

## Bishop Brendan Leahy Statement New Year's Day 2021

A lot of humorous WhatsApp messages are circulating these days cheering the end of what has been one of the worst in living memory for most of us. Worldwide over 1.5 million people have lost their lives to the COVID-19 virus, with over 270 million people facing hunger (double the number since last year), due to the impact of COVID and drought. In Ireland, 3,500 have died and for the bereaved this was so distressing. Then then the pain of lockdowns and isolation, mental health issues and domestic violence, job loss and educational disruption. There were the restrictions around sacraments, including funerals, weddings and so much more. And still so much work to do in overcoming COVID but with light at the end of the tunnel.

Yes, we need to let this year out quickly. It is said that long ago in Ireland, they opened the doors in the house on New Year's Eve to let out the old year and usher in the new. But while there is much we will want to let out, let's make sure we take note of the light that came through the cracks of this year. Strange as it might sound perhaps, but let's not let every COVID thing out. Because of what we've lived through in 2020, as we head into 2021 our world has a much keener sense that it needs to take care of itself. It also has realised just how much caring can be placed at the heart of political discourse and, for all of us, just how important it is to show particular priority care for the vulnerable.

In his 2021 World Peace Day message Pope Francis urges us to promote a "culture of care". In Ireland, let's make a 'note to self' – in this year of years we did something really important; collectively, socially and politically, we promoted a culture of care of one another, starting with the most vulnerable. There's loads we could have improved on, not least in the initial lockdown with cancellation of referrals and operations for serious illness, how we dealt with mental health issues, with services for people with disabilities. But the core priority was undeniably right – protect the weakest, those most vulnerable to the virus. Imagine what we could achieve as a nation if we applied this throughout society, viewing our public policy through the eyes of the vulnerable and those on the margins. May we never forget this experience of the year when vulnerability was neither ignored nor su-

perficially dealt with. We saw need – we rushed to respond; we recognised mistakes – we remedied them; we recognised the cost – we were prepared to make sacrifices. This has to be a template for us going forward. In his message Pope Francis provides what he calls a "grammar" of care: commitment to promoting the dignity of each human person, solidarity with the poor and vulnerable, the pursuit of the common good and concern for the protection of creation. These are four principles we've seen working a lot this year in Ireland. We could say that we've all taught each other in a new way the grammar that writes a noble history. And we did this together. Collective effort has been a hallmark of our year. It shows us that when our generous social capital, altruistic political will and shared resources come together we can tackle issues and make a difference.

As we move into 2021, let's renew our commitment to do what are often called 'spiritual and corporal works of mercy'. Caring is a hallmark of Christian identity. When we fail in care, we present a caricature of Christianity. The new year ahead of us will also be a time for further political commemorations, not least the signing of the Treaty in December 1921. A hundred years later, let's make sure the grammar of care is what characterises our decisions and choices.

**Feast of the Epiphany 6th January** is celebrated with great joy particularly in many Eastern countries. Such is the significance of this feast that in some countries Christmas gifts are given out on this day. The wise men were searching and looking for something they knew they had to find. It was a journey with many questions and a journey that took time, patience and faith. It was a journey that may have seemed futile and pointless. Why bother? Why take a risk? The wise men knew better. Today's feast day is a reminder to keep searching and to keep going as best we can on our daily journey even when we don't have all the answers. Like the wise men the end result is what it's all about. Masses for the feast day will be online through our FB page.

**Ireland's traditional "Nollaig na mBan"** or "Little Women's Christmas" You could be forgiven for looking at today, January 6, as a sad one — it is the day that the Christmas decorations come down, after all. But even though it signifies the end of the festive season, January 6 is also a cause for celebration — especially for the women in our lives. *Nollaig na mBan*, or Women's Christmas, is traditionally a day to celebrate women's hard work over the Christmas period. As the woman of the house would prepare everything for the festivities (and clean up

## Remembered In Mass

### Donoughmore



Sat 2nd No Public Mass. Sun3rd Online	11am	Paddy hickey. Martin Wade. Ellen Ryan (Rathuard)
Mon 4th		No public Mass
Tue 5th	7pm	Dermot Keane
Fri 8th		
Sat 9th		
<b>Knockea</b>		
Sun 3rd		
Wed 6th	11am	Myles O'Reilly
Sun 10th	11am	Sean Kilroy. Patrick-Brosnan (Months Mind)
<b>Roxboro</b>		
Sun	12:30	No Mass
Sun	12.30	No Mass

afterwards), the end of the season was also seen as a chance for her to take a day off and leave the work to the men. The household roles would be reversed, and women would gather together to relax, unwind and have fun with their friends, while their husbands cooked and cleaned. In a 1998 article by the *Irish Times*, the author wrote: "God rested on the seventh day, but women didn't rest until the twelfth day of Christmas." At the peak of its popularity, Women's Christmas would see women call round to their friends and neighbours and all gather to eat the last of the Christmas cake together. At home, the Christmas decorations would be taken down and stowed away for another year —. Nowadays, *Nollaig na mBan* isn't

## Parish of Donoughmore/ Knockea/Roxboro

May His Love fill your Heart and Home this Christmas season and in the coming year

as widely celebrated as it once was and is mainly confined to the southwest of Ireland. But it is experiencing somewhat of a revival, with many restaurants and cafés offering *Nollaig na mBan* specials for groups of women celebrating the day. Unfortunately with the current restrictions these celebrations won't be taking place this year.

**Recent death with our sympathy and prayers** Mary O'Dwyer, Roxboro, Ballysheedy, Nora O'Connell Hillcrest Ballysheedy and Emma McManus, London. May they rest in Peace.



A Happy New Year to all and we wish you and yours every blessing and good health in 2021

**Fr Tom Mangan PP**

087-2348226

dkrparish@gmail.com

**Facebook: DKR Parish Limerick**

**Sacristan**

**Terry 087-6686050**

The Eircode for St. Patrick's Church, Donoughmore is **V94 V6T3**. Knockea is **V94 D938**.

**Weekly Parish Lotto:** No Winner  
Winning No's 3,5,22,25. Next jackpot €5,200  
Lucky dips: 1. Willie Dooley 2. John Keane 3. Sarah & Michael Carroll 4. Sean McManus 5. The 3 of US 6. The 3 of Us

**Weekly Parish Lotto:** No Winner €4,900 Winning No.13,18,20,28. Lucky dips;1Noreen O'Donoghue 2.Pat Fitzgerald 3.Eileen Skehan 4Ann Wade5.Helen Grimes 6Josephine & Vincent Hayes Next Jackpot €5,000, draw in the Courthouse Tuesday 15th Dec.

LLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLLL