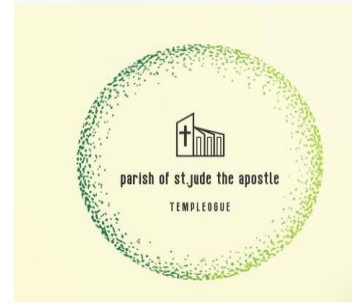




Christmas
2021
Fr. Brendan



Dear Parishioner and Neighbours

Firstly, I wish you and all your families a very Happy Christmas and Healthy New Year. Another year dominated by Covid 19 - which continues to change the way we live, the way as a parish we have celebrated the sacraments and special moments sad and glad in people's lives and so much more.

For those with families abroad whom you haven't had a chance to see and hug, it's been a difficult time - online and digital are great - but not quite the same.

As I write this note 17th November - restrictions and not just Covid are still in the air, and with that a sense of 'here we go again.' But no point wasting emotional time or energy - as Jesus said - we have to take up our cross every day and carry on.

Thank you all so much for tuning in to our 'on-line' moments of worship, and for coming back to church as and when we were allowed. Our teams of sanitizers and cleaners have been amazing ensuring the church is as safe as possible for us all. From wiping down all the pews, windows open to allow ventilation, and our new air purifying machines we are doing our utmost to keep everybody safe. For those who are still nervous about coming back to church physically, that is understandable and you should continue to do what you feel is appropriate for yourselves.

By the number of baptisms I've been celebrating over the past few months, there seems to be a baby boom in the area - even allowing for clearing the back-log over shut down.

We were very lucky to be able to celebrate First Holy Communions & Confirmations in small class groups which were widely appreciated by parents and grandparents. I also don't think I've done as many Weddings as in the past 6 months but I suppose that includes some poor brides and grooms who had multiple dates for their weddings. At least it gives the new husbands a little excuse if they forget the anniversary !

We used the lock-down time to paint the Parish Centre and I must say the colours work very well.

Thanks to Catherine, Rita, Tommy, Paddy, Angela & Ann Mary on our parish team, Janet and her team in the Café, Kathleen and her team in the Montessori.

Our schools, teachers, Boards of Management and SNA's and of course Mick - for their support and kindness over the year as we endeavour to do our best for the next generation.

Our PPC and volunteers who clean the church. Our Choir and Folk Group are still not able to sing at church but I would love to think that when they are that some new members might join them as it will be like starting a 'new' choir and folk group as they haven't been able to meet for so long. We had hoped to have a Carol Service with a full church but as of time of writing I think it's best to plan for an on-line celebration.

Our other ministries (Eucharistic ministers, Readers, Baptismal team, School chaplains, Funeral team, Flower Team, Finance & Maintenance volunteers, Gardeners and more - some are still not back - but you are on 'furlough' not redundant !

Thanks for continuing to contribute to our parish, through online and directly, the priests (not just me but priests who work in all parishes, rich and poor and in-between) through the Christmas & Easter Dues.

Last year I welcomed visitors who were 'home' for Christmas, this year as I write this letter I'm not so sure as to who or how many will be home, might I suggest that you invite them to tune into the same Christmas masses on-line that you are watching or attending - from around the world, so that at least we can be spiritually together to listen again to the Christmas story of hope and joy to the world.

On a sad note this will be the first Christmas some of you will have following the loss of a loved one, may you be supported by the Christmas message of hope in our Saviour Jesus Christ.

Finally enclosed please find our Christmas Timetable ! But be prepared for changes according to what happens over the next few weeks.

With every best wish to you and yours. Happy Christmas and Happy 2022 !

Fr. Brendan Madden P.P.
& Perky

