mass Rock:** Friday 15<sup>th</sup> August 7.00pm  
**Prayers at St. Catherine's Well:** Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> November 4.00pm

**Mass Intentions**

When you book a Mass or get a Mass Card, Fr Colm can let you know the date and time of the Mass if requested. The Saturday evening Mass in Killybegs is offered for a number of intentions. It may be necessary to include a number of intentions in some of the other Masses as well. When a particular Mass Intention is not offered here, the Mass Stipend is sent to the Missions or to other clergy to offer Mass for that intention.

**Sunday Masses 7.00pm (Vigil), 9.00am & 11.00am.**

**Weekdays:** Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: 10am; Friday: 10am or 7pm.

*Weekday Masses subject to change. Consult weekly Newsletter.*

**Webcam:**

All Masses & all Church Services from St Mary's are streamed live on **mcn.live** or go to our website **killybegsparish.com** and click on **Services Online**  
*Marriages and Funerals* can be recorded, on request, free of charge, and can be downloaded from our site. Recordings may only be stored for a short time.

**Marriage Preparation Programme: ACCORD**

www.accord.ie / marriagepreparation@accord.ie / Tel: 015053112

**Induction Loop** is available for hearing-aid users, switch to T position.

**Gluten-free Bread** for Holy Communion is available at all Masses.

**Website:** The Parish Newsletter is posted on our website: **killybegsparish.com**

**The Parish Office, Killybegs, Co. Donegal, F94CY56**

**Hours of Opening:** Monday to Friday 9.30am - 2.45pm. **Tel:** 074 9731013

**Email:** **info@killybegsparish.com**

**Website:** **killybegsparish.com**

**Live Streaming:** **www.mcn.live**

**Parish Secretary:** Ann O'Donnell: Tel: 074 9731013 / 087 6735139

**Parish Priest:** Fr. Colm Ó Gallchóir: Tel: 074 9731013 (9731030)

**Parish Sacristan:** Patricia O'Boyle.