

FACILITATOR'S REPORT

I would like to welcome you all here tonight to our AGM and to thank you for coming. Ballincollig Parish Council had an extremely busy and fulfilling year. We undertook many projects which were challenging and to which we responded magnificently.

The first of these, a Workshop on Awareness of Depression and Suicide, was the second meeting organised by Dick Beamish. This session was attended by a smaller gathering, but was very worthwhile. It is hoped to hold another session in the future.

Our Patrick's Day Celebrations were very successful in 2010. This year we were exceptionally busy as we also, as a Parish Council, participated in the first Patrick's Day parade in 25 years in Ballincollig. Thanks to everybody who got involved in the organisation of the celebration after mass in Christ Our Light and also in the Parade. It is anticipated that the involvement in the Parade will become an annual event – so thinking hats on everybody and come up with some good ideas for next year.

The Eucharistic Procession was attended by a large gathering. It was wonderful to see such a large turn out from the first communicants. Considerable work went into organising this and I want to thank everybody involved and also thanks to An Garda Síochána for their help and co-operation.

Fr. George expressed a wish to hold a function to celebrate all the various working group in our vibrant Parish. Following on from this wish our "Fiesta" Day or Parish Day of Celebration was perceived. What a great day it proved to be with warm sunshine, food and dancing together with a great spirit of friendship and a sense of belonging to our Parish. It was wonderful to everybody enjoying themselves – from babies to old age pensioners. It hoped this will become an annual event as it brings all the groups within the parish together.

Our Child Protection Policy was forwarded to the Diocesan Office for approval with the recommendation that we have an officer at Parish level as opposed to a the Diocesan Officer but we were advised by the Diocesan Office that there will be only one DLP for the whole dioceses and that is Fr. Liam O'Driscoll. We await further developments in the light of the recently published reports.

The Paraliturg during July and August, once again, proved to be very successful and our thanks goes to all involved.

The Constitution of the Parish was looked at by the Core Group to see if it conformed to Diocesan Guidelines. As a result some changes were made.

The 25th anniversary of Christ our Light was acknowledge on November 22nd with the con-celebration of Mass by Bishop Buckley, priests of our Parish and former priests and some of the priests who were ordained in that church. There was a truly amazing atmosphere in the church on that day and the church looked magnificent as it had been decorated

by the Altar Society/Ballincollig Flower Club. Once again hospitality was extended to parishioners of Ballincollig and indeed surrounding parishes. We received tremendous co-operation from the Neo Catechumens, they opened the doors of their St. Mark's Centre in Innishmore to us and afforded us the use of their facilities and were of immense help to us on the day. To all the members at St. Mark's Centre we extend a special thank you and wish them well.

Our Advent Retreat was held on 30th of November and 1/2nd of December in the church of Christ Our Light. The Redemptorists were unable to provide us with a priest so Fr. George managed to organise Fr. Tom Clancy at short notice. Fr. Clancy was outstanding and everybody was very impressed with him. Our thanks also go to him for stepping in at short notice.

In 2009 relatives of deceased parishioners were written to and given the option of booking first anniversary mass before the mass book was opened officially. Also, a decision was made to offer the Church of Christ Our Light to couples, from outside the parish, who wished to get married in Ballincollig.

November 2009 saw the Parish Council undertake its biggest and most challenging task to date; this was the organising of the Parish Mission to be held in March 2010. Because of the hands on approach of all the parish council members we have bonded very well as a result of organising this mission and there is a great sense of friendship amongst us. Thanks to everybody involved – it was an amazing and uplifting experience. Young, middle

aged and older parishioners participated in the week and as a result the life of our parish has been enhanced. A special thank you is extended to everyone involved for making this a memorable occasion and affording the parishioners the chance to become actively involved.

December 2009 saw the new parish council members, recruited in November, being introduced to the existing Parish Council at a social gathering in Fr. George's house. It was an excellent way to introduce the "new" to the "old" in an out of meeting session. Little did our new members know what was ahead of them with the organising of the Parish Mission!! - it was a baptism of fire!!! and they truly immersed themselves in the organisation of same. Well done to you and keep up the enthusiasm.

Also, the organisers of the Children's Mass recruited 20 new members to help out at the 11.00 a.m. Mass on Sundays in the church of Christ Our Light. This is a huge number to acquire and the recruitment was done after the children's mass when parents were attending.

Despite these times of recession two collections were organised in the Parish - one for the flood victims in our midst and the other for the people of Haiti. The response to both was magnificent and well done to everyone who contributed. The generosity of the people of the parish of Ballincollig is well known and once again the parishioners came up trumps to help those less fortunate.

The Council devoted a full meeting to discuss the letter from the Pope to the people of Ireland. It is felt that this was a very worthwhile exercise and it is hoped to carry out a similar exercise with the various ministries within our parish. This process enables people to voice their opinion in a safe place and allows them to be heard.

Fr. George organised four very successful trips for young people last summer – to Glendalough, Gougane Barra, Taize and Knockadoon. The feedback was terrific and thanks to everybody who was involved in organising and leading these young people. It is great to see young people being included and involved in our church this way and we have every reason to be very proud of them.

On a sad note – Margaret Healy of the Baptism Preparation Group passed away and also Jerry O'Connor, a Parish Council Member. To their families we extend our sympathy.

Before I finish I want to thank all of you for your contribution and dedication to the Parish Council. Without your involvement the parish of Ballincollig would not flourish or be as vibrant. Looking back on the past 14 months we can see what was undertaken and each project had considerable work attached to it. The success of these events is a measure of the effort and work undertaken by each of you. To be involved at the level that you are all at shows your commitment and dedication to our parish life.

As you all know there are many sub-groups attached to the Parish Council – Communications Group, Baptism Preparation Group, Liturgy Group, Visitation Group to mention a few. Without your contribution and dedication these groups would not function. Again a special "thank you" to you all.

Our thanks to Catherine Crowley in the Parish Office, Catherine is always pleasant and co-operative no matter what task she is asked to undertake. I would also like to thank Rosemary for providing us with tea, coffee and biscuits on the nights of our Parish Council meetings.

Finally, on my own behalf I would like to thank everyone on the Council for the kindness, friendship and help offered to me as Facilitator. I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved – a lot has been achieved and please God our work will continue into the future to ensure that Ballincollig Parish remains active and inclusive.

My thanks to Fr. George and Fr. Billy – they were always there at the end of the phone when and if I needed advice.

A parish the size of Ballincollig is always looking for volunteers to help out. If you are reading this article maybe you might consider getting involved. We would love to have you and would welcome your input. Many of the groups within the Parish are now looking for new members and would welcome new life and new Ideas. Should you feel the "call" to take part please contact the priests of the parish or indeed contact the Parish Office. It is up to all of us to develop the Parish of Ballincollig.

Many thanks to you all.

Phyl Kennedy

Facilitator

Ballincollig Parish Council.