



# Togher & Monasterboice Parishes

## Christmas Message



For me, this Christmas feels very different.

It's the first after the death of my younger brother, Eoin Pól, on the 19th July. I miss him a lot, and Christmas will not be the same this year. I know there are many reading who have their own story of loss, suffering and trouble - all of which seem more sharp at Christmas. It is understandable for many that while they anticipate Christmas so much, they are, in the end, relieved to have it behind them.

### Emmanuel — God with us.

The good news of faith is that the mystery of the Incarnation means that God wants to enter into our sorrows and brokenness. and indeed to know also our hopes, dreams and prayers for ourselves and for this (broken) world. This year, especially we unite in prayer with those suffering from war, violence, those who are refugees, and of course those who are homeless, starving, or lacking freedom in any way. God is not only with us, God is with THEM. In every heart that suffers, in every child that cries, in every dying breath.

So, while we are so mindful of those in sorrow, pain or loss; most of us, thankfully, will celebrate Christmas with our families in a spirit of joy. There was a survey recently which stated that 71% of people said 'Christmas Dinner' was their favourite tradition - no pressure!!! Tradition is all well and good, but things have to change too! If there's no change, there's no growth; making a small effort to incorporate something new or different might go some way to helping those who dislike the season, to just get through it.

My favourite Christmas movie is the classic "It's a Wonderful Life", the message of which is, I think, to encourage us to remember that **PRESENCE** is more important than **PRESENTS** - not only at Christmas time, but the whole year round. Indeed the same theme is hinted at in the classic 'How the Grinch Stole Christmas!', when the main character ponders; **"'Maybe Christmas,' he thought, 'doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas ... perhaps ... means a little bit more!'"**

So could I encourage us all to look for something this Christmas that connects us to the eternal truths of life - **hope, joy, peace and love**. It may be in the smiles and happiness of the children, or the coming together of the family/friends, or it may be in the peace and quiet of the wee small hours as you prepare for the day ahead, or recover from it. Whatever it is, making the choice to engage differently can really turn a Christmas from something you fear, dread or downright hate, into a moment of memory, togetherness and care.

I saw a lovely post on social media recently, which said **"The first Christmas was pretty simple - it's ok if yours is too"**. So, try not to get too 'caught up' in the perfect Christmas, but just let Christmas 'be'.

Could I say a huge thank you to everyone who has helped make our Churches so ready for Christmas - our sacristans, their helpers (*often family*), Altar Societies, Cleaners and decorators, this who set up cribs, outdoor lights, and Christmas Tress, etc; Our Choirs, their leaders; those who serve in music ministry in general and the ministries of Word and Eucharist; Altar servers, gift bearers, collectors and counters, and generally all who support the Churches of our parishes. Thank **YOU!!!** We couldn't be parish without you.

In this marvellous event of **'God becoming human'** (*Incarnation/Christmas*), Jesus reveals his great love and his divine plan to restore our communion with him. May we open our hearts to Christ so he may be born in us now, and every day, and prayerfully examine our lives so we may show to all, at every opportunity, the same love, hope, peace and joy he brings to us.

On behalf of myself, Fr. Tom and the newly arrived Fr. Akan, have a very holy, blessed and joyful Nativity, filled with the love of God and may God grant us all rich blessings in the New Year.

Clergy: Very Rev. Patrick Rushe, PP., Adm, Vf., 086 880 7470;

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Very Rev. Tom Daly, PE, AP. Boicetown, Togher A92C597 - 041 68 52110

### Parish Office

Tuesdays & Wednesdays from 2.30pm - 5.30pm;  
Our secretaries, Mary/Ann (087-3791443) will answer calls  
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